***Preserving your Happiness - PH83-02  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:5-7***

We are looking at Philippians 4 where the apostle Paul is tying up the divine viewpoint understanding which he has been giving us throughout this book on how to be happy. That is the theme, and that is the purpose of the book of Philippians. We have found that happiness is ultimately a mental attitude. Paul is now describing that happiness in those terms to us. Happiness for a Christian is, in the last degree and the last word, the product of learning from the Bible how to live and how to think. If people live according to biblical principles, they will be happy. If their minds are saturated with biblical principles so they can make choices, as per biblical principles, they will find that happiness is their normal experience. A relaxed mental attitude, then, is the basic foundation of happiness.

We have seen that the great destroyer of happiness is depression. Depression basically is caused by anger, and secondly by self-pity. Anger usually results from the sense that some of our rights have been violated. We respond in bitterness, and then that turns to self-pity. We are in complete destruction and complete devastation of our personal happiness. The unhappiness of depression has great destructive effects on ourselves, both spiritually and physically.

Philippians 4:4 has commanded Christians to be happy. The apostle Paul has been spelling out some of the conditions of inner happiness. We have seen that this is what God expects of us.

In Philippians 4:5-7, the apostle Paul is going to lay out for us further understanding on how to be happy. So first of all, there are the principles of happiness in verses 5 and 6. This we will look at in two directions. Verse 5 gives us the happiness relative toward men, and verse 6 gives us happiness relative to God.

**Moderation**

So first of all, we look at happiness from the direction of our relationship to people. Verse 5 says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." The word "moderation" is the Greek word "epieikes." This is one of the most untranslatable words in all of the Greek New Testament. If you were to go back and search through translations of the Bible into English hundreds of years back, and come on down through the years and search through modern versions, you would find a variety of English words used for this one Greek word in Philippians 4:5. You would find a variety of English words in an attempt to somehow try to convey a practically untranslatable Greek word. So we're going to have to work around it from several directions and try to give you the feel of what the word "epieikes" means because it is a critical feature in personal happiness.

**Forbearance**

To begin with, the first part of the word is this preposition "epi." That means "upon" or "over." The second part of the word comes from the Greek word "eikos," and that means "reasonable" or "gentle." So this word means "over reasonableness" or "over gentleness." The English word "forbearance" is a pretty good word for describing this Greek word. It is, in short, a spirit which is not unduly rigorous. This is describing a quality which is equitable; it's fair; and, it's moderate. We would say "an attitude which does not insist on the letter of the law." Rather, it is an attitude of exercising mercy under certain conditions.

In other words, here's what justice says you must do. If you follow the letter of the law, and apply it strictly, this is what you will do. But God says there are times when we must act with "epieikes." Therefore, we do not strictly follow the letter of the law, but there are extenuating circumstances that merit our forbearance. They merit our not being rigorous. They merit our not being insistent on giving the punishment that is due.

**Gentleness**

The Bible uses this word in several places, which might help us to get a little better understanding of it, since it is so hard to translate. For example, in 1 Timothy 3:3, it is translated by the English word "gentle" in describing a pastor-teacher. It says, "He is not given to wine, nor violent, nor greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous." The word "patient" is translated in the Revised Version by the word "gentle." This is one facet or one idea of what we mean by "epieikes."

It is used in James 3:17 as one of the qualities of wisdom which comes from above: "gentle." There you have the word "epieikes" again. It means "easy to be entreated," which is again a sort of an explanation of "epieikes."

In 1 Peter 2:18, it is associated with one who is also a "good" person. So you had these many different words in English trying to convey the idea of not being overly rigorous to apply the letter of the law. This is because the spirit of unyieldingness is a spirit which destroys personal happiness. So "moderation" in Philippians 4:4 means a spirit of reasonableness; a spirit of goodwill; a spirit of magnanimity; or, a spirit of forbearance. Moderation is just the opposite of strictly demanding your rights. Moderation is the opposite of refusing to oblige the needs of other people.

