



## #2 – Appreciate Everything

*Philippians 1:3-9, 3:7-9, 4:11-13*

### Introduction

When Elie Wiesel was a young correspondent for a French newspaper working in New York City after World War II his travel permit expired. When he went to his French consulate they told him he would have to return to France to have it renewed. But he could not afford to do that. At the U.S. Immigration office, an official kindly said to him, "Why don't you just become a U.S. resident and apply for citizenship?" So he did.

Years later, after he became a well known author and Nobel laureate, he was offered French citizenship. But he declined. When he was poor and needed a homeland, it was America who had offered him one.

That is an outstanding example of appreciation.

### **Philippians 1:3-9** (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*)

<sup>3</sup> I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and establishment of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how I deeply miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you can determine what really matters and can be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that [comes] through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul's prayers for the Christians far away in Philippi, where he could not possibly go because of his wrongful imprisonment in Rome for the cause of Christ... this is an even better example of APPRECIATION.

Compare this letter to Paul's other letters written during his brief 20 years as a disciple of Christ and an apostle and the same kind of attitude by Paul is seen all the time. E.g. Ephesians, Colossians, Thessalonians, even the much troubled church in Corinth.

Let's not forget that most of Paul's letters to churches were written to resolve problems that had been reported to him. These congregations were in need, but in spite of that, they also had much about them to be appreciated... and Paul did appreciate... every... thing... and every... person.

Paul's opening words of the letter – reviewing his prayers for them – shows three directions to take in appreciation... of other people...

- 1 - Never forget any virtue – past,
- 2 - Hold your criticism – present,
- 3 - Anticipate the best – future.

### **Philippians 3:7-9** (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*)

But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. <sup>8</sup> More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ —the righteousness from God based on faith.

*Side note: I have been reading from a new translation that few people have... the Holman Christian Standard Bible which I access on the Internet at BibleGateway.com. My purpose... to demonstrate the great value of using different translations.*

Furthermore, there are lots of other places throughout all the epistles that show this same pattern by Paul.

## 1- Never forget any virtue – past, vv. 3-4

Most of what we know about this church is in Acts 16, the very first place Paul went when his ministry to the whole world moved on to a new continent... Europe. All before that was in Western Asia – around the end of the Mediterranean.

Although Luke reports that twice later he was in Philippi, we have no information what happened there, but the clear inference is that it was a hospitable and encouraging visit.

Luke's account in Acts 16 focuses on three people... 1) Lydia, a well-to-do merchant who loved God and despite such small numbers they could not even have a synagogue, they worshipped regularly... 2) a spirit-possessed slave girl who made predictions for people that her masters made money off of that Paul exorcised so she could live a normal life, and... 3) the jailor whose conversion and baptism in the middle of the night was greatly influenced by the incredible display of faith by Paul and Silas who despite their severe wounds and intended continuation of great pain with their feet in stocks, rejoiced with thanks to Christ.

This is the stuff of which the church in Philippi began. And the persecution brought against Paul & Silas was

So Paul's appreciation for the past expressions of the Philippians' faith is no mere glorification of a very mundane or ordinary faith by those people. They, too, experienced opposition and probably persecution, yet they were unusually helpful to Paul after he was kicked out of their city. Phil 4:14-16

It is always wise to hold others with deep respect, especially when you know they have had to put up with difficulties.

## 2- Hold your criticism – present, v. 5

Paul is well aware of some specific problems in Philippi...

2:14 – don't complain or argue he tells them

2:28 – he expects his own anxiety about them will dissipate

3:2 – watch out for dogs – false teachers

4:1 – he pleads with two women by name to reconcile, Euodia and Syntyche

Yet he remains joyful because through it all...

that church has remained true to their original calling AND... they have done better than most churches again by personally helping support Paul in prison.

*(And later, they will show again the same generosity by helping send a large contribution from the Gentile/Greek churches to the starving and impoverished Jewish Christians under intense persecution in Jerusalem.)*

There are lots of ways to restrain yourself in the face of disappointments about what other people are doing.

Here is one way NOT to do it.

An elderly couple had a rare but severe disagreement that wouldn't go away. When the wife was asked how she coped with it, she said... I scrub the toilet. How does that help? I use his toothbrush.

A better way is to follow Paul's example...

deal with the issues  
avoid personal attacks  
learn "the secret"

Philippians 4:13 – anyone can do it if they connect deeply and sincerely with Jesus Christ.

"I can do everything through Christ, who gives me the strength."

## 3- Express your best intentions – future, v. 6 – 11

Most wise parents realize the tremendous power of positive expectations. All the successful teachers in the world realize it, too.

Whenever you respect the innate possibilities that our Creator has given every one of his dear children, they are empowered by YOUR belief... in yourself, in them, and primarily... in God.

One day, a very wealthy father took his young son on a trip to the country with the express purpose of showing him how poor people live. They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family.

On their return from their trip , the father asked his son ,  
"How was the trip?" "It was great , Dad."

"Did you see how poor people live?" the father asked. "Oh yeah , " said the son.

"So , tell me , what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father.

The son answered:

"I saw that we have one dog and they had four.  
We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end.  
We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night.  
Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon.  
We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight.  
We have servants who serve us , but they serve others.  
We buy our food , but they grow theirs.  
We have walls around our property to protect us , they have friends to protect them."

The boy's father was speechless. Then his son added,  
"Thanks Dad for showing me how poor we are."

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Isn't perspective a wonderful thing?

What would happen if we always appreciated  
EVERY THING that happens to us  
EVERY BODY who befriends us  
EVERY SITUATION we encounter  
EVERY UNEXPLAINABLE EVENT in our lives?

When we "know Christ" ... we CAN do that.

Jesus is calling you.