



Partners in the Gospel

June 11, 2017

The Partners' Work Out!

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

The psychology of personal change has become a subject of many researchers and personal coaches. How do we embrace and cultivate genuine change in our beliefs, our behaviors, our day to day doing of life. Increasingly, the research shows a series of steps to be taken if real change is going to happen.

1. Awareness - need for a change
2. Desire - how we feel about how we are and what we want to become
3. Skills - learning about how change happens helps us; here's where a mentor is very helpful
4. Action - action follows the three above. Get fired up, motivated - burned out!
5. Support - For real change to take place, we need community of like-minded people

Let me suggest to you that what psychology is discovering and promoting, the Scripture has been describing for centuries! I've titled our time together in God's Word this morning - The Partners' Work Out - need to correct a typo - Partner's to Partners' - move the apostrophe! Shift your thinking from Jesus and me to Jesus and we! Let's explore together our "Work Out"!

The Partners' Work Out!

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^Simple Bible reading clue...When you see the word, "therefore", ask, What is the therefore there for? In other words, the "therefore" is a word that links together two passages - a passage that usually speaks of an accomplishment of Jesus or a quality of His character linked to a passage that gives instruction about how to live out the accomplishment or how to respond because of His character.

The Partner's Mentor - Jesus - Servant, Obedient, Name, Glory - Mentored by Him - obedience will be central to His example and His manner.

My beloved - Paul is not a drill sergeant, barking orders and shouting commands. He loves these people. His love for them is his motivation to be their champion for choosing to following Jesus, following in obedience.

as you have always obeyed - Paul is speaking to the whole church at Philippi - throughout this passage - using plurals. The whole church at Philippi is in view. We are not sole proprietors. We are partners - with Jesus and with each other.

Obedience is a learned behavior. We learn it from Jesus and from each other.

¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

We are to work out all that God is working in all of us.

The command that Paul gives is to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (2:12c). It is frequently pointed out that Paul does not say “work *for* your salvation,” or “work *toward* your salvation,” or even “work *at* your salvation.” Rather he says “work *out* your salvation with fear and trembling. This couplet of words, fear and trembling, is used by Paul here and in 1 Corinthians. In each place, Paul associates “fear and trembling” with the weakness, the vulnerability and defenseless ness of a person who has been crucified. In other words, we work out our salvation, not with our guard up, but with our self-defenses nailed to a cross. This is the way of Jesus, our Mentor, who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

^Staff and Interns - finished reading and discussing together a book - The Ideal Team Player - Patrick Lencioni - Humble, Hungry and Smart. Humility is the outworking of “fear and trembling”.

Working out our salvation will definitely involve our attitude towards one another.

Attitude

Specific to the context of Paul’s words - Stated positively, we are to work out our salvation in unity. Based upon our each having the mind of Christ, we corporately live in community with each other.

Stated negatively, Paul says... *¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing.* Jesus, our Mentor, taught us that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. So, if we are torqued with or tired of a fellow follower of Jesus, the disunity of heart is going to be heard in our words. We start talking about a brother or sister in Christ, rather than to the person who has angered or offended us.

The outcome of our working out our salvation without grumbling or disputing - *¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*

What a stark contrast to a dark world! Blameless and innocent - ^Social Media - ten students, accepted to Harvard - acceptance revoked for sharing sexually explicit memes. Shining as lights on social media. ^WWJD - WWJP - what would Jesus post?

The Partners’ Work Out will be found in our attitude toward one another and our contrast with the dark world. Our work out will also include our action... of holding fast to the word of life.

Action

¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

We are partners in the Gospel. We are to work out our salvation so that others might hear, see, and experience the Gospel. We are to silence our grumbling and complaining, saving our words for sharing the word of life with others. Holding fast, not holding on - sharing the good news of the accomplishments of Jesus.

Among the Partners - there are those called to be Pastors - *so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.*

Paul joins together two images - each of them descriptive of rigorous labor

Run in vain - Athlete - Prize - Labor in vain - manual labor - both of these images prompt Paul to boast, to be proud of the other Partners working out their salvation. ^Karyn Cartier - The Orchard has been blessed to have Karyn serving among us.

Example

The Partners' Work Out - Attitude - Do all things without grumbling or disputing; Action - hold fast, hold out the story of Jesus and all that He has accomplished. Is Paul just telling them what to do? No. He is a living example of what he is asking them to do.

Does Paul have a reason to grumble or dispute? Remember, he is in prison for the Gospel. Chained to a Roman soldier; I can only imagine he wants to be somewhere else.

¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Paul is a living example of being "all in", even to the point of dying. Were he to die for Christ - Paul speaks of rejoicing! Because Paul has heard of the struggles the church at Philippi was experiencing, he implores them - keep working out your salvation with joy, being careful to not become prey to grumbling or disputing.

Lasting Change - The command to work out their salvation may have readily rallied the Partners. Like a coach, is Paul just giving them a half-time pep talk? No, he has in mind a consistent attitude and action of the Partners in Philippi - especially now that he is away from them and his return is uncertain.

as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling

How? ^Book mentor - Dallas Willard, professor of philosophy at USC

Vision - Lasting change comes into our lives when we identify a preferred future, a vision of what we can be and do. God has this preferred future clearly in view for us -

³ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Ours is a vision of living out the Kingdom of Jesus - right here, right now.

Intention - Being a body of believers who are working out our salvation with fear and trembling doesn't just happen. We must be intentional about living out our faith together. We must be reminded that grumbling and disputing are not the way of Jesus.

Intention will eventually lead to choices we will make in following Jesus. Intention will prompt us to make decisions in advance of circumstances that may compromise our walk with Jesus.

Means - Lasting change, real spiritual formation, takes place through having a vision, exercising intention, and employing the means of transformation - being in the body of Christ, Small Group - ^Discussions by the Pool - hosted by Steve and Kathi Mitchell, home in Manchester - June 24th.

Means will include reading and learning the Scriptures. Do you need a Bible? We have study Bibles to give to you.

Means will include experiencing a conversation with God - learning to hear His voice and speaking with Him.

Means will involve being in worship with other followers of Jesus. Combined worship service on the commons on July 2nd with Londonderry Christian Church and August 20th with several churches as part of the Old Home Day celebration.

The Partners' Work Out - Attitude, Action, Example... Lasting change - Vision, Intention, Means - all achieved, not as sole proprietors - Just Jesus and Me, but as Partners - Jesus and We!