



Following the upward call through Philippians ...

Stand Firm in the Lord

The Christian life is a life of struggle. Even champion Christians such as the apostle Paul had to "go, fight, win!" "I have fought the good fight," he commented as he knowingly approached his last days on earth, "I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). The pull of the world, the pressures from friends and enemies, the mounting discouragements, and the complications of health issues can all wage war against the faith of the saint, and in "losing heart" the Christian can lose it all. Hence the Holy Spirit, through His inspired authors, in various ways encourages the fol-

lowers of Christ to be victors rather than victims, overcomers rather than overcome.

- **Stand firm** — The one hope of all saints — the clearly stated goal — is the resurrection of the righteous at Jesus' coming. At the last trumpet, the "body of our humble state" will be transformed into conformity with the body of Jesus' glory. "Therefore, my beloved brethren," appeals the apostle Paul, "whom I long to see, my joy and my crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved" (Philippians 4:1). Twice the apostle uses the word "beloved"; these brethren were among those for whom he laid down his life, and the apostle cared intensely about them and their eternities. He calls them his "joy" also; Paul's purpose was to present every man complete before Christ, and that these brethren were still walking with the Lord was a source of great joy to him. The saints were also his "crown"; they were also his reward before the great King. But all of this would be meaningless if the brethren wandered away from the faith. Hence comes the exhortation, "stand firm in the Lord."

- **Live in harmony** — The congregation at Philippi, in contrast to so many others to whom epistles were written, had minimal problems. The one remonstrance in this letter is to two women: "I urge Euodia," emphasizes the apostle, "and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2). The language indicates that these two ladies needed to get past their personal differences, quit fighting, and start speaking to one another civilly again, recognizing the big picture and focusing on the Lord. "Indeed, true comrade," appends Paul, possibly speaking directly to Epaphroditus, who would be carrying this letter, "I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel ..." (Philippians 4:3). These women had participated somehow in the challenges the apostle went through for the gospel, but had apparently got so focused on personal issues that Paul asks his "true comrade" to give these ladies an assist. God's goal is that all brethren live together in harmony.

- **Fellow workers** — Euodia and Syntyche, to their credit, had shared with Paul in his struggles for the cause of the gospel, "together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life." Reaching the lost and strengthening the saints is called "struggle" and "work." Clement and others are commended for their participation with Paul. Clearly, sacrifice is necessary in order for the gospel to go forward, as well as harmony and teamwork.

Once again, the scripture mentions "the book of life." For the individual to have his name entered in the book of life, he needs to "be born again," wherein he has moved out of death into life. In immersion into Christ, the saint now has the assurance that his arising "to walk in newness of life" has resulted in his being in fellowship with God and that his name is now recorded among the ranks of the spiritually living. But that name can be erased from the book of life (Revelation 3:5). It is incumbent that the believer continue to fight the good fight of faith. "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). Get your name written there, and keep it written there!

**Get your name
written in the book
of life, and keep it
there!!**

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