

Philippians 4:1-3

Interpersonal problems inevitably come to a congregation. By his use of prepositional prefixes as well as family and athletic imagery, Paul highlights the importance of Godward togetherness within the congregation.

- 1) To whom is Paul writing generally? ¹ *Therefore*, (cf. 3:17-21)
 - a) An affectionate relationship with the regenerate church membership—*my beloved and longed-for brothers*,
 - i) Cf. 1:12; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8
 - b) An anticipated glad reward—*my joy and crown [stephanos]*, (cf. 1st Thess. 2:19)
 - c) An affectionate relationship restated—*beloved^{pl}*.
- 2) Paul wants the congregation to stand in a defensive posture: *stand firm in the Lord in this way*,
 - a) Paul has already used “run” (2:16), “pursue” (3:12, 14), and “walk” (3:16-18)
 - b) Spiritual stability results from Godward thinking as described in the previous section. (cf. 1:27-4:1)
- 3) To whom is Paul writing specifically?
 - a) Two women are noted (directly, individually, and publicly) as being in discord—² *I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be in agreement in (the sphere of) the Lord*. (cf. 2:2)
 - i) Such self-resignation as exhibited by the Lord Jesus was, and is, the only fundamental solution to overcome the stress of inter-personal relationships in the outworking of the sanctification process in each one’s experience. (McCune)
 - ii) Apparently the church was unable to resolve the problem between these two.
 - b) Someone needs to intervene—³ *Yes, I ask you also, genuine partner [suzugos], assist [sullambano] these women*
 - i) Paul reminds this anonymous man
 - (1) Of Paul’s authority to request his assistance
 - (2) Of the legitimacy of his working relationship with Paul
 - (3) Of his responsibility to help these women think in a Godward manner
 - ii) Paul reminds the congregation what these women have done in the past—*who struggled [sunathleo]* (against a common enemy) *with me in the (ministry of the) gospel*,
 - iii) Paul reminds the congregation of what other people have done in the past—*with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers [sunergos]*, *whose names are in the book of life*.
 - (1) God keeps a careful record of those who are His, of which the written register of Roman citizens was similar.