

God's Goal In Me Philippians 2:1-8



One of the purposes of the 13 epistles of Paul was to address problems the churches were experiencing. Some of those problems were obvious and the churches needed encouragement and direction on how to deal with them. For example, an obvious problem would be false teachers that opposed Paul.

In Phil. 2, he addresses an underlying problem in the churches. There were those that served the church, but they had the wrong motive.

Philippians 2:1-8

2 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

KJV

Phil. 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory

- Strife comes from the Greek word Erithiah that means to do something to fulfill a selfish ambition.
- Vainglory comes from the Greek word Ken od ox ee ah that means to do something for your own glory.

There were those in the church that were serving the church, but they were serving with a selfish motive. They were serving to satisfy their selfish ambition and for their own glory.

How did Paul know there was this underlying problem?

- He may have received a special revelation from Jesus.
- He may have received word from the church elders that there was conflict in the church.

If I have the wrong motive for serving others, how do I know?

- I get my feelings hurt easily
- I feel entitled
- I complain
- I criticize
- I compare
- I gossip
- I pity myself
- I defend
- I cause conflict
- I don't resolve conflict biblically

This was a very difficult situation for the church.

There were those that were of great benefit to the church because of the way they served or gave to the church. But these same folks were causing conflict in the church.

You may be thinking, "I am glad that Paul is not talking about me. I don't serve others."

If you are not serving others in the church, Paul is talking about you. You may not use service to advance your selfish ambitions or to feed your ego, but if you are not serving, your heart is not right with God.

Paul reminds the church of the example of the Lord Jesus.

Phil. 2:4-8

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

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Jesus was God. He made the greatest personal sacrifice to serve others that anyone has ever performed.

- He emptied Himself of His throne
- He took on the form of a man
- He took on the form of a servant with no reputation
- He made the ultimate sacrifice.
- He suffered the worst possible form of death.
- He made this sacrifice for all of mankind.

He made this sacrifice without any thought of being rewarded in this life!

It was a good thing.

- He served and was despised.
- He served and was rejected.
- He served and was crucified.

When He died, He only had 120 followers.

To be like Christ does not mean just to serve others.

To be like Christ means to serve without any motive of selfishness or pride.

To be like Christ means to serve not just in action but in attitude.

This attitude of selfless service is called humility.

To be like Jesus is to be humble in attitude.

Would you admit how difficult this is?

- I like others to know what I have accomplished.
- I like to talk about what I have accomplished.
- I like it when others talk about what I have accomplished, especially my wife or my children.
- I like to be recognized or exalted.
- I like being rewarded for what I do.
- I like being promoted.
- I like it when people are grateful for the things that I do.
- I like to have things my way.
- I like to for others to tell me I was right.
- I like being served.
- I like being served what I want.
- I like being able to do what I want to do when I want to do it.

All these self-centered desires are in my flesh. These desires are not going anywhere until I die.

Romans 7:18

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

NKJV

Galatians 5:17

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

KJV

Would you admit that self-centered desires are in your flesh?

These desires can become your motive for serving. When that happens to you...

- You get your feelings hurt easily
- You feel entitled
- You complain
- You criticize
- You compare
- You gossip
- You pity yourself
- You defend
- You cause conflict
- You don't resolve conflict biblically

If you serve with the wrong motive and you become an elder or a deacon in the church, it will be a disaster.

How do we experience victory over the flesh and its desires?

Any change that we try to make that is not based on the gospel of grace of Jesus Christ is just behavior modification. It normally does not last very long.

In other words, I can make up my mind that I am going to be like Jesus and selflessly serve others. I can put up reminders that say, "don't serve for the wrong reason." I can ask others to hold me accountable.

With only my will power, I may have temporary success but before you know it, I am serving for the wrong reasons. I allow these selfish and prideful desires to become my motivation for serving.

- I get my feelings hurt easily
- I feel entitled
- I complain
- I criticize
- I compare
- I gossip
- I pity myself
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Then I hear another sermon that convicts me and stirs up my will power and I do it all over again.

Your will is important. You must be willing to make a change before you will change. But you cannot defeat the flesh and its desires with just your will power.

Trying to defeat your flesh with just your will power is like trying to stop a grizzly bear with a bb gun!

Using only their power to defeat sin is why so many believers are on this cycle of sin and repentance. You get stuck in immaturity. After a while, you can just conclude, I will always be this way.

How do we experience victory over the flesh and its desires?

God empowers His children through prayer.

Luke 11:9-13

9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

NKJV

But our prayer for power is answered as we pray in faith.

Matthew 21:20-22

20 And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

21 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done.

22 And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

NKJV

As Christians, the object of our faith should always be Jesus and what He has achieved.

John 14:13-14

13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

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What did Jesus achieve for me that enables me to put off the flesh and its desires and put on the Lord Jesus Christ?

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

KJV

Listen to what Paul said...

Ephesians 4:17-24

17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,

18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But you have not so learned Christ,

21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

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To defeat the flesh and its desires, I pray for power believing that because of what Jesus accomplished, I am not the old man, but I am the new man in Christ.

The desires I have that are selfish and prideful are what remains in my flesh from the old man.

The old man has been crucified with Christ.

Galatians 2:20

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

NKJV

Because of what Christ has accomplished, the old man is dead. The old man is not who I am.

When I am tempted by the flesh and its desires, I pray for God's power believing in Jesus that I am the new man. When I pray believing, the power of God enables me to act like the new man.

Romans 6:1-14

6 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,
6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.
7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.
8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.
10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.
11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.
13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
NKJV

You know you only have minutes to live. Death is staring you in the face. You want to live but your will power to live is not enough. Death is going to have its way in your body.

What do you do? You believe in what Christ has achieved for you. You believe that because He defeated death and was raised from the dead, you will overcome death and be raised from the dead. You pray for God's power believing in Jesus and God gives you power to pass victoriously through the door of death.

The desires for sin in your flesh are staring you in the face. You want to live for Christ, but your will power is not enough. Sin and its desires are going to have their way in your body.

What do you do? You believe in what Christ has achieved for you.

- You believe that because He died to sin once and for all, you have died to sin once and for all.
- You believe that as Jesus was raised from the dead, you have been raised from the dead to walk in newness of life.
- You pray for God's power believing in Jesus you are a new man in Christ and God empowers you to put off the old man and put on the new man.
- You resist the flesh and pass victoriously through the temptation to sin.

Will you receive Jesus?

Will you confess that you have served with the wrong motives?

Will you commit yourself to change into the image of Jesus?

Will you repent for trusting in your will power to change rather than trusting in Jesus?