So what Christians are being called upon here to do is to avoid being needlessly rough in dealing with people and needlessly wounding them. It is hard to put one English word that conveys that idea of not being heavy-handed in your dealing with people in their particular shortcomings.

When it says, "Let your moderation," the "your," of course, refers to the Philippian Christians. "Let your moderation be known." The word "be known" is the Greek word "ginosko" that most of you are well acquainted with. "Ginosko" is the word that describes knowledge which comes to us as the result of experience, not knowledge that comes to us as the result of reasoning. But our experiences teach us things. This is the particular Greek word for "knowledge" as the result of experience. Here it refers to a knowledge that people get as the result of their experience with us. So what he is saying is that when people deal with you as a Christian, if you want to be a happy person, don't be too heavy-handed. Don't demand the letter of the law. Don't be demanding strictly what you have coming to you. But act in forbearance; act in restraint; and, be a little obliging toward people, even though they don't deserve it.

This is in the aorist tense, so it is the quality of unselfish reasonableness, viewed as a whole, controlling a believer. It is passive. This kind of expression is not something you create. It would be a mistake for you to think that you can do this just by deciding to do this by an exercise of your will. No, the Bible makes it clear that this is something that has to flow out of you beyond your determining that you're going to do it. Now you can determine to develop this quality so that it can flow. You determine that by turning to the learning of doctrine so that you can build a spiritual maturity structure in your soul, and then you will be expressing the character of Christ. To have a spiritual maturity structure in your soul is equal to having the character of Jesus Christ, and the character of Jesus Christ does produce this quality of forbearance.

So this word says, "In the experience that people have with you, out of you should flow, without any particular effort on your part, this natural expression." Furthermore, this "ginosko" is in the imperative mood, which means it's a command, and it is to be satisfied with less than you have coming to you. You are commanded to have this kind of a forbearing attitude by the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Considerate Reasonableness**

There are many ways in which we can be expressive of this considerate reasonableness on the part of other people. We must let our considerate reasonable be known to other people when they deal with us. You will let it be known, for example, by respecting the privacy of others. We all know about the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. Your sweet reasonableness, your restraint of your heavy hand, can be expressed by respecting the privacy of other people, and by letting them live their lives as unto the Lord without your pushing yourself into it, and without your violating their privacy.

You may let your considerate reasonable must be known by preserving the self-respect of others in how you treat them. They may not deserve kind treatment, but you preserve their self-respect. You express your reasonable considerateness by honoring the rights, the material, and the property of other people. You don't use the services and the possessions of others without paying for them. You don't brazenly demand or assume to use what belongs to others. You exercise grace toward those who are indebted to you. In this way, you don't demand the letter of the law. You exercise a considerate reasonableness – a forbearance.

You can express this by the fact that you treat spiritually shallow and negative Christians with pity. The farther along you go in the Christian life, and the more fully developed your spiritual maturity structure is, the more inclined you are to be impatient with people who are spiritually stupid and dumb. It is hard to be patient, particularly when it's some Christian that's so arrogant; so blasé; so smug; and, so thinking that he has arrived, particularly if he happens to be a member of some big church that has some famous preacher speaking to him. Usually that's a combination that is the kiss of death, and it leaves people generally pretty ignorant of biblical principles. And it's hard to be patient when you meet such a shallow Christian who acts with arrogant inanities. Instead, you have to exercise a forbearance, hopefully to encourage him to spiritual maturity.

You have to be kind toward well-intentioned people who are foolish in what they want to do. People are always having good intentions to do something. They get an idea that something would be a wonderful thing to do. Their intentions are good, but the results are foolish and unprofitable, and you have to exercise a forbearance toward them. You have to be kindly disposed toward those who arrogantly abuse you, and who act as if you had been born without a brain, and that they're infinitely superior to you in what you know in your judgment. There are many ways in which you can let your reasonable considerateness (your forbearance) be known.

