

Philippians

Lesson #1, Introduction

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Read through the book of Philippians two times before you begin answering the questions below.

Using only the text of Philippians, try to answer the following questions. Be sure to note the Scripture references to show where you found your answer from the Bible. *At this point in the lesson you may not be able to answer every question using only your Bible.* You will have an opportunity at the end of this lesson to come back and complete your answers using other Bible study sources.

1. Who wrote the book?

Paul but he includes Timothy (1:1); Paul writes in first person all the way through the book and gives personal details about himself and his circumstances.

2. To whom is it written?

To the believers at Philippi (1:1); 4:15 also: You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

3. When was the book written?

Paul was in prison in Rome, yet expected to be released. His response is different than when he writes to Timothy in his second letter. He has fellow workers with him at this time.

Written during Paul's first imprisonment around 60-62 AD [MacArthur Study Bible]

4. Where was it written?

References to praetorian guard and his imprisonment indicate he was in Rome (1:13). Paul wrote it somewhere away from Philippi...see 2:19: But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. Also in 4:15 it says he left Macedonia.

"Paul wrote Philippians, along with Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon, from prison. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the church accepted that the four Prison Epistles were written during the apostle's imprisonment at Rome (Acts 28:14-31). In recent times, however, both Caesarea and Ephesus have been proposed as alternative locations.

The evidence that Paul wrote Philippians from Rome is impressive. The terms "praetorian guard" (1:13) and "Caesar's household" (4:22) are most naturally understood as references to the emperor's bodyguard and servants stationed in Rome." [John F. MacArthur Jr., Philippians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 5.]

5. What is the general tone of the author in the book?

Loving, encouraging, full of a grateful spirit for their growth and progress in the faith. He uses lots of wooing, loving words to describe the Philippians. It's very personal and intimate from Paul to his beloved friends.

6. What is the author's purpose in writing this book?

He writes to let them know that God was using his imprisonment for the gospel. Paul wanted them to be encouraged. See 1:12-14: **12** Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, **13** so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, **14** and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

He writes to remind and encourage them to godly living as seen in 1:27; 2:1-4; and the rest of the admonitions in the book.

Thank you note for their gift as seen in 4:14: **14** Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

7. What topics are included in this book?

Paul's imprisonment; the gospel being proclaimed; Christ is worth it all—no matter the cost; be like Jesus; maintain unity; be a light; how to treat those Paul sends their way; Paul's testimony; follow Paul's example; live like a citizen of heaven; stand firm; help in conflict; think rightly; contentment in all circumstances; the Lord's return

8. What are the key words of the book? Key words are words that are repeated or carry an important thought.

Christ, gospel, imprisonment; proclaim; preach; rejoice; joy; unity (unite); fellowship; contentment; loss/count; gift

9. What are the main themes of the book? A theme is the main idea, the overall message. Exalt Christ; give all for Christ; be like Christ; follow Christ; value Christ

"While other themes appear in this epistle, they are but spokes around the hub of the Christ Poem. Themes such as Christian unity (1:27; 2:1-4; 4:2-3), spiritual joy (1:4, 18, 25, 28; 2:2; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10), being ready for the Lord's return (1:6, 10-11; 2:16; 3:14, 21), and giving to others in need (1:23-26; 4:10, 15-19) are the fruits of pursuing Christ and knowing him experientially. Unity comes from self-sacrifice (as Christ did in becoming man and dying on the cross), spiritual joy is the result of knowing Christ now and seeing him in his return (as Christ experienced joy when he returned to the Father), and giving to others is directly linked to Christ giving himself over to death so that all who believe in him may have eternal life." [Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. Davids, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon., vol. 16 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 147-148.]

10. What attributes of God do you see in this book?

God is Father (1:2; 2:15); God is One and Only (2:6); God sanctifies—He is holy and makes His children holy (2:13); God is righteous and He gives His righteousness to us in Christ (3:9); God is electing, effective, and efficacious in His call (3:14); God hears (4:6); God is peace (4:7); God is mighty (4:13, 19); God is worthy of praise (4:20).

11. What attributes of Christ do you find in this book?

He loves (1:8); He judges (1:10; 2:16); He is righteous (1:11; 3:9); He is worthy of all worship (1:20); He encourages (2:1); He is humble, obedient, faithful, enduring (2:5-8); He is God and worthy to be worshiped (2:9-11); He is knowable (3:8); He is of infinite value (3:8-11, 14); He is Savior (3:20); He is powerful (3:21); He is sovereign over all (3:21); He is near (4:5).

12. List any attributes of the Holy Spirit you find in this book.

He is part of the trinity (1:19; 3:3); He promotes fellowship (2:1); He promotes worship (3:3).

Now you can go back and add to your answers above using a Bible dictionary or Bible commentary.

13. What insights have you gained thus far in your study of Philippians?

I think 1:20 and 1:21 sum up what I see in this book, which is that because the Lord Jesus is such a glorious, beautiful, gracious, loving, merciful, holy, and saving Savior that doing whatever is pleasing to Him is a small thing.

Philippians 1:20 — 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. *I am struck with the idea that Christ can be exalted in how I live each day.*

Philippians 1:21 — 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. *He is my all and all my interests should be bound up in Christ. He has my attention.*

14. What's one verse in the book that has caught your attention? How did it encourage or convict you, or make you want to study and think about it more?

The verses above and also 3:1.

Philippians 3:1 — 1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. *Rejoicing in the Lord is a safeguard for me. How practical and amazing to consider!*

Convicted by 3:8 to really consider what I am willing to count as loss in view of knowing Christ!

Philippians 3:8 — 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

Philippians

Lesson #2, Chapter 1 Observation

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study that all too often can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what is in the text. At this stage in the Bible study, you're noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what it means or how it applies to your life—that will come later, I promise. Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. You'll be glad you did!

I've included Chapter 1 at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. To begin, read through Chapter 1. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 1. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.¹
 - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-2).
Paul's greetings to the saints at Philippi.
 - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 3-11).
Paul tells the Philippians how thankful he is for their faith and their work in the gospel. He longs to see them and tells them how he's praying for them—that they their love would grow in knowledge and discernment and that they would approve the things that are excellent so they can be holy and upright in their lives.
 - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 12-26).
Paul encourages the Philippians that even though he was thrown in jail for preaching the gospel, he has seen the Lord use it for great good and the furtherance of the kingdom. He even affirms that though many are taking advantage of his imprisonment for their own gain, he doesn't mind because in the end Christ is preached and put on display. Paul longs to be with Christ, but also

¹The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

desires to serve Him in whatever capacity the Lord may give for in the end, “to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 27-30).

Paul encourages the Philippians to conduct themselves worthily of Christ and stand firm in the spirit and with each other, recognizing that opposition and suffering are part of following Christ.

2. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

The main point of this chapter is to encourage the Philippians in their hardships and trials that they are dear to Paul, that trials are part of the Christian life, but they can live for Christ and give Him glory no matter what their circumstances.

Key verse could be 1:20 or 1:21

Philippians 1:20 — 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Philippians 1:21 — 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

3. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.
May Christ be Exalted

4. On the *Philippians Bible Text* handout mark key words. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. Start with these first. Then mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

5. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time *God* is mentioned in Philippians Chapter 1. Your Chapter 1 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Vs. 2 – grace to you and peace from *God*

Vs. 2 – *God* our *Father*

Vs. 3 – I thank *God* when I [Paul] remember you [Philippians]

God

Verse 2 peace from God our Father

Verse 3 thank my God

Verse 6 confident that He [God] who [referring to God] began a good work in you will complete it

Verse 8 God is my witness how I long for you

Verse 11 to the glory and praise of God

Verse 14 some brethren...have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear

Verse 28 don't be alarmed by opponents—a sign of destruction for them, salvation for you, and that too, from God

Christ

Verse 1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus

Verse 1 to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi

Verse 6 God will perfect work in you until the day of Christ Jesus

Verse 8 long for you with the affection of Christ Jesus

Verse 10 be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ

Verse 11 fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ

Verse 13 my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known

Verse 14 most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonmet

Verse 15 some are preaching Christ from envy and strife

Verse 17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition

Verse 18 whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed and in this I rejoice

Verse 19 deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ

Verse 20 but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always...

Verse 21 to live is Christ

Verse 23 hard pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ

Verse 26 your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus

Verse 27 conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ

Verse 29 to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him [Christ] but to suffer for His [Christ's] sake

Holy Spirit

Verse 19 prayers and provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ

Gospel

Verse 5 in view of your participation in the gospel

Verse 7 in the defense and confirmation of the gospel

Verse 12 turned out for the greater progress of the gospel

[Verse 14 speak the word of God without fear]

[Verse 15 some to be sure are preaching Christ]

Verse 16 I am appointed for the defense of the gospel

Verse 27 conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ

Verse 27 striving together for the faith of the gospel

Preaching/with synonyms

Verse 14 speak the word of God

Verse 15 preaching Christ from envy and strife, but some also [preach the gospel] from good will

Verse 17 proclaim Christ

Verse 18 Christ is proclaimed

Pray/prayer/synonyms

Verse 3 I *thank God* in all my remembrance of you,

Verse 4 always offering *prayer* with joy in my every *prayer* for you all

Verse 9 and this I pray that your love may abound

Verse 19 this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers

Imprisonment

Verse 7 I have you in my heart since, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partakers of grace with me

Verse 13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known

Verse 14 most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage

Verse 17 thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment

Rejoice/joy

Verse 4 always offering prayer with *joy*

Verse 18 Christ is proclaimed; and in this I *rejoice*. Yes, and I will *rejoice*.

Love/with synonyms

Verse 7 I have you in my heart

Verse 9 I pray that your love may abound still more in real knowledge and discernment

Verse 16 the latter do it [preach Christ] out of love

Partaker/participation

Verse 5 in view of your participation in the gospel

Verse 7 you all are partakers of grace with me

Faith

Verse 25 all your progress and joy in the faith

Verse 27 striving together for the faith of the gospel

6. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be.

7. Now, list them on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.

Verse 27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ

8. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted.
9. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.
See observation sheet.

10. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)
Verse 6 *For* I am confident of this very thing – ties in with verses 3-5 with his statements in verse 6.
Verse 7 *For* it is only right for me to feel this way about you all connects verse 6 “He who began a good work in you will perfect it” with verse 7 “you are all partakers of grace with me.”
Verse 8 *For* God is my witness connecting verse 7 “you are all partakers of grace with me” with verse 8 “how I long for you”
Verse 9 *And this I pray* connects verse 8 and Paul’s great affection with his prayer for them. Also transitions to a new “topic” of prayer.
Verse 12 *Now I want you to know* introduces a new topic.
Verse 19 *for I know that this* connects Paul’s rejoicing over the gospel being proclaimed with his deliverance to do more kingdom work.
Verse 29 *for to you it has been granted* connects the statement of salvation in them from verse 28 with their belief and suffering as believers (verse 29)

So that

- Verse 10 this I pray...*so that* you may approve...
Verse 13 circumstances have turned out...*so that*...my imprisonment has become well known
Verse 26 I shall remain for your progress in the faith...*so that*...your proud confidence in me may abound
Verse 27 conduct yourselves worthily...*so that*...I will hear you are standing firm

11. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.
Verse 5 *first day*
Verse 5 *now*
Verse 6 until *the day* of Christ Jesus
Verse 10 blameless until *the day* of Christ
Verse 20 Christ will even *now*, [as always]
[Verse 25 I will remain and continue]
[verse 26 through my coming to you again]
Verse 30 and *now* hear to be in me

12. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.

See observation sheet.

13. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person. For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is loving [because He loved the world]; He is giving [because He gave His Son]; He is eternal [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

Attributes of God

Verse 2 God is Father

Verse 2 God is peace

Verse 3 God is worthy of praise/He is sovereign

Verse 6 God is sovereign/holy/eternal/powerful

Verse 8 God is all seeing, all knowing

Verse 11 God is all/mighty/worthy of praise

Verse 14 God is king

Verse 28 God is righteous/holy/judging/discerning/all seeing/all knowing

Attributes of Christ

Verse 1 Christ is Lord/Master

Verse 2 He is holy

Verse 6, 10 He is judge/holy/righteous/sovereign/powerful

Verse 8 He is compassionate/loving/merciful

Verse 11 He is righteous

Verse 13 He is sovereign/king/worthy to be followed and obeyed

Verse 14 He is sovereign/trustworthy

Verses 15, 17, 18 Christ is proclaimed/preached because He is king/the only God

Verse 19 He provides

Verse 21 He is all sufficient

Verse 23 He is winsome and lovable

Verse 29 He is worthy

Attributes of the Holy Spirit

Verse 19 He provides for believers

14. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action. For example, in Philippians 1:1 *we find a list about Paul’s thankful heart.* We discover 1) he’s thankful when he remembers the Philippians; 2) he’s shows his thankfulness by praying for them; 3) his thankfulness spills over into prayers with joy for them; 4) he’s thankful when he remembers how they participated in the gospel from the very beginning until now.

See observation sheet.

15. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting.

See observation sheet.

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in each chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life at this time. Your task at this time is to look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter. Have fun digging into God's word!

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES

Discovering the Treasures of the Word

Philippians Chapter 1

1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,

5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.

8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

Paul is thankful
1. for their gospel participation
2. for the good work God will do
3. for their partaking of grace in Christ Jesus
+ the hope

Paul prays they grow
1. love may abound - more - real - all
2. approve of excellent things - sincere - blameless
2. be filled with the fruit of righteousness
- come thru a gift - to the glory + praise of God

Paul's circumstances
1. greater progress of the gospel
2. imprisonment has become well-known - to praetorian - to everyone else
3. brethren have courage
4. some praetorian cannot strife - out of fear of punishment - cause trouble for others

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES

Discovering the Treasures of the Word

14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear,

15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will,

16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel,

17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.

23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better,

24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith.

- Some preach
1. w/o fear
 2. good will
 3. love
 4. pure motives
 5. to wish to cause me distress while some preach
1. envy
 2. strife
 3. selfish ambition
 4. cause distress to Paul
 5. rejoice
 6. Christ is proclaimed

- To live
1. Christ is exalted
 2. I gain
 3. fruitful labor
 4. necessary for Paul's sake
 5. for your progress
 6. joy in the faith

- To die
1. Christ is exalted
 2. I gain
 3. I will
 4. with you all

Handwritten notes in the left margin:

- Handwritten scribbles and notes.

Paul's Big Decision

1. beautiful - verse 20
2. remain in the flesh - success - for your sake - for your progress - for your joy in the faith - as you would be assured/continue in me

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES

Discovering the Treasures of the Word

26 so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

27 Only construe yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel:

28 in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Δ Jesus
 + Holy Spirit
 ✓ see comments (1)
 S → S Synonyms
 Transitions
 Ⓞ time
 so that
 ↔ contrast / comparisons

gospel
 faith
 preaching / and synonyms
 de-taker / participation
 pray
 independent (v)
 live / remain
 die / depart
 rejoice (1)
 joy (2)

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Philippians

Lesson #3, Chapter 1:1-11

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Before you begin this lesson, ask the Lord for His help in gaining the most from His Word. He loves to answer the prayers of His children!

“Paul apparently visited Philippi twice during his third missionary journey, once at the beginning (cf. 2 Cor. 8:1–5), and again near the end (Acts 20:6). About 4 or 5 years after his last visit to Philippi, while a prisoner at Rome, Paul received a delegation from the Philippian church. The Philippians had generously supported Paul in the past (4:15, 16), and had also contributed abundantly for the needy at Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1–4). Now, hearing of Paul’s imprisonment, they sent another contribution to him (4:10), and along with it Epaphroditus to minister to Paul’s needs. Unfortunately Epaphroditus suffered a near-fatal illness (2:26, 27), either while en route to Rome, or after he arrived. Accordingly, Paul decided to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi (2:25, 26) and wrote the letter to the Philippians to send back with him.” John MacArthur¹

1. Right from the get-go we learn some important information about Paul and Timothy. What do we learn about them in verse 1?

They are bond-servants of Christ Jesus.

2. In verse 1 Paul uses a term to describe himself and Timothy that comes weighted with meaning. Define *bond-servant* [Strong’s #1401 (ESV, NIV *servants*)] using your study Bible notes, a commentary, a Bible word study book or something along those lines (Don’t forget the excellent online tools available for word studies).

The word indicates they are servants by nature. How is that? Because when we come to know the Lord Jesus as our Savior, then we gain His nature. He came to serve and now we follow in His footsteps.

Means to be bound to another. “It refers to one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another. Paul’s will was at one time swallowed up in the will of Satan. Now his will is swallowed up in the sweet will of God. It refers to one who serves another even to the disregard of his own interests. Paul served Satan to the detriment of his own interests. Now he serves the Lord Jesus with a reckless abandon, not regarding his own interests.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 26–27.]

“When used in the New Testament of a believer’s relationship to Jesus Christ, *doulos* describes willing, determined, and devoted service.” [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 13.]

“In that spirit Paul and Timothy did not think of being bond-servants of Christ Jesus in anything but positive terms. That devotion is required of every believer, but especially of those called to the ministry. Even if a pastor’s or teacher’s primary devotion is to the church, it will inevitably bring some measure of compromise, disappointment, and

¹ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1818.

spiritual failure. But devotion to Christ Jesus can never be disappointing or in vain. If his ministry is concerned with other believers' standards and opinions, a pastor will invariably stray from the gospel to some form of compromise. But devotion and obedience to the Lord and to His Word will just as invariably keep him on a godly and faithful course." [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 13–14.]

- a. From the following verses try to piece together what Paul wants us to understand about himself: Romans 6:22; 7:6; 1 Corinthians 7:22-23; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 5:14-15; Galatians 1:10. What do you learn about a *bond-servant*, as Paul is using the term, from those verses?

Romans 6:22 But now having been ***freed from sin and enslaved to God***, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

Romans 7:6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, ***so that we serve in newness of the Spirit*** and not in oldness of the letter.

1 Corinthians 7:22–23 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is ***Christ's slave***. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

2 Corinthians 4:5 For ***we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake***.

2 Corinthians 5:14–15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, ***so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf***.

Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? ***If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ***.

"The word is *doulos* and refers to one bound to another. Paul was bound to Jesus Christ by the bands of a constraining love. It refers to one born into slavery. Paul was born into slavery to sin by his first birth, and into the position of a loving bondservant of the Lord Jesus by his new birth. It refers to one who is in a relation to another which only death can break. Paul's relation to Satan was broken by his identification with Christ in His death. He now is in a relation to Jesus Christ which will last forever, since Christ can never die again, and Paul's life is Christ. It refers to one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another. Paul's will was at one time swallowed up in the will of Satan. Now his will is swallowed up in the sweet will of God. It refers to one who serves another even to the disregard of his own interests. Paul served Satan to the detriment of his own interests. Now he serves the Lord Jesus with a reckless abandon, not regarding his own interests." Kenneth Wuest²

3. With one word—*bond-servant*—the tone is set for understanding Paul and the book of *Philippians*, while also laying the groundwork for understanding our own relationship with the Lord. As God's bond-servant, what motivations are the focus of your heart and how do those motivations guide the choices you make throughout the day?

²Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 26–27.

I have been bought with a price. I am no longer my own master. The Lord Jesus is my precious Master, King, Savior, and Deliverer. He has every right to ask anything of me and He has every right to expect that I would respond with alacrity, joy, and submission. My responses should be humble, trusting His oversight for my life, rather than quarreling and griping about it in my heart.

All to Jesus, I surrender. All to Him, I freely give.

4. To whom does Paul address his letter in verse 1? What do we learn about the recipients?

To the saints

Who are in Christ Jesus

Who are in Philippi

Also including the overseers and deacons

5. What benediction does Paul give the Philippians in verse 2?

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

6. Kenneth Wuest points out, “The *grace* spoken of here is sanctifying grace, that part of salvation given the saint in which God causes him to grow in Christ-likeness through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.” The word “*peace*” means “the operation of God’s grace in binding the believing sinner to God and His life again, ... in bringing that believer in his experience more and more into harmony with God in his life and service.”³ When Paul writes his customary greeting of “grace and peace” to his friends and fellow believers, what does he want to communicate to them?

He wants to remind them of the work of God in their lives. That it is ongoing. It is the richest blessing Paul can conceive to greet those he loves so dearly.

“The saving, eternal grace that is granted to penitent, believing sinners is the supreme divine gift, and everlasting peace is its greatest blessing. The source of both is God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This salutation expresses Paul’s abiding love and concern for the faithful believers in Philippi and serves as an introduction to the many specific causes for rejoicing that he mentions throughout this tenderest of all his epistles.” [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 16.]

7. What is Paul thankful for when he remembers the Philippians? See Philippians 1:3-5.

He’s thankful as he remembers the Philippians with joy as he remembers their participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

8. Describe the beginnings of the Philippian church and its first converts. See Acts 16:11-40.

After staying in the city for a few day, Paul, on the Sabbath, went to the river where some women were gathered for prayer. There God opened Lydia’s heart and saved her. Then they came upon a slave-girl who was demon possessed. When Paul cast out the

³Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 29-30.

demon, her masters took offense and incited the crowd to beat Paul and Silas. After being beaten they were thrown into prison. Though beaten, Paul and Silas praised the Lord. God sent an earthquake to open the prison doors. The jailer, fearing repercussions, was going to take his life until Paul assured him they hadn't escaped. The jailer and his family repented and believed. In the morning, Paul revealed that both he and Silas were Roman citizens, who had been unfairly beaten. The magistrates begged them to leave Philippi, but they tarried long enough at Lydia's house to encourage the saints before they departed.

Acts 16:11–40 So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis; and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were staying in this city for some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans." The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household. Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men." And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out." The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

9. In what way did the Philippian believers *participate* or *partner* in the sharing of the gospel "from the first day until now?" See Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5;

Philippians 1:7; 4:10, 15-16. What does that tell you about this group of believers, even if you know nothing else about them?

