

Philippians 2:19-24 Part 4
The Importance of the Occupation of the Attention of the Mind Part 4
also I Corinthians 7:29-35

We are in Philippians 2:19-24. Remember the book of Philippians is about *fellowship*, participating together in fellowship. We are in this section in verses 19 through 30, The Proof of Character in Fellowship. One's character is proven in fellowship.

We saw first of all in verse 19, Paul's concern for the spiritual welfare of the believers in Philippi. He says, **Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you quickly, in order that I also might be cheered up (or encouraged) after having known about the things concerning you.**

Then Timothy's character, **For I have no one likeminded, who genuinely will care about the things concerning you.** It is this word *care* that we are focused on in this series of studies. The word *care* is the Greek word that means *the occupation of the attention of the mind*. He is the only one who is available that the occupation of the attention of his mind is about your spiritual welfare. He is the only one I have. **For I have no one who is likeminded, who genuinely would care (or be involved) about the things concerning you.**

Timothy's contrast to others, verse 21, **For they all are seeking the things of themselves and not the things of Christ Jesus.** So Paul's concern. He is going to send Timothy because he wants to know what is happening with them spiritually. He is burdened because he does not know. But he centers on the person that he sends for this mission, letting them know that he has no one who is likeminded, that is, that his psyche works and is occupied with the same things that Paul is; who genuinely would care, not just run an errand or be on a mission but be concerned and occupied with the spiritual concern of the believers there in Philippians. It goes on to say, **For all others are seeking the things of themselves not the things of Christ Jesus.** And that is the key to all of our experience in life as to our mental, emotional well-being and spiritual well-being, is to be occupied with the things of Christ and not the things of ourselves. Most of the time, just out of natural function, we are occupied with the things of ourselves. And it shows.

You remember last week we studied about Martha and Mary, and how Martha was in the kitchen, and she was distracted with much serving. So she came in and saw her sister sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to His word and appealed to Jesus to have Mary come and help her in the kitchen because she alone is serving. And Jesus said that Mary had chosen the good portion, the priority, the important thing. Showing us that even serving Christ we can have our priorities out of alignment.

Serving the Lord is not as important as hearing and learning and studying His word. I have said that over and over again to people who are attracted to or drawn to service: teaching and preaching. We have had people drop out of Greek and Bible study classes in order to teach other people and they have not yet learned what the Scripture says themselves. So it is a concern. Serving is not the priority. Learning is the priority. Growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ is the priority. And so he sends Timothy.

Last week we saw two words. Remember I told you in Luke 10:38-42 with the Mary and Martha episodes that there were two Greek words used in that section that are only used together in one other place. And we are going to take that other place today to show that Paul knew about the Mary and Martha situation. He knew that Jesus had said to her, "**Martha, Martha you are anxious,**" that is, the attention of your mind is occupied. And this has snowballed on you, and you are now expressing this obsession - this occupation to the point that you are now expressing it. It is controlling you. It has ahold of you. "**You are anxious and troubled about many things but there is only one thing necessary, and Mary has chosen that necessary thing.**" So she was distracted, at the beginning of Luke 10:38, she was distracted with much serving. We want to focus on that word, *distraction*. And that she was *anxious* and *troubled*. Anxious, that is, the attention of her mind was occupied.

Remember we studied these principles; everything is based on the principles that Jesus laid down in Matthew 6:24. He said that man was created to only have the capacity to serve one thing or person. Either God or the physical realm in which we live. You cannot serve God and mammon. You cannot serve both. One capacity. **Therefore**, in Matthew 6:25 He says, **take no thought** (that is our word, the occupation of attention of the mind). **Take no thought for your life what you shall eat, or what you shall put on.** So He is saying even the necessities of life can occupy the attention of your mind. You can worry about it, be anxious about it. It will take over your mind.

Now Christianity is not psychology. It is not the power of positive thinking. It is not practicing certain psychological principles. But our relationship with the Lord is so personal that we have interaction with Him in our minds. Paul called the $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ (psuchē) the arena in which all of life takes place. Once I have received Christ all of life and action takes place in the arena of my psyche. And the energy impulses from various forces that run across my brain are either from the influence of Satan in the world or from the Holy Spirit of God Himself. From the Holy Spirit of God He is transforming me and changing me. From the influences of the world, it is attempting to influence, allure, and distract, and take my attention away from Christ. My soul already belongs to Christ. Christ lives in me. The Holy Spirit has sealed me. Now the personal relationship, the interaction with Him, takes place spiritually through the mind. He is alive. He is real. This word of God that has been made alive by the Spirit of God is alive in me and through me.