What Paul says is that this attitude of forbearance is to be made known "to all men." The word "all" refers to humanity in general. The word "men" is "anthropos," and "anthropos" means mankind. So it is referring to humanity as a whole. Thus, whether a person is saved or whether he is unsaved, he's part of mankind. The apostle Paul is saying that unbelievers, as well as believers, are to be treated by us with this kind of forbearance.

**The Rapture and the Judgment Seat of Christ**

Then he tells us why – one good reason why you should act like this. Because, he says, "The Lord (meaning the Lord Jesus Christ) is at hand," and the Greek makes it very powerful and very striking in the way it expresses it, because there's no verb. There is no "is" in the Greek. It just says, "The Lord at hand." The word "at hand" is "eggus." "Eggus" simply means "near," and here it means "near" in the sense of the time of the rapture.

We have a similar use of this word in James 5:7-9. This is the same idea that Paul is expressing here. Jesus Christ is about to return. The next event of prophecy is the rapture of the church. But remember that the rapture of the church means, for you and me, immediately the Judgment Seat of Christ. That's what he means. That's his point – reminding us that the Lord is soon to return. Because just as soon as Jesus Christ returns, the first thing that's going to happen is that we are going to be judged as to how we lived. One of the things, of course, that's going to come under judgment is this quality of forbearance, and how we acted toward other people who were less than they should be; who were weak; who were inane; who were ridiculous; who were brazen; who were aggressive; who were pushy; and, who were a lot of other things that they should not have been. We are immediately going to come under judgment as to what our treatment of those people was.

So he says, "Remember, the Lord is near." And your judgments are going to be evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the Lord Jesus Christ is going to deal with you accordingly. So don't be tempted to play a role of arrogance that you yourself then will suffer loss of reward for at the Judgment Seat of Christ. What he is saying is that we should live a relaxed live-and-let-live attitude. That's essential to personal happiness. If you have not learned how to live and let live, you will never be a happy person. It's practicing personal righteousness while leaving others to the Lord as far as their righteousness goes. It's walking in humility as a faltering sinner who's been saved by grace, who is not yet all that perfect. If you remember that you are not all that perfect, it will be easier for you to be understanding of the fact that others are not all that perfect.

So the point here that he's making is, having commanded us in verse 4 to be happy as the normal expression of the Christian life, he then spells out for us a relationship toward other people which is essential to happiness. That is that we shouldn't come down too hard on other people. Don't come down without any mercy on the fact that people are wrong; that they fall short; that they are not doing what they should do; or, that they are not what they should be, but rather act with forbearance. Remember that this is how God treated you in grace. Therefore, exercise grace toward other people. You will notice, as you have learned perhaps from your own experience, that when you fail to act with forbearance, that you aren't particularly a happy person yourself. So that's the point. Verse 5 says, "If you want to be happy, take an easy hand in your dealing with people." Have a relaxed, live-and-let-live attitude.

**Do not be Anxious**

Verse 6 says that there's a condition for our relationship to God as well. He says, "Be anxious." This is the word "merimnao." The King James Version originally translated this word by the English word "careful," which, 300 years ago meant "anxious." It doesn't mean that to us today, so it's kind of a misleading translation to say, "Be careful in nothing," because that doesn't make any sense because we should be careful. What this word means is "anxious." It's probably related to another Greek word "merizo," and you can see how these are similar, and "merizo" means "to divide into parts" or "to pull in different directions." This gives us the basis of the meaning of "merimnao." "Merimnao" means "to have a distracting care" or "to be anxious" or "to be torn in different directions." It describes the practice of simply being concerned about something.

That concern is not necessarily sinful, because this same word is used in Philippians 2:20 where Paul says, "I have no man (in describing Timothy) like-minded who will naturally care for your state." Here was somebody who had a concern who would care for their state. The word "care" is this same word that we have here in Philippians 4:6 translated as "anxious." Paul says, "I have no one like Timothy who will have an attitude of "merimnao" toward you. So it is not necessarily sinful that we should have this kind of a concern. It simply means that it is unnecessary for a Christian to have this concern in the sense of worry, or in the sense of a destructive attitude.