Romans 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 8:1–5 Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

Philippians 1:7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.

Philippians 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.

Philippians 4:15–16 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

The Philippian believers rejoiced, delighted in giving to the poor in Jerusalem. They were generous, though they themselves were suffering persecution and were in deep poverty. They were persistent in their desire to give to others for the glory of God. They are part of the grace given group of saints in the world. They entered into Paul's sufferings and sought to alleviate them the best they could. They longed to support Paul and when they were able to do so, they did—at the first opportunity. They alone had this generous and kind, far-sighted view of Paul's needs and circumstances. They understood that God would meet their needs if they sought to meet the needs of others.

10. What assurance did Paul have about these believers according to verse 6? That He who began a good work in them would perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

11. What do you learn about God's work in the life of a believer from Philippians 1:6? Try to make at least 5 observations from verse 6.

Paul is assured/confident that God will complete His work in them.

He began the work in them.

It is a good work.

God will perfect the work—that is, He will finish the task.

The work of God is completed in the day of Christ Jesus.

God will sustain the believers as He works in them.

God will sustain the believers until the final day.

God is powerful to do the work.

God is powerful to complete the work.

God is committed to finishing the work that He began in them.

God began the work—that is, He initiated it.

Because God began and initiated the work of salvation, then it does not rely on the merit or efforts of the Philippians.

No part of the work is due to the efforts of the Philippians.

It is to be of immense comfort and encouragement to know that God will complete what He begins in us.

“Though we are renewed, we have not fully recovered from the injury we received by the fall of Adam. If God withdraws His life-giving strength, our secret corruptions will break forth and our interest in holy things will soon disappear. O the glory of God’s grace! From the first to the last we are indebted to it (Galatians 2:20). We can do nothing without Him. When we come to heaven, how will our souls admire the riches of His glorious grace.” Thomas Manton⁴

12. In verse 7, Paul states, “For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all.” What is Paul referring to that encourages him so greatly? See Philippians 1:3-6 and verse 7 for your answers.

Philippians 1:3–6 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ***in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.*** For I am confident of this very thing, that ***He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.***

Philippians 1:7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, ***since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.***

They are fellow believers. They are fellow laborers in the gospel. They are fellow sufferers who responded sympathetically to Paul’s needs.

- a. How would you describe this group of believers based off Paul’s description of them in verses 3-7?

They are eager servants. They wanted to give their all in response to their Savior’s magnificent work on their behalf. They didn’t appear to do things in half measures. They were enthusiastic, joyful, and committed—even when it cost them their own comfort.

13. What is God a witness to according to verse 8?

How much Paul longs for them with all the love and affection of Jesus.

14. Eager Beaver: Paul frequently uses the idiom, “God is witness.” What does he mean when he uses that saying? See Romans 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:5, 10.

Romans 1:9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,

2 Corinthians 1:23 But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth.

1 Thessalonians 2:5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness—

⁴Thomas Manton, Richard Rushing, editor, *Voices from the Past, Volume 1* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 73.

1 Thessalonians 2:10 You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

He uses it to show his sincerity, his earnestness, and zeal. To protest his innocence when others are maligning him. He uses it to attest to his upright behavior.

- a. Where does Paul get the idea of calling a witness, and even more specifically, calling God as witness? See Genesis 31:50; 1 Samuel 20:12; Isaiah 43:12; Jeremiah 42:5.

Genesis 31:50 “If you mistreat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, see, God is witness between you and me.” *Used as a way to protect or prevent wrongdoing.*

1 Samuel 20:12 Then Jonathan said to David, “The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you? *As a way to prove intended faithfulness. A way to say that they will keep their word.*

Isaiah 43:12 “It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And I am God. *God even appoints people to be witnesses to His faithfulness and promise keeping.*

Jeremiah 42:5 Then they said to Jeremiah, “May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with the whole message with which the LORD your God will send you to us. *In calling upon God to be a witness, there is a great protestation of innocence or faithfulness in doing what is right.*

15. With great affection motivating him, Paul prays for his friends—and what a prayer it is! List what Paul prays for these dear believers. See verses 9-11.

Philippians 1:9–11 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

He prays:

That their love may abound more and more

That their love would be based in real knowledge and all discernment

That their biblical and discerning love will help them approve the things that are excellent

That their biblical and discerning love will help them be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ

That they would be filled with the fruit of righteousness which can only come through Jesus Christ

And that it would all be to the glory and praise of God

16. Define *knowledge* [Strong’s #1922] and *discernment* [Strong’s #144 (NIV *depth of insight*)].

Knowledge:

“This is from the Gr. word that describes genuine, full, or advanced knowledge. Biblical love is not an empty sentimentalism but is anchored deeply in the truth of Scripture and regulated by it (cf. Eph. 5:2, 3; 1 Pet. 1:22).” [John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1820.]

“Knowledge” is from the Greek word speaking of knowledge gained by experience, as contrasted to intuitive knowledge, which is from another word. A prefixed preposition intensifies the word, and we have “full knowledge.” The full knowledge which these Philippians needed to gain by experience was a better understanding of God’s Word as translated into their experience, and a clearer vision of the Lord Jesus in all the beauty and fragrance of His Person.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 35.]

Discernment:

“The Eng. word “aesthetic” comes from this Gr. word, which speaks of moral perception, insight, and the practical application of knowledge. Love is not blind, but perceptive, and it carefully scrutinizes to distinguish between right and wrong.” [John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1820.]

“The words “all judgment” are the translation of a Greek word referring to a sensitive moral perception, and a quickness of ethical tact. How often we saints mean to be loving to others, and say the wrong words or do the wrong thing. We lack that delicate sensibility, that ability to express ourselves correctly, that gentle, wise, discriminating touch which would convey the love we have in our hearts to the lives of others. But this can be ours if we but live in close companionship with the One who always exhibited that sense of delicate tactfulness in His life.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 36.]

- a. Why is it so important that the Philippians’ love be hemmed in by *knowledge and discernment*? See Romans 10:2; Ephesians 5:1-5; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 Timothy 1:19; 4:15-16.

Romans 10:2 For I testify about them that *they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.*

Ephesians 5:1–5 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. *But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.* For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Colossians 1:9–12 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the

Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

1 Thessalonians 5:21–22 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.

1 Timothy 1:19 keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

1 Timothy 4:15–16 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

Love that has as its foundation biblical knowledge and discernment will be guided in principle. It helps to make right judgments. It will maintain purity! True, biblical, discerning love will do what is right. It helps us walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. We are not to blindly accept things. Helps us not to throw over our faith. It is a safeguard for us and for those who follow us.

17. How does love that is informed and grounded in knowledge and discernment help us *approve the things that are excellent?*

It gives wisdom to see what is pleasing to the Lord and what is merely our own fleshly desires. It's easy to fool ourselves, so it's helpful to know what things are pleasing to the Lord and what are not. It gives assurance that we are honoring the Lord. Only the excellent and blameless things are pleasing to the Lord.

“Here are two good tests for us to follow as we exercise spiritual discernment: (1) Will it make others stumble? (2) Will I be ashamed if Jesus should return?” Warren Wiersbe⁵

18. What's the result of having a knowledgeable, discerning love that approves of excellent things? See verse 10.

In order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ. Notice those acts of faith only continue till the Lord's return because then we are fully redeemed and given new bodies. What we are in position now, we will be in practice too!

“A growing love, fed by proper knowledge and moral insight, enables one to see the best way to live in light of the day of Christ.” Richard Melick⁶

19. Verse 11 gives us another description of what sincere, blameless lives are like. What do you learn in verse 11?

Philippians 1:11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

⁵Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 66.

⁶Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 66.

Sincere, blameless living is full of the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ. This glorious living brings glory and praise to the Lord.

“The difference between spiritual fruit and human “religious activity” is that the fruit brings glory to Jesus Christ. Whenever we do anything in our own strength, we have a tendency to boast about it. True spiritual fruit is so beautiful and wonderful that no man can claim credit for it; the glory must go to God alone.”
Warren Wiersbe⁷

20. If Philippians 1:9-11 was the only prayer God chose to answer in your life, what do you think the results would be? How would this answered prayer give you wisdom in dealing the wide variety of events and relationships in your life?

I would be sooooo much better! I would live like I am supposed to live! Wouldn't it be wonderful to see that prayer fully realized in our lives? To be growing and overflowing in love for God and for others—to have it be a wise love in how it's lived out—to deeply know the Lord and understand His ways.

I wouldn't be hindered by my own selfishness but would be seeking the good of others and employing godly wisdom and knowledge of God in serving them. Ultimately, my life would simply be caught up in living for the Lord *alone*. His joy would be my focus.

21. What is the ultimate goal of a Philippians 1:9-11 kind of life? See verse 11.
To live to the glory and praise of God!

“The day of Christ characterized Paul's thoughts; the glory of God motivated Paul's actions. He saw the entire scope of salvation as an outworking of God's grace and as a contribution to God's glory. The chief end of persons was the glory of God. He reminded the Philippians of their ultimate calling, to reflect God's character in their lives. He explained the reason for their careful living; the glory of God in their lives.”
Richard Melick⁸

22. We've taken apart the pieces of this section of Scripture; now let's put it all back together again to capture the main point of this passage. As you review verses 3-11, what is the main thing Paul wanted to make sure the Philippians understood?

Paul wanted them to understand how much he loved them, what a blessing they were to him, and all he desired God to do to bless them. The focus of this paragraph is on the Philippians and how Paul felt about them and his hopes for God's work in their lives.

⁷Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 66.

⁸Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 67.

Philippians

Lesson #4, Chapter 1:12-20

TEACHER'S GUIDE

As you prepare to study God's Word, come expectantly with your sins confessed, relying on Him to sow great truths in your heart.

1. What does Paul want the believers at Philippi to know? See verse 12.
He wants them to know that his circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel.
2. Before we discover more about what Paul's circumstances, what can you learn about his attitude towards them from verse 12? Paul's response gives you insight into his life purposes and what he valued most. What do you discover?
Paul's attitude is positive. He's looking at things from an eternal perspective, even though his circumstances may be hard on him personally. Paul loves that the gospel is being proclaimed. It is his focus, joy, and purpose.
3. What do you learn about Paul's circumstances according to verse 13?
He was imprisoned for the cause of Christ. Yet, his imprisonment was the means God used so that the whole praetorian guard and everyone else would hear and know about the Good News of Jesus Christ!
4. In the wisdom of God, what things resulted from Paul's circumstances? See verses 13-14.
See also Acts 28:30-31; Philippians 4:22.
The whole praetorian guard heard. Everyone else in Caesar's household, and possibly, in Rome heard. It resulted in the believer's having courage to speak the gospel of Jesus Christ. It resulted in the believer's trusting the Lord more, not less! Paul stayed for two years in rented quarters and all who wanted to, could come and visit him, and be taught and evangelized openly and unhindered. God used this mightily to spread the gospel in a safe way for Paul. The result was that many in Caesar's household believed!
Philippians 1:13-14 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.
Acts 28:30-31 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.
Philippians 4:22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.
5. The gospel advanced in spite of Paul's imprisonment. When God purposes something, what is the result? See Genesis 50:20; Job 42:2; Daniel 4:35; Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4:15-18; Ephesians 1:11.

Genesis 50:20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

Job 42:2 “I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

Daniel 4:35 “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

2 Corinthians 4:15–18 For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Ephesians 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

When God purposes something, I will take place! Nothing can thwart it, cause it to swerve or even delay it.

6. What do you *need to know and believe about God*, if you are going to apply faith like Paul did when your circumstances seem to be taking you backward rather than forward? I need to call to mind these truths, to recount them to the Lord, and believe that they are indeed true of my circumstances and what I see unfolding about me.

“While others may have seen the end of missionary activity, Paul saw the new ways the gospel could advance. The events which seemed to inhibit the freedom of the gospel became its springboard. Paul did not say “in spite of” these events, but rather “through them.” There is a note of sacrifice here. Paul’s private concerns did not matter; the gospel did.” Richard Melick¹

7. Paul spends quite a bit of time reassuring the Philippian brethren about his situation. Based on his comments thus far in the chapter, what do you think they were concerned about for Paul? How would Paul’s response ease their worries?

They were concerned about Paul’s imprisonment and how he was doing spiritually. Because Paul responded with an eternal, God-focused perspective, then he was able to minister to the Philippians and bolster their faith in their sovereign and good God.

8. In verses 12-14 we see that Paul’s response gave the brethren courage. Our response to our circumstances can also go a long way to strengthening the faith of others. What do you notice from Psalm 119:74-75; Philippians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 3:6-8; 3 John 1:3-4? How does this truth motivate you even more to respond well in difficult circumstances?

¹Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 70.

Psalm 119:74–75 May those who fear You see me and be glad, Because I wait for Your word. I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are righteous, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

Philippians 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

1 Thessalonians 3:6–8 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.

3 John 3–4 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

I am greatly motivated by this truth. That others could be hindered by my lack of faith, that their own response to the Lord is muted because I am not trusting the Lord or responding in faith is a huge wake-up call for me to think rightly and respond in a God-glorifying way.

9. *Most of the brethren* (from verse 14) were encouraged and strengthened to speak forth the Word of God because of Paul’s steadfastness of faith. In verses 15-16, list what you learn about the groups Paul describes.

Philippians 1:15–16 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;

Some:

Preaching Christ out of envy

Preaching Christ out of strife

Others:

Preaching Christ out of good will

Preaching Christ out of love

They do this knowing Paul is appointed for the defense of the gospel

10. In verses 15-16 Paul adds more information about “the brethren” mentioned in verse 14.² Whether they were preaching Christ from pure motives or not, Paul indicates they are

² Some take the view that those who are preaching from selfishly wicked motives are the Judaizers. Though it’s possible Paul meant this group, a better view is that this group are believers, albeit misguided ones. One reason for this view is that Paul is still talking about the response of “most of the brethren” from verse 14. Another reason for taking this view that the selfish preachers are misguided believers is because the Judaizers were false teachers, who taught that the Gentile converts had to become Jews in order to be saved. If the selfish preachers were spreading a false gospel, Paul in *no way* would have rejoiced in that proclaimed message, yet in verse 18, Paul rejoices that Christ is proclaimed. And still another reason for taking this view is simply context. In his comments thus far in Chapter 1, Paul has not made reference to the Judaizers and their false gospel. It seems best to say that the strife

fellow saints. We learn these “brethren” are operating out of envy and selfish ambition as they purposely cause strife and hope to grieve Paul. Whoa! That is so naughty! And yet, who among us can say that we haven’t struggled with attitudes like this before? We can all fall into similar sins. How would you counsel these erring brethren to turn from their fleshly attitudes and actions? Here are a few verses to get you started, but feel free to choose your own or add more: Psalm 119:11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 1:9.

Psalm 119:11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Philippians 2:3–4 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

I would go about it in a very similar way as Paul does with Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians 4:3-4. I would appeal to their common faith and urge them to remember they will stand before the Lord, but then I would get a bit “tougher” on them if they were unwilling to turn from their wrong attitudes and repent.

I would go to **James 1:19–21**, “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.”

James 3:10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

James 4:1–12 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

causing preachers were misled believers, since Paul is glad that even through them the gospel is preached, and Christ is made known.

Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

11. Define *appointed* [Strong's 2749 (ESV, NIV *put here*)]. What revealing and important information do we learn about Paul from his use of the word *appointed* in verse 16 (the NKJV moves it to verse 17)? See also 1 Corinthians 9:16-17; Galatians 2:7-8; 2 Timothy 1:11-12.

It means that "I am set in place for this purpose. I have been placed or made to lie in this place."

We learn that Paul perfectly understands that God sovereignly purposed and placed him for the preaching of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:16–17 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, *for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.* For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, *I have a stewardship entrusted to me.*

Galatians 2:7–8 But on the contrary, seeing that *I had been entrusted with the gospel* to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles),

2 Timothy 1:11–12 for which *I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.* For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. [Not the same Greek word, but a synonym.]

12. What was it about Paul's *appointment* by God to preach the gospel that moved some of the brethren to jealously preach the gospel? You might find 1 Corinthians 3:1-23 helpful as you form your answer.

They thought Paul's position was one to be coveted. They wanted the fame and recognition that Paul received. They didn't understand that he was appointed by God for this specific calling. They were jealous of something God had called Paul to do, not understanding that God calls us all to serve in the body in specific ways according to the gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:1–23 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who

plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless." So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

13. In verse 17 we see the term "selfish ambition" used (NKJV places it in verse 16). See what you discover about the word *ambition* [Strong's #2052].

Comes from a term referring to "electioneering" for a position. It has the idea of maneuvering oneself into a position for gain of some kind. Means to seek to win followers.

14. Though some of the brethren sought to put themselves forward, using the preaching of the gospel to do so, how did Paul choose to respond? See verse 18. How does Paul's response shine light on his own motives for preaching the gospel?

Philippians 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

Paul rejoiced that the gospel was preached. He wasn't going to concern himself with other people's motives. All he cared about was that the gospel would be proclaimed.

Paul's response reveals his own motives for preaching the gospel—they were sincere, honest, above board, not for his own gain. It was all for Jesus—and only for Jesus.

- a. Though there are many trials associated with Paul's imprisonment and the unkind actions of other believers, Paul chose to exercise faith over his feelings. What are some things we need to know and implement to follow his example? See Psalm 57:1-3; Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 10:35-36; 11:6; 12:1-3; James 1:2-4.

Psalms 57:1-3 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes all things for me. He will send from

heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth. *Remembering the Lord will accomplish all things for us, that He rescues and sees the injustice.*

Galatians 6:9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. *We are to keep doing good, knowing that God sees our labors even if others don't value them.*

Hebrews 10:35–36 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. *We need to endure, persevere and attend to our calling, for there is reward at the end.*

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. *To live by faith and trust in the Lord Himself. To keep seeking Him in every circumstance.*

Hebrews 12:1–3 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. *To remember the example of Jesus and follow His example. To put off sin and things that entangle so we can run well to the end.*

James 1:2–4 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. *Rejoice in the spiritual fruit that is being produced from the trials.*

15. Underlying everything Paul did was one all-consuming passion to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. Look up the following verses to see the different ways Paul explained his single-minded focus. See 1 Corinthians 10:31; 16:22; 2 Corinthians 5:9, 14-15; Romans 14:7-8; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21; 3:7-14. What things stand out to you from those verses?

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, *do all to the glory of God.*

1 Corinthians 16:22 If anyone does not *love the Lord*, he is to be accursed. Maranatha.

2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, *to be pleasing to Him.*

2 Corinthians 5:14–15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so *that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him* who died and rose again on their behalf.

Romans 14:7–8 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore *whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.*

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; *and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*

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

Philippians 3:7–14 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, *I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*.

His whole focus is Jesus. All for Him because He is worthy, and Paul has a debt of love to pay. His life was one great upward and Godward focus.

- a. Consider, your own focus and passion toward the Lord. In what ways are you similar to Paul, and in what ways could you devote yourself to the Lord more?

My spirit aligns with Paul, but I feel woefully deficient when it comes to living it out. I long to be MORE focused on Christ and less on me.

- b. What verse best sums up your own devotion toward the Lord? Choose a verse from the ones above or choose your own.

2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

2 Corinthians 5:14–15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Psalms 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

16. Sometimes it's difficult to reconcile how God would allow people to continue to minister and preach the gospel when we know their service comes from worldly or wicked motives. Yet, our God's ways are not our ways. He, as Thomas Watson said, is able to "strike a straight blow with a crooked stick." When we see others serving out of selfish ambition, what do we need to keep in mind concerning them—and ourselves? See Romans 12:16-21; 1 Corinthians 4:1-7; Galatians 6:7-10.

Romans 12:16–21 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God*, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good*.

1 Corinthians 4:1–7 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. *Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.* Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Galatians 6:7–10 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.* For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. *So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

Be humble ourselves. Trust that God will deal with it, while being careful not to respond similarly. Keep pressing on, knowing that men’s motives will be brought to light. We need to do what is right, regardless of what others are doing. God is not mocked. He will deal with the sin, which is all the more reason for being above reproach ourselves.

“He was able to rejoice, not in the selfishness of his critics, but in the fact that *Christ was being preached!* There was no envy in Paul’s heart. It mattered not that some were for him and some were against him. All that mattered was the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!” ~Warren Wiersbe³

17. The wording of the NASB and NKJV in verse 19 can be a little confusing. The ESV and NIV did a great job translating the verse to help us understand what Paul was communicating. The NIV says, “for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.” From verse 19, what things can you identify that bring comfort to Paul while he undergoes many trials?

An assurance that God works and acts. He was comforted by their prayers for him. He was comforted through the providing work of the Holy Spirit.

18. In verse 19 Paul says he will be *delivered* in some way. The clue to what he meant is found in verse 20. What do you learn about the deliverance he looked for?

The deliverance is that God will be exalted in his body—his life, no matter what.

19. What is Paul’s earnest expectation and hope from verse 20? Define *earnest expectation* [Strong’s #603 (ESV *eager expectation*; NIV *eagerly expect*)].

³Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 69.

His earnest expectation and hope is that he won't be put to shame in anything—and that Christ will be exalted in his body, whether by life or by death.

“Apokaradokia (earnest expectation) is a compound word that literally refers to stretching the neck. It often was used figuratively of an eager longing or expectancy, a connotation reinforced by the synonym hope. Paul was certain that, in the eyes of God, he would never truly be put to shame, whether before Caesar, the world, or the church. Ultimately, he would be vindicated. He expressed similar confidence to the Corinthians, saying, “Even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame” (2 Cor. 10:8).” [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 75.]

