

Love ... So Amazing

Philippians 2:5-8

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A. Not Self Willed (vs. 5-6):

1. Have this attitude; Mind – We are commanded to continuously understand the mindset that Christ has and had so that we learn His affection for us and His passionate will to complete the purposes of God towards us.
 - a) The position of the pronoun “this” is emphatic and shows that the exhortation reaches back basically to 2:2–4, while the pronoun “who” in 2:6 connects the exhortation with the illustration in 2:5–8. The words “let mind be” are the translation of one Greek word which means, “to have understanding, to be wise, to direct one’s mind to a thing, to seek or strive for.” The word seems always to keep in view the direction which thought of a practical kind takes. [\[1\]](#)
2. Christ – When we come to this understanding we are able to develop a greater insight into how our anointed Savior truly thinks, and what He is devoted to accomplish for God’s glory.
3. Although He existed – Even though Christ, before coming to earth, lived in the very nature of who God is, and with all the privileges that come from being supreme in heaven, for the purposes of saving mankind, He did not desire to remain in heaven and as a result He did not neglect the needs of mankind.
 - a) The Greek word is not the simple verb of being, but a word that speaks of an antecedent condition protracted into the present. That is, our Lord gave expression to

the essence of Deity which He possesses, not only before He became Man, but also after becoming Man, for He was doing so at the time this Philippian epistle was being written. To give expression to the essence of Deity implies the possession of Deity, for this expression, according to the definition of our word “form,” comes from one’s inmost nature. *This word alone is enough to refute the claim of Modernism that our Lord emptied Himself of His Deity when He became Man.*^[2]

4. Form – Jesus' existence on earth was fashioned, inside and out, with characteristics that no one else has ever had (begotten).

- a) This word (trans. “form” in the KJV and NASB) stresses the inner essence or reality of that with which it is associated (cf. Mark 16:12). Christ Jesus, Paul said, is of the very essence (*morphē*) of God, and in His incarnation He embraced perfect humanity. His complete and absolute deity is here carefully stressed by the apostle. The Savior’s claim to deity infuriated the Jewish leaders (John 5:18) and caused them to accuse Him of blasphemy (John 10:33).^[3]

4. Did not regard equality with God – Even though Christ has the very nature of God He humbled Himself to serve under the authority of God rather than co-participate with the other members of the Trinity.

- a) In other words Christ did not hesitate to set aside His self-willed use of deity when He became a man. As God He had all the rights of deity, and yet during His incarnate state He surrendered His right to manifest Himself visibly as the God of all splendor and glory.^[4]

5. Did not regard equality with God – Christ laid aside His authority (Colossians 1:15-18), not His divinity and chose, once and for all, purposefully elected, on His own initiative,

to not preside in a manner that makes Him equal with God even though He is (John 10:18, 28-29).

a) Equality with God here refers to our Lord's co-participation with the other members of the Trinity in the expression of the divine essence. This is a very important point, for when we come to consider the fact that our Lord laid aside something, we will see that it was not the *possession* but the *expression* of the divine essence.^[5]

6. Something to be grasped/robbery – Christ did not view His decision to come under the authority of God as an act that changes His status or who He is in the God-head. He can attain His position of authority anytime He chose (John 10:18, 28-29).

7. Something to be grasped/robbery – To come forth in the form of a man also means that Christ no longer viewed Himself as having the same status as God. He accepted that His complete commitment is to execute God's will for mankind (the Garden of Gethsemane; Matthew 26:36-46) no matter the cost.

B. It is Sacrificial (v. 7):

1. Emptied Himself – Christ on His own initiative, based on His own power, willfully, once and for all, gave up the display of His glory (on the Mount of Transfiguration He put it back on for a moment; Matthew 17:1-13), at His incarnation but did not give up His deity. This means He is completely committed, for the sake of God's salvific agenda, to function in the form as God-man.

a) These statements indicate that Christ became a man, a true human being. The words "made Himself nothing" are, literally, "He emptied Himself." "Emptied," from

the Greek *kenoō*, points to the divesting of His self-interests, but not of His deity. “The very nature of a servant” certainly points to His lowly and humble position, His willingness to obey the Father, and serve others. He became a man, a true human being. “Likeness” suggests similarity but difference. Though His humanity was genuine, He was different from all other humans in that He was sinless (Heb. 4:15).^[6]

2. In the form of a bonds slave – Jesus existence on earth was fashioned (begotten), inside and out, so that He possessed all the characteristics of a person who recognized themselves as being owned by God to completely surrender to fulfilling His Master’s will (John 4:34; 6:38-39). His surrender was so comprehensive it included fulfilling God’s will to die on the cross for man’s sin (Matthew 26:36-46). This is also highlighted when Christ said ‘It is finished’ (John 19:30).
 - a) The words “form of a bonds slave” therefore mean that our Lord gave outward expression to His inmost nature, the outward expression being that of a bonds slave.^[7]
 - b) He did not empty Himself of His deity, since Paul says that the expression of His deity was a fact after His incarnation, that expression implying the possession of the essence of Deity. He set aside the *outward expression* of His deity when expressing Himself as a bonds slave. It was the outward expression of the essence of His deity which our Lord emptied Himself of during the time when He was giving outward expression of Himself as a bonds slave.^[8]
3. Being made in the likeness of man - God, through the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), created out of nothing the incarnation of Christ. Christ in the womb of Mary was shaped by the Holy Spirit to resemble, without diminishing His deity, all that mankind is. As a result Christ became fully man, but yet a man who lacks the ability to commit sin (Romans 5:15; 1 Corinthians 15:21; 1 Timothy 2:5).

a) When Christ was born at Bethlehem, He entered into a *permanent* union with humanity from which there could be no escape. He willingly humbled Himself that He might lift us up! [\[9\]](#)

b) The words “was made” are the translation of a word meaning “to become.” The tense of this verb is ingressive aorist, which signifies entrance into a new state. Our Lord entered into a new state of being when He became Man. But His becoming Man did not exclude His possession of Deity. He was and is today a Person with two natures, that of absolute Deity and that of humanity. The text says, “He became in the likeness of men.”

