

STUDY NOTE: Even how the Scriptures are printed can sometimes be misleading. For example, the 1st verse of chapter 4, clearly belongs with the last sentence of chapter 3...

“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus [the] Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.”

So? Always question the inerrancy of chapter “divisions.”

Similarly, at least be agnostic about the inerrancy of paragraph designations. In the case of “chapter 4,” the paragraph separation between verses 3 and 4 may have disguised an important teaching; to wit, how to resolve conflict within the church. I assert this paragraph “separation” be ignored, at least for this study. So then, consider what follows the mention of the disagreeing parties in verse 3 as a solution to their problem, and as great advice for managing conflict within the church today.

Philippians 4:1-9. Publisher Indents.

Since our citizenship is not of this world, but heaven, we eagerly await the Christ who eliminate entropy. Therefore, my beloved, my joy, my crown—that is how you should stand firm in the Lord!

Now, I urge Euodia and Synthche to agree with each other, *ev* the Lord. And Syzygus and Clement: please help them. You all have fought by my side for the gospel; you’re names are in the Book of Life. Here’s what I want you to do...

Rejoice in the Lord, always. Rejoice! Let your gentleness be obvious; not just an “inner feeling.” Remember the Lord is near, listening, watching, wanting to help. Don’t be anxious—*anxiety* never solved anything. It is prayer and petition, with gratitude, that you address God for help. God’s peace, a peace that transcends understanding, will guard your *raison d’être*, your very mind *ev* Christ Jesus. Here’s how I want you to do this: Reason, Reckon, Decide [*λογίζεσθε* 3049] about whatever is...

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1. True, | 5. Lovely, |
| 2. Noble, | 6. Admirable, and |
| 3. Right, | 7. Praiseworthy or excellent. |
| 4. Pure, | |

Whatever you’ve learned from me—put it into practice. THEN, the reconciliatory peace [*εἰρήνης*, 1515] of the Lord God will be with you all [*ὑμῶν*, 2nd person, *plural*].

PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9

Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

²I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, [or *loyal Syzygus*] help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think [*λογίζεσθε* 3049] about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.



- Q Why would Paul be concerned about the fracas between Euodia and Synthche? Aren't human conflicts⁹ normal, if not critical to human progress?
- Q How would you characterize a church with no conflict?
- Q Why didn't Paul simply resolve the issue? Euodia, apologize; you're wrong. Or, Synthche, apologize; you're wrong. Why are apologies a deficient conflict resolution tool?
- Q How does a reconciliatory peace "guard"¹⁰ your minds? (verse 7)
- Q How does focus upon, directed decisive thinking¹¹ on these things...

- ✓ True
- ✓ Noble
- ✓ Right
- ✓ Pure
- ✓ Lovely
- ✓ Admirable
- ✓ Praiseworthy

reinforce people to seek resolution toward a *reconciled* peace?¹²



⁹Conflict is an open disagreement between at least two people who support with equivalent passion clearly understood mutually exclusive alternatives with limited resources. Accordingly, conflict is "resolved" when the disagreement is undisclosed (vs. "open"), or when one of the opposing parties is eliminated, or when the passion of one party is modified, or when the alternatives are not viewed as mutually exclusive, or the alternatives being posed are modified to become non-exclusive, and/or when the resources become unlimited, or there are no resources at hand to meet the needs in question.

¹⁰*Guard...hearts...minds.* A military concept depicting a sentry standing guard. God's "protective custody" of those who are in Christ Jesus extends to the core of their beings and to their deepest intentions (e.g., 1 Peter 1:5). From an NIV Commentary.

¹¹See a full explanation of this idea in my article, *A Pauline Approach to Christian Conflict Resolution*, D. Thomas Porter, © 2008; see <https://DiggingDeeper.Life/content/APaulineApproachtoChristianConflictResolution.pdf>

¹²Paul uses the Greek εἰρήνη to depict peace here—not the Hebrew concept shalom (שְׁלוֹמִים) indicating prosperity, nor the Latin idea of *pax* indicating an absence of conflict, nor the peace that comes from submission (e.g., the Arabic concept of *islam*) but εἰρήνη implying the Greek notion of balance, a return to equilibrium. Thus, the peace Paul calls for here is a turning to what is fair, balanced, and quiet—not peace based on submission, nor a mere absence of conflict, nor even peace which comes with perfected prosperity. Learn more about different views of "peace" within Scripture at:

<https://DiggingDeeper.Life/content/Peace Types in Scripture.pdf>

Philippians 4:10-23. *Au Revoir*. Yes, I rejoice, in the Lord, that you've renewed your concern for me. And, you've had no opportunity to manifest that concern. Look, I'm not saying I'm in need: I have learned to be content—regardless of circumstances. I know what it is to be poor, and to have plenty. I've learned the secret of contentment—in every situation; whether well fed or starving, whether living well or living in poverty, I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.

Nonetheless, it was good of you to share my troubles. As you in Philippi know, not one church supported me when I set out for Macedonia—you all and you all alone. Even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help, again and again.

Make no mistake about it, I am not looking for help right now, but I am looking to see your “account” be credited. I am supplied well, now that the gifts from you sent by Epaphroditus are here. They are a sweet smelling offering¹³—an acceptable sacrifice—pleasing to God Himself. My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

May glory be given forever and ever to Father God. May you greet each other immersed in Christ Jesus. The folks here say hello, especially those in Caesar's household. May the gift of the Lord Jesus the Christ be with you. So be it, let it be, truly.

- Q Why was Paul's thanks and commentary about the Philippians so profuse? Is it wise to praise a church this much; will a collective ego problem arise?
- Q Under what circumstances can we do all things through Christ?
- Q What made their offering a sacrifice, a sweet smelling aroma?
- Q What makes Paul, and us, jump into a doxology? What were the circumstances when that happened to you?

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23

I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²¹ Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings. ²² All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

¹³The Hebrew Scriptures describe this sacrifice not for atonement of sin, but for thanksgiving and praise (e.g., Leviticus 7:12-15; Romans 12:1; Ephesians 5:2; or Hebrews 13:15-16).