

Living Worthy of the Gospel
Philippians 1:27
7/19/2026

Introduction and Context:

In the book of Philippians, the Apostle Paul answers the “**What’s next**” for the church at Phillippi, and his teaching is still important today as we ask ourselves the same question.

The church at Phillipi was a special church for Paul. It was...

- Founded during his second missionary journey
- The first church he planted in Europe (Greece) (Acts 16)
- Between 10-15 years old
- Paul thought very fondly of this church (Phil. 1:1-7)
- Paul had likely made multiple visits to this church (Phil. 4:15-16)

And while Paul had a lot of affection to share with this church, there was also a lot of uncertainty—the “what’s next” types of questions—being addressed in this letter.

- Paul was writing from prison (Phil. 1:13)
- Paul is sharing about his own suffering and preparing the Philippian Christians to experience similar trials (Phil. 1:29)
- While Paul longs to visit them again in person, he knows that a visit is unlikely—and it never happens (Phil. 1:8)
- Although there is some minor tension within the church, Paul’s encouragement is to press on in truth and rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 4:2)

This morning, we will see that just as it did for the Apostle Paul and the church at Phillippi, Philippians 1:27 answers the “What’s next” questions in life as we find our position, our participation and our purpose from living every day to be “Worthy of the Gospel,” standing firm in unity and striving side by side for the sake of the Gospel.

Let’s read this verse together –

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.” - Philippians 1:27, ESV

“Worthy of the Gospel” is one of those biblical statements like:

- Enoch “walked with God” (Genesis 5:24)
- David was “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14)
- “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:23)
- Let your manner of life be “worthy of the Gospel of Christ” (Phil. 1:27)

I read those verses and WOW! This brother in Christ, this sister in Christ, he/she lived a life, “**Worthy of the Gospel.**” What a statement! What a testimony! But what does it mean?

When we see the phrase or idea “Worthy of the Gospel” being taught it is followed up by teaching and emphasizing:

- 1) **Unity among the saints**
- 2) **Striving together side by side in the work of the Lord**
- 3) **Both!**

Unity and striving for the Gospel are daily instructions, because if they aren’t being practiced in the church, where we are shared recipients of the Gospel that unites all believers, then how do we expect unity and striving to be played out in our marriages, in our parenting, in our friendships, in the world we are called to reach! Rather than describing mere outward behavior, the gospel becomes the shared narrative that unites believers and establishes the foundation for how they think and live.

D. A. Carson says it well: “Conduct worthy of the gospel is above all conduct that promotes the gospel.”¹

“Worthy of the Gospel” - **POSITION (Worthy)** that God gives to his children that invites us to **PARTICIPATION (Unity)** and **PURPOSE (in God’s Mission)** as we reach the world.

Perfection isn’t required to live “worthy of the Gospel,” but position, participation and purpose are, and this teaching is not isolated to Philippians 1:27.

Ephesians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, Colossians 1:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, Romans 16 and more—these references are in my notes as well—all unpack that living “Worthy of the Gospel” is not an achievement to be earned, but it’s a grace of God that brings about alignment of one’s beliefs and actions, which is demonstrated through unity, striving forward together, perseverance, sacrifice, and spiritual fruit.

- Paul urges the Philippians to conduct themselves in a way consistent with the gospel, maintaining unity and steadfast commitment to faith ([Phil 1:27](#)).
- The Ephesians are to demonstrate their calling through their behavior toward one another ([Eph 4:1](#)),
- The Thessalonians receive instruction to live in a manner reflecting God’s character and kingdom ([1 Thess 2:12](#)).
- The Colossians receive a charge to walk in a manner honoring the Lord through fruitful works and spiritual growth ([Col 1:10](#)).

¹Benjamin L. Merkle et al., *Ephesians–Philemon*, ed. Iain M. Duguid et al., vol. XI, ESV Expository Commentary (Crossway, 2018), 145.

- Paul prays in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 that God would make believers worthy of their calling and accomplish good works through divine power, ultimately glorifying Christ. “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power.”
- Romans 16 is a complete list of “fellow saints” whose works of Christian hospitality and welcoming fellow believers has been “approved.”
- 3 John 6 recommends those who have been faithful in their efforts to extend that faithfulness by sending missionaries forward in a manner worthy of God

1) “Living worthy of the Gospel,” calls us to security in our POSITION before God

This imagery and terminology, “citizens of heaven,” was quite meaningful to the Philippians who prided themselves on being a Roman colony and receiving the honor and privilege of Roman citizenship.²

Paul is saying this urgently (Only, Above all, Just one thing): Remember church where your primary allegiance lies. You take comfort in having the access, the benefits, and belonging to Rome. But above that, remember who you belong to. You are citizens of heaven!