Romans 8:19 For the *anxious longing* of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

“Apokaradokia, which is also found in Romans 8:19, is a picturesque word, possibly Paul’s own coinage, which RSV translates ‘eager expectation’ and NIV renders as a verb *I eagerly expect*. It denotes a state of keen anticipation of the future, the craning of the neck to catch a glimpse of what lies ahead, ‘the concentrated intense hope which ignores other interests (apo), and strains forward as with outstretched head (kara, dokein)’ as Kennedy well describes it. So confidently does the apostle await the verdict of his trial, preoccupied not with his fate but rather with the desire that whatever happens may result in the glory of his Master. ‘Perish all things, so that Christ be magnified!’ was the memorable watchword of Lord Shaftesbury, re-echoing the apostle’s conviction; and there is no purer desire than this, that the whole of our life and Christian service may enhance the glory and esteem of the one who alone is worthy.” [Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 83.]

20. In his letters, Paul often refers to not being put to shame or doing things in vain. What do you learn from the following verses about Paul’s attitudes toward his labors and sense of purpose? See 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 6:3; Galatians 4:11; Philippians 1:20; 2:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:1; 3:5.

1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

2 Corinthians 6:3 giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited,

Galatians 4:11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.

Philippians 1:20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Philippians 2:16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

1 Thessalonians 2:1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain,

1 Thessalonians 3:5 For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

He saw the ministry as his opportunity to return love for the debt of grace he owed to Christ. He didn't want anything to interfere with the gospel's advance. He labored and wanted his labors to bear fruit. He longed for every part of his life to give the Lord glory. He didn't want any part to be wasted.

21. What are some ways those same attitudes and purposefulness might show up in your life? I love how his purposefulness is framed by grace. He completely knows and understands that the work and his life is all from the grace of God, but it only binds him more tightly to the Lord. He longs to use his life for God's blessing. I want to spend my life for the Lord just like this, but my "self-preservation" and "selfishness" gets in the way of my intentions to do all for Him. I grieve over the lost opportunities but can't wallow in the wasted parts. I need to trust Him for the opportunities to serve Him. Lord, help me see that the "small" things, the little opportunities for dying to self are part of your plan to get glory out of my life.

22. As Paul reassures the Philippians about his circumstances in verses 12-20, what things stand out to you that you would like to implement in your own life? What truths encouraged you from this lesson?

This whole section has really been impactful. I really want to live like this—to see things from God's perspective, to be so caught up in God's cause that I don't worry or wallow in my own circumstances. If I live by faith, see with faith, respond in faith, then the nitty gritty parts of life will be like oil on water. Verse 20 has become my heart's cry in this season—how I long that the Lord be exalted in my life, whether in my life and all that holds or by my death.

"It does not matter how things go with him. If he dies, his will be the martyr's crown; if he lives, his will be the privilege still to preach and to witness for Christ. As Charles Ellicott nobly puts it, Paul is saying: 'My body will be the theatre in which Christ's glory is displayed.' Here is the terrible responsibility of all Christians. Once we have chosen Christ, by our lives and conduct we bring either glory or shame to him. Leaders are judged by their followers; and Christ is judged by us." ~William Barclay⁴

"Dearest, how foolish I have been! Why! what does it matter what becomes of me, if the Lord shall but be glorified? ... If Christ be exalted," he said,—and his face glowed with holy fervour,—“let Him do as He pleases with me; my one prayer shall be, that I may die to self, and live wholly for Him and for His honour. Oh, wifey, I see it all now! Praise the Lord with me!” ~Susannah Spurgeon recounting a story about her husband, Charles Spurgeon⁵

⁴William Barclay, *The Letters to Philipppians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated, The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 31.

⁵C. H. Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography, Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records, by His Wife and His Private Secretary, 1854–1860*, vol. 2 (Chicago; New York; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1899), 192.

Philippians

Lesson #5, Chapter 1:21-30

TEACHER'S GUIDE

As you prepare to study God's Word, come expectantly with your sins confessed, relying on the Lord to sow great truths in your heart.

1. In this lesson, the portion of Scripture we're studying gains its moorings and depth from Paul's comments in the previous verses. We also see verse 21 begins with *for* to let us know that Paul's opening comment in this section must be viewed in light of what he had said previously. Please explain Paul's ribbon of thought from verses 12-20 and how verse 21 ties in.

Verse 21 is directly tied with the previous paragraph. In it Paul was reassuring the Philippians that God was sovereignly working through his difficult circumstances to promote the gospel. For Paul, this was the highest aim in life—that in whatever means, through any means, that Jesus Christ is proclaimed, which is why Paul rejoiced and was at rest in his imprisonment. Paul knew that God was not thwarted by circumstances, so whether he was locked up or at liberty, Paul knew that God would use him for the gospel—and Christ would be lifted up. Paul also rested in the little or big ways of serving, knowing that Christ could be exalted in his life no matter what.

So when we get to verse 21 then it makes perfectly good sense and fits in with what he had been saying previously to say, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain!"

If all of life is all lived for Jesus' sake, then the means is of little significance as long as the end result is glory for Jesus.

2. Paul's heart is laid bare for us in verse 21, reflecting his purpose and aim in life. John MacArthur writes, "The Greek phrase rendered *to live is Christ and to die is gain* contains no verb. It literally reads 'to live Christ, to die gain.'"¹ Let's try to plumb its depths by considering what verse 21 looks like *when lived out each day*. It might be helpful to ponder, what choices and actions accompany a motivation like verse 21?

To live is Christ means choosing the things that would please Him above pleasing myself. It means looking for His smile, His approval above all the smiles and frowns here on earth. He becomes the one, overriding motivation for all things, which then governs my response. Feeling anxious? Living Christ means thinking like He does. Wanting to pout and vent? Living Christ means making no provision for my flesh and instead living by faith, looking to the unseen truths to uphold me. Living Christ means choosing His way over my own. When I am feeling selfish and not wanting to serve, then it means going to Jesus for His mind, His love, His patience, strength, and endurance to serve. Living Christ means choosing the things of the Spirit above the things of the flesh.

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 76.

3. Because of his fervent love for Christ, what choice is difficult for Paul to make according to verses 22-24?

Philippians 1:22–24 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

Paul so longs to depart and with the Lord, but because of the constraining love of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) then he is willing and happy to remain until the Lord calls him home. The phrase, “is more necessary for your sake” reveals the focus. Doing nothing from selfishness (Philippians 2:3) means staying and serving on earth though his heart is already in heaven with Jesus.

4. Which of his two desires does Paul ultimately “choose” according to verse 25? Why? See verses 22-25.

Philippians 1:25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

He “chooses” to remain (probably rather than begging God to take him home) and serve the churches for their progress and joy in the faith.

It will be fruitful labor (verse 22).

It is necessary for their sake (verse 24).

It is for their progress (verse 25).

It is for their joy in the faith (verse 25).

5. What is at the root of this single-minded and fervent desire toward the Lord? See 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Philippians 3:7-11, 14.

2 Corinthians 5:14–15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Philippians 3:7–11 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

As we’ve seen before, it is all for Jesus. Jesus is the all-consuming passion. Jesus is the focus, the goal, the prize, the reason he gets up in the morning, the reason he breathes. His life is one great response of love to the debt of love, grace, and mercy

showered upon Him in Christ. Oh may that be my life, heart, and passion too! More of Jesus! All to Jesus! All for Jesus!

6. Paul often says he does things for the sake of others. Here in verse 24 his desire to remain is motivated out of love for “their sake.” What do you learn from the following verses about Paul’s motivation about doing things for the sake of others? See also 1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11; 4:11-15; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7.

1 Corinthians 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos *for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.*

2 Corinthians 2:10–11 But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*

2 Corinthians 4:11–15 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you. But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE,” we also believe, therefore we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. *For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.*

Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.

1 Thessalonians 1:5–7 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; *just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.* You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

Paul constantly considered how he could live so that the gospel and Jesus would be put on display. Every choice he made came down to how it gave more glory to the Lord and how it would bless or strengthen others. Talk about convicting!!! That can all be traced to his desire to “live Christ.” Oh may I live Christ in such a way—to remember that I exist for God’s glory and to do good to others so the Lord Jesus is put on display.

7. Since Paul is convinced his earthly life and ministry will be prolonged, what does Paul hope to do for the Philippians? See verses 25-26.

He will remain (that is, he will not die) and will continue doing what he’s always done for them—build into them for their progress and joy in the faith. He hopes that they will they will rejoice in their spiritual father as he returns to them and picks up his ministry to them.

8. Define *progress* [Strong’s #4297]. See also the other two places this word is used: Philippians 1:12 and 1 Timothy 4:15.

“Only here, ver. 25, and 1 Tim. 4:15. The metaphor is uncertain, but is supposed to be that of pioneers cutting (κόπτω) a way before (πρό) an army, and so furthering its march. The opposite is expressed by ἐγκόπτω to cut into; hence to throw obstacles in the way, hinder. Gal. 5:7. See on 1 Pet. 3:7.” [Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 419.]

The word “furtherance” is from a Greek word which means “to cut before,” and is thought to have been used of an army of pioneer wood cutters which precedes the regular army, cutting a road through an impenetrable forest, thus making possible the pioneer advance of the latter into regions where otherwise it could not have gone.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 39–40.]

Philippians 1:12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

1 Timothy 4:15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

9. Paul’s goal is to build a strong foundation in the Philippians, so they will make progress in their walk with the Lord. How might this be accomplished? See Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:1.

Ephesians 4:11–13 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. *The teaching of the Word of God by the men of God whom He has gifted for this very purpose. They teach so we will all grow to maturity in Christ and reflect Him in every way.*

Colossians 1:28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. *All teaching is done so that we would be made complete in Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. *We are taught so will walk and live in a way that pleases God—and then to excel still more!*

It is through listening to and receiving the Word of God that we grow in maturity in Christ, so that He is formed in us! Oh may we give more attention to the Word of God so we look more like Jesus every day!

10. Paul also desired the Philippians have “joy in the faith” even while they endured many trials, conflicts, and difficulties. What are some reasons for having “joy in our faith?” Look up the following verses as you form your answer: Matthew 5:10-12; Romans 5:3-5; 8:17-18; 1 Peter 4:12-16. What does it say about us if we *don’t rejoice* in our faith?

Matthew 5:10–12 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult

you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. *We can have joy in our faith when we suffer for Jesus’ sake. We are told to rejoice and be glad because the suffering results in reward in heaven. We can have joy in our faith because we are simply following in the way of those before us.*

Romans 5:3–5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. *We can rejoice in our faith knowing that our tribulations produce godly character in us.*

Romans 8:17–18 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. *We can rejoice in our faith that our sufferings are simply nothing in light of the glory and reward that is to come.*

1 Peter 4:12–16 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. *We can have joy in our faith that we have been called to suffer just as Jesus did. Our right response in our trials brings glory to the Lord.*

What does it say about us if we don’t have joy in our faith? It says we are unbelieving. It says we are not trusting. It says we are unwilling to rely upon the Lord. It says we don’t believe God is enough for our situation, to help us and to guide us.

11. The NASB and NKJV translate verse 26 a bit awkwardly. The ESV and NIV help us understand Paul’s thoughts better. The ESV says, “so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.” How do the labors of Paul among them (verse 25) contribute to the Philippians’ rejoicing in Christ?

They have been so blessed and built up in the faith that it causes them to rejoice and give glory to the Lord for His kind provision.

12. Paul’s labors on behalf of the Philippians are funneled into one great purpose. What is it from Philippians 1:26 ESV?

To give glory to the Lord—whether in his imprisonment or in his release that Christ would be magnified, and Paul would have another opportunity to impart truth to his dear friends in Philippi.

13. Paul hopes to come minister to the Philippian believers once again. Yet, whether he comes to them again or remains absent, what does he desire them to do? See the first part of Philippians 1:27 for your answer.

Philippians 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Paul desires that they conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

14. Paul gives a description of what *conducting oneself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ* would look like in verses 27-28. What do you learn?

Philippians 1:27–28 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

Conducting yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ is seen 1) in standing firm; 2) in one spirit—united; 3) in their striving *together* for the faith of the gospel with one mind; 4) in not being alarmed by their opponents.

What a fascinating little picture! I love this snapshot into Paul’s mind and what God desires for us as we shine the light of Christ in a dark world.

15. Paul frequently urged believers to live “in a worthy manner.” What does that kind of living look like according to Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 4:1?

Ephesians 4:1–3 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, *implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Colossians 1:9–12 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be *filled with the knowledge of His will* in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, *so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him* in all respects, *bearing fruit in every good work* and increasing in the *knowledge of God; strengthened* with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all *steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks* to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

1 Thessalonians 2:10–12 You are witnesses, and so is God, how *devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly* we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were *exhorting and encouraging and imploring* each one of you as a father would his own children, *so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you* into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we *request and exhort* you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to *how you ought to walk and please God* (just as you actually do walk), that *you excel still more.*

16. There were those among the Philippians who were *not* living in a manner worthy of the gospel. What do you learn about their conduct from Philippians 1:15-17 and 3:18-19?

Philippians 1:15–17 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

Philippians 3:18–19 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

There were those who were filled with strife and envy. They were full of their own selfish motives and even desired to bring distress to Paul—hardly the conduct of those who desired to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. There were those who were just flat out enemies of Christ and unable to do anything for God’s glory. They only wanted to set their mind on earthly things and glory in their shame.

17. What is the sure end of those who oppose true gospel preaching and instruction? See verse 28. See also 2 Thessalonians 1:5-8.

Philippians 1:28 in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

2 Thessalonians 1:5–8 This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Destruction. Judgment for those who afflict the saints and do not know God or obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.

18. Define *granted* [Strong’s #5483] from verse 29. Also see Acts 3:14; 27:24; Galatians 3:18 where the same Greek word is used.

Granted=given. God has given it. The word carries with it the idea of it being a *gracious gift* given to the Philippians—to believe and to suffer *for Jesus’ sake*.

“Wuest’s translation: And the reason why you should not be terrified is because to you that very thing was graciously given for the sake of Christ and in His behalf, not only to the believing on Him, but also to be suffering for His sake and in His behalf.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 54–55.]

Acts 3:14 “But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

Acts 27:24 saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’

Galatians 3:18 For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

19. What two things have been granted to the Philippians? And for what purpose? See verse 29.

To believe and to suffer—for Jesus' sake.

20. What does verse 29 teach us about salvation? See Philippians 1:29 and John 6:29; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 2:8.

Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Salvation is granted to us by God. Jesus said it is a work of God in a person's life. God is the first mover in salvation. He moves and makes salvation happen. Because salvation is all of grace, then it is all of God. It is a gift!!!

21. What does Philippians 1:29 teach us about suffering for Christ? See also Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-20; Acts 5:41; 14:22; Philippians 3:8, 10.

Suffering, too, is granted to us, given to us, is a gift from God.

Matthew 5:10–12 "*Blessed* are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "*Blessed* are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. "*Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*"

John 15:18–20 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

"*Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.*"

Acts 5:41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, *rejoicing* that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "*Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*"

Philippians 3:8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom *I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,*

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and *the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;*

“It is one thing to accept suffering and resign oneself to it.
It is another to realize the privileges that come through it.”² ~Richard Melick

22. In what ways would the Philippians suffer according to verse 30? What are *some* of the things Paul suffered on behalf of Christ? See 2 Corinthians 6:3-10.

Conflict like Paul experienced. Paul suffered many hardships and distresses. He was physically beaten and put in prison. He went without sleep, food, and shelter. He labored tirelessly, yet was maligned by his enemies within and without the church. Apparently, the Philippians were experiencing many of the same kinds of trials.

2 Corinthians 6:3–10 giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited, but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

23. Two key themes shine in this section of Paul’s letter to the Philippians. One theme is Paul’s all-consuming desire to exalt Christ, as seen in Philippians 1:21. The first theme of putting the Lord on display in every way leads into the second theme of counting *all* things a privilege because they come from God’s hand—even if it means enduring difficulties, afflictions, and sorrows. Paul counted it an honor to suffer, serve, labor and love God with all his heart. When we begrudge the Lord our joyful service, what are we losing sight of? Look up Luke 17:10; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Philippians 3:8-9 as you consider your response.

Luke 17:10 “So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’ ”

1 Corinthians 15:9–10 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

Philippians 3:8–9 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

When we begrudge the Lord our joyful service and submission to His will for our lives, it’s because we lose sight of our true position—we are unworthy slaves. We don’t

² Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 91.

deserve special treatment. Slaves do whatever their Master tells them to do and submit to whatever he gives them—and so should we. God’s grace should change everything for us so that we labor more, love more, serve more because of His grace toward us. Like Paul, we should count all things loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing whatever I go through will lead me into a deeper and closer relationship with Christ. *To live Christ and to die gain.*

“What does Paul expect from them? He expects them *to stand fast*. The world is full of Christians on the retreat, who, when things become difficult, play down their Christianity. True Christians stand fast, unashamed in any company. He expects *unity*, they are to be bound together in one spirit. Let the world quarrel; Christians must be united. He expects a certain *unconquerability*. Often, evil seems invincible; but Christians must never abandon hope or give up the struggle. He expects a *cool, calm courage*. In times of *crisis*, others may be nervous and afraid; Christians will still be serene, in control of themselves and of the situation.

Paul does not suggest that this will be easy. When Christianity first came to Philippi, they saw him fight his own battle. They saw him beaten and imprisoned for the faith (Acts 16:19). They know what he is now going through. But let them remember that a general chooses the best soldiers for the hardest tasks, and that it is an honour to suffer for Christ. There is a story about a veteran French soldier who, in a desperate situation, found a young recruit trembling with fear. ‘Come, son,’ said the veteran, ‘and you and I will do something fine for France.’ So Paul says to the Philippians: ‘For you and for me the battle is on; let us do something fine for Christ.’”³ ~William Barclay

³William 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), 36–37.

Philippians

Lesson #6, Chapter 2 Observation

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study that all too often can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what is in the text. At this stage in the Bible study, you're noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what it means or how it applies to your life—that will come later, I promise. Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. You'll be glad you did!

I've included Chapter 2 at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. To begin, read through Chapter 2. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 2. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.¹
 - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-11).
Paul urges the Philippians to “make his joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose” by following Jesus' example of humility. Jesus did nothing from selfishness or empty conceit. Jesus looked out for the interests of others. Jesus didn't grasp after equality with God when He was in His human body. Jesus died to self and became a willing servant to all. His submission to the Father's will led Him to the cross. His lifetime of love and obedience to do the Father's will resulted in His exaltation in heaven and His future exaltation from all upon the earth.
 - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 12-13).
Because we have been commanded to live humbly and die to self, following Jesus' example (verses 1-11), we are to pay attention to our salvation—living out our faith with fear and trembling, yet knowing God works in us at the same time.
 - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 14-18).

¹The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

Keeping in mind the context—show love toward one another, humbly serve, maintain unity, follow Jesus’ example—we are then commanded to do all things without grumbling or disputing because living this way reveals that Jesus has transformed us. Paul urges us to be faithful in holding up and out the gospel message to all so he can rejoice in their faithfulness on that day when Christ is exalted.

- d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 19-30).

In the final paragraph in this chapter, Paul explains why he sent Timothy and Epaphroditus to them. Both men loved and served the Philippians just like Paul did. Both men sought to do good to the Philippians rather than looking out for themselves. Both men sacrificed themselves in their service, so Paul felt comfortable sending them as his emissaries to the believers there.

2. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

This chapter is about dying to self and serving others so that the Lord Jesus is put on display. This chapter reveals the beauty of sacrificial service and how greatly it is valued by the Lord.

3. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your three to five word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title’s purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

The Beauty of Sacrificial Living

Dying to Self 101

Follow Jesus’ Example

4. On the *Philippians Bible Text* handout mark key words. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. Start with these first. Then mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

5. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time *God* is mentioned in *Philippians Chapter 1*. Your *Chapter 1* list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Vs. 2 – grace to you and peace from *God*

Vs. 2 – *God our Father*

Vs. 3 – I thank *God* when I [Paul] remember you [Philippians]

God

Verse 6 He [Christ] existed in the form of God

Verse 6 He [Christ] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped

Verse 9 God highly exalted Him [Christ] and bestowed on Him [Christ] the name which is above every name

Verse 11 every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father

Verse 13 for it is God who is at work in you

Verse 13 both to will and to work for His good pleasure

Verse 15 prove yourselves blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach

Verse 27 but God had mercy on him [Epaphroditus]

Jesus Christ

Verse 1 if there is any encouragement in Christ

Verse 5 have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus

Verse 6 who [referring to Jesus], although He [Christ] existed in the form of God

Verse 6 [implied He Jesus Christ] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped

Verse 7 [implied He Jesus Christ] emptied Himself

Verse 8 He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on the cross

Verse 9 God highly exalted Him [Jesus Christ]

Verse 9 God bestowed on Him [Jesus Christ] the name which is above every name

Verse 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow

Verse 11 every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father

Verse 16 holding fast the word of life so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory

Verse 19 but I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy

Verse 21 they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus

Verse 24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly

Verse 29 receive him [Epaphroditus] in the Lord with all joy

Verse 30 he [Epaphroditus] came close to death for the work of Christ

Holy Spirit

Verse 1 if there is any fellowship of the Spirit

[possibly verse 2 united in spirit]

Name

Verse 9 bestowed on Him the name

Verse 9 which is above every name

Verse 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow

Rejoice/joy

Verse 2 make my joy complete by...

Verse 17 even if I am being poured out as a drink offering...I rejoice and share my joy with you all

Verse 18 I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me

Verse 28 so that when you see him again you may rejoice

Verse 29 receive him in the Lord with all joy

Glory

Verse 11 every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father

Verse 16 I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain

Interests

Verse 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests

Verse 5 [look out] for the interests of others

Verse 21 they all seek after their own interests not those of Christ Jesus

So that

Verse 10 God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow

Verse 11 God exalted and bestowed name [that] every tongue will confess Jesus as Lord

Verse 15 do all things without grumbling or disputing so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent

Verse 16 [referring to verse 14's command—do all things without grumbling or disputing, then in verse 16] holding fast the word of life so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory

Verse 19 I hope to send Timothy so that I also may be encouraged

Verse 22 you know of his proven worth that he served with me

Verse 27 God had mercy on him—and on me—so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow

Verse 28 I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice

6. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be.
7. Now, list the commands on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.

