

Philippians 1:27

Verse 27 is the primary thesis of the book of Philippians, "... *let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ...*" This is the one main objective in life for all Christians.

Verse 27 opens with the word "Only." Linguist Max Zerwick points out that this word "*monos*" would be like lifting your finger in warning – to make a [very critical] point.

Paul is saying, "I want you to keep just this one main object in mind!" The "only" primary item on his to-do list for the believer is "*let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ...*"

The first Greek word is an adverb "*axiōs*" which means "*in a worthy way or manner.*" The second word Paul uses is the verb "*politeuomai*" from which we get our word politics, or political allegiances. This word's most basic meaning is "to have one's citizenship." How it is used here involves this verb's other meaning which is, "*to live in relationship with others*" or "*to conduct one's life.*"

What "*in a worthy way or manner*" meant politically in practical terms was that these Philippians would be:

- Highly devoted in their occupation to the betterment of their city
- They would be careful not to discredit the polis – their city
- They would be loyal in their political viewpoints so that they lined up with the empire
- They would want to live in such a way that they would be considered honorable citizens.

When we understand that kind of context, we can easily make spiritual / biblical connection Paul is implying which is:

- Be highly devoted in your occupation to the betterment of God's purposes on earth
- Be careful not to discredit the city of God
- Be loyal in your viewpoints to the word of God
- Live in such a way so that you will be honorable members of the family of God
- Live in such a honorable manner that your behavior is worth of the gospel message of Christ

Christians should be ...

- The most dedicated students to learning in their school – it is dishonoring to the Lord to fail to study or do homework
- The unsurpassed employees on the job – it is dishonoring to the Lord to do sloppy, incomplete, poor quality work, or do just enough to get by and do that poorly, or to have a negative complaining attitude about work
- The most amiable, kind, helpful, and considerate neighbor – **Romans 12:18**, "*As much as depends on you live peaceably with all men.*"
- The premier example at their sport as athletes or a hobby sport – it is dishonoring to be a poor sport
- Paramount behaviorally in every interaction of a Christian's life – there should never be a time when we, by our conduct dishonor God

When the unsaved look at the church and do not see holiness, purity, wholesomeness, and virtue is there any reason for them to believe the gospel the church is supposed to proclaim?

We don't behave so that we can go to heaven; we behave as good citizens of heaven because we're going there. Here's the main point to keep in mind as we travel through this world to heaven: make sure that heaven has a good reputation on earth by the way we behave.

Paul writes in verse 27 (paraphrased) "*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.*" How do we do that, Christian? How do we do that, church? In verse 27 Paul will identify two major traits on how to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:27

1. Trait 1 – Make it your priority (i.e. worthy conduct)

Notice the middle of verse 27, “so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you ...” Make this a priority. I’ll know if it is a priority whether someone else tells me or I see it firsthand.

2. Trait 2 – Stand fast in one spirit

“One spirit” refers to a common spirit, one way of thinking, a common ambition, or a common purpose, and a unified goal. There is a connotation also in the meaning of “one spirit” which is be committed to repairing any disunity or spirit.

The formula is expressed in the potential of relationships. $R = N \times N - 1 \sim 2$. R stands for (for relationship) $R = N$ stands for the (number of people) times $N - 1$ divided by 2.

In a group of people of 150 there is a possibility of over 11,000 conversations and potential relationships. A group of 3,000 adults – the potential exists for 4.5 million conversations and relationships. This is the reason Paul emphasizes the need to diligently and relentlessly work at maintaining one spirit in the church.

Dysfunctional

Vs.

Functional

Lies and dishonesty

Disguise the truth and reality

Confusion

- Fog about direction

- Avoid responsibility

Controlled focused

- Self centered

- Egocentric

- At the expense of others

In survival mode

Ineffective behaviors (repeatedly)

Broken communications

Broken relationships

Avoid truth and reality

Open, honest, direct

Confront reality

Vision Driven

- Clarity

- Forward thinking

Fellowship or Team Focused

- Partnership

- No causalities

- Collaboration

Creative environment

People feel empowered

Creativity aligns around the goals and vision

Shared goals and partnering

Confront issues

Vs. 27 – The verb here for “standing firm” is a military metaphor that pictures the Philippian believers serving in the same army, engaging the same foe, fighting in the same battle, which in this word picture the enemy would represent disunity. The last part of verse 27 says, “... with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

Here are 9 practical ways to stand together in one spirit and mind:

1. Assume personal responsibility for your spiritual development through personal and corporate Bible study and prayer.
2. Participate in the Sunday worship services on a regular basis **Hebrews 10:25**, “... not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some ...”
3. Join in the family life of the church through a Sunday school, fellowship, and Adult Bible study.
4. Exercise your spiritual gifts and talents in specific areas of involvement in ministry.
5. Support the variety of ministries through prayer and specifically with your service
6. Contribute financially to the church in a consistent, generous manner. (**1 Corinthians 16:2**)
7. Tell others about your relationship with Christ and support those who proclaim the gospel around the world.
8. Respond positively to the leadership of the elder team as they shepherd the church along.
9. Take responsibility for your own emotional well-being.