God has adopted you, bought you, and redeemed you! As you live, let your manner of life demonstrate that YOU BELONG to HIS KINGDOM.

For many of us, this instruction is actually quite familiar. I’ve heard it said many times as parents are dropping their kids off at school, or for an activity, and even at church. The final instructions before getting out of the car sound something like, “remember your last name,” “remember who you belong to,” or “remember who you represent.”

The message to the child is: What you do and how you act is a representation of your family—your last name. Your actions and behaviors need to match your belonging in our family. Think, speak, and act in the way I have taught you—represent us well.

The message Paul is sending here is even stronger than representing a family name. He is saying: This is urgent. You belong to Jesus. You are citizens of heaven.

You have seen the ways I have lived for the gospel, followed the gospel, suffered for the sake of the gospel, am preparing to DIE for the sake of the gospel—now LIVE the way I have shown you. Don’t trade the blessing of living a holy, Spirit-empowered, fruit-giving, life of unity and striving together for anything less.

“Only, let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel.”

² ESV Study Notes – pg. 2282

Living worthy of the gospel is impossible without receiving the gospel itself. The free gift of forgiveness and salvation where God gives us access to all the blessings of eternal life. Scripture is clear, the gospel is given. The gospel is not earned, it is given. So, I must say clearly that **Gospel earning and gospel living are two different things**. Grace and effort are not opposed to one another. They work together.

- **Romans 3:10** - “There is no one righteous, no not one.”
- **Ephesians 2:1** – “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.”
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** – “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Our purpose of unity and participation in God’s Kingdom together are dependent on the unity of belonging to the Gospel Kingdom!

We act differently when we belong! Colossians 3:12-13 says:

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

2) “Living worthy of the Gospel,” calls us to PARTICIPATE with other believers in a Spirit of Unity

Christians share a common origin in the Holy Spirit’s work. The spirit is the One who creates unity and empowers us to maintain it.³

A Spirit of Unity requires our PARTICIPATION, because, as we look down vs. 28, this is how you will be separate from the world.

I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ...and not frightened in anything by your opponents. **This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. Phil. 1:27-28**

Disunity, division, and conflict are always rooted in attitudes or actions that are out of step with the Spirit and work against participation in the mission of the gospel.

One commentary says it this way: “The point is this: the world—its people, families, and nations—may be split and divided, arguing and differing, fussing and feuding, fighting and divorcing, warring and killing, seeking and grasping; but the church is not to live that way. The church is to be unified; it is to be one in spirit and one in mind; one in heart and one in purpose.”⁴

³ Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Ephesians*, Christ-Centered Exposition (Nashville, 2014), 96.

⁴ Leadership Ministries Worldwide, *Galatians–Colossians*, The Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible (Leadership Ministries Worldwide, 1996), 265.

Here is the brilliance of God's Kingdom and Paul's writing. Unity is grounded in belonging to the same kingdom—citizens of heaven. Because we are unified in our manner of life, now we don't have to have the same gifts, same preferences, same likes, same talents. Unity in the Spirit is about more than being just like someone else. In fact:

“In order to pursue ‘unity in the spirit’ we must be willing to renounce the opposite of each. We must renounce self-centeredness to walk in humility. We must renounce harshness in order to walk with gentleness. We must renounce tyranny of our own agendas in order to walk with patience. We must renounce idealistic expectations in order to walk in forbearing love. We must renounce indifference and passivity in order to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. The church is unified and God is glorified when we live with such Christ-like love.”⁵

The message of Christian unity is different than anything the world has to offer, and invites to participate in unity for the purpose of God's mission of reaching the world.

3) “Living worthy of the Gospel” calls us to PURPOSE in striving side-by-side with God's people

The church must stand firm in *unity*: “in *one spirit*, with *one mind*.”

- ⇒ *One spirit* means that all the members of a church must be born again by the Spirit of Christ. All members must have a renewed spirit from the same source, from the same Person. They must all be committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. They must all have a heart given to Him.
- ⇒ *One mind* means that all members must be set upon the same purpose; they must all be focused upon the purpose of Jesus Christ.

Then the last thing on striving side by side. Notice how we do that—with “one mind.” Do you know where else we see this phrase “one mind”? Phil 2:1-5. Take careful note of the emphasis on “same mind” in these verses. There are 3 references in these verses, that we are to have the mind of Christ.

This is ultimately how we “Live worthy of the Gospel.” By having the same mind as Christ.

⁵ Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Ephesians, Christ-Centered Exposition* (B & H Publishing, Nashville, 2014), 96.