

# 20:20 Vision Ministries - Devotions by Roger Browning

## Week 1 (December 28, 2014-January 3, 2015)

One of my traditions is to start each year in Paul's letter to the Philippians. This short letter takes less than 15 minutes to read, but it is filled with powerful thoughts to begin the New Year. Allow God to minister to your heart as you study these devotions.

**Sunday**, December 28 (read Philippians 1:1-11)

*. . . being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)*

How can you start your year with confidence and assurance? How about believing today's printed verse and taking it to heart! Paul starts all of his letters by reminding us that **grace** precedes **peace** (v. 2). The joy that all of us can experience comes from two facts taught in v. 5-6: 1) we are not alone in ministry because fellow believers are our partners; and 2) Jesus will complete the salvation process that He began when we gave our hearts to Him (salvation, sanctification, glorification). As I intercede for you in 2015, my prayer is identical to that of Paul. I want each of you to grow in your love for God and for one another, and I want each of you to grow in knowledge and depth of insight so that you will be ready for and excited about the return of our Lord to earth (v. 9-11).

**Monday**, December 29 (read Philippians 1:12-30)

*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)*

Take the time to read today's material because, even as I write this devotion, persecutions are starting in America. Beheadings are commonplace in Muslim countries and are beginning to take place in the United States. We should not be afraid to die for the cause of Christ because God will take us immediately into His presence (v. 21-24). The Lord wants you to be so sure of your relationship with Him that you have no fear of the troubles coming to our world. Everything God allows in your life will ultimately be for your benefit and for His glory (v. 12-15; see Romans 8:28), so "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (v. 27a). Your salvation is secure in God's hands, so you can also trust Him to deal with those who oppose you and your message (v. 28).

**Tuesday**, December 30 (read Philippians 2:1-11)

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: (Philippians 2:5)*

Paul encourages believers to be united in Christ and to place the needs of others ahead of our own (v. 1-4). Who is our example of selfless living? Jesus, of course, who left the glory of being equal with the Father to become a man, and who spent His days on earth as a servant, and who died a criminal's death on Calvary to pay the price for our sins (v. 6-9). How does your attitude compare to His (v. 5)? Because Jesus was faithful to the Father's plan to redeem fallen mankind, He is exalted and carries a name that is above all names (v. 9). Someday, "every knee (will) bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (v. 10-11). Since we are still living in the **Day of Grace**, bow down voluntarily right now so that you won't be forced to kneel among those who reject Him!

**Wednesday**, December 31 (read Philippians 2:12-18)

*Do everything without complaining or arguing, . . . (Philippians 2:14)*

Paul reassures us that the task of completing our salvation experience is in the hands of God, not in the accomplishments of men (v. 12-13). By respecting God enough to allow Him to control our lives (v. 12), we “work out (our) salvation.” All we can do is to surrender the control of our lives to Him; God does all the rest (v. 13). We must learn to “do everything without complaining or arguing” so that the lost world “may see (our) good deeds and praise (our) Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). We are called to be “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14), but so far we have been dim, flickering lights. God wants us to “shine like stars” as we present the gospel to our lost friends and neighbors (v. 15-16). You’re a child of the King! Share that amazing truth with passion and conviction.

**Thursday**, January 1 (read Philippians 3:1-9)

*But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. (Philippians 3:7)*

As we begin 2015, I want you to obey the command in v. 1, “rejoice in the Lord!” We are part of a mighty army of God’s children, so, in spite of current circumstances, we are commanded to set an example for others in the body of Christ. We are among those “who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh” (v. 3). Last year, we spent a lot of time studying the difference between the flesh and the Spirit, so we should know by now that the flesh cannot be trusted to bring us closer to God. Paul had wonderful religious credentials (v. 4-6), but he traded them all in for salvation full and free, paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ (v. 7-8). His righteousness did not come from his accomplishments, but rather from the **gift of God** through the finished work of the Lord (v. 9). Do you acknowledge that your place in heaven is secured by His life, death and resurrection alone? Happy New Year!

**Friday**, January 2 (read Philippians 3:10-14)

*Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. (Philippians 3:13)*

I quote these verses almost every morning during my prayer time. They remind me that the future is much brighter than the past if I continue to seek God with all my heart. The more I know about the One who died for me, the more I love Him. The more I love Him, the more I am willing to suffer for Him if that is what He allows to come into my life. Salvation is free, but it isn’t cheap (v. 10-11)! I want you to have the kind of love and trust that compels you to seek Him. None of us will achieve perfection in these earthly bodies, but we should “press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of (us)” (v. 12). To accomplish this, we must focus on letting go of the past (v. 13) so that we can “press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called (us) heavenward in Christ Jesus” (v. 14). Are you willing to commit 2015 to that goal?

**Saturday**, January 3 (read Philippians 3:15-21)

*Only let us live up to what we have already attained. (Philippians 3:16)*

Maturing Christians will allow God to teach them **new truths**. They should never lock themselves into a position that makes no provision for more truth to enter (v. 15). I consider the printed verse above to be one of the most powerful 3:16’s in the Bible because it levels the playing field for all of us. If we live up to the truth we now understand, God will reveal more truth to us. We are **citizens** of heaven right now, so our minds should focus on things above and not on earthly things (v. 17-20; see also Colossians 3:1-2). God is still in the transforming business as long as we live in these earthly bodies (v. 21), but He has new bodies for us in heaven (v. 21). As we move toward that glorious transformation, don’t lose sight of the cross (v. 18)! Without it, we would all be lost!