Commands

Verse 2 make my joy complete

Verse 3 do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit

Verse 3 regard one as more important

Verse 4 do not merely look out for your own interests

Verse 4 [implied look out for] the interests of others

Verse 5 have this attitude in yourselves

Verse 12 work out your salvation

Verse 14 do all things without grumbling or disputing

[Verse 16 holding fast the word of life because it modifies the earlier command in verse 14]

Verse 18 You too rejoice in the same way

Verse 18 [You] share your joy with me

Verse 29 Receive him in the Lord

Verse 29 Hold men like him in high regard

8. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner*, or *like* will help you find words or phrases being compared.

Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted.

9. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.

See observation paper

10. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)

See observation paper

11. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.

See observation paper

12. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.

See observation paper

13. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person. For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is loving [because He loved the world]; He is giving [because He gave His Son]; He is eternal [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

Attributes of God

Verse 6 God exists

Verse 6 God is pre-eminent

Verse 9 God honors the Son; He is mighty; and judges rightly

Verse 11 God is worthy of all honor and glory; He is the Father [also verse 15]

Verse 13 God is the supreme mover

Verse 13 God organizes things according to His will and pleasure

Verse 27 God is merciful

Attributes of Christ

Verse 1 Christ strengthens and encourages

Verse 5 Christ is worthy of emulation

Verse 6 Christ is eternal. Christ is God. Christ while on earth was humble and submitted Himself to the Father

Verse 7 Christ is humble.

Verse 8 Christ took on human flesh in His humility. He was obedient to the Father's will.

Verse 9 Christ is worthy of worship and exaltation.

Verse 10 all will worship Christ

Verse 11, 29 He is Lord

Verse 16 He will judge

Verse 19, 24, 29 He is trustworthy

Verse 21 He is selfless

Attributes of the Holy Spirit

Verse 1 He promotes fellowship

Verse 2 we can enjoy fellowship with Him

14. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action. For example, in Philippians 1:1 *we find a list about Paul's thankful heart*. We discover 1) he's thankful when he remembers the Philippians; 2) he's shows his thankfulness by praying for them; 3) his thankfulness spills over into prayers with joy for them; 4) he's thankful when he remembers how they participated in the gospel from the very beginning until now.

See observation page

15. Be sure to mark or write down any "nuggets" you observed which you thought were interesting.

I really enjoyed seeing the comparison in "interests" in this chapter and how we are urged to make God's interests our own. In fact, it's highly commendable as we see with Timothy.

I especially loved thinking on verse 5 and the command to have the same attitude as the Lord Jesus in humbling myself and serving others.

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in each chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life at this time. Your task at this time is to look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter. Have fun digging into God's word!

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER 2

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES

Discovering the Treasures of the Word

Philippians Chapter 2

notice the parallelism from vs 1 and 2

1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,

2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

negative to positive
Do nothing to regard
Do not merely... to look for other

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES

Discovering the Treasures of the Word

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

Living a David life

13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

1 always obey
2 work out your salvation
3 with fear
4 God is at work
5 God works for His good pleasure

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

18 You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

Timothy's role

20 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

22 But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

1 sent
2 tell Paul about P
3 kindred spirit
4 genuine concern
5 seek after Christ Jesus
6 served
7 send

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES
Discovering the Treasures of the Word

25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;

26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.

27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you.

29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;

30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

Epaphroditus
1 brother
2 fellow worker
3 fellow soldier
4 your messenger
5 minister
6 longed
7 distressed
8 sick
9 God had mercy
10 sorrow
11 sent eagerly
12 receive w/ joy
13 regard highly
14 almost died
15 risked life

- △ god
- + Jesus
- ∨ Holy Spirit
- ccc Concern
- ▭ so that/that
- ⓪ time
- ┆ transition
- ←C→ contrast
- C→ comparison

- S-D Synonyms
- N name
- rejoice/joy
- giving
- invested

Philippians Lesson #7, Chapter 2:1-11

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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?

Tied directly to Philippians 1:27-30 where Paul had just been urging them to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel and to stand firm in one spirit, one mind, striving together because he knows they are experiencing conflict and will continue to do so. Trials and conflict always tempt us to polarize and not work in unity with each other, which is why he transitions into his statements in 2:1 and so on.

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)?

He wants us to remember that there is encouragement in Christ. There is consolation of love in the Lord and in the body. There is fellowship of the Spirit in the body. There is affection and compassion among believers.

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?

Has also been translated consolation, comfort, solace, exhortation. Comes from the Greek *paraklesis*. The Holy Spirit is the *paraclete*—the helper.

John 14:26 “But *the Helper, the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Acts 15:30–32 So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its *encouragement*. Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, *encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message*.

Romans 15:4–5 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and *the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope*. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

Hebrews 6:18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have *strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us*.

It's interesting to note how true, biblical encouragement comes through the Word of God! Also interesting to note that when we do encourage biblically, there is hope.

4. Since there is indeed *encouragement in Christ*, what are some ways you have been helped by Him?

Because the Holy Spirit resides in me, then He helps me, strengthens me using the Word to give me the hope I need to persevere. Every morning there are new encouragements from the Lord. He uses trials and difficulties to drive me back to the Word so I will be encouraged. He doesn't shield me from things but helps me through them. When is there not encouragement in Christ if we would only meet with Him in the Word.

5. What are some ways you have been *consoled or comforted by love of the Lord Jesus* toward you?

Again, when have I not been consoled by Jesus' love and mercy toward me?! It is a marvel that He loves me! Jesus rescued me and loved me, giving His all for me. Oh, what an amazing comfort and strengthening truth that is! Hebrews 12:3 reiterates this: "For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

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?

Romans 5:5 and *hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us*. The Holy Spirit was given to us, who is the agent or means that God uses to pour out His love toward us in our hearts. We gain hope through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9–16 However, *you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you*. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, *He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you*. So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but *if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live*. For all who are being *led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God*. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a *spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"* The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, *The Holy Spirit dwells in believers, who then gives life to our mortal bodies so we will live eternally. Because of the Spirit we can put to death the deeds of the body; we are led by the Spirit, which proves our sonship; we are freed from sin through the Spirit's work in us*.

Romans 8:26 In the same way *the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;*

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 Or do you not know that *your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you*, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Ephesians 2:18–22 for through Him we both have *our access in one Spirit to the Father*. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are *being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit*.

Ephesians 4:30–32 *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption*. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

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.

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, *It is who He is to be affectionate and compassionate. He will always shower them upon His children*.

Philippians 1:8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all *with the affection of Christ Jesus. His affection moved Him to die for us—and His love for us helps us love others*.

Colossians 3:12–13 So, as those who have been *chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Because we are chosen of God, we can love others and be patient and kind*.

1 John 4:19 We love, because He first loved us.

8. What does Paul desire for the Philippians in 2:2? What bearing does verse 1 have upon the instructions of verse 2?

Paul wants the Philippians to make his joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, be united in spirit, and intent on one purpose. Paul’s instructions in verse 2 are directly linked to verse 1. When he says be of the same mind, he’s referring to the encouragement found in Christ that we are then to put into practice toward others. When he says maintain the same love, he’s referring to the consolation of love we have from Christ, through Christ, and because of Christ, which should then frame our every interaction with others. When he says be united in spirit, he’s referring to the fellowship we enjoy with the Holy Spirit, which then must be extended and maintained in our relationships. When he says to be intent on one purpose, he’s referring to the affection and compassion we have in Christ, which should then govern how we interact with one another.

“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.

The *one* purpose we should all strive for, live for, and focus on is to give God glory in the world, to live Him up as worthy of all our love, fealty, purpose, and focus.

Philippians 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, *Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.* Yes, and I will rejoice,

Philippians 1:20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, *Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

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

Philippians 1:27 Only *conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ,* so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Philippians 2:1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ... *because those things are true, then live **intent on one purpose**—to display Jesus Christ and to give God glory.*

If we have the single mind of Philippians 1, then we will have no problem with the submissive mind of Philippians 2. ~Warren Wiersbe¹

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?

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

If each of us would apply verse 3 in our interactions, in how we think and speak, then there wouldn't be any cause of conflict and no cause for fractures within the body.

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

"This Gr. word, which is sometimes rendered "strife" because it refers to factionalism, rivalry, and partisanship (see note on Gal. 5:20), speaks of the pride that prompts people to push for their own way." [John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1822.]

"The ethical terms used here expose the spiritual malaise at the heart of the church, and point to the all-sufficient remedy. Selfish ambition, *eritheia* (RV, 'faction') is the same word as in 1:17 where it is used to describe the inimical intention of Paul's enemies. Of the Philippians it is used of party squabbles and petty conceits. We might translate it 'quarrelsomeness', although that does not quite convey the hint of self-seeking which the word contains. Such a display which Galatians 5:19–21 brands as an 'act of the sinful nature' sadly disfigured the inner life of the church. But there is worse to come in

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

the diagnosis. If selfish ambition is the symptom of the malady the root cause may be seen in vain conceit, lit. 'empty glory', which is equally reprobated in Galatians 5:26. 'Factiousness and vanity,' comments Michael—'these were the evils that menaced the Christian community at Philippi. The former is often the bane of active, vigorous Churches.'" [Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 101.]

"There is the desire for personal prestige. Prestige is for many people an even greater temptation than wealth. To be admired and respected, to have a platform seat, to have one's opinion sought, to be known by name and appearance, even to be flattered, are for many people most desirable things. **But the aim of the Christian ought to be not self-display, but self-obliteration.** He should do good deeds, not that men may glorify him, but that they may glorify his Father in heaven. The Christian should desire to focus men's eyes not upon himself but on God.

There is concentration on self. If a man is forever concerned first and foremost with his own interests, he is bound to collide with others. If for him life is a competition whose prizes he must win, he will always think of other human beings as enemies or at least as opponents who must be pushed out of the way. Concentration on self inevitably means elimination of others; and the object of life becomes not to help others up but to push them down." [William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, electronic ed., The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: The Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 32–33.]

Romans 2:8 but to those who are *selfishly ambitious* and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

Philippians 1:17 the former proclaim Christ out of *selfish ambition* rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

James 3:14–16 But if you have *bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart*, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

Notice that in each of the verses above, there are corollary sins and deeds of the flesh that help us understand even better what selfish ambition looks like. Selfish ambition is spawned out of a rebellious heart that will not obey the truth of God's Word. With selfish ambition is unrighteousness, wrath, and indignation. There is a lack of pure motives when selfish ambition is present. It also causes distress to those who desire righteousness in our interactions. Selfish ambition begins in the heart where there is first pride and a willingness to lie about the true state of our thoughts and desires. Selfish ambition is earthly, natural, demonic and leads to disorder and every evil thing.

When viewed in its entirety here, it's easy to see why God does not want us to engage in selfishly ambitious ways. It is rather appalling to see this sin for what it really is! Oh,

for the Lord's grace to grow less and less selfish and more focused on the needs and interests of others.

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

"Vain glory" is the translation of a word made up of two words, one word meaning "empty," or "vain," used in the sense of "to no purpose, futile," and the other meaning "opinion." Thus the total meaning is "empty pride." [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 59.]

"A second means for promoting spiritual unity is forsaking empty conceit. Empty conceit translates the compound Greek word *kenodoxia*, which appears only here in the New Testament. It is formed by the adjective *kenos* ("empty") and the noun *doxa* ("glory"), hence the King James Version rendering "vainglory." ***It refers to a highly exaggerated self-view, which is nothing but empty conceit. Whereas selfish ambition pursues personal goals, empty conceit seeks personal glory and acclaim.*** The former pertains to personal accomplishments; the latter to an ***overinflated self-image***. *Understandably, a person with such conceit considers himself always to be right and expects others to agree with him. The only unity he seeks or values is centered on himself.*

Empty conceit is arrogant pride, being "wise in your own estimation" (Rom. 11:25). The ancient Greeks did not admire humility, thinking it was a mark of weakness. But even they recognized that a person's view of himself could become so exaggerated as to be presumptuous and contemptible. Their term for such exalted pride, a word still used in English and many other modern languages, was *hubris*. In his long list of sins that characterize unbelieving, rebellious mankind, Paul uses a word derived from *hubris*, which is rendered "insolent" (Rom. 1:30). In his letter to the Galatian churches, he warned, "For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Gal. 6:3). *Because empty conceit is, by nature, self-deceptive, believers must be on constant guard against it. It is an implacable enemy of spiritual unity.* [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 111–112.]

Conceit, a seeking of glory which is, in reality, empty because it focuses on the individual rather than on the Lord. ~Richard Melick²

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.

When I am humbly looking to the Lord, focusing on Him and others, rather than myself, I'm not looking for what is supposedly due to me. God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5), so I must put to death anything that leads me to pride

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

and self-glorification. Self-focus and self-glorification promote discord rather than unity. It is glorying in self rather than the good of others.

Proverbs 25:6–7 *Do not claim honor in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of great men;* For it is better that it be said to you, “Come up here,” Than for you to be placed lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen. **Such an example of self focus and thinking I should be honored in some way.**

Matthew 11:29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **Here Jesus calls us to follow His example which had nothing to do with self-glorification.**

Matthew 20:26–27 “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; **If I really want to be noticed then serve others and don’t worry about yourself.**

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, **Oy! True love is antithetical to self-honor and self-focus.**

Ephesians 4:1–3 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **If we are diligent to preserve unity then we must work against the polarizing nature of our fleshly desires for notice and honor.**

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?

Philippians 2:4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Romans 14:19–22 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles. The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

Romans 15:1–3 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.”

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Philippians 2:21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

To forget myself in pursuit of the Lord Jesus—Hebrews 12:1-2 and also Matthew 6:33.

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.

Philippians 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, From verses 6-8 we see that though honor, worship, respect, and obedience were due to Him, instead we see Him saying no to the things that are rightfully due to Him *because* He wanted God’s will in His life more than He wanted His own. For that reason, He emptied Himself, took on the form of a bond-servant, was made as a man, humbled Himself in obedience so that He obeyed God all the way to the cross in dying for our sins.

Pride cannot live beneath the cross. Let us sit there and learn our lesson, and then rise and carry it into practice. ~Charles Spurgeon³

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 Melick⁴

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

Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name *Immanuel*. ***Immanuel—God with us.***

Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And *the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God.*

When Paul says that Christ existed in the form of God—it means that Jesus is indeed God. There is only one God to be honored and exalted. The Lord Jesus is God and before He was born, He was the eternally existing one united with the Father in heaven.

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.

Isaiah 53:2–3 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men,

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

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

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

John 5:30 “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 17:5 “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Hebrews 5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Jesus left His glory in heaven, desiring to obey the Father’s will for mankind in providing complete payment for our sins, so Jesus gave up His rightful place of honor and glory and became a man—because a perfect man must die for sinful man. Oh, there is so much packed into that statement! Oh, the glories of these truths, so mighty and magnificent to think on! The grandeur of Jesus’ sacrifice is seen in His disregarding the honor that is due to Him and living as a man amongst sinners, who don’t honor Him—never giving into the temptation to judge us before the Father’s time of judgment.

Paradoxically, being “made nothing” means adding humanity to deity rather than subtracting deity from His person. ~Richard Melick⁵

This quote is huge and amazing to think on. Jesus’ glory was “under wraps” while He lived on earth. ***His godhood was never subtracted which is why the statement that He didn’t regard equality with God a thing to be grasped (Philippians 2:6) all the more magnificent.***

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.

He humbled Himself in His obedience to the Father’s plan which led to being forsaken by the Father while He atoned for our sins on the Cross.

Luke 2:51 And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

Hebrews 5:5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”;

Hebrews 5:7–8 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

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

1 Peter 2:23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

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)?

God highly exalted Him. Jesus in Heaven is being exalted now. He does not have to wait until the end of time for His exaltation. God also gave Him the name which is above every name.

“Bestowed is from *charizomai*, which conveys the idea of giving freely and generously. The Father conferred upon the Son the name which is above every name with the most divinely perfect love. Jesus so completely satisfied the Father in fulfilling the work of His incarnation, in providing redemption for the elect, that He generously granted Him this exalted title. “Having become as much better than the angels,” the writer of Hebrews explains, “He has inherited a more excellent name than they” (Heb. 1:4).

This name was given Him to emphasize His rank above all other beings. It reflects not only His divine essence and nature but also the new and unique privileges mentioned above that the Father gave Him in response to His redemptive work. This name is incomparable, the superlative of superlatives.

Paul does not reveal the supreme name, the name which is above every name, until verse 11, where he declares that “every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (emphasis added). Lord is the title of majesty, authority, honor, and sovereignty. One day that exalted name will be expanded to “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16). Obviously Lord, used in the sense of ultimate sovereign authority and command, ranks over all other names. Whoever is Lord is over everyone else—and that is precisely the point in so titling the Savior—has absolute supremacy and the right to be obeyed as divine Master.

In the marvelous grace of God, believers not only will be fellow heirs with Jesus Christ but also will share His names. Through the apostle John, God promises: “He who overcomes,” that is, every true believer (1 John 5:4–5), “I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name” (Rev. 3:12; cf. 2:17). When they are glorified, all believers will be stamped with the name of God the Father (“My God”), with the name of heaven (“the city of My God, the New Jerusalem”), and with Christ’s supreme title of Lord (“My new name”). Those names will mark them out, brand them, as it were, as belonging to God and identifying with Him in the fullest and most intimate way.” [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 143–144.]

“God chose freely to grant him a high name. Most agree the “name that is above every name” is the title “Lord.” Further, most agree that the title refers to Jesus’ character, as well as to his function. This corresponds to Peter’s preaching at Pentecost (Acts 2:36) and to the view of the early church generally. The new factor is that, by virtue of Jesus’

humility, he became the object of adoration in the Godhead, as well as the administrator of God's affairs. The worship accorded him in 2:10–11 supports this fact. Other passages speak to his function of Lord as well (1 Cor 15:24–28; Eph 1:20–23). Now, since the ascension, all that God is comes to us through Jesus, and all who come to God do so through Jesus." [Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 106.]

"In view of its special connection with the name of God in the Old Testament the giving of the name in this context declares that Jesus Christ is installed in the place which properly belongs to God himself as Lord of all creation. Of this fact there are, according to the subsequent verses, two outstanding proofs.

10–11. In his name, the name which is above every name, every knee must bow, and every tongue confess (i.e. proclaim) that Jesus Christ is Lord. Both aspects of this acknowledgment are based on Isaiah 45:23 in a context which proclaims the unique greatness of Israel's God. No clearer proof could be forthcoming of our Lord's pre-eminent position at the Father's right hand than the use of this Old Testament quotation in reference to him." [Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 11, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 113–114.]

"Further, Paul says that, as a consequence of his sacrificial love, God gave Jesus the name which is above every name. One of the common biblical ideas is the giving of a new name to mark a new stage in a person's life. Abram became Abraham when he received the promise of God (Genesis 17:5). Jacob became Israel when God entered into the new relationship with him (Genesis 32:28). The promise of the risen Christ to both Pergamos and to Philadelphia is the promise of a new name (Revelation 2:17, 3:12).

What then is the new name given to Jesus Christ? We cannot be quite certain what exactly was in Paul's mind, but most likely the new name is Lord.

The great title by which Jesus came to be known in the early Church was kurios, Lord, which has an illuminating history. (1) It began by meaning master or owner. (2) It became the official title of the Roman emperors. (3) It became the title of the Greek and Roman gods. (4) It was the word by which the Hebrew Yahweh was translated in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures. So, when Jesus was called kurios, Lord, it meant that he was the Master and the Owner of all life; he was the King of Kings; he was the Lord in a way in which the gods of the old religions and the idols could never be; he was nothing less than divine." [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), 45–46.]

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?

Philippians 2:10–11 so that at the name of Jesus **EVERY** KNEE WILL BOW, of those who **are in heaven and on earth and under the earth**, and that **every** tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

No one is left out. All will worship Him as it is due to Him—in heaven. On earth. Under the earth. Glory! Glory to the Lamb! Worthy, worthy, worthy is He!

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.

1 Corinthians 15:24–28 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all. **When? At the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the Father, when He has abolished all sin and death, when His enemies are crushed, when all things are subjected to Him. Where? In heaven.**

Ephesians 1:20–23 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. **When? It is happening now. After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. Where? In heaven. By whom? The Father.**

2 Thessalonians 1:7–10 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. **When and where? In heaven after the final judgment and end of sin. By whom? The saints will give Him glory.**

Hebrews 2:9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. **When? After He suffered and died, He was crowned with glory and honor.**

Hebrews 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **When and where? In heaven after Jesus endured the cross, He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Revelation 4:9–11 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever

and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.” ***When, where, and by whom? He now lives in heaven and receives glory and honor from the living creatures and the 24 elders in heaven.***

Revelation 5:11–14 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped. ***This picture is in the future, but not the final picture of the glory to be given to Jesus. This will take place in the tribulation when the judgments are being exacted upon the earth. By whom? Angels, living creatures, elders, every created thing, yet there are still those on earth who are not bowing to the Lordship of Christ. There is still a future, final day when ALL exaltation will be given to the Son.***

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.

Servant-hearted obedience, love, sacrifice for the sake of others as demonstrated by Jesus. To so prize the Father’s will that the unthinkable becomes thinkable and doable—to put off self and live for the Lord and others. If we remember these truths, then unity will reign in our relationships. God will get the glory!

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 Barclay⁶

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

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

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 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 Wiersbe⁷

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

Philippians

Lesson #8, Chapter 2:12-18

May the Lord grant you much grace as you dive into His Word in this lesson. Ask the Lord to help you see areas to improve in and a heart willing to do it *for His sake*.

