

What does it mean to work out one's salvation with fear and trembling? Is God in favor of human tradition?

God's work (e.g. bringing one to salvation [Phil 2:13]) begins a new work in the believer (v. 12).

The apostle Paul encouraged believers to work out life issues based on scripture. They should have reverence and awe for God and do right in all circumstances.

R. R. Melick wrote:

Personal salvation brings with it responsibilities which Paul related to Christians' obedience. The responsibility was to live in accord with their salvation, letting the implications of their relationship with Christ transform their social relationships. Paul really meant, in the first place, that they were to act like Christians.

To live like Christians, the Philippians were to have an attitude of obedience. The obedience was not to Paul, although apparently his presence encouraged it in their lives. The obedience was to God. The church members were to solve their problems as an act of obedience to God. Such obedience confirmed the fact that they were truly saved.....The precise words are "fear and trembling." These words reminded them of their relationship to God and that they were to conduct their lives with a seriousness and reverence due him. After all, he worked in them.¹

Relationships take work. One is a right relationship with God confesses his sin and relies on the Spirit to live a holy life (Ga 5:16, Eph 5:18, 1 Jn 1:9).

Jesus condemned the Pharisees saying, "You nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition" (Mt 15:6). He called them hypocrites and said Isaiah prophesied well about them², saying: "These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (vv. 8–9).

False religious teachers today continue to deceive (2 Pe 2:1). The apostle Peter said that men should obey God rather than men (Ac 5:29).

¹ Melick, R. R. (1991). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 32). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

² Is 29:13