



The Epistle of Joy **"Working Out Your Salvation" # 2** **Philippians 2:12-13**

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The priority of our life is to discover the source of energy behind our desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

- What motivates us to live a life of holiness in an unholy world?
- What inspires us to live a life of righteousness in an unrighteous world, even among those who claim to be our brothers and sisters in Christ?
- Who produces the spiritual progress in our personal lives, or who is in control of the spiritual fruit that is produced through our lives?

- Everything we do requires some source of energy, and it is the same way with the progress of our sanctification.
- Is it all up to us, or is it all up to God.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

Philippians 2:12b-13

True spiritual growth requires all that we are and all that God is.

- For Christians to develop their spiritual maturity, they must first define their purpose in life, determine to live according to God’s perfect will for their life and devote every effort toward that goal.
- At the same time, they must realize that without the aid, the energy, the presence, and the power of the Holy Spirit, all of their efforts will achieve nothing – they may learn more about Him, but they still might not “know Him.”
- Jeremiah 29:13 – ***“You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”***
- Psalms 34:18 – ***“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”***

Other examples of this paradox:

- **The Incarnation** – Jesus was the Son of God and the Son of Man.
- **The Inspiration** – The Bible was written by men who were so moved by the Holy Spirit that what they wrote became the Word of God, which means it is absolute truth with no mixture of error.
- **The Lord Jesus** – Jesus was born of a young girl, but because that child was conceived in her womb by the Holy Spirit, He was the God-Man, who lived among us, and yet without sin.
- **Our Salvation** – God’s invitation to all sinners is, ***“Whosoever will may come.”*** But the Bible also says God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.
- **Our Perseverance** – Our salvation is secure because we are held by the hand of Almighty God. However, in Matthew 24:13, Jesus told His disciples, ***“He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”***

Paul’s explanation of the paradox:

- **1 Corinthians 15:9ff** – Paul said he labored more than anyone, yet it was not him who labored, but the grace of God at work in and through him.
- **Galatians 2:20** – Paul said he no longer lived, and yet the life he lived in the flesh, he lived by faith in the Son of God.
- **Colossians 1:28-29** – Paul said he labored to present every man perfect in Christ, but according to God who worked mightily in him.

1. Understand Our Example is Jesus Christ –

- Jesus made Himself of no reputation.
- Jesus took upon Himself the form of a bondservant.
- Jesus humbled Himself to the death of the cross.

- Therefore, Jesus is a model of what a saved sinner should be like – meek, humble, and submissive to God’s assignment.
- The Apostle Paul told the Galatians that he was in travail until Christ was fully formed in them.
- The Apostle John said, if we abide in Christ, we will walk the way He walks.
- **“The spiritual life which we have is not our own. We did not induce it, and we can’t maintain it. It is solely the work of Christ.”** – John Owen.
- However, as the Apostle Paul said, we are to “work out the work that Christ has done in us,” for our life goal is to be found complete in Christ.

2. Understand That We Are Unconditionally Loved –

- In verse 12, Paul refers to the believers in Philippi as ***“My beloved.”***
- In chapter 1:8, Paul said he ***“Longed for them all with the affection of Christ Jesus.”***
- In chapter 4:1, Paul said, ***“Therefore, my beloved brethren, whom I long for.”***
- As we “work out” that which Christ has “worked in,” how great to know that in His love for us, there is room for our failures.

3. Understand That We Have Been Called to Obedience –

- The Apostle Paul challenged them – ***“So, then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed.”***
- The Greek word that is translated in our Bibles as “obey” means to “come under” to submit to a command.
- When the people in Philippi heard the gospel, they “obeyed” the Word of God; they “came under.”
- The word of the gospel says that to be saved: one must repent from their sin and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.
- This was more than a good suggestion; it was a command to be obeyed.

4. Understand That We Must Assume Personal Responsibility for our Spiritual Development –

- Paul challenged the Philippian believers, ***“As you have obeyed in my presence, now obey in my absence.”***
- The larger understanding of that verse is clear: “As you obeyed God while I was with you, now show what you learned by living in obedience to God even when you are on your own.”
- Philippians 1:27 – ***“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”***

5. Understand the Consequences of Our Sins –

- There is a sense in which our salvation is complete, in the sense that Jesus has done a complete work for us.
- Still there is also a sense in which our salvation is incomplete in that it is not yet a complete work in us.
- Therefore, we are to ***“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”***

- While we are unconditionally loved, and God gives us space for our failures, that does not nullify the consequences of our sins.
- Therefore, we must work out that which God has worked in us with a healthy fear of a holy God, who will never be less than totally holy.
- Paul's warning was not that we should live our Christian lives with a constant sense of fear of hell or damnation but rather that we should live with a fear of failing to work out that which He has worked in us through Jesus Christ.
- The word "fear" means to have a **"Holy awe of a mighty God."**

"We take comfort in it: God who works in you. Grace all-sufficient dwells in you, believer.

**There is a living well within you springing up; use the bucket, then;
keep on drawing; you will never exhaust it; there is a living source within."**

Spurgeon