1. Paul continues expounding on his theme begun in Philippians 1:27, that the Philippians would *conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ*. Summarize what conducting ourselves in a worthy manner looks like from Philippians 2:1-11.
To walk in a manner worthy of the Lord is to do and be like Jesus—to maintain unity, to think of others as more important than ourselves, to look obey the Lord and submit to His will, all to give God glory in all things.

2. Paul's *so then* (ESV, NKJV, NIV *therefore*) at the beginning of Philippians 2:12 indicates he fully intends to continue his discussion of how the Philippians can live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. What command is given in verse 12?
The command is "work out your salvation with fear and trembling."
 - a. How does verse 12 connect to Paul's comments in the previous verses?
One of the ways we can be part of that heavenly throng that gives glory to God is by working out (that is, living out) our salvation with fear and trembling.

 - b. What other observations can you make about verse 12?
 - It's definitely tied to the previous verses about exalting the Lord Jesus—see *so then/therefore*.
 - The Philippians have already been living this way. Now, Paul urges them to continue to do so.
 - They lived this way in Paul's presence (which is why he knows they will continue).
 - Salvation isn't stagnant.
 - We have a part to play in the living out, daily obedience part of our salvation. We are not just lumps on the floor.
 - We are to maintain a holy fear of God in doing so—which is highly motivating.
 - We are to do this in a trembling spirit—humbly, contritely, gratefully.

3. Notice how the following Scriptures essentially say, "Work out your salvation." See Romans 6:8-13; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 7:1. After reviewing those Scriptures, consider our passage, and explain what Paul means when he says *work out your salvation*.

Romans 6:8–13 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; *but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body*

so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

In working out my salvation as it says in Philippians 2:12, in this passage I will apply it by not letting sin reign in my body. I will present myself to God as an instrument of righteousness.

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? **Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things.** They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but **I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.**

In working out my salvation as it says in Philippians 2:12, in this passage I will apply it by exercising self-control, understanding that the way I run and how I run this race of life makes all the difference. One of the ways I do that is by running purposefully and with self-control at all times. Oy!

2 Corinthians 6:1 And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— **In working out my salvation as it says in Philippians 2:12, in this passage I will apply it by proving my salvation in my transformed life.**

2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

In working out my salvation as it says in Philippians 2:12, in this passage I will apply it by not allowing sin to remain. I will root it out of my life and heart. I love the phrase “perfecting holiness” because I fear God.

The words “work out” are the translation of a Greek word which means “to carry out to the goal, to carry to its ultimate conclusion.” We say, “The student worked out a problem in arithmetic.” That is, he carried the problem to its ultimate conclusion. This is the way it is used here. The Philippians are exhorted to carry their salvation to its ultimate conclusion, namely, Christlikeness. The salvation spoken of here is not justification, but sanctification, victory over sin and the living of a life pleasing to the Lord Jesus. They are to see to it that they make progress in their Christian lives. ~Kenneth Wuest¹

I love this! “The Philippians are exhorted to carry their salvation to its ultimate conclusion, namely, Christlikeness. The salvation spoken of here is not justification, but sanctification, victory over sin and the living of a life pleasing to the Lord Jesus. They are to see to it that they make progress in their Christian lives.”

Believe as if you had no power. Work as if you had no God. ~Marvin Vincent²

¹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 73–74.

² Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 437.

4. We're told to work out our salvation with *fear* and *trembling*. What does Paul want us to understand about how we are to live before the Lord? See 2 Corinthians 7:15; Hebrews 12:28-29. Please comment on how verse 13 guides the kind of "fear and trembling" we're to have.

2 Corinthians 7:15 His affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, *how you received him with fear and trembling*.

Hebrews 12:28–29 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, *let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe*; for our God is a consuming fire.

First, it's good for believers to have fear and trembling in the presence of God and those who are His representatives for they speak for Him. Next, we see that gratitude moves us to respond with that reverent fear and trembling.

Verse 13 guides our fear and trembling by reminding us that God is at work in us because it is His will and good pleasure to do so. How amazing is that?!

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

5. The nitty gritty of *how* to apply verse 12 in our lives and what it may look like can sometimes feel a bit nebulous, which is why it's so comforting to read verse 13. What do we learn in verse 13? Explain how the encouraging truths in verse 13 help us obey the command of verse 12.
- In verse 13 we learn that as we work out our salvation, God is at work in us. Working out our salvation only comes as God works in us.
 - Verse 12 won't happen if verse 13 isn't already in place.
 - God works in us. Not around us, not to us, but in us. The work is deep and transforming then.
 - It is God's will to do this work.
 - If God didn't will this work, it wouldn't happen.
 - Both the will and the work are pleasing to God.
 - Said another way, it pleases God to help us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

"A clipper ship crossing the Banks of Newfoundland in heavy weather strikes an iceberg. She settles rapidly at the bow, and her captain and crew have barely time to leap into the lifeboat. The question, "What must we do to be saved?" is answered by their prompt leap into the lifeboat, which is an act of faith. They trust their lives to it for salvation. From immediate death they are saved.

But, after the ship has sunk, the crew are still out in the deep and dangerous sea. There is a second process necessary. In order to keep out of the trough of the sea and to reach the distant shore, they must stick to the boat and pull lustily at the oars. They must "work out their salvation" now by hard rowing. But this is a continued process of salvation day after day until they reach the shores of Nova Scotia. Never for a moment, however, are they independent of the lifeboat. That must keep them afloat, or they go to the bottom. At last, after hard rowing, they reach the welcome shore. This is their third, final, and complete

salvation, for they are entirely beyond any perils of the treacherous sea. Now they are at rest, for they have reached the desired haven." ~Theodore Cuyler³

6. In Philippians 2:14 we're given a very practical way to work out our salvation. What is it? How would obeying this one command be an effective way to walk in a worthy manner before the Lord?

Do all things without grumbling or disputing.

If I simply obeyed this one command and made it my aim to live out each day, I would be working in Jesus' footsteps. He would delight in the humble spirit that this kind of living demands of us.

7. Define *grumbling* [Strong's #1112 (NKJV, NIV *complaining*)]. Look up the following verses to see how that same Greek word is used other places. See John 7:12; Acts 6:1; 1 Peter 4:9. What do you learn from those verses about the word?

"The word "murmurings" is the translation of a Greek word which means, "to mutter, to murmur." It was used of the cooing of doves. It is an onomatopoeic word, that is, a word whose sound resembles its meaning. It is spelled, *gongusmon* (γονγυσμον). It refers, not to a loud outspoken dissatisfaction, but to that undertone murmuring which one sometimes hears in the lobbies of our present day churches where certain cliques are "having it out," so to speak, among themselves. The word refers to the act of murmuring against men, not God. The use of this word shows that the divisions among the Philippians had not yet risen to the point of loud dissension. The word was used of those who confer secretly, of those who discontentedly complain." [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 75–76.]

"Grumbling is from *gongusmos*, an onomatopoeic word that sounds like the guttural, muttering sounds people often make when they are disgruntled. It is a negative response to something unpleasant, inconvenient, or disappointing, arising from the self-centered notion that it is undeserved." [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 179.]

John 7:12 There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray."

Acts 6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

Don't murmur or grumble in a crowd to win people to your side or to cause division. Definitely, don't grumble in your heart in serving others.

³ Theodore Cuyler, *God's Light on Dark Clouds*, page 65.

8. Define *disputing* [Strong's #1261 (NIV *arguing*)]. What else can you learn about arguing and disputing from Luke 9:46; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 3:3-5; 1 Timothy 6:3-5? "The word "disputings" is the translation of a Greek word that carries the ideas of discussion or debate, with the underthought of suspicion or doubt. The murmurings led to disputes." [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 76.]

"*Disputing* is from *dialogismos*, which has the basic meaning of inner reasoning and is the term from which the English word *dialogue* derives. But it soon developed the more specific ideas of questioning, doubting, or disputing the truth of a matter. In Romans 14:1, the word is used of passing judgment on another believer's opinions and in 1 Timothy 2:8 it is rendered "dissension." Whereas grumbling is essentially emotional, disputing is essentially intellectual. A person who continues to murmur and grumble against God will eventually argue and dispute with Him." [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 180.]

Luke 9:46 An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.

Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

1 Corinthians 3:3–5 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.

1 Timothy 6:3–5 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

Arguing always causes division, so we are to watch out for those who are argumentative and turn away from them. When we grumble and argue, we are acting in a fleshly manner. Arguing always stems from a wrong understanding of what is valuable and worthy of praise.

9. Instead of disputing, what does the Word of God counsel us to do when we have a difference of opinion? See Romans 12:18; 1 Corinthians 1:10-12; Galatians 5:26; 1 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 12:14; James 3:14-18.

Romans 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

1 Corinthians 1:10–12 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.

Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.”

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

1 Timothy 2:8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

James 3:14–18 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

God wants me to endeavor to strive for peace, make peace, and be at peace to the extent that it is possible. We are in sin if we aren't trying to be agreeable and helpful with one another. We are to work at being of one mind and heart with one another. The sins of pride lead to boastful challenging of one another. The men in the church, as they lead, are to make sure they are not engaged in anger/wrath and dissension among each other. Pursue peace. Arguing, dissensions are bitter and selfish. This kind of living is fleshly and even demonic. God calls it evil. It creates chaos rather than harmony and peace.

10. We're commanded in Philippians 2:14 to “do all things without grumbling or disputing.” What kinds of things might we be tempted to complain or argue about when we, like the Philippians, encounter suffering, hardship, and persecution?

I don't know about everyone else, but I would be tempted to grumble and complain about everyone else and how they aren't seeking the Lord so some such unworthy way of thinking. When I have expectations about the way people should attend to me and my needs, then I grow grumbly and fitful. I don't often argue out loud, but I argue plenty in my heart. If I don't put a curb on my inward disputings, then it leads to bitterness in my heart toward others.

11. The word “prove” from verse 15 means to “show yourself to be” or “may become.” The phrasing indicates we are to become or are in the process of becoming something we are not now. If we refrain from grumbling and disputing, what is the result in our lives according to verse 15?

If we refrain from grumbling and disputing, then we show ourselves to be blameless and innocent children of God. The blameless and innocent part won't happen unless we are children of God first. By refraining from grumbling and disputing, we show ourselves to be above reproach in a crooked and perverse generation. We will shine like stars in the universe.

12. Thankfully, the words “blameless” and “above reproach” used in verse 15 don’t mean sinless perfection. (Incidentally, they are variations of the same Greek word.) The words do mean, however, that we live in such a way that unbelievers cannot “rightfully” point a finger at us. Wow! What an amazing testimony! If we want to live without shame or guilt in the midst of world looking for a way to accuse us, then what do we need to do? See Philippians 2:14.

Not grumble or argue. Plain and simple.

13. Why would implementing this one command have such a far-reaching effect in our lives and to the world around us?

Because we naturally grumble. Our flesh loves to fight. We see it just outside the Garden of Eden with Cain and Able and it’s only gotten worse since then. God intends to use the self-controlled, gracious tongue of believers to win a perverse and grumbling world to Himself.

14. Philippians 2:16 begins with “holding fast the word of life.” A better rendering, and one that fits the context better, translates this section as “holding forth” the word of life. The NIV did a good job with the text, saying you will shine like stars in the universe as you “hold out the word of life” to unbelievers. Based on that reading, and according to the near preceding context, what powerfully puts God and His transforming power on display? See verse 14.

Not grumbling or arguing. Oh dear! Point taken!

15. There’s no getting around it in this text—if we want to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ and put feet to our salvation, then we cannot grumble or complain, especially when we’re under pressure. What does it say about us and our God if we do resort to grumbling and arguing among ourselves?

It means we’re...I’m trying to fix it myself. It means I think I have a better plan than God. It means I’m not trusting Him—my lack of trust always shows up in grumbling on some level. It means I’m not willing to believe God, trust Him, or believe that He is enough for me—no matter what situation I find myself in.

“Paul is not saying that they would become children of God by avoiding complaining and disputing. They were already children of God. His point is rather that they would become known as children of God by avoiding these things. **Certain things are simply out of keeping with the Christian faith, and when unbelievers see these things in us, they are quick to conclude that there is nothing to our Christianity. Complaining and grumbling are certainly among those things.**

Christians believe that God is sovereign over all things, including even those circumstances that they find unpleasant and undesirable. When we complain and grumble, we are telling those around us that we believe God is doing a very poor job, and, if given the opportunity, we could do much better.

We can go a long way towards conquering grumbling and complaining by keeping constantly in mind the world in which we live, and our responsibility in it. This world is a dark place—it is both ‘crooked’ and ‘perverse’ (v. 15). This world is not as God made it. It has been warped and twisted by sin, but God’s

people are not like the world. We are those in whom the darkness has been dispelled by the light of the gospel, and we are now to 'shine as lights in the world' (v. 15)." ~Roger Ellsworth⁴

16. Besides becoming a shining testimony of God's redeeming grace by not grumbling or arguing, what is another reason Paul desires the Philippians to live well? See Philippians 2:16.

So that in the day of Christ, Paul would rejoice/glory because his labors for their sake had not been in vain.

17. Look up the following verses and explain what you learn about Paul and his stewardship of the time, gifts, and ministry God had given him. See 1 Corinthians 9:27; Galatians 2:2; 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 3:5.

1 Corinthians 9:27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified. *He made the most of his time and sought to overcome his flesh, laziness, or distraction.*

Galatians 2:2 It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. *Paul didn't want any part of his life to be for nothing. He wanted it all to count for the kingdom.*

Galatians 4:11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. *Same as above.*

1 Thessalonians 3:5 For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain. *He labored and wanted it to matter for the kingdom.*

Paul sought to use his gifts and labors for God's kingdom. He worked hard, relying on the Lord, knowing that he would someday stand before the Lord. He didn't want his labors to be burned up because they were wood, hay, and straw.

18. No one wants to waste their time or efforts on things that won't bear fruit—and neither did Paul. It's obvious from the verses above (and more we didn't look at) that Paul wanted his labors for the Lord to bear fruit. Yet, it's important to examine *why* Paul wanted to work so faithfully. What is it that motivates his faithfulness and makes him long to see fruit in his ministry? See 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Philippians 1:18, 20, 21; 3:14.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, *do all to the glory of God.*

2 Corinthians 5:14–15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, *so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.*

Philippians 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, *Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,*

⁴Roger Ellsworth, [Opening up Philippians](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2004), 44–46.

Philippians 1:20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, *Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

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

Philippians 3:14 *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Paul lived for God's glory. He never got over the fact that the Lord Jesus rescued him from sin and his own designs. With every fiber of his being, he wanted to give all for his Savior. Oh, may I live even a portion of that zeal out in my choices and motivations. May I willingly sacrifice my own desires and freedoms and look to how I can maximize the time God has given me. It's not "my" time, it's God's.

a. How does living with such a clear sense of purpose and goals make life simpler? Living with a clear sense of purpose and goals helps me weed out the unimportant, the distractions, even the things that are selfish. Living with clear purpose and goals narrows life down. It makes it more efficient and easier to sift through the myriad of choices that are thrown at us each day. *How will I live today?*

19. Even if we don't understand all the "offering" references Paul uses in Philippians 2:17, we still get a sense of what he wants to communicate to the Philippians. What does he want them to know in verse 17?

He is giving himself for them. He wants them to know that he willingly is giving himself to bring them to maturity and faith in Christ.

20. Define *poured out* [Strong's #4689]. Round out the word's meaning and how Paul is using it in Philippians 2:17 by looking up the following verses where he employs the same word or speaks in a similar way: Acts 20:24; 2 Corinthians 12:15; Philippians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Timothy 4:6.

"Though I am poured out as a libation. Old word. In N. T. only here and 2 Tim. 4:6. Paul pictures his life-blood as being poured upon (uncertain whether heathen or Jewish offerings meant and not important) the sacrifice and service of the faith of the Philippians in mutual service and joy (both *χαίρω* [chairō] and *συνχαίρω* [sunchairō] twice in the sentence)." [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Php 2:17.]

"A more appropriate rendering therefore is "because I am being poured out as a drink offering." That whole phrase translates the single Greek word *spendō*, which means "to be poured out as a libation" (cf. 2 Tim. 4:6). Paul's example was evident in the price he was paying in pouring out his life to God like an Old Testament drink offering.

Contrary to what some interpreters suggest, Paul was not here speaking of his eventual martyrdom. The present tense clearly indicates that he was speaking of his current experience as a prisoner in Rome. He saw his life, not his death, as his ultimate act of sacrifice to the Lord. He was a living sacrifice, not a dead one (Rom. 12:1). His comments elsewhere in this letter indicate that he did not anticipate imminent execution,

although he clearly understood that that was a possibility. He had already said: “To remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith” (1:24–25). Later in the present chapter he wrote, “I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly” (2:24).

Both Jews and Gentiles would have understood the implied imagery of a drink offering, or libation, a ritual that was familiar to many ancient people (cf. Lev. 23:18, 37; 2 Kings 16:10–16; Jer. 7:18; Hos. 9:4). After placing the sacrificial animal on the altar, the priests would take wine (or sometimes water or honey) and pour it either on the burning sacrifice or on the ground in front of the altar. That act symbolized the rising of the sacrifice into the nostrils of the deity to whom it was being offered.

Paul’s drink offering was also made on behalf of his beloved brethren in Philippi, an offering made upon the sacrifice and service of their faith. He spoke as if their faithfulness was greater than his own, which he described as being poured out on their greater sacrifice and service. Here the apostle reflects the sincere humility that marks the spiritually noble believer and that was supremely exemplified by the Lord Himself in His incarnation (2:1–8).” [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 191–192.]

“Paul said he was being poured out. The present tense verb suggests something already happening, although it may have been happening in kind and would culminate in the future. Some interpret this to mean his impending martyrdom, of which Paul was certain. Others think of it in terms of his apostolic ministry, which often included suffering. While Paul may have entertained the idea of martyrdom, he was not unduly pessimistic at this point. His language is reflective. It seems to be a verbalization of thoughts about his life and its meaning. The conditional sentence in which this occurs (“even if”) suggests an element of doubt about the matter.” [Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 115.]

Acts 20:24 “But *I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself*, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

2 Corinthians 12:15 *I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls*. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

Philippians 1:20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, *Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body*, whether by life or by death.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 Having so fond an affection for you, *we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives*, because you had become very dear to us.

2 Timothy 4:6 *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering*, and the time of my departure has come.

- a. Based on what you’ve just learned, please explain what Paul is communicating in Philippians 2:17.

Because God is using his life in service for others, Paul rejoices that God is using him for their good and God's glory. His life is for the Lord—in any capacity and to any degree for whatever the Lord may ask of Him. He rejoices that God is using him, though it costs him his own comfort, hopes, and goals. More than anything Paul desires his life to be an offering to the Lord in any way God chooses to use him.

21. What does Paul hope to receive from the Philippians in 2:18?
He desires that they share their joy with him.

- a. Rather than a vague, general kind of joy, Paul has something specific in mind. What kind of joy does he desire to see in the Philippians? See Romans 5:1-2; 15:13; Philippians 1:25.

Romans 5:1–2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and *we exult in hope of the glory of God.*

Romans 15:13 *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Philippians 1:25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all *for your progress and joy in the faith,*

Paul desired the Philippians to share their joy in their faith with him. nothing bolsters a saint as much as hearing of the faith and joy other believers have in their Lord and Savior as they recount His wonderful love and work in them.

- b. How would this kind of joy be a blessing to all?
It causes all to rejoice, to give glory to God, and to reflect on their own faith in Christ and His work in them.

22. What things stood out to you in this lesson that you'd like to continue to think on and live out?

I definitely want to spend more time on verses 17-18! To spend my life purposefully, intentionally for Jesus' sake. I long to find it easy to give up "my time" for the sake of the kingdom. I long to have the eyes to see when I am clinging to me instead of living for Him.

I love the intentionality, sacrifice, and focus on the goal in this passage. I am sooooo distracted and I desperately desire to remember these truths!

What various hindrances we meet
In coming to a mercy seat?
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there.

Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,

Discovering the Treasures of the Word

Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright;
And Satan trembles, when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

While Moses stood with arms spread wide,
Success was found on Israel's side;
But when thro' weariness they failed,
That moment Amalek prevailed.

Have you no words? Ah, think again,
Words flow apace when you complain;
And fill your fellow creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent,
To Heav'n in supplication sent;
Your cheerful song would oftener be,
Hear what the Lord has done for me!

~William Cowper⁵

⁵ William Cowper, "What Various Hindrances We Meet," <http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/w/v/h/vvhwmeet.htm>

Philippians

Lesson #9, Chapter 2:19-30

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Have you prepared your heart for the study of God's Word? Have you asked for the Lord's help and insight? Have you confessed your sins and thanked the Lord for making His Word accessible to you?

1. Paul ended the previous section referring to his death in service for Christ (Philippians 2:17). Though he longs to depart and be with Christ, he believes the Lord still has vital ministry for him to do (Philippians 1:18-26). Until Paul can be among the Philippians in person, what does he desire to do and why? See Philippians 2:19.

Philippians 2:19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

Paul hopes to send Timothy to them so he can hear how they are doing spiritually.

2. What things were happening in the Philippian church that concerned Paul about their spiritual health? We've already discussed some of these reasons, so it should be familiar to you. Scan through the book and see what you can find.

They were being attacked from the outside and facing conflict from within the church. They had false teachers among them, seeking to undermine Paul's teaching. They were experiencing suffering and persecution. They were feeling the effects of trials and conflict in that they weren't maintaining harmony among each other. They were seeking their own happiness and fulfillment. They had false teachers who were trying to turn them back to the legalism of Judaism. And they had the divisive conflict of Euodia and Syntyche they needed to deal with. They were also poor.

3. Why did Paul trust Timothy to go and check on the Philippians? See Philippians 2:20-22.
Philippians 2:20-22 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

He considered Timothy a kindred spirit in the things of the kingdom. Timothy, like Paul, sought the interests of Christ. And Timothy was like a son to Paul in the ministry.

