

Phroneō Part 2

– *mindset, frame of mind, attitude* –

Last week we began our study of **φρονέω** (phroneō, Strong's 5426), another word from the Greek New Testament having to do with the thinking processes of the mind. It expressly has to do with the attitude of the mind, or the frame of mind. Our study last week was taken from Paul's letter to the Philippians in which he deals with the theme of fellowship and presents that the main ingredient necessary for genuine fellowship among believers is a humble frame of mind.

In Philippians 2:5, Paul uses the passive voice of the imperative mood to command believers to "Let this **mindset** (**φρονέω**, phroneō) be in you which *was* also in Christ Jesus." The passive voice used here indicates that the believer cannot produce the mindset that Jesus had; rather the Lord must develop it in us as we continuously go through the trials and experiences of life. In Philippians 2:6-8, Paul describes the Lord's mindset: Jesus, while being God, emptied Himself of His glory and humbled Himself as He took on human form and functioned as a slave.

This week we continue our study of **φρονέω** (phroneō) from Philippians 3:13-20. In preceding verses, Paul presents his religious pedigree which could have been used as a means of promoting himself within the framework of the existing religious system. He describes his attitude toward that pedigree in Philippians 3:7-9 where he says, "What things were gain to me, these things I have considered loss on account of Christ. But indeed therefore I am also considering all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; on account of whom I suffered loss of all things, I consider *them* to be rubbish, in order that I might gain Christ, and I might be found in Him not having my righteousness which *is* from law, but which *is* through faith of Christ, the righteousness from God based upon faith."

In these verses Paul describes the new frame of mind with which he approaches life. His attitude now is that his stature in Judaism and all his earthly accomplishments are worthless. He considers the pursuit of the knowledge of Christ to be his focus and the only thing of value in his life. Paul goes on to present in Verses 13-20 the pattern believers are to follow using his own life and walk with the Lord as an example.

13) Brothers, I myself do not count myself to have taken hold; but one thing *I do*, on the one hand forgetting the things behind, and on the other hand stretching out to the things before,

14) I pursue according to *the* mark *based upon* the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In Verses 13 & 14 Paul says he does not consider that he himself has arrived at perfection, but shares that his purpose in life is to forget the things that are past and stretch forward to the things before; those things being "the mark *based upon* the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus."

15) Therefore as many as *are* mature, we should have this frame of mind (φρονέω); and if your mindset (φρονέω) is on anything differently, even God will reveal this to you;

16) Nevertheless, unto which *mindset* we arrived, walk by the same rule, *have* the same frame of mind (φρονέω).

In Verses 15 and 16, Paul applies his teaching. In Verse 15, he presents his own approach to the accomplishments of his life as the frame of mind, or mindset, that all believers should have when they reach maturity in Christ. In Verse 16, Paul is taking into consideration that not all believers have reached maturity. He is instructing believers at every level of maturity to continue to walk according to the rule presented, in pursuit of the frame of mind he has just described.

17) Brothers, become fellow-imitators of me, and observe the ones walking this way, according as you have us *as a* pattern.

In Verse 17, Paul gives a command that believers are to become imitators of him and that we should observe, (σκοπέω, skopeō, Strong's 4648) or fix our eyes upon, those who are walking with the same frame of mind that Paul has. We have in him a pattern of the frame of mind of one who is a mature Christian.

18) For many are walking of whom I was often saying to you, and now I say even weeping, *they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ;

19) of whom the end *is* destruction, of whom the god *is* the belly, and the glory *is* in their shame, the ones having a mindset (φρονέω) on earthly things.

In Verses 18 & 19, Paul says that there are many who are enemies of the cross of Christ. They prefer to deny the cross rather than to deny themselves. Instead of following Christ in taking up their cross daily, they embrace a religion of positive thinking devoid of the cross, devoid of the realization of the necessity of the crucifixion of the flesh. Paul says that the end of such people is destruction and describes their frame of mind, or mindset, as being upon earthly things, not upon the things of Christ.

20) For our citizenship exists in heaven, from where we also wait for *the* savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 20 gives the reason it is necessary for our attitude and frame of mind to be transformed, "For our citizenship exists in heaven, from where we also wait for *the* savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ." Being that we are citizens of heaven, our mindset should be on the things of heaven not on the things of the earth.

Paul has presented that we must enter into fellowship together the same way Jesus entered into this world. In spite of being the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus put the glory of that aside to become a human being and to function as a slave. Paul also presents his own life as an example to us. He leaves all of his accomplishments in Judaism and his religious pedigree behind; as he follows Christ, he chooses the low road so that he can take hold of that for which Christ has taken hold of him.

As believers we are to press "according to the mark based upon the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus." In order to mature into the purpose for which we are called, we must submit to the Lord's humbling process, no longer asserting ourselves and our rights, but being sensitive to how our lives might be used by the Holy Spirit to reach out and touch the lives of others.

Notes

- phroneō is the English font spelling of the Greek word φρονέω.
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