

## Philippians

### Lesson #7, Chapter 2:1-11

Before you begin your lesson, be sure to stop and ask the Lord for His help in studying His Word. May these verses be the seed crop that increase the harvest of righteousness in your life.

1. Philippians 2:1 begins with *therefore*, which means it is directly tied to the previous verses. What had Paul just been discussing in Philippians 1:27-30?
2. Though Paul begins his statements with an *if* in Philippians 2:1, we could actually insert *since* in the place of his “if.” Paul is speaking about realities, not uncertainties. Yet, by framing his rhetorical comments with *if* statements, Paul effectively gets us to consider what is true for all believers. What does Paul want us to remember (verse 1)?
3. Define *encouragement* [Strong’s #3874 (NKJV *consolation*)]. See also John 14:26; Acts 15:30-32; Romans 15:4-5; Hebrews 6:18 to gain insight into the word’s meaning. What do you learn?
4. Since there is indeed *encouragement in Christ*, what are some ways you have been helped by Him?
5. What are some ways you have been *consoled or comforted by love of the Lord Jesus* toward you?

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6. Paul refers to believers enjoying *fellowship with the Holy Spirit*. Look up the following verses to gain a better picture of what Paul means by that phrase: Romans 5:5; 8:9-16, 26; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:18-22; 4:30-32. What are some ways *you* enjoy fellowship (ESV *participation*) with the Holy Spirit?
  
7. What are some ways God has lovingly shown *affection and compassion* toward you? See also 2 Corinthians 1:3; Philippians 1:8; Colossians 3:12-13.
  
8. What does Paul desire for the Philippians in 2:2? What bearing does verse 1 have upon the instructions of verse 2?

"I am quite sure that the best way to promote unity is to promote truth. It will not do for us to be all united together by yielding to one another's mistakes." ~Charles Spurgeon

9. Paul urged the Philippians to live harmoniously with each other, by being *intent on one purpose*. What is that one purpose? You can find elements of that single-minded, Godward focus in Philippians 1:18, 20, 21, 27; 2:1.

If we have the single mind of Philippians 1, then we will have no problem with the submissive mind of Philippians 2. ~Warren Wiersbe<sup>1</sup>

10. Paul gives further instruction for maintaining godly harmony in the church at Philippi. What do you learn in Philippians 2:3? How would obeying this verse alone promote unity among the brethren?

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 74.

11. Define *selfishness* [Strong's #2052 (ESV, NKJV, NIV *selfish ambition*)]. See also Romans 2:8; Philippians 1:17; James 3:14-16.

12. Define *empty conceit* [Strong's #2754].

Conceit, a seeking of glory which is, in reality, empty because it focuses on the individual rather than on the Lord. ~Richard Melick<sup>2</sup>

13. How would being humble in heart help you to regard others as more important than yourself? Consider what you learn from the following verses about humility: Proverbs 25:6-7; Matthew 11:29; 20:26-27; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:1-3.

14. More instruction for servant-hearted, humble living is given in Philippians 2:4. What do you learn? Look up the following verses to see some examples of what that might look like in your life: Romans 14:19-22; 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Philippians 2:21. What are more ways to put Philippians 2:4 into practice in your life?

15. On the heels of Paul's admonitions to the Philippian believers, what does Paul command the Philippians in verse 5? What episodes from Christ's life are presented to help us live unselfish, others-focused, humble, servant-hearted lives? See Philippians 2:6-8.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 94.

Pride cannot live beneath the cross. Let us sit there and learn our lesson, and then rise and carry it into practice. ~Charles Spurgeon<sup>3</sup>

The dramatic distance Jesus traveled from the “form of God” to “the death of the cross” dramatically reveals the servant mind that each believer was to have. ~Richard Melick<sup>4</sup>

16. What does Paul mean when he said Christ *existed in the form of God*? See Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; John 1:1.

17. What does Paul mean when he says Christ *emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men*? See Isaiah 53:2-3; John 5:30; 17:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 5:8.

Paradoxically, being “made nothing” means adding humanity to deity rather than subtracting deity from His person. ~Richard Melick<sup>5</sup>

18. How did Christ *humble* Himself according to Philippians 2:8? See also Luke 2:51; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Hebrews 5:5, 7-8; 1 Peter 2:23.

19. The Scriptures say, “Before honor comes humility (Proverbs 15:33).” Christ, in taking on human flesh and identifying Himself with all things human, certainly humbled Himself. Even in this area the Scriptures were fulfilled in Him. After His humiliation, what honor was given to the Lord Jesus and by whom (Philippians 2:9)?

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<sup>3</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896), June 3, evening.

<sup>4</sup> Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 99.

<sup>5</sup> Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 103.

20. While on earth, Jesus wasn't given the honor and exaltation He deserved. Even now, He doesn't experience the worship rightfully due Him, but there will come a day when He will receive His just praise. How will Christ be worshiped according to Philippians 2:10-11?
  
21. When, where, and by whom does this exaltation take place? See 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:20-23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Hebrews 2:9; 12:2; Revelation 4:9-11; 5:11-14.
  
22. This theologically rich passage demonstrates that how you think matters because it impacts how you live. What threads of thought from Philippians 2:1-11 should be woven into the fabric of your life? How should those precious truths impact your life as seen in verses 1-11.

So we come to the end of this passage; and, when we come to its end, we come back to its beginning. The day will come when people will call Jesus *Lord*, but they will do so *to the glory of God the Father*. The whole aim of Jesus is not his own glory but God's. Jesus draws men and women to himself that he may draw them to God. In the Philippian church, there were some whose aim was to gratify a selfish ambition; the aim of Jesus was to serve others, no matter what depths of self-renunciation that service might involve. In the Philippian church, there were those whose aim was to focus people's eyes upon themselves; the aim of Jesus was to focus people's eyes upon God. So the followers of Christ must think always not of themselves but of others, not of their own glory but of the glory of God. ~William Barclay<sup>6</sup>

A reporter was interviewing a successful job counselor who had placed hundreds of workers in their vocations quite happily. When asked the secret of his success, the man replied: "If you want to find out what a worker is really like, don't give him responsibilities—give him *privileges*. Most people can handle responsibilities if you pay them enough, but it takes a real leader to handle privileges. A leader will use his

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<sup>6</sup> William Barclay, *The Letters to Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated, The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 47.

privileges to help others and build the organization; a lesser man will use privileges to promote himself.”  
Jesus used His heavenly privileges for the sake of others—for *our* sake. ~Warren Wiersbe<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 74.