We saw from Luke chapter 8 in the parable of the sower Jesus said, "The seed which is the word of God on one of the types of soil fell among the weeds." The weeds represent the cares of this life. Being occupied with the things of this life.

Today I want to draw your attention to I Corinthians chapter 7. So if you have your Bibles. I Corinthians chapter 7 that I think is one of the, if not the most important sections of Scripture for believers to know. If you understand the five principles of life that Paul has laid down in I Corinthians chapter 7 you will see that our relationship with the Lord and our involvement in this life becomes more at peace and more stable. I Corinthians chapter 7 and we are going to begin at verse 29.

Now I Corinthians 7:1 Paul indicates that starting with chapter 7 he is going to answer some of their questions. So apparently they had questions. And the main question was what happened when two nonbelievers are married and then one of them gets saved? What does the believer do with the nonbeliever? Are we supposed to divorce them? Are we supposed to stay married to them? Exactly what are we supposed to do?

And Paul used the principal for both marriage as well as master-slave relationships; the situation that you are in when you receive the Lord stay in it and serve Him in it. In other words the key is that the believer is not to initiate leaving or casting off the nonbeliever. But he supplies commands within this and says, "But if the unfaithful person or the nonbeliever leaves the believer, the believer is to let them leave." That is a command.

God has called us to be at peace. But if you are faithful to serve Christ in your relationships and circumstances and the other person decides to do whatever they are going to do, you are not responsible for that. So stay faithful to Christ in all of those circumstances.

The same thing with being a slave. "If you receive Christ and you are a slave," he said earlier in this chapter, "then serve Him as a slave." But if you are offered your freedom take it. But if you do not have your freedom then serve the Lord in it. Minister to the other slaves. Be an example to your master. Serve Him in it. That is your missionary field. That is your ministry for as long as God gives it to you.

Now there is a summary statement beginning at verse 29. And beginning at verse 29 are the five principles of life. Five principles of life for the believer. He says, **Now this I say, brothers, that the time is short**, not much time left. We only have a short period of time. And that was back in Paul's day, so it is even shorter for us. Time is short. The summary is this: **in order that also the one having wives be should be as not having wives**. What in the world? That does not mean that men can be married and date other people.

"Are not you married?"

"Well, I have a wife, but I function like she is not even there. I do not have a wife. Nu-huh. Because the Bible tells me that if I have one to function as though I don't have one."

"Hey, okay."

We will see at the end of this section Paul is talking about that our devotion to the Lord should be without distraction.

Do you remember Martha back in the kitchen? She was distracted with much serving. He said, "This is not law. This is not a teaching of Jesus as a quote. It is a summary statement of all of the Lord's teachings and all what God has to say." If you are going to get married, and since the men are the heads of the family and are responsible for the family spiritually, and materially, and financially - is that if a man is going to be married his devotion to the Lord does not change. He will show us in a moment it does change. But he is saying if you function in your devotion to Christ, you think you have one other person, you think you have four other

people now, not only do you have to listen to the Lord you have to listen to them too. "The Lord wants me to do this, and she wants me to do this, and what I do here?" Well, in our devotion to Christ it is just me and Him. I am supposed to seek His will. That does not mean that the other family members do not have input. So number one, **Those that have wives should function is not having.**

Verse 30, secondly, **And the ones who are weeping, as not weeping.** He is not saying that it is wrong to weep, or that it is wrong to cry. Just do not get embedded in it. Do not indulge. If you have to cry, cry. If you have to grieve, grieve. Some people grieve their whole lives. They are obsessed with weeping. They are obsessed with grieving. It is okay to weep. Just do not get into it. Do not indulge.

Thirdly, **And the ones who are rejoicing, as not rejoicing.** Just the opposite of the weeping. You know those are the times that you want to put in a bottle. Figure out, "What did I do this day that it came out so good? I want to repeat it every day, so that - I would rather rejoice than weep." But you can get into rejoicing too. You can indulge in rejoicing and look for the positives so that we can rejoice. It does not say it is wrong to rejoice, it just says it is wrong to indulge.