This verb is present tense, so it means we constantly should not have this attitude of worry. It is active. We are to choose this attitude. Again, it's imperative. God is commanding us not to do this. He says we are not to have this attitude of anxiety in anything. So he says, "Have it in nothing." The word "nothing" is "medeis." "Medeis" is a compound word. It's made up of "me" first. That's a negative. Then it's made up of "de," which is the conjunction "even." Then it's made up of "heis," the numeral one. So what we are saying is "not even one." It's neuter. So it's a thing. "In not even one thing" are you to have anxiety. That pretty well covers the ground.

In the case of the Philippians, interestingly enough, as fine a church as they were, and as much spiritual progress as they had made, there is something significant here. When you have the combination of this little negative "me" along with the present imperative, it is saying, "Stop doing something you're already doing." So these people were already practicing anxieties. They were already guilty of worrying about some things, and maybe even about Paul and his situation. The point was that he was saying, "Do not do this. Stop doing it. You're already engaged in it."

**Worry**

Obviously, worry is the enemy of happiness. It's a mental attitude which separates a believer from his spiritual resources which he has gained through doctrine in his soul. It neutralizes the directive functioning of his mind so he cannot act with divine viewpoint in meeting the situations of his life. The anxious mind is a divided mind. It's torn. It's pulled in different ways. It's uncertain as to which way to turn.

Satan, of course, wants to encourage worry in order to keep the Christian from being able to draw on the resource that his divine viewpoint has given him. Therefore, 1 Peter 5:7-8 tells us, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may desire." So instead of our worrying about it, the point is to take it to the Lord and leave it there. The point of maximum happiness is when you take your problem to the Lord and leave it there. Worry undermines all this.

What Paul is really suggesting when he says, "Be anxious for nothing," he is saying, "Practice the technique of faith rest. Practice the thing of casting yourself and your problem into the Lord's hands, whatever it is, and then awaiting His direction." For example, this principle is stated in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is in Psalm 55:22 and Psalm 37:5. Of course, the whole principle of faith rest is spelled out for us in Hebrews 4:1-11, where the faith rest technique is taught.

So a Christian who is worrying is a Christian who is not believing, because the Christian who believes that God can handle his problem is the Christian who is capable of resting by faith in the Lord to handle the problem. So whatever it is, you take it to the Lord, and you leave it there. Worrying is counterproductive on all accounts. Philippians says that we are to do this in everything: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything." Everything means every case and every situation. It is in contrast to the word "nothing."

"Be anxious for nothing, but rather in everything by prayer and supplication." So here is the way to handle the problems of unhappiness from the point of view of God. First of all, we are to be anxious for nothing, but rather we are, by prayer and supplication, to do something with thanksgiving: "Let your requests be made known unto God."

**Prayer**

The word "prayer" is the word "proseuche." This is the New Testament word for prayer in general. This has the dative case, so it means "by means of prayer." It always is used of requests to God. This word is never used of one man making a request to another man. It is the same word which is used in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that tells us to pray constantly – pray without ceasing. It is admonishing us to use the prayer technique constantly in the Christian life. Prayer is the basic tactic, as we have found from Ephesian 6:18, which the Christian soldier uses in the angelic conflict.

**Supplications**

Then he adds another thing. He says not only "proseuche," but he says "supplications." That's a different Greek word. This is "deesis." This is the word for prayer which expresses a desperate need. Here, again, it's with dative case, so it says "by means of." "By means of prayer in general, and by means of a specific expression of a desperate need." In the New Testament, this is used only of requests to God. But in other Greek literature, it is used also of man to man. But what this word connotes is somebody who is under a strong desperate situation need. This is somebody who is saying, "God, by this date, I have to have this decision go this way or this way. I have to have this situation resolved this way or this way. I have a 'deesis' condition, and therefore I am now spelling it out in specific steps." This word "deesis" means "to spell out the details." Get your thinking straightened out and then say, "Father, this is it. I have this need," and come to Him with the urgency that that connotes.

