

The Joy of Living
Philippians 2:12-18
Working Out is Joyful

- The joy of working out leads to a life of effective action. (v. 12-13)
God acts.
 - God is the One who is at work in us throughout the entirety of our faith walk.
 - He begins the process by initiating salvation.
 - He continues the process by working in us to will and do according to His good purposes.
 - He completes the process as we die and are glorified with Christ.
- We act.
 - Paul does not say work for your salvation; he says *work out* your salvation.
 - In other words, it is yours. Now, squeeze every bit of life, goodness, peace, joy out of it.
 - Paul can say this to the Philippians because they have already been doing this, and he wants them to do it more and more.
 - There is both a personal and corporate aspect to this working out. (Remember that Paul was addressing the unity of the church family in the passage linked to this one)
- The joy of working out results in reverent fear and trembling. (v. 12)
Fear is not a result of present or future punishment, but of understanding our own weaknesses and limitations.
 - Fear also comes from a desire to please God.
 - "When we really love someone, we are not afraid of what he may do to us; we are afraid of what we may do to him."
 - "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Proverbs 9:10)
 - "They (followers of Jesus) are to do this 'with fear and trembling,' because such seriousness is appropriate to the task of living out their commitment to the gospel in a way that demonstrates that they are genuine believers."
 - "Be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." – 2 Peter 1:10-11
- The joy of working out produces in us peace and certainty. (v. 14)
People who lack peace and are filled with doubts are the people who complain and question.
 - Paul is using language that would remind readers of the people of Israel in the Exodus wanderings who grumbled and complained against God and Moses.
 - He is reminding the Philippians to learn from their mistakes.
 - Exodus 16 and 17 provide examples of the ways that Israel grumbled against the Lord.
 - When we grumble and complain about our life circumstances, we cannot experience the fullness of God's peace and are prevented from living out our calling as followers of Jesus.
- The joy of working out cultivates in us compelling purity. (v. 15-17)
Blameless has to do with what the Christian is in the world.
 - Innocent has to do with what the Christian is in him/herself.
 - Without blemish has to do with what the Christian is in the sight of God.
 - This purity is compelling in its contrast and purposeful in its mission.
- It provides direction in a directionless world.
 - It provides light in a dark world.
- Purity is gained in holding fast to and holding forth the Word of Life.
 - Paul sees his labor (*kopian* – labor to the point of utter exhaustion) as directly related to the Philippians' purity and unity.
 - He is more than willing to sacrifice himself to see them succeed in the endeavor of faith.
- The joy of working out creates more joy. (v. 18)
Paul's call to the Philippians is more than a suggestion. It is an imperative.
 - Flourishing in purity and unity, working out salvation in these ways, will lead to tremendous joy.