4. What do you learn about the bond between Paul and Timothy? See 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:20, 22; 1 Timothy 1:2, 18; 2 Timothy 3:10-11.

1 Corinthians 4:17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my *beloved and faithful child* in the Lord, and *he will remind you of my ways* which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

Philippians 2:20 For I have no one else of *kindred spirit* who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

Philippians 2:22 But you know of his *proven worth*, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a *child serving his father*.

1 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy, my *true child in the faith*: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Timothy 1:18 This command I entrust to you, Timothy, *my son*, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,

2 Timothy 3:10–11 Now *you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings*, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!

5. When will Timothy come to be with the Philippians according to verses 23-24?

Philippians 2:23–24 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

If Paul has anything to do with the timing, it will be immediately—as soon as he finds out what will happen with him. And then he hopes to come to them too.

6. In verse 23 Paul says he’s waiting to see how things go for him. What is he waiting to discover? See Philippians 1:19-20, 21-26.

Philippians 1:19–20 for I know that this will turn out for my *deliverance* through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether *by life or by death*.

Philippians 1:21–26 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. *But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake*. Convinced of this, I know that I will *remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith*, so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

a. What does he think is going to happen? See Philippians 2:24.

Philippians 2:24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

Paul believes that he will be released from prison so he can come and minister to them once again.

7. In Philippians 1:19-26 and here in 2:23-24, we see Paul submitting his plans to the Lord’s good and perfect will. Paul had many ministry plans (Romans 15:28-29; Philemon 22), but he had learned to hold them loosely. What did he know, understand, and apply in his life? See Proverbs 16:1, 9; 19:21; 21:1; Psalm 37:23; Isaiah 46:10; Matthew 6:9-10; Luke 22:42.

[Examples of Paul’s ministry plans: **Romans 15:28–29** Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain. I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Philemon 22 At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.]

Proverbs 16:1 The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.

Proverbs 16:9 The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.

Proverbs 19:21 Many plans are in a man’s heart, But the counsel of the Lord will stand.

Proverbs 21:1 The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Psalms 37:23 The steps of a man are established by the Lord, And He delights in his way.

Isaiah 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

Matthew 6:9–10 “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

Luke 22:42 saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”

What did Paul know, understand, and apply in his life when making plans? He knew that though a man plans his way, the Lord can even change the words on his tongue. He definitely understood that the Lord directs a man’s steps. He knew that though man has many plans in his heart, the Lord’s counsel/plans will stand, not man’s. He understood that the Lord directs man’s heart in whatever way He wishes and according to His design. The Lord delights in establishing man’s way. God declares—and Paul understood this—that God’s will and way will be accomplished as He desires. Paul knew that we are to pray and ask for God’s will to come to pass on earth. Paul also understood that the best and highest good comes from submitting to the Father’s will, no matter how difficult it may be.

8. Like Paul, we can know and understand these truths, yet find it challenging to give up our cherished plans in the face of God’s different ones for us. Besides the truths above in question #7, what are some other truths that help you *willingly submit* to God’s plans for your life? Here are some to get you started: Luke 9:23; 17:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:21; 3:7-8; James 4:13-17. Any others?

Luke 9:23 And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. *My life is not my own. I must deny myself (read—will) and follow Him.*

Luke 17:10 “So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’” *As a slave of Christ, I shouldn’t expect that my will would be considered. The amazing thing is how kind the Lord is dealing with our hopes and desires though He may not bring them to pass.*

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. *My every response is to be done to the glory of God.*

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. *If Christ is truly life for me, then whatever the Father desires for me, will only hasten me toward that goal.*

Philippians 3:7–8 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, *Since all things lead me to Christ, then even the loss of my plans, hopes, and desires, can give me a greater view and knowledge of Him.*

James 4:13–17 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. *We are to submit our plans and purposes to the Lord, holding them loosely, knowing we don’t know what He knows!*

9. While Paul waits to see what God’s plans are for his life, what does Paul put into the works? See Philippians 2:25. Why? See Philippians 2:25-26.

Philippians 2:25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; *Paul decides it’s best to send Epaphroditus to the Philippian church.*

Philippians 2:25–26 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. *Why? Because he was Paul’s trusted fellow worker, a fellow soldier in Christ’s regiment. He was also an emissary of blessing from the Philippians to Paul before. And Paul also wanted to send him now that he [Epaphroditus] had recovered from his sickness and was longing to see the Philippians.*

10. What do we learn about Epaphroditus and the kind of man he was from verses 25-28 and Philippians 4:18?

Philippians 2:25–28 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you.

Philippians 4:18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

- Paul considered him a brother in the faith.
- He was a fellow worker.
- He was a fellow soldier.
- He was sent by the Philippians to bless Paul—as a messenger and minister to Paul’s needs.
- Even in his deathly illness, he longed for his Philippian friends.
- He was trusted to bring the money gift for Paul.

11. Paul makes a distinction between being a *fellow worker* and a *fellow soldier*. Look up the following verses to piece together what might have been in Paul’s mind when he used those descriptive terms. For *fellow worker* see Romans 16:3, 9, 21; Philippians 4:3; Philemon 1, 24. For *fellow soldier* see 1 Corinthians 16:12; 1 Timothy 1:18; 2 Timothy 2:3-4; 4:7; Philemon 2.

A Fellow Worker

Romans 16:3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

Romans 16:9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Romans 16:21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

Philippians 4:3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Philemon 1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker,

Philemon 24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

A fellow worker has joined in the work of the ministry. Paul sees them as helpers to his own ministry and also workers in their own calling from the Lord.

A Fellow Soldier

1 Timothy 1:18 This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,

2 Timothy 2:3–4 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

Philemon 2 and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

A fellow soldier holds the standard a bit higher by noting how they labor in the battle and only devote themselves to the Master’s service. A believers are to fight, though not all really enter into the battle on behalf of their King.

12. The Philippians are to *receive* Epaphroditus in verse 29. What implications does the word *receive* carry with it, and what heart response does it require of the Philippians?

Receive carries with it an intentional welcome—a taking of the gift and bringing it into the fellowship—in this case, it was Epaphroditus. The heart response is one of joy

because he was a fellow worker and fellow soldier. He was a faithful man. He was to be regarded highly because men like him are few and far between.

13. How does Paul want the Philippians to respond to Epaphroditus when he arrives among them? See the first part of Philippians 2:29. See also Matthew 10:40-41; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Colossians 4:10.

Philippians 2:29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; *with all joy*

Matthew 10:40-41 “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. “He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. *Receiving these men who are faithful workers for the Lord, who teach and preach God’s Word, are God’s ambassadors, they are to be received as if they were the Lord Himself!*

Romans 16:1-2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well. *Receive faithful workers is how we are to respond to all the saints! Oh my, I fear we have much work to do in this area of receiving and ministering to faithful servants of the Lord.*

1 Corinthians 16:10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord’s work, as I also am. *Receive him graciously, welcoming him, so that there isn’t fear or uneasiness.*

Colossians 4:10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas’s cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him); *Receiving is welcoming them.*

14. Paul gives further instruction in the second half of Philippians 2:29. What’s the next way they are to receive Epaphroditus?

Holding men like him in high regard.

15. The following texts address how a church can show high regard for the men who minister to them. Summarize what you learn from Luke 10:7; Acts 28:10; I Cor. 9:5-14; I Thess. 5:12-13; I Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6. For a principle found in the Old Testament, see 2 Chronicles 31:4.

Luke 10:7 “Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. *Take care of your faithful minister. He is worthy of his wages.*

Acts 28:10 They also honored us with many marks of respect; and when we were setting sail, they supplied us with all we needed. *They are to honored with marks of respect and their needs supplied.*

1 Corinthians 9:5-14 Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? I am not speaking these things according to

human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. *If you are enjoying spiritual blessing then you should and must take care of your shepherd so that they can minister even more faithfully. The congregation should make sure that the shepherds reap blessings from the people, as well.*

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. *Appreciate them, esteem them highly because of their work (not because you like their personality). Recognize their work and labors.*

1 Timothy 5:17–18 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." *Double honor! Such a radical idea when one considers that many don't even receive single honor.*

Galatians 6:6 The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. *Sheep are to share all good things with their faithful shepherds.*

2 Chronicles 31:4 Also he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the law of the Lord. *The people were commanded to care for the Levites who were set apart to minister on their behalf in the tabernacle/temple.*

16. Often churches don't consider how to bless and encourage those who minister the Word of God to them. Think for a moment how *you* obey the command to *receive in the Lord with joy* and *regard highly* those who faithfully serve you by preaching and teaching God's Word.
 - a. First, consider *your own response* to those whom God has placed in your life for your spiritual growth. In what way have *you received* your preachers and teachers *in the Lord* and *with joy*? How do *you* obey the command to *regard* your preachers and teachers *highly*?

I think I sin most often in just not really considering them at all because I'm more concerned about me. Part of regarding them highly is to listen to them and seek to apply what they teach. The joy part comes in anticipating the teaching I am to receive.

- b. How does your church do in obeying this command for your preachers and teachers? Often church members *assume* the church is “taking care of the pastors,” but never find out for sure. What can you do as a church member to ensure that your church is ministering to your pastors and teachers as the Lord commands?

I need to check in with the deacons/elders and ask specifically how they are doing in this area since the care and maintenance of pastors comes from them. I would also want to see how the leaders are responding to those who minister the Word of God to them.

17. Paul explains why he wants the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus. What do you learn from Philippians 2:30? See also 1 Corinthians 16:15-18; note the progression from Philippians 4:10 to verse 18; Philemon 13.

Philippians 2:30 because *he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.*

1 Corinthians 16:15–18 Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, *because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours.* Therefore acknowledge such men.

Philippians 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but *you lacked opportunity.*

Philippians 4:18 *But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.*

Philemon 13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that *on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel;*

The other “fellow workers” really came alongside and helped Paul. They also became as “stand ins” for the other believers in ministering to Paul.

18. Epaphroditus’ stellar character continues to shine as he steps in to serve Paul, even at risk to his own life. The clue for how he was able to live so sacrificially can be found in Philippians 2:30. What do you find? See also Acts 20:24.

Philippians 2:30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, *risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.*

Acts 20:24 “*But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.*”

Like Paul, he didn’t count his life as dear to himself. He was willing to put himself in harm’s way if it meant the furtherance of the gospel.

Selah. Oh, I see how selfish I am and how begrudgingly I spend myself for the Lord’s kingdom. May my heart be made more like Christ and may I follow the example of Paul,

Timothy, Epaphroditus, and the other faithful fellow workers and fellow soldiers in the Master's service.

19. This section of Philippians spotlights the godly example of Timothy and Epaphroditus, whose examples we are to emulate. See Philippians 3:17; 4:9; Hebrews 13:7. What traits from these men would you like to follow in your own life?

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

Philippians 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Hebrews 13:7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

I long to see greater zeal, greater focus and purpose of heart, less being distracted! I so want to pursue the Lord the way Paul and these men did, to serve others with such sacrificial motivations and great self-disinterest. May I imitate their faith, practicing what I see in them!

Oh how desirable, how profitable to the Christian life
 Is a spirit of holy watchfulness
 And godly jealousy over myself.
 When my soul is afraid of nothing
 Except grieving and offending Thee, the blessed God,
 My Father and Friend,
 Whom I then love and long to please,
 Rather than be happy in myself!
 Knowing, as I do, that this is the pious temper,
 Worthy of the highest ambition, and closest pursuit
 Of intelligent creatures and holy Christians,
 May my joy derive from glorifying and delighting Thee.

The Valley of Vision, "Devotion," page 130.

Philippians

Lesson #10, Chapter 3 Observation

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study that all too often can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what is in the text. At this stage in the Bible study, you're noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what it means or how it applies to your life—that will come later, I promise. Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. You'll be glad you did!

I've included Chapter 3 at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. To begin, read through Chapter 3. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 3. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.¹
 - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verse 1).
Paul desires that the brethren rejoice in the Lord.
 - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 2-6).
He also urges the brethren to beware of the false circumcision who put their confidence of God's favor in their works. Paul argues that of all people he should have put confidence in his works for God's favor.
 - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 7-11).
Paul explains why he counts all things as loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ. All the things the world and our flesh count as valuable don't hold a candle to knowing Christ deeply and intimately.
 - d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 12-16).
Paul acknowledges he's not perfected, but he continues to press with the Lord Jesus as his goal.

¹The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

- e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 17-21).

He urges the brethren to follow his example in all that he's just said (verses 1-16). He contrasts those who are enemies of Christ with those whose citizenship is in heaven.

2. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

The main point of the chapter can be summed up in verse 8 which says, "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ." Verse 8 crystallizes how Paul feels about Jesus Christ and the life he now lives. For Paul, the main point in everything he writes in chapter 3 can be summed up in seeing Christ as the greatest value, goal, and focus in life. For Paul, to live is Christ!

3. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your three to five word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

The Surpassing Value of Christ

4. On the *Philippians Bible Text* handout mark key words. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. Start with these first. Then mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

5. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time God is mentioned in Philippians Chapter 1. Your Chapter 1 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below. Verse 2: grace to you and peace from *God*; verse 2: *God* our *Father*; verse 3: I thank *God* when I [Paul] remember you [Philippians].

God

Verse 3 we worship in the Spirit of God

Verse 9 may be found...having "the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith"

Verse 14 press on toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

Verse 15 if you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also

Christ

Verse 1 rejoice in the Lord

Verse 3 glory in Christ Jesus

Verse 7 counted all things to be loss for the sake of Christ

Verse 8 count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord

Verse 8 suffered loss of all things and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ

Verse 9 [gain Christ] and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own...

Verse 9 righteousness...which is through faith in Christ

Verse 10 that I may know Him

Verse 10 know the power of His resurrection

Verse 10 know the fellowship of His sufferings

Verse 10 [that he would be] conformed to His death

Verse 12 press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus

Verse 14 I press on toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

Verse 18 many walk...enemies of the cross of Christ

Verse 20 we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

Verse 21 who [He, Jesus] will transform the body of our humble state

Verse 21 with the body of His glory

Verse 21 by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself

Spirit

Verse 3 who worship in the Spirit of God

Beware

Verse 2 Beware the dogs

Verse 2 Beware the evil workers

Verse 2 Beware the false circumcision

Loss

Verse 7 whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ

Verse 8 I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ

Verse 8 Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things

Lay Hold

Verse 12 I press on so that I may lay hold of that

Verse 12 for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus

Verse 13 I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet

Count

Verse 7 I count all things to be loss

Verse 8 I suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish

Perfect

Verse 12 not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect

Verse 15 let us, as many as are perfect, have this attitude

Righteousness

Verse 6 as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless

Verse 9 not having a righteousness of my own

Verse 9 that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith

Flesh and Confidence

Verse 3 put no confidence in the flesh

Verse 4 I might have confidence in the flesh

Verse 4 if anyone has a mind to put confidence in the flesh I far more

So That

Verse 8 suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish so *that* I may gain Christ

Verse 10 may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, *that* I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death

Verse 11 being conformed to His death *in order that* I may attain to the resurrection from the dead

Verse 12 I press on so *that* I may lay hold

6. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be.

7. Now, list the commands on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.
 - Verse 1 Rejoice in the Lord
 - Verse 2 Beware of the dogs
 - Verse 2 Beware of the evil workers
 - Verse 2 Beware of the false circumcision
 - Verse 15 Let us *have* this attitude
 - Verse 16 Let us *keep living* by that same standard
 - Verse 17 Join in following my example
 - Verse 17 Observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us

8. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared.

Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted.

9. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.
See Observation Sheet
10. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)
See Observation Sheet
11. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.
See Observation Sheet
12. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.
See Observation Sheet
13. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person. For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is loving [because He loved the world]; He is giving [because He gave His Son]; He is eternal [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

Attributes of God

Verse 3 God is Spirit

Verse 3 God is worthy to be worshiped and is the means of worship

Verse 9 God is righteous

Verse 9 God’s righteousness is communicable

Verse 14 God draws us to Himself

Verse 14 God is in Heaven

Verse 15 God is the revealer of secrets

Attributes of Jesus Christ

Verse 1 Jesus is to be rejoiced in for all He is and what He has done

Verse 3 Jesus is worthy of all glory

Verse 7, 8 Jesus is worthy of all sacrifice and self denial

Verse 8, 20 Jesus is Lord

Verse 9 Jesus is righteous

Verse 9 Jesus is God

Verse 10 Jesus is knowable

Verse 10 Jesus is God for He rose from the dead

Verse 12 Jesus has a plan for our lives

Verse 20 Jesus is Savior

Verse 21 Jesus is holy, glorious, King

Attributes of the Holy Spirit

Verse 3 the Holy Spirit is the means of worship for the believer, He is of the same essence and attributes as God, making Him God.

14. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action. For example, in Philippians 1:1 *we find a list about Paul's thankful heart*. We discover 1) he's thankful when he remembers the Philippians; 2) he's shows his thankfulness by praying for them; 3) his thankfulness spills over into prayers with joy for them; 4) he's thankful when he remembers how they participated in the gospel from the very beginning until now.

See Observation Sheet

15. Be sure to mark or write down any "nuggets" you observed which you thought were interesting.
I just love meditating on "being conformed to His death." This is dying to self and applying Luke 9:23, "And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in each chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life at this time. Your task at this time is to look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter. Have fun digging into God's word!

Notes on Chapter 2
SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES
Discovering the Treasures of the Word

Philippians Chapter 3

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

False
circumcision
vs
True
circumcision

3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh, if anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

Why Paul
+ Confess
+ Confess
+ Confess
vs 5
vs nation
vs tribe
vs Hebrew
vs Pharisee
vs zealous
persecutor
vs blameless

gain = loss -> for Christ
all things = loss < knowing Christ
greater value

loss of "all things" = rubbish
< gain Christ

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES
Discovering the Treasures of the Word

11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Jesus laid hold of
5:2 to 5:21
lay hold of
vs 10-11
things
I reached
obtained
or laid hold of
Phil 3:12
so things
I laid hold of
lay hold of
press on
vs 12

Whatever means it is - it
has been perfect
for what reason
lay hold means
resurrection
from the
dead -
man
vs 10

our walk
is
the
walk

their
end
vs

our
end

2 Trainings
vs 15 Attitude
vs 12 Standard

2 Commands
Join
observe

and
walk
1 as enemies
2

△ God
+ Jesus
✓ Holy Spirit
= Beware
X LOSS
○ lay hold
1234 count

contrast
synonyms
ccc
commands

□ righteous
□ flesh
— in the

Th. ra. 1:1-4

Philippians

Lesson #11, Chapter 3:1-7

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Prepare your heart to study God's Word by asking Him for His help and insight, confessing any known sin, and thanking Him for the treasure of the Scriptures that guide, sustain, and teach you.

1. Paul has given instruction and encouragement to the Philippians from the moment he began his letter to them. To remind yourself of the ground Paul has covered, peruse Philippians 1:1-2:30 and choose any 5 of his previous commands, warnings, or encouragements and list them here. (I limited the selection to 5 so it wouldn't feel too overwhelming, but if you prefer to list them all, please do!)

Commands

1. 1:27 Conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ
2. 2:2 Make my joy complete by being of the same mind....
3. 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness
4. 2:3 [Do nothing] from empty conceit
5. 2:4 Do not merely look out for your own personal interests
6. 2:4 [implied—look out] for the interests of others
7. 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves
8. 2:12 Work out your salvation with fear and trembling
9. 2:14 Do all things without grumbling
10. 2:14 [Do all things without] arguing
11. 2:16 Participle: holding fast the word of life
12. 2:18 Rejoice in the same way
13. 2:18 Share your joy with me
14. 2:29 Receive him then in the Lord
15. 2:29 Hold men like him in high regard

Warnings

- 1:29 granted to suffer

Encouragements

1. 1:6 He who began a good work in you will complete it...
2. 1:12 My circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel
3. 1:13 My imprisonment has become known to the whole praetorian guard
4. 1:14 Brethren have courage to speak boldly and proclaim Christ
5. 2:12 My beloved, just as you have always obeyed, and now much more in my absence, work out your salvation
6. 2:14-15 Do all things without grumbling or arguing to prove yourselves children of God...

2. The Greek word for *finally* in Philippians 3:1 has been translated various ways, depending on its context. Here in verse 1, it would be better translated *furthermore* or *henceforth*, which then provides a bridge between all Paul has previously instructed and

the new information he now gives. What does Paul command the Philippians in chapter 3 verse 1?

Rejoice in the Lord.

3. Eager Beaver: Paul repeatedly uses the word *rejoice* in different ways in the book of Philippians. Review how he uses the word *rejoice* or *joy* and who it's directed toward from Philippians 1:18; 2:17, 18, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10.

Philippians 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, *Here Paul rejoices that the gospel message is proclaimed—no matter the motivations for those who do so. For the second rejoice, it sounds like he is determining by faith to choose to rejoice, though the poor motivations of some for preaching the gospel were done out of spite.*

Philippians 2:17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. *Paul rejoices in his opportunity to give himself for the sake of the Philippians' faith and growth in Christ.*

Philippians 2:18 You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me. *Paul now speaks to the Philippians and desires that they rejoice in their opportunity to give themselves for the sake of others and for the Lord Jesus.*

Philippians 2:28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you. *Paul desires the Philippians to rejoice when they see Epaphroditus again.*

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. *Paul writes to the Philippians to rejoice in the work and service of the Lord.*

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! *Paul urges the Philippians to rejoice when difficulties and trials come upon them.*

Philippians 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. *Paul rejoiced at the spiritual sensitivity and generosity of the Philippians toward him in their giving.*

4. Why would Paul desire the Philippians to find joy in the Lord (3:1), based upon what you know of the Philippians' circumstances?