So this is a specific request motivated by strong desire. If you want to be happy, as far as your relationship to man is concerned, be forbearing. Do not be heavy-handed. Do not demand your rights. Do not demand what you have coming to you. Act with restraint. When it comes to your actions toward God, do not be anxious or worrisome about anything. Rather, take the things that are a problem to you that would be a source of worry, and by the practice of prayer in general, and by the specific naming of desperate needs, bring them to God.

**Thanksgiving**

However, notice that it adds the word "with." "By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving," and the word "with" is the Greek word "meta," and "meta" here means "amid" or "in the midst of" thanksgiving. "Thanksgiving" is the Greek word "eucharistia." "Eucharistia" is the Greek word for "gratitude." Prayer is always to be accompanied by thanksgiving. It matters not what you ask God. Something may pop into your mind; something may immediately come up that you need a direction from God; or, you need His help in some moment. It should be also accompanied with thanksgiving. The remembrance of past blessings through prayer gives you a ground for thanksgiving in the present. If you thank God, you will very often have to look back on what He has done. That's the point of thanksgiving. You look back and find that He is a God who performs through prayer.

The spirit of gratitude does something else. You thank God even for the thing that is now a crises in your life. You're saying to Him, "Lord, here it is. I have to solve this, and I have up to a certain time to solve it. This is my desperate need." You bring Him a "deesis" condition, and you have spelled it out. Even in that you add with it ("meta" – "amid" it, or "plus" that) a spirit of thanksgiving. What are you doing? Well, you're thanking God for the very crisis that you're in? Why? Well, you're thanking for that because you recognize that God, in His sovereignty, does not make mistakes, but he's doing something with you. You may have been at fault, and you may have brought the problem on your own head, but even then, the sovereign God is working toward your blessing. If you will come to Him in prayer, He's going to resolve that situation.

That's what Romans 8:28 means when it says, "All things work together for good, to them who are called according to the purpose of God." The worst situations in your life are actually God working His eternal good in your life. So when you are thankful, you are also expressing a spirit of submission. You are also saying, "Father, You are the sovereign God. This has come into my life. Whether it's my fault or not my fault, here is where I am. And You are above it all." You recognize God's sovereignty. You express submission when you thank Him for it. If you refuse to thank God for a situation you're in (the misery of your life), then you are not expressing submission. You're expressing the attitude of a rebel.

So remember that a Christian always stands between blessings received on the one hand and blessings hoped-for on the other hand. For this reason, he should always give thanks, and always keep asking. He stands between blessings received and blessings hoped-for. Therefore, he should always give thanks for what he has received, and ask for what he hopes for. That's the point of being grateful. Only a thankful-minded Christian can be a happy Christian.

So there are three things to remember about prayer, to tie this together for you. One is the love of God. God seeks only your happiness. He does with us that which will be to our greatest joy. Secondly, remember the wisdom of God. He alone knows completely what is best for us. Third, remember the power of God. He is fully capable of meeting our needs and solving our problems. These facts result in happiness, or, as Paul calls it here, "peace."

So it says, "By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving." Then he says a very important thing. "Let your requests be made known unto God." "Requests" is the Greek word "aitema." "Aitema" is an item that you asked for. We would call these your prayer requests as Christians. "Let them be made known," and it's "gnorizo." It is present. Present means constantly getting this knowledge through experience. It is passive. It is a different kind of situation than our doing it. That is, it is a Spirit-filled believer praying under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. So he is requesting what the Holy Spirit initiates. He is really passive. It is the Spirit of God leading us in prayer. It is imperative – a command to the Christian to use the technique of prayer. This refers to petitions made known to God through prayer.

Notice that it says that we are to make these special requests known, "Unto God." The word "unto" is the Greek preposition "pros" which means face-to-face; that is, directly to God – communicating about our needs to God the Father, not to people. The word "God" is the word "theos" with the definite article "the." So it is God the Father that is in view here.