Fourthly, **And the ones who are purchasing, as not possessing.** Wow, that is a tough one. All of us own things. Or to put it a different way, all of us have things that own us. We are to function in this life, it is okay to own things, but do not possess them. Do not let them control you. Do not let them have such a control in your life. You say, "Well, I own this now, so I have to...", especially when it is there for Satan to use to cause all kinds of distractions. We have to take care of things. We have to take care of business, necessities, but not indulge.

Verse 31, **And the ones using this world, as not overusing it.** That is literal. We have to use the world. We have to eat, we have to live, we have to work. So as those who are using the world as not overusing it. I think that is a good principle. That is what all of these things are saying. Use the world because you have to, do not indulge yourself. Do not go beyond what you have to. Weep, if you have to weep. Rejoice, if you have to rejoice. Just do not indulge yourself. It is not wrong to own things, just do not possess them, do not let them possess you. Use the world. You have to use the world, only do not overuse it. **For the fashion of this world is passing away.**

He says in verse 32, **Now I desire you to be without occupation.** That is a literal translation, that is probably not what your English text says, it probably says *care*. But it says, **Now I desire you to be without occupation.** And that is our word for *the occupation of the attention of the mind*. **The unmarried man is occupied,** and again that is our word, **with the things of the Lord, how he will please the Lord.** So if you are unmarried, this is what he said earlier, the ones having wives as though not having wives. **The unmarried man is concerned and occupied with the things the Lord, how he will please the Lord. But the one who has married, verse 33, is occupied with the things of the world, how he will please his wife.** He is occupied with the world, how he may please his wife, and he is distracted, he is divided between the two. Verse 34, **There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman is occupied with the things of the Lord, in order that she might be holy**

both in body and in spirit: but the one who has married is occupied with the things of the world, how she will please her husband. That is the same problem. And he does not say, "This *could* be this way," and it does not say, "This *should not* be this way." He is presenting it as fact. That is what we do.

Verse 35, **And this I speak for your own benefit; not in order that I might cast a noose around you, but for that which is honorable, and that you might attend to the Lord, here is our word, without distraction.** He says, "I am just saying this for your spiritual benefit. That whether you are married or you are not married, your devotion to the Lord should be the same. It should not change."

"Well, now I have other people to think about and I cannot do what the Lord wants me to do because they want me to do something."

He is saying, "No, that is not the way it works," because we have been created with the capacity to be occupied with only one thing. He is laying out the principles that if you are occupied with pleasing other people - it is nice to love them, nice to be responsible - but our devotion, our attention, our service in life is to the Lord. And it is what He wants us to do. I cannot be occupied with pleasing other people and seeking Him, and pleasing Him, and obeying Him at the same time. It is impossible.

So you can see why Paul made some very factual and yet very hard statements. Right to the point. If you are going to take on other relationships, make sure it is with the understanding that your devotion to the Lord stays as it is and it is not divided up among several people along with the Lord.

We are in a society that promotes pleasing other people. We are in a social society where there is such a social emotional need for family and friends and whatever. And the most common response I have received over the years is that, "Well, I know the Lord will forgive me and He will have grace upon me, but my relatives will not forgive me, so I will do what they want me to do because the Lord will always forgive me." And even though that might be true in principle, it shows where our devotion is.

Again the title of this section in Philippians is The Proof of Character in Fellowship. We have to make a lot of decisions in life. We have to make decisions based on what is priority for us in life. What is first and the priority of our lives? And who is the priority of our lives? And what is the priority of our lives? We cannot serve God and mammon. It is impossible.

The five principles of life. It does not say it is wrong to do these things, it is just do not overdo it. These are natural things of life. But he is saying, "Do not indulge. Let your moderation be known to all men," we are going to see in Philippians 4. The reputation of just being moderate. Just using the world but not overusing it. Using it for what it is supposed to be for.

It goes along with what we said the first hour, remember this world system is the harlot. And we are interacting with the harlot and her seductions and her allurements every day, even

when we handle the necessities. And so Paul here in I Corinthians 7 outlays for us how to handle that situation. Still our minds will be influenced and corrupted by dealing with the world. But that is why we continually come, confess our sins, confess our need of Him, receive the ministry of His Spirit through His word for cleansing.

Let's close with prayer.