C. Selfless (v. 8):

1. Being found – After all is said and done, anyone who scrutinizes Jesus would vividly see that Jesus was completely a man.
2. Appearance; Fashion - “His deity did not make Him more nor less than a Man, and His humanity did not make Him less than absolute deity.” His outward appearance was completely that of a man but it did not change inwardly His deity.

a) Our Lord’s expression of His Deity was not assumed from the outside, but came from His inmost nature. Likewise, His outward expression as a bonds slave came from His inmost nature. But His expression of His humanity came, not from His inmost nature as God, but was assumed in the incarnation. The contrast here is between what He was in Himself, God, and what he appeared in the eyes of men. [\[10\]](#)

b) There was always that single personality with a dual nature. His deity did not make Him more nor less than a Man, and His humanity did not make Him less than absolute Deity. He became in the likeness of man, and He was found in fashion as a man. [\[11\]](#)

3. Humble Himself – Christ on His own initiative, decisively decided, to give up the manifestation of His glory, give up divine privileges, become a man who functions completely surrendered to God’s authority, take on the appearance of a man, and all that comes with being a poor man (Matthew 8:20) even dying the worst death ever, a death on a Roman cross. He left glory where He made and owned all things to come to earth and live in poverty.

a) He humbled himself. He put aside all personal rights and interests in order to insure the welfare of others.^[12]

4. Obedient to the point of death – Christ totally believed in all that God desired to accomplish to provide salvation to mankind (John 3:16), it did not matter if it included the death on a Roman cross. He surrendered Himself to function completely under the authority of the will of God no matter the cost.

a) Judaism prized obedience to the point of death in stories about its martyrs. Crucifixion was the most degrading form of execution, reserved for non-Roman criminals who were slaves or free persons of the lowest status.^[13]

5. Even death on a cross – **Genitive, singular, masculine | prepositional object** – It is one thing to die knowing that the person’s life was faithfully lived for the purposes of God, but it is another thing to die suffering shamefully, totally humiliated, falsely accused and accursed for something that person never even thought to do. This shameful horrifying process took place in the most horrific manner which is the lowest way a person could be executed, and that is on a Roman cross. The only reason that Christ was hung on the cross was because of His Father’s will that He be crucified to deliver mankind from sin. It was not because He had any desire to sin.

a) Crucifixion was widely regarded in the ancient Roman world as “the slave’s punishment” (*supplicium servile*). The victim of crucifixion served as a living public placard, warning all who passed by of what would happen to those who rebelled

against their station in life, whether as a literal slave or as a member of a conquered, and therefore symbolically enslaved, nation. ^[14]

b) He was always the Master of death. He died as no other individual ever died or ever will die. He died of His own volition. He dismissed His human spirit. The word “unto” is the translation of a Greek word which means “up to the point of.” Our Lord was obedient to the Father up to the point of dying. ^[15]

6. Even death on a cross – Even though Christ knew His death would have been a shameful, humiliating, horrifying process and the lowest way a person could be executed, a Roman cross, He still fulfilled God’s will to love us.
7. Even death on a cross – Christ submitted to die on a Roman cross because Christ, for the sake of His Father’s agenda, emptied Himself of His glory and became the God-Man that He is. Because He was no longer going to focus on functioning in His glorified state He lowered Himself for the purposes of God to the lowest of lowest form of death and between two thieves because God so loved the world.

a) Christ suffered not because he deserved it but because he selflessly refused to exploit his divinity and instead substituted his own death for the death of those who justly deserved God’s wrath. ^[16]

^[1] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 5, pp. 61–62). Eerdmans.

^[2] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 63). Eerdmans.

^[3] Lightner, R. P. (1985). [*Philippians*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 653–654). Victor Books.

^[4] Lightner, R. P. (1985). [*Philippians*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 654). Victor Books.

- ^[5] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader](#) (Vol. 5, p. 64). Eerdmans.
- ^[6] Lightner, R. P. (1985). [Philippians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 654). Victor Books.
- ^[7] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader](#) (Vol. 5, pp. 66–67). Eerdmans.
- ^[8] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader](#) (Vol. 5, pp. 67–68). Eerdmans.
- ^[9] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, p. 75). Victor Books.
- ^[10] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader](#) (Vol. 5, pp. 69–70). Eerdmans.
- ^[11] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader](#) (Vol. 5, pp. 69–70). Eerdmans.
- ^[12] Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F., eds. (1962). [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament](#) (Php 2:7). Moody Press.
- ^[13] Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (Php 2:8). InterVarsity Press.
- ^[14] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon](#). (Vol. 3, p. 356). Zondervan.
- ^[15] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader](#) (Vol. 5, p. 70). Eerdmans.
- ^[16] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon](#). (Vol. 3, p. 356). Zondervan.