That's very important. Many Christians with problems are praying in effect to their friends. They're praying in effect to their family. They're praying in effect to other church members. They're praying to preachers. They're praying to nosy people. There are always enough nosy people around who want to violate your privacy to know what's going on in your life, that will root around like a pig with his long rooting nose, and you'll start praying to them. Do you realize that's what you're doing? The Bible says, "Let your requests be made known unto God."

You have a crisis; you have a problem; or, you have a pressure in your life. You have something that needs to be solved. So what do you do about it? You talk to everyone else about it instead of talking to God about it. This verse is telling you to take it to the Lord, and keep your mouth closed where other people are concerned. What you do is really insult the living God. Perhaps you say, "Well, I did pray about it, and I've asked the Lord for guidance in solving my problem." But then you proceeded to get advice from other people. You didn't just take it to the Lord. You're talking to these other guys, and you're looking to see if you can help the Lord find the answer. That's what you're doing. You're seeking to help the Lord find the answer. You take it to the Lord.

If you're going to have happiness, you are not to worry about anything. But that which would worry you, you are to take by the general technique of prayer, and by the practice of specific requests, with the spirit of gratitude, and let your requests be made known unto God: "Father, here's what I need to straighten out my situation to meet my life's circumstances." Unload your burden to the Lord where He will take care of it, and just leave it there.

**Peace**

Paul doesn't stop there. Verse 7 puts the clincher to this. Here is that great and tremendous promise of the Word of God relative to your personal happiness. The thing that concerns all of us is how to not only arrive at being happy, but how to maintain that happiness; how to keep it from slipping away from us; and, how to find that here we've come to a situation of good relationships with God; with people around us; and, in our lives in general, so that happiness is the normal note of our experience. Then we bomb out in some respect, and the whole thing is gone.

The reason Paul has told us the human side of forbearance in verse 5, and the God side of taking the problems to the Lord and leaving them there is because if you do those two things, your happiness will automatically be protected in this way. Verse 7 says, "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "And" is the Greek word "kai." It stands right there first in the Greek sentence, beginning at verse 7, just like it does in the English. "And" is indicating that he's connecting verse 7 back to verse 6 because he's introducing a result. This word "and" could be translated "and so." The idea is result. You must understand that the word "and" means "and so if you do these two things, toward man and toward God," here's a promise of the Word of God. You will experience a condition of peace.

The Greek word for peace is "eirene." "Eirene" is a word connoting a harmonious relationship between different elements. It is in effect, the English word "happiness." That's what we're talking about. When he uses the word "peace," he means the harmonious relationship which results in happiness. This is the condition of having used the faith rest technique of having brought the problem to the Lord, and leaving it there.

**Understanding**

What's the result? Well, you're going to have the happiness of whom? The happiness of God. This is the ablative case in the Greek, so it means happiness "from the source of God." This is the happiness that God creates, and which He bestows. This happiness, he says, is one which "passes all understanding." The word "passes" is "huperecho." "Huperecho" means literally "to hold" or "to have above." It comes from this preposition "huper" which means "above" and from the Greek word "echo" which means "to hold, so it means "to hold above." Or we would say, "To be superior." This is "to be better than" or "surpassing."

We've had this word before. We had it in Philippians 2:3 where it is used under the translation "better." We had it in Philippians 3:8 where we had the word translated by the word "excellency," meaning "the surpassing thing." So the peace, the happiness which God gives, is surpassing above all understanding. The word "understanding" is the Greek word "nous." "Nous" refers to the perceptive function of the mentality. There is the directive function of the mind. The "nous" refers to this learning capacity that you have.

We may illustrate this word by Luke 24:45, which uses the same word: "Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures." "Then opened He their 'nous,' that they might understand the Scriptures." That is, Jesus gave them instruction, and with the learning capacity of their mind, they took in information. We have this in Ephesians 4:17, Colossians 2:18, and 1 Timothy 6:5. So the Bible uses this word again and again for the capacity to learn to understand.

