

BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

PHILIPPIANS 1:3

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." (KJV)

"Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God." (MSG)

"Whenever you cross my mind, I thank God for you and for the gift of knowing you." (VOC)

"I thank God for you Christians at Philippi whenever I think of you." (PHI)

"Every thought of you makes me thank God for you," (CPV)

INTRODUCTION:



A tape measure is a must when you need an accurate measurement. How long is that 'bolt' that you need? about 4 inches? maybe 5 inches? If you need one that is exactly 4 inches, you'll need an exact measurement. A random [without definite aim, purpose, or method] measurement is not effective when you need to be precise.

Do you live your life randomly [without definite aim, purpose, or method]? Have you measured your maturity in Christ accurately? A random measurement is not good enough. The Bible teaches us that we are to _____ our spiritual maturity.

I. THE MARKS OF MATURE BELIEVERS:

What are the marks of a mature Christian believer? What are the marks of a dynamic, mature Christian Church? Clearly, the marks so desperately needed by believers and churches are spelled out:

THE FIRST MEASURING MARK: _____ (v. 3)



- Remember that Paul was in _____ in Rome and that he was a great distance from Philippi. He did not have their presence; all he had was the _____ of their time together. And sitting there in prison, remembering their love and care and support, his heart swelled up with _____ for them, and he _____ God for them.
- APPLICATION:** What a lesson for us! If Paul, in such _____ circumstances, thanked God for believers who were so far away from him, how much more should we thank God for each other. We have the love and care and support of each other week by week and day by day, and we can call upon each other for help any hour of any day. Yet how often do we thank God for each other? We should be following Paul's example, thanking God for all believers every day. We are not alone in the world. God is building the body of people worldwide—a body of people who are just like us—committed to live for the Lord Jesus Christ and to carry His gospel of salvation and love and care to the world that reels under the weight of desperate need.
- ILLUSTRATION:** How can you have a thankful heart? Picture a balance scale with a bowl attached to each side. Now picture same scale inside your heart. On the right side of the scale the bowl quickly fills up with the various trials of the day: worries, misunderstandings, hurt feeling, financial stress, health stress, marriage stress, job stress—just to name a few. It just seems that life is **NOT FAIR**. Your scale has become too weighted with bad things.
- An immature** or **a mature** believer knows how to bring a balance to life's problems. How? By _____ to fill the bowl on the left with a _____ **HEART**. No one ever said that it would be easy or that all of your circumstances had to be pleasant.
- A THANKFUL HEART** comes from two things:
 - ☞ _____ and _____ God for the strength to bear the trials of life, and
 - ☞ deliberately _____ to give thanks.
 - As the believer _____ in faith,
 - God _____ and _____ his heart with an overflowing strength and gratitude.



6. **QUESTIONS:** Food for thought

- ✓ Are you thankful for salvation? family? friends? church? When was the last time you thanked God for each of these?
- ✓ Who is the most thankful person that you know? What makes them so thankful?
- ✓ Why is it so difficult to give thanks during unpleasant circumstances? How can you prepare your heart ahead of time to be thankful?

PHILIPPIANS 1:4

“Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy”. (KJV)

“And all my prayers for you are flooded with joy” (CPV)

“My prayers for you are full of praise to God as I give Him thanks for you with great joy! I’m so grateful for our union.” (PTP)

“Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart.” (MSG)

“My constant prayers for you are a real joy, for they bring back to my mind how we have...” (PHI)

THE SECOND MEASURING MARK: _____ (v. 4)



7. Paul says that he always prayed for the _____. They were constantly on his mind and in his prayers. The idea is that he prayed all throughout the day for them.
8. **APPLICATION:** What a dynamic lesson in prayer for us: To pray by name throughout the day for all the churches we know! We tend to pray for our own church and forget other churches that are such a vital part of the Lord’s work! Our prayer life must be consistent [agreeing, not self-contradictory]. How many of us pray as we should? We must pray as if we really believe that prayer changes things and not just when we get around to it. Here’s the questions for you: Think and pray about it.
- ✓ **Y N NS:** Does your church people pray for other churches?
 - ✓ Would you consider your prayer life to be: a) full-time? b) part-time? c) don’t know?
 - ✓ When should I pray?
 - ✓ Where can I get alone to pray?
 - ✓ Who do I need to pray for?
 - ✓ What things and situations should be in my prayers?
9. Like Paul said, ‘As I am here in jail, it is a lot of _____ to pray for you, Philippians, it brings joy to my heart.’
10. Our joy runs deepest when we are on our knees before God in _____. A good test of the depth of joy in our lives is the nature of our prayer for _____.

YOUR AIM: _____