Finding joy in the Lord and rejoicing in the privilege that it is to suffer in His name is a true sign of spiritual growth and maturity. Paul knows how important it is for all believers to rejoice in the Lord. He also explains that it is a safeguard to keep them from looking into false teachers, getting off track, growing discontent, etc.

5. We too are commanded to *rejoice in the Lord*, no matter what our situation. In fact, the more distressing our circumstances, the greater need for us to obey this command (Philippians 3:1). Consider *why* you should rejoice in the Lord in all things and at all times.

Why should I rejoice in the Lord in all things and at all times? First, because we're told to do so. Next, because it shows I am trusting the Lord by faith. It also reveals my submission to the Lord's will in the easy and more difficult times.

- a. Next, consider some of the specifics about the Lord and your salvation that give you joy. Start with 5 items, though feel free to continue if you have more!

When I rejoice in the Lord, meditating on Him, I remember His faithfulness and obedience to go to the cross on my behalf. I rejoice in His perfect atonement to cover all my sin. I rejoice in knowing Him, that I can have fellowship with Him. I rejoice that I can bring Him glory if I will trust and obey Him and live for Him. I rejoice that His sacrifice was completely efficient to cover all my past, present, and future sins—and not mine only, but also all who place their faith in Him.

- b. How can you incorporate *more* rejoicing in the Lord, especially when you are in distress?

To incorporate more rejoicing when I am in distress I must, must, must spend time in the Word, praying through and meditating on the soul-refreshing Word. Only the Word can so revive and strengthen my soul so I can rejoice in my distresses. This comes because I lift my eyes from myself and my circumstances to the Lord in faith and trust that He knows what is best.

By faith, I turn to the Word. By faith, I listen and praise the Lord in song. By faith, I turn to the memorizing Scripture. And by faith, I go where other believers are so I can be encouraged and strengthened by their faith.

- c. Finally, think about what attitudes or actions on your part might hinder your rejoicing in the Lord. What are some ways you can grow more aware of these temptations?

Lack of trust. Refusing to believe or apply God's Word. Hurrying over my daily Bible reading rather than slowing down and praying through it. Not praying before doing things, especially Bible reading and study.

6. While the Philippians rejoice in the Lord, what does Paul intend to do for them and why (verse 1)?

To write the same things to them again, is not a trouble for him. He does so because it's also a safeguard for them.

7. What kinds of things do we tend to remind people about? For what purpose?
Things that are dangerous. Things we're worried about. Things that are important.
Things that are precious to us. Things that will be good for them to remember.

We do that for protection. We remind people of things that will help them. We remind them of things that will bring them joy and blessing.

8. What do you learn about this valuable discipleship tool in Romans 15:14-15; Hebrews 5:11-12; 2 Peter 1:12-15; 3:1-2?

Romans 15:14–15 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another. But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you

again, because of the grace that was given me from God, *Sometimes we remind boldly or even firmly because we know and understand our calling.*

Hebrews 5:11–12 Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. *We remind because the young or immature need to be taught so they will grow. It's not good that we stay the same. A ministry of reminding is helpful and crucial for our growth.*

2 Peter 1:12–15 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind. *We remind people of truths that they already know and adhere to because the truths are so valuable, so important and life-changing, and because they are truths we need to live upon and apply to our lives.*

2 Peter 3:1–2 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles. *We remind to stir people up to their duties and responsibilities in the Lord. And we should always remember the Word of God preserved for us.*

9. What warning does Paul give the Philippians in verse 2? What do you learn about this group from the description (verse 2)?

He tells them to *beware* the dogs, the evil workers, and the false circumcision.

We definitely see how Paul regards them—lowly dogs, as evil, and as false.

10. The following passages from Galatians 2:3-4; 5:1-12; and 6:12-15 help us see how dangerous it was to be influenced by this group. What do you learn? What was at stake for the Philippians, if they were persuaded by this group?

Galatians 2:3–4 But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. *If the Philippians believed the Judaizer's message they would be brought into the bondage of the Law once again—with no hope for living upon the free grace of Christ.*

Galatians 5:1–12 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?

This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is. But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves. *If the Philippians believed the Judaizer's message they would be enslaved once again and obligated to keep the whole Law. If they walked away from the truth of the gospel, it would show they weren't truly saved to begin with—they would be "fallen from grace." They would also be "infected" by the Judaizer's message because the Judaizers were trying to remove the stumbling block of the cross.*

Galatians 6:12–15 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. *If the Philippians believed the Judaizer's message they would be trying to escape persecution. The Philippians would also be a boastful trophy in the Judaizer's belts. It's essential that the Philippians understand they are new creatures in Christ.*

11. What is the difference between the *false* circumcision and *true* circumcision according to Philippians 3:3? See also Romans 2:25-29; Galatians 6:12-15; Colossians 2:8-12.

True circumcision worships in the Spirit of God.

True circumcision glories in Christ.

True circumcision puts no confidence in the flesh.

Conversely, the false circumcision does not worship in the Spirit of God since they do not possess His Spirit.

The false circumcision doesn't glory in Christ, instead, they glory in themselves, their attainments, their position and attention. They glory in their pride.

The false circumcision puts great confidence in their flesh, in their works, in the stuff of this world, in their own righteousness—rather than finding their hope in the Lord Jesus.

12. What does it mean to *worship in the Spirit of God*? See Deuteronomy 30:6; John 4:23-24; Romans 7:6.

Deuteronomy 30:6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

John 4:23–24 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Romans 7:6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

To worship in the Spirit of God means to come humbly before the Lord, with love and reverence, and a focused heart. To worship in the Spirit of God means to worship Him in our hearts and in the truth of God's Word. To worship in the Spirit of God means that we leave behind the old ways of the Law and works righteousness.

13. How can you *glory in Christ Jesus*? See Psalm 105:3; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Philippians 3:7-9.

Psalm 105:3 Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.
Jeremiah 9:23–24 Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.

Philippians 3:7–9 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

To glory in the Lord Jesus is to be glad in Him, to revel and rejoice in His holy name. To glory in the Lord Jesus is not to boast in anything but Him, and of knowing Him. To glory in the Lord Jesus means to count all things as loss in view of knowing Him and counting Him of surpassing value.

14. What does it mean to *put no confidence in the flesh*? See Proverbs 3:5-7; Galatians 3:3; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:4-11; Hebrews 13:9.

Proverbs 3:5–7 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Ephesians 2:8–9 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Philippians 3:4–11 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His

sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Hebrews 13:9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

To put no confidence in the flesh is to apply ALL of Proverbs 3:5-7. It is to remember that salvation and sanctification are a work of grace, and most certainly not a result of works. Putting no confidence in the flesh means living upon Christ's righteousness by faith, knowing our hearts are strengthened by grace, not by worldly or fleshly means.

15. What does it look like *in the day to day of life* to worship in the Spirit, glory in Christ, and put no confidence in your own works? How can you remind yourself of these important attitudes?

It is to live out Proverbs 3:5-7. It is to remember the debt I owe the Lord Jesus for His sacrifice on my behalf. It is to remember the depth and power of indwelling sin so that I cry out to the Lord Jesus for rescue, cleansing, and covering. 1 John 1:9.

Reminding myself of those attitudes always comes back to time in the Word, purposefully thinking on and mulling over the truths I must apply in my life, to be thoughtful of His Word.

16. Paul continues to dismantle the false teaching hurting the church. After his statement that he puts no confidence in the flesh in verse 3, what does Paul reveal in Philippians 3:4-6? He basically gives them his testimony and tells them that if anyone could have put confidence in the flesh, it was him. From there, Paul lists his "confidence in the flesh" credentials:

- a. Why does he introduce this information from Philippians 3:4-6?

He introduces this information to show that though someone may even be blameless according to the Law, that still won't be enough to secure salvation, entrance into God's presence, and the cleansing from all sin.

17. Consider what you know about each of the items Paul lists in Philippians 3:4-6 that might tempt him to put his confidence in them. See Genesis 17:14; Acts 26:4-5; Romans 10:2-5; 11:1; 2 Corinthians 11:22; Galatians 1:13-14.

Genesis 17:14 "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

Circumcision, which means he is part of God's chosen people.

Acts 26:4-5 "So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem; since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion. *A Pharisee of the strictest sect. He was at the apex of manmade righteousness—but it wasn't enough.*

Romans 10:2-5 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to

establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. *Paul had to live by the Law's righteousness. He was also very zealous and eager to do so. Probably because it fed his pride, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency.*

Romans 11:1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Deuteronomy 33:12 *Of Benjamin he said, "May the beloved of the Lord dwell in security by Him, Who shields him all the day, And he dwells between His shoulders." The tribe of Benjamin received a wonderful blessing from Moses. They were also beloved of their father, Jacob. MOST IMPORTANTLY, Paul was able to trace his spiritual heritage back to Abraham, the Father of Israel.*

2 Corinthians 11:22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. *He is a Hebrew, an Israelite, and a descendant of Abraham.*

Galatians 1:13–14 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. *He worked hard to prove to God his love and zeal. Unfortunately, it was misplaced and ineffective!*

18. What's a stake if we put "confidence in the flesh?" See Matthew 16:24-26; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17, 21; Galatians 2:15-16, 21; Philippians 3:8-11; Hebrews 11:24-26.

Matthew 16:24–26 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? *If I put confidence in the flesh, I will lose my soul.*

2 Corinthians 5:14–17 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. *If I put confidence in the flesh, I am not a new creature. I remain in the old things and do not know Christ.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. *If I put confidence in the flesh, I will never be righteous.*

Galatians 2:15–16 "We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. *If I put confidence in the flesh, I will never be justified because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.*

Galatians 2:21 “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.” *If I put confidence in the flesh, I nullify the grace of God and say that Jesus died needlessly.*

Philippians 3:8–11 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. *If I put confidence in the flesh, I won’t consider Jesus of surpassing value, nor will I desire to know Him or follow Him faithfully.*

Hebrews 11:24–26 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. *If I put confidence in the flesh, I will choose to enjoy the pleasures of sin and find the treasure of “Egypt” of more value than the Lord Jesus.*

19. In Philippians 3:7 Paul leverages his exhortations to a new level. What does he say and what does it encompass?

Philippians 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Paul addresses anything that might be considered “gain” and says that he will count them as loss for the sake of knowing and following Christ.

20. What are some of the things that are *gain* to you in your life?

My husband, my education, my firstborn status, my health, my position, abilities and gifts from the Lord—both natural and spiritual, my children, my finances, my American citizenship, my age, my experiences, my stuff like my car and wonderful items in my home.

- a. How do your “gains” lure you away from relying on Christ’s work and righteousness?

My “gains” lure me away from relying on the Lord and His righteousness by tempting me to think I am “all that” and deserve all the kindnesses the Lord has *showered* upon me to the point that I am drowning in a pool of His mercies and good things. My pride always takes over and asserts itself! Oh for shame!

- b. What’s the answer for not taking comfort in your “gains?”

To follow Paul’s example in Philippians 3:7 and count them as a loss, as something not to count on at all. To not take comfort in my gains means humbling my heart, remembering the Lord is opposed to the proud and gives grace to the humble.

21. Paul often talks about doing things *for the sake of Christ*. What are some of the things Paul does for the sake of Christ? See Romans 9:3; 1 Corinthians 4:10; 8:9-13; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 12:10; Ephesians 3:1.

Romans 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, *He's willing to give up his salvation if his Jewish brethren would be saved.*

1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor. *He was willing to be considered a fool, weak, and without honor for the Lord's sake in winning others to Christ and building up the saints.*

1 Corinthians 8:9–13 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble. *Paul curbs his liberties for the sake of Christ in winning others to Christ.*

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. *Paul humbled himself as a servant of the Lord Jesus, rather than promoting himself.*

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. *Paul finds contentment in all his weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, and difficulties for the Lord Jesus' sake because he understands that when he is in a place of weakness the Lord Jesus is on display.*

Ephesians 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— *Paul serves the Gentiles out of love for the Lord Jesus.*

22. How does framing your life around doing all *for the sake of Christ* change how you do things, how you think about them, and how you're motivated?

Doing things for Jesus' sake allows me to do things I would never do, don't want to do, or even struggle to do in my flesh, but for Jesus' sake, I take comfort in the great reversal and do it all for him rather than for the person in front of me or for my fleshly reasons. I love even saying, "For His sake" because it so motivates me and elevates my thinking to that heavenly realm where I live by faith.

"Lord, I give up my own plans and purposes, all my own desires, hopes and ambitions, and I accept Thy will for my life. I give up myself, my life, my all, utterly to Thee, to be Thine forever. I hand over to Thy keeping all of my friendships; all the people whom I love are to take second place in my heart. Fill me now and seal me with Thy Spirit. Work out Thy whole will in my life at any cost, for to me to live is Christ. Amen." ~Betty Scott Stam

“When we consecrate ourselves to God, we think we are making a great sacrifice, and doing lots for Him, when really we are only letting go some little, bitsie trinkets we have been grabbing, and when our hands are empty, He fills them full of His treasures.”

~Betty Stam

"I'll Rest in Christ"

~Isaac Watts and David Ward

No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the deeds that I have done;
I leave the hopes I held before
To trust the merits of Your Son.

*So I'll come to You and rest
From my so-called righteousness.
I will cease my striving and put my hope in Jesus.
Trusting in His work for me.
I'll rest in Christ.*

By sov'reign love I bear His name,
What was my gain I count my loss.
My former pride I call my shame
And nail my glory to His cross.

The finest works of my own hands
Dare not appear before Your throne:
But faith can meet Your law's demands
For Jesus' deeds are now my own.

Philippians

Lesson #12, Chapter 3:8-14

TEACHER'S GUIDE

God's Word has such richness to it that we cannot come to study it without His eye-opening and soul-stirring help. Be sure to take time to ask the Lord for His wisdom to gain insight into this passage, so your heart is changed as a result.

1. Paul begins Philippians 3:8 with the phrase, *more than that I* (ESV *indeed, I*; NKJV *yet indeed I also*; NIV *what is more*). What is he comparing between Philippians 3:7 and 3:8?

Paul is upping the comparison/contrast between all the things he can count as loss for the sake of Christ, but then he makes it even better by saying that even more than doing that, he will count ALL things as loss in view of knowing Christ. So now it's not just the things that are gain, but anything will be counted as loss in view of knowing the Lord Jesus better and having sweet fellowship with Him.

"All is loss that comes between us and Christ." George MacDonald, *The Dictionary of Burning Words*, page 95.

2. Why is Paul willing to *count all things loss* according to Philippians 3:8? Because the Lord Jesus is of *surpassing value*. Gaining Christ is worth counting anything else as loss.
3. What *kind of things* does Paul count as loss? See 1 Corinthians 3:18-23; 8:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:18, 22-33; Philippians 3:3-6.

1 Corinthians 3:18–23 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS"; and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS." So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God. *Paul counts wisdom as loss—especially the world's wisdom. He counts the favor of men as loss because we possess all things in Christ.*

1 Corinthians 8:1–2 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know. *Paul counts knowledge as loss if it doesn't edify and lead him to a better relationship with Christ.*

2 Corinthians 11:18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. *Paul counts the flesh as loss—the stuff we do, the stuff we try to accomplish ourselves, the stuff the world values.*

2 Corinthians 11:22–33 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without

number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands. *Paul counts his lineage, position, and heritage as loss. Even being a servant of Christ will be counted as loss IF it gets in the way of drawing nearer to the Lord Jesus.*

Philippians 3:3–6 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. *Paul counts the fleshly benefits of being born a privileged Jew as loss. He counts his knowledge, training, and experience as loss if it gets in the way of his knowing the Lord Jesus better.*

4. How would counting all things *loss* help you know Christ better, in the way Paul is speaking in Philippians 3:8? How do the “things” get in the way of knowing Christ? If I put those things away from me and look only at Jesus, then I’m not looking for those things to give me a boost, to boast in them, or to look for security or satisfaction in them. Instead, I am looking only at Jesus and counting Him the loveliest of all creation, the greatest of all gifts. Jesus is pre-eminent and the One to whom I should look upon and abide with.

5. What information about Jesus in Philippians 3:8 helps us see *why* Paul counted things *loss for the sake of Christ, because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ, and to gain Christ?*

Because He is Jesus Christ *the Lord*. He is Lord, Master, King, and worthy of all praise, all loss, all service, suffering, offering, work, worship, praise, and meditation.

Note the difference between doing things for “the sake of Christ” and for “knowing Christ” and to “gain Christ.” Knowing and gaining Christ is deeper and more completely given over than even doing all things for the sake of Christ, which is wholly commendable.

6. Define *Lord* (Strong’s #2962). *Lord* is the Greek equivalent of Yahweh, the memorial name of God as seen in Exodus 3:14. See also Exodus 3:13-15; John 20:28; Acts 2:36;

Philippians 2:10-11; 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4 to understand the meaning behind “Lord” as used in Philippians 3:8.

“He to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord. 1a the possessor and disposer of a thing. 1a1 the owner; one who has control of the person, the master. 1a2 in the state: the sovereign, prince, chief, the Roman emperor. 1b is a title of honour expressive of respect and reverence, with which servants salute their master. 1c this title is given to: God, the Messiah.” [James Strong, [Enhanced Strong's Lexicon](#) (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995).]

Exodus 3:13–15 Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God, furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘*The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.*’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “*My Lord and my God!*”

Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that *God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.*”

Philippians 2:10–11 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that *every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying *the Master who bought them*, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

Jude 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny *our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

When Jesus is called Lord, it is one way of proclaiming that He is God, the Master, Creator, and Ruler of all things. He is as Jude says, “our only Master and Lord.” The Father has always intended that all creation praise and worship the Son in His Lordship, so the blessed and most holy and mighty Son would receive the honor and glory He deserves and is worthy of receiving. The Father is not jealous that Christ would receive this honor, though the Father has made it clear that He is the ONLY God, One, which teaches us that Jesus is God and one with the Father.

7. Paul so highly values the Lord Jesus that he counts it a privilege to know Him. What else does Paul desire according to verse 9?

Philippians 3:9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

He desires to be found wearing, living in, possessing the righteousness of Christ—that can only come through faith in Him.

8. Why is this characteristic, as seen in verse 9, essential for all who would know Christ?
See 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:16; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:3-7.
There is no way to gain righteousness, forgiveness, cleansing from sin without coming to Christ in faith and receiving His righteousness.

1 Corinthians 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, *who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,*

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, *so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Galatians 2:16 *nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.*

2 Timothy 1:9 *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,*

Titus 3:3–7 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

9. Just as Paul has done in verse 9, take some time to consider how Jesus' righteousness is given to all who turn to Him in faith. In what way have these awesome and precious truths impacted how you think and live?

Christ's righteousness gives me such freedom. I confess that I often find it hard to believe, but trust God by faith that it is so. To think that God looks at me and sees the Lord Jesus' righteousness is absolutely amazing! Knowing I have Christ's full righteousness applied to me helps me move on from my sin. Knowing there is no way I can earn God's favor apart from Jesus' righteousness makes me stand in awe of Him and love Him more.

10. In this passage, Paul says he desires to *gain Christ* (verse 8) and *be found in Him in His righteousness* (verse 9), yet that's not all. What else does Paul desire from the Lord Jesus according to verse 10?

He desires to know Christ. He wants to know and experience the power of His resurrection in his life. He desires to know and experience the fellowship that comes from suffering, especially in the ways that Jesus did. Paul desires to be conformed to Christ's death—to deny himself and give up all like Jesus did.

11. See what you can learn about the word *know* as used here [Strong's #1097].
Know and experience. It is an intimate, personal kind of knowledge. It is not just "book larnin'" but life livin' that Paul is talking about here.

“Paul wants to come to know the Lord Jesus in that fulness of experimental knowledge which is only wrought by being like Him. ...Paul’s desire was that he might so come to know his Lord, the power of His resurrection operative in his life, and a joint-participation in His sufferings, that he would be brought to the place where he would become, both as to his inner heart life and also as to the outward expression of the same, like his Lord with respect to His death, not merely His physical death which was for others, but His death to self, as illustrated so vividly to the Philippians in the self-emptying of the Lord Jesus in 2:7, a self-emptying that was true of our Lord not only in His act of becoming incarnate and of stooping to the death of the Cross, but also one that conditioned His entire earthly life and made it the beautiful life it was, a death to self, a denying of self for the blessing of others. ***This was what Paul was striving for. The most radical conformity is here indicated. It was not only the undergoing of a physical death like that of Christ’s, but a conformity to the spirit and temper of His life, the meekness, lowliness, and submission of Christ.*** [Kenneth S. Wuest, [Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader](#), vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 93–94.]

12. What experiential, relational ways did Paul desire to know the Lord Jesus in Philippians 3:10?

In His resurrected life that conquered sin and death. In His sufferings. And in His death.

“Paul already knew Christ as his Savior. But he wanted to know Him more intimately as his Lord.”

~The Bible Knowledge Commentary¹

“Paul wants to come to know the Lord Jesus in that fulness of experimental knowledge which is only wrought by being like Him. He wants to know also in an experiential way the power of Christ’s resurrection. That is, he wants to experience the same power which raised Christ from the dead surging through his own being, overcoming sin in his life and producing the Christian graces.” ~Kenneth Wuest²

“An unknown God can neither be trusted, served, nor worshipped.”

~A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, from the Preface

13. In verse 10 Paul writes about knowing Christ better through suffering. Look up the following Scriptures, then explain what you learn about the “fellowship of suffering” with Christ. See John 15:18-20; Romans 8:16-17; 2 Corinthians 1:5; Galatians 2:20; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Peter 4:12-13; 5:9.

John 15:18–20 “*If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.*” “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘*A slave is not greater than his master.*’ *If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours*”

¹ Robert P. Lightner, “[Philippians](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 661.

² Kenneth S. Wuest, [Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader](#), vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 93.

also. [We will undergo the things that Jesus went through. If He suffered, then of course, we will suffer too being that we are sinful creatures who deserve far worse than what we are receiving.]