This is the peace of God, or the happiness of God – the happiness from God that surpasses all human capacity to grasp. It will be beyond your comprehension. In other words, you're in a situation in life where there is no way that you could feel at ease. There is no way that you could say, I'm happy." There is no way you could say, "In my soul, I'm at peace." Yet, you look at yourself and you say, "That's exactly what I am. I am suffering this thing, and I'm happy. I'm in the midst of this tragedy, and I'm at peace." You say to yourself, "I can't understand that." That's what Paul is saying. Notice the chain reaction.

**Incomprehensible**

If you do the thing toward man, and that is to not be so heavy-handed and pontifical in your dealings with people, and if you will turn in the things that are a source of worry to you, and instead in thankfulness to God for that very thing, you bring it to Him in prayer and in specific requests, the result will be that there will come a happiness upon your soul that your thinking capacity will not be able to understand. You will simply not be able to fathom how this can be. Many Christians who have practiced this pattern have indeed found themselves in tragedies in the midst of peace. It's a happiness which dissipates the worst anxieties, and it's incomprehensible to the mind.

**God's Protection**

Furthermore, not only will you find you have this peace, but you will find that God is doing something, for it says, "The peace of God, which passes all human understanding, shall keep." The Greek word for "keep" is "phroureo." "Phroureo" in the Greek language is a military word, and it means "to protect by means of a military guard." We would call it a garrison. It is the Greek word for protecting by means of a military guard.

We have it so used, for example, in 2 Corinthians 11:32, where we read, "In Damascus, the governor under Aretas the king kept (and here is the word – "phroureo") garrisoned the city of the damascenes with a garrison desirous to apprehend me." He kept the city of the damascenes with a garrison. He guarded it. He put it under siege, desirous to apprehend Paul.

It is used in 1 Peter 1:5. Here the word "kept" is in the sense, again, of being under a military guard. But this is a guard for our eternal salvation: "Who are kept (who are guarded – who are garrisoned) by the power of God through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." So once you are a Christian, God says he puts a military guard over your salvation.

In Philippians 4:7, this word is used to describe God protecting the Christian's happiness – the Christian who practices reasonableness and prayer with thanksgiving in behalf of his problems. That's the thing. Everything that faces us then is under the watchful guardianship of God the Holy Spirit. This word is future, meaning at all times in the future. It's active. God himself does it. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact.

What does he guard? He says, "He guards our hearts." This is the Greek word "kardia." The "kardia" here refers to the directive side of the mind. The perceptive side of the mind was the "nous." The directive side is the "kardia," that part out of which actions spring. He protects the information coming in, and that information that we get gives us an attitude that is beyond our comprehension. But He protects also our hearts so that God protects your actions. He keeps you from doing the thing that causes you unhappiness. That's great. God, actually, for a Christian who has put himself in the position of this chain of events, will be protected from taking actions that cause him unhappiness.

That tells us something about ourselves. When we find ourselves in something that's a misery and unhappiness to us, it very frequently is because of something that we have done as a result of an action we have taken. It tells us that we have not permitted God the Holy Spirit to act as guard over our actions. God says, I'll send a military guard of angels, and they will protect your directive mind so that you will not move into actions that will bring you unhappiness.

Furthermore, he says that it, "Will keep your hearts and," he says, "your minds." "Your minds" is "noema." "Noema" refers to that which we think out: a purpose; a design; or, a line of action. In other words, this also applies to the directive mind, but here it is specifically protecting us from human viewpoint actions. That's what he is saying – that God will protect you from decisions which destroy your own happiness. Remember that that's where most of your happiness goes. It is destroyed by ourselves as a result of human viewpoint decisions we make.

So God says, "I will protect your actions. I will protect the decisions that you make; your lines of actions; and, your conclusions. I will keep you from following courses that will bring you unhappiness. I do this through Christ Jesus." That is Jesus Christ, who is the way to salvation; who is the pathway to the super grace life where maximum happiness exists; and, who is the One who preserves us at that level?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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