Romans 8:16–17 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, *heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.* [Our sufferings also identify us as belonging to the Lord Jesus.]

2 Corinthians 1:5 For just as the *sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance*, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. [We will have suffering. Period. Lots of them.]

Galatians 2:20 *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*

2 Timothy 1:12 *For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.*

Hebrews 12:1–3 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and *let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

1 Peter 4:12–13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but *to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*

1 Peter 5:9 But resist him, *firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*

The fellowship of suffering comes about because Jesus went first. He was mistreated and abused, so of course, as His followers, we should be too for a slave is not greater than his master. The fellowship of suffering also reveals our sonship—we are children of God. As part of the fellowship of suffering, we can expect suffering, and for some, lots of it because we live a life of dying daily. Yet in our suffering, we shouldn't feel shame though the world will try like crazy to do so. Instead, we are to run with endurance, keeping our eyes fixed on Him, knowing that He suffered so we can suffer well, long, and without giving up. In fact, we are to rejoice that we experience the “fellowship of suffering” and can be strengthened knowing that all believers undergo suffering.

14. The last item in Philippians 3:10 is a result of entering into Christ's sufferings. What happens as we fellowship with Christ in our sufferings according to verse 10?

We are conformed to His death.

15. Look up the following verses to gain a better grasp of what it means to be “conformed to His death.” See Luke 9:23; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12; 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21; 2:3-8.

Luke 9:23 And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

2 Corinthians 4:7–12 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you.

2 Corinthians 5:14–15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

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

Philippians 2:3–8 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Being conformed to His death practically means that I die to myself each day. I deny myself. Being conformed to His death means living that dying life, knowing that as I do, the Lord Jesus will be seen in me. Being conformed to His death means living for Him rather than for me—in this way, I deny myself, take up my cross, and follow Him. Another aspect of being conformed to His death means that the Lord Jesus lives in me. Dying is gain for the believer so being conformed to His death isn’t a bad thing. We are commanded to have the same attitude as Christ in dying to self, as I do this, I am being conformed to His death.

“When these four things are true of Paul, namely, to be discovered by men to be in Christ by the very life he lives, by coming to know Him better all the time, by experiencing the same power that raised Christ from the dead surging through his own being, and by becoming a joint-participant in His sufferings for righteousness’ sake, then Paul will constantly be made conformable to Christ’s death. *The words “made conformable” mean literally, “to bring to the same form with some other person.”* It is the same Greek word the apostle used in the great Kenosis (Κενοσις) passage (2:5–8), meaning in its verb form “to give outward expression of one’s inner intrinsic nature.”

Paul’s desire was that he might so come to know his Lord, the power of His resurrection operative in his life, and a joint-participation in His sufferings, that he would be brought to the place where he would become, both as to his inner heart life and also as to the outward expression of the same, like his Lord with

respect to His death, not merely His physical death which was for others, but His death to self, as illustrated so vividly to the Philippians in the self-emptying of the Lord Jesus in 2:7, a self-emptying that was true of our Lord not only in His act of becoming incarnate and of stooping to the death of the Cross, but also one that conditioned His entire earthly life and made it the beautiful life it was, a death to self, a denying of self for the blessing of others. This was what Paul was striving for. The most radical conformity is here indicated. *It was not only the undergoing of a physical death like that of Christ's, but a conformity to the spirit and temper of His life, the meekness, lowliness, and submission of Christ.*" [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 93–94.]

16. What does Paul mean when he says he desires to “attain to the resurrection from the dead” in Philippians 3:11? See Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:16-17, 20-23; Philippians 3:21; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

Romans 8:9–11 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, *He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

1 Corinthians 6:14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but *will also raise us up through His power.*

1 Corinthians 15:16–17 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and *if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.*

1 Corinthians 15:20–23 *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.* For since by a man came death, *by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.* For as in Adam all die, *so also in Christ all will be made alive.* But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

Philippians 3:21 *who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory,* by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

1 Peter 1:3–5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born *again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,* who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

To attain to the resurrection from the dead, Paul is referring to the transformation of our bodies in which we will be made like Christ. Our mortal bodies will become immortal and raised up from the dead by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. In our resurrection glory we will no longer experience sin and death and its corruption in our bodies. Only in Christ will we experience this glorious transformation into conformity with the body of His glory (we will be like Him). In its fullness, attaining to the

resurrection of the dead transforms our bodies and our souls. Paul isn't only speaking of a physical resurrection, but the transformation of his whole being. Finally, when our resurrection takes place, we will obtain our inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us! Oh glory, glory, glory!

- a. How should that knowledge and understanding about our future resurrection change how we live?

It gives hope! It gives motivation and focus for this life. It's also a reminder that this life isn't all there is! We live for more than what we see here. It changes how I live because I don't want to sin knowing what is reserved in heaven for me.

17. The ESV and NKJV connect verse 11 to Paul's previous comments, so that the transition from verse 10 into verse 11 reads, "...becoming like Him in His death, *that by any means possible* I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." Explain how verse 11 further reveals Paul's intense desire to *know Christ*. See also Romans 8:18, 23.

Attaining to the resurrection from the dead is the ultimate fulfillment of knowing Christ when we will see Him as He is and be transformed ourselves. *By any means possible* he will not consider his sufferings of note and *by any means possible* he will eagerly look forward to the day when his salvation will be completed.

"To know Christ means that we share the way he walked; we share the cross he bore; we share the death he died; and finally we share the life he lives for evermore." [William Barclay, *The Letters to Philipppians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated, *The New Daily Study Bible* (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 76.]

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Romans 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

18. After ardently giving voice to his deepest heart desires, what is Paul quick to concede in verse 12?

He hasn't yet attained to the resurrection from the dead—that is, he isn't perfect yet, but he presses on to know Christ and follow Him so completely that he will accomplish the tasks and live the life God intended for him before time began.

- a. Define *perfect* [Strong's #5048]. See Philippians 3:21.

"To make perfect, complete. to carry through completely, to accomplish, finish, bring to an end." [James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995).]

To carry out a thing to the full.

Philippians 3:21 reveals what Paul means when he talks about being made perfect. The verse says, “who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

“Have attained, am made perfect. There is a change of tenses which may be intentional; the aorist *attained* pointing to the definite period of his conversion, the perfect, *am made perfect*, referring to his present state, Neither when I became Christ’s did I attain, nor, up to this time, have I been perfected. With *attained* supply *the prize* from ver. 14. Rev., *am made perfect*, is preferable, as preserving the passive form of the verb.” [Marvin Richardson Vincent, [Word Studies in the New Testament](#), vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 449.]

“Paul pointedly denies that he has reached a spiritual impasse of non-development. Certainly he knew nothing of so-called sudden absolute perfection by any single experience. Paul has made great progress in Christlikeness, but the goal is still before him, not behind him.” [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Php 3:12.]

- b. Define *press on* [Strong’s #1377]. See also 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 12:1 to gain a picture of what Paul meant.

Pressing on toward a fixed point. In a sense, he is keeping up the chase.

“He has in mind the image of a Greek runner streaking down the race course. He is keeping up the chase, so to speak. He is pressing on toward a fixed goal.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 96.]

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

19. What does Paul mean when he says he desires to *lay hold of that for which he was laid hold of by Christ Jesus*? As you look up the following verses to help you form your answer, consider why God grabs hold of anyone. What is your purpose as a believer? See Ephesians 1:4; Philippians 3:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 2:11-14.

Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, *that we would be holy and blameless before Him*. In love

Philippians 3:13–14 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning *for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.*

Titus 2:11–14 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, *instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*

My purpose as a believer is holiness, to live for the glory of God, and exuberantly love the Lord Jesus, my Savior and my God.

“It was Christlikeness that Paul was pursuing after. It is absolute Christlikeness that he says that he has not yet captured and pulled down so as to make his own.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 96.]

20. Because Paul is not yet made perfect, what does he do according to verse 13?

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

He doesn’t regard himself as having laid hold of that transformed, resurrection glory state. Instead, he forgets what lies behind and keeps reaching forward to what lies ahead.

21. Obviously, we will remember things that happened to us in the past, so what does it look like *practically* to “forget what lies behind” and “reach forward to what lies ahead?”

Practically, to forget what lies behind means to count it as nothing (see Philippians 3:8). To reach forward means to keep my eyes fastened on Jesus rather than on the stuff of this world. Forgetting what lies behind means assessing the past and the things of yesterday for what they are and then moving on, so that they don’t become impediments to running well and finishing the race.

- a. How does the passage we’re studying in this lesson provide a framework for not being encumbered by the past?

It frames it all because it shows just how we need to think about our past and the things that hurt or have harmed us.

22. What lies ahead for all believers according to Philippians 3:14?

The goal and the prize, which is the Lord Jesus and a completed salvation (see verses 11-12).

23. Sometimes we need to be reminded of the goal, of what we're really living for, and what we've been called to do as believers. How does Philippians 3:12-14 help direct your heart and mind in how you need to live? What are some ways you can live more faithfully with your eye on *the goal*?

It's such a good redirect and definitely what my heart needs. I need to be reminded of where I'm headed because I get lazy and distracted all too easily! I slow down instead of running well. This passage reminds me of my goal—the goal from the first day of my salvation clear through to the last day before it is completed in the Lord's presence.

How can I live more faithfully with my eye on the goal? Reviewing these truths. Spending time with other *runners* as they will motivate me (runners, not walkers or sitter-downers). Studying! Studying and meditating on the Word always motivates and reorients me when I get lost and slow down.

“Yes, for His sake I have been caused to forfeit all things, and I count them but dung, in order that I might come to know Him in an experiential way, and to come to know experientially the power of his resurrection, and a joint-participation in His sufferings, being brought to the place where my life will radiate a likeness to His death, if by any means I might arrive at the goal, namely, the out-resurrection out from among those who are dead.” ~Kenneth Wuest's translation of Philippians 3:10-11³

My Goal Is God Himself
by Frederic Brook

My goal is God Himself, not joy, nor peace,
Nor even blessing, but Himself, my God;
'Tis His to lead me there—not mine, but His—
At any cost, dear Lord, by any road.

So faith bounds forward to its goal in God,
And love can trust her Lord to lead her there;
Upheld by Him, my soul is following hard
Till God hath full fulfilled my deepest prayer.

No matter if the way be sometimes dark,
No matter though the cost be oft-times great,
He knoweth how I best shall reach the mark,
The way that leads to Him must needs be strait.

One thing I know, I cannot say Him nay;
One thing I do, I press towards my Lord;
My God my glory here, from day to day,
And in the glory, there my great Reward.

³ Kenneth S. Wuest, [*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*](#), vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 95.

Philippians

Lesson #13, Chapter 3:15-21

TEACHER'S GUIDE

God's Word has treasures upon its surface, but often precious gems must be dug out and examined so they can be enjoyed. Philippians chapter 3 contains many such sections and this lesson is no different. As you prepare to study this book, take time to ask the Lord for His help and a willingness to gain His mind in your studying.

1. Our passage is fairly straightforward, but there are a few sections we need to consider carefully to gain the full impact of Paul's teaching. Let's do a bit of review to get us in place and ready. First, in Philippians 3:8-11, what does Paul desire above all things?
To know Christ, to value Him above all things.

2. Next, in Philippians 3:12 what does Paul mean when he says, "Not that I have already obtained *it*?" See Philippians 3:10-11 and verse 21 for your answer.

Philippians 3:10–11 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

He has not obtained to the fully resurrected life. He looks forward to the day when all sin, sorrow, death, and temptation will be removed in the resurrection. In that day, even our bodies will be transformed and made like Christ's.

3. What does Paul press on to do in Philippians 3:12? What does Paul mean when he says, as the ESV puts it, "I press on to make it my own because Christ has made me His own?"
See also 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Titus 2:11-14.

He presses on to lay hold of that for which he was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Paul means that though he lives imperfectly now, he presses on, perseveres, and lives intentionally so that the completed salvation will be his—which is the purpose for our salvation—that Christ's blood would transform us and conquer sin and death.

2 Corinthians 5:14–15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, *so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.*

Titus 2:11–14 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, *looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*

4. What is one way Paul intends to apply that will help him press on to his goal? See Philippians 3:13.

He forgets what lies behind and reaches forward to what lies ahead.

5. What surprising bit of information does Paul convey at the beginning of Philippians 3:13?

He doesn't regard himself as having laid hold of it yet. Meaning that he hasn't stopped running the race toward heaven.

6. Paul reiterates the motivating goal of his life in Philippians 3:14. What is it? See also 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

Philippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus is the motivating factor for every part of his life. He desires to run well and finish the race for the glory of the Lord and out of love for Him.

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. *It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Timothy 4:7–8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me *the crown of righteousness*, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will *award to me* on that day; and not only to me, but also *to all who have loved His appearing*.

7. With Paul's previous words fresh in our minds, we're now ready to tackle our passage for this lesson. What command are we given in verse 15?

Let us have this attitude.

8. What are we to imitate? To what is Paul referring in his command from verse 15? For sure, your answer should include verse 14, though you may consider Paul's command reaches to include verses 12-14.

We are to have the same attitude as Paul and keep pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

9. Paul uses different forms of the *same* Greek word in Philippians 3:12 and 3:15. The NASB translated the word as *perfect* for both verses, while the ESV, NKJV, and NIV chose to translate the word in Philippians 3:12 as *perfect* and in Philippians 3:15 as

mature. The reason for this translation difference can be found in the context of the passage. To whom is the command addressed in Philippians 3:15?

Brethren.

10. What distinction in thought is exposed in verse 15?

There are those who are mature who will keep pressing on toward the goal and then there are those, who are not mature (implied), who don't have the same attitude as the mature do about pressing on toward the goal and what that might look like in their lives.

11. Why is it completely reasonable to expect believers, especially mature and maturing believers, to have Paul's same attitude? See John 15:8, 16; Romans 7:4; Ephesians 4:14-16; Titus 3:14.

John 15:8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

Romans 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

Ephesians 4:14-16 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Titus 3:14 Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

Simply because that is what all believers do—or should do. It's our calling and purpose to bear fruit! The idea of not making progress in the faith is untenable.

12. What should the mature and maturing believers continue to do according to verse 16? Keep living by the same standard to which we have attained.

13. What seems absolutely clear from Paul's comments is that there's no going backward or regressing for those whose goal is the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. What words or phrases does Paul use in this section that underscore that attitude? See verses 12-16.

What else do we glean from the following verses? See 1 Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1, 10; 2 Peter 1:5-10; 3:18.

Press on. Lay hold of. I was laid hold of by Christ. Forget what lies behind. Reach forward to what lies ahead. Press on. Toward the goal. Upward call. Keep living by same standard.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, *be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*

Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your *love may abound still more and more* in real knowledge and all discernment,

1 Thessalonians 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you *excel still more*.

1 Thessalonians 4:10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to *excel still more*,

2 Peter 1:5–10 Now for this very reason also, *applying all diligence*, in your faith *supply* moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities *are yours and are increasing*, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you *practice these things*, you will never stumble;

2 Peter 3:18 but *grow in the grace and knowledge* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Oh, the beautiful language of the pilgrim's progress! Amazing, soul-stirring, and encouraging to let roll off the tongue!

14. What is Paul instructing believers to do in verse 16? [What is the “standard” he’s referring to here in verse 16?] As you consider your answer, review Paul’s comments in verse 12, which will help you put your thoughts together. For some examples, you can refer to Philippians 1:27; 1 Timothy 4:12; James 1:2-4.

Keep living by the same standard to which you have attained. All believers are to live by a certain standard. What is it? To conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel. To be faithful and show ourselves an example to all. To persevere, so that we are tested and found to be lacking in nothing.

[Paul says in verse 12 that he hasn’t obtained it, but there is in verse 16 some level of something that he, and we, have attained to already.]

Philippians 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

James 1:2–4 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

15. Not only does Paul desire all believers to have an attitude of pressing on toward the goal while maintaining and progressing in their walk with the Lord, what else does he urge us to do in verse 17?

Join in following his example in these things. And observe those who also walk in the same pattern as Paul.

16. What do you learn in verse 17 about *your* role in the body of Christ?

I am to join in following Paul's example. I don't just get to sit on the sidelines. I am also to be around other believers enough that I can observe their own faithfulness in following Christ.

17. Paul contrasts the way true believers walk with another group. Who are they and how do they walk? See verses 18-19.

He contrasts the true believers with "the many." He calls them enemies of the cross of Christ. They walk in such a way that their end is destruction. Their god is their appetite. They glory in their shame. They set their minds on earthly things.

18. Define *appetite* [Strong's #2836 (ESV, NKJV *belly*; NIV *stomach*)]. See also Matthew 6:31-33; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Peter 4:3.

"This refers either to their sensuality or to their self-interest (see Rom 16:18 for a similar expression)." [Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. Davids, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon., vol. 16 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 207.]

"So the Cyclops in Euripides: 'My flocks which I sacrifice to no one but myself, and not to the gods, and to this my belly the greatest of the gods: for to eat and drink each day, and to give one's self no trouble, this is the god for wise men' ("Cyclops," 334–338)." [Marvin Richardson Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 452.]

Matthew 6:31–33 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For *the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things*; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Romans 16:17–18 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. *For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites*; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

1 Peter 4:3 *For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles*, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

19. For a fun exercise, take the description about the unbelievers from verses 18-19 and instead tailor those verses to describe believers. For example, "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even *rejoicing* that they are *friends* of Christ..."

Philippians 3:18–19 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even rejoicing, that they are friends of the cross of Christ, whose end is eternity with Christ, whose God is their greatest joy and delight and for whom they live and breathe, and who desire above all else to give Him glory as they set their mind on heavenly things.

20. What do we learn about believers from verse 20?

A believer's citizenship is in heaven. A believer eagerly waits for his Savior. A believer's Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ.

21. Define *citizenship* [Strong's #4175]. See also Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 12:22-23; Revelation 21:10-27.

"It speaks here of fixedness. Thus the commonwealth of which the saints are citizens has its fixed location in heaven. The stability and security of the citizen under Roman law filled the thoughts of the time with high conceptions of citizenship and its value. Philippi, being a Roman colony, and its citizens therefore Roman citizens, thought in terms of citizenship. Paul seizes this fact as a good opportunity to illustrate to the saints their heavenly citizenship with its privileges and responsibilities. What a contrast between those mentioned in 3:18, 19, who were citizens of this earth, and those spoken of in 3:20, 21, who are citizens of heaven!" [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 102.]

Ralph Martin has some good insights: "The apostle here indicates the double allegiance of the Philippian Christians. As Roman subjects they are citizens of the far distant, capital city of Rome, where the emperor has his residence. As servants of 'another king, one called Jesus' (Acts 17:7), they are citizens of that capital city, where the King of kings has his domicile, and whose advent to establish his reign on this earth and to rescue his people (1 Thess. 1:10) is awaited. Here on earth, meanwhile, they are resident aliens who dwell temporarily in a foreign country, but have their citizenship elsewhere (cf. Heb. 11:13; Jas 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:11)." [Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 167.]

Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

Hebrews 12:22–23 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

Revelation 21:10–27 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. There were three gates on the east and three gates on the

north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. *I am a citizen here!!! This is my city, my home, and where I will live forever!*

22. What do you learn about being a *citizen* from verse 20?

There are others who are also citizens. The place of my citizenship is in heaven. That means that my place of abode here on earth is not my real home. My Savior lives in heaven, where my true home is. Because He is there, then my heart is caught up with thoughts of Him and I look forward to the day when He will come to take me home *there*.

“Paul reminds them of one great truth: ‘Our citizenship’, he says, ‘is in heaven.’ Here was a picture the Philippians could understand. Philippi was a Roman colony. Here and there at strategic military centres, the Romans established their colonies. In such places, the citizens were mostly soldiers who had served their time—twenty-one years—and who had been rewarded with full citizenship. The great characteristic of these colonies was that, wherever they were, they remained fragments of Rome. Roman-style clothes were worn; Roman magistrates governed; Latin was spoken; Roman justice was administered; Roman morals were observed. Even in the most remote regions, they remained unshakably Roman. Paul says to the Philippians: ‘Just as the Roman colonists never forget that they belong to Rome, you must never forget that you are citizens of heaven; and your conduct must match your citizenship.’” ~William Barclay¹

23. Another reason why we wait for and eagerly anticipate the Lord's return is given in verse 21, which is a fulfillment of Philippians 3:11. What will happen according to verse 21? See also 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 48-54; 2 Corinthians 5:2-4, 8; Philippians 1:21.

Philippians 3:11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

¹ 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), 81.

Philippians 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

My earthly shell will be transformed!!! My frail and fleshly shell will be transformed into a body like Jesus' at His resurrection. It will not tire, sin, die, or fail. It will be glorious.

1 Corinthians 15:42–44 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:48–54 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory.

2 Corinthians 5:2–4 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

2 Corinthians 5:8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

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

24. From this passage, we see that there is one thing that all believers have in common. What is it? See 1 Corinthians 1:7-8; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2.

All believers look forward to the day when they will be with Jesus! Eagerly waiting for it! He is our life, and we look forward to His revealing! We wait **for Him!** We love and long for His appearing! We will see Him!

1 Corinthians 1:7–8 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Colossians 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

2 Timothy 4:8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

25. Remember, Paul was writing from prison to a church that was experiencing intense pressure, conflict, and trouble from all sides. Review the soul-refreshing truths from Philippians 3:12-21 and list the truths you find encouraging to think about in your own times of trouble.

I am encouraged by Paul's urging to press on, to keep my eyes on heaven, living for the goal and the prize of Christ Jesus. I am encouraged in how I should live here *today*. I am strengthened by the negative example of the enemies of Christ—I don't want to be even close to what they are like—oh for grace to not be! I am encouraged by my real citizenship, by my real home, my permanent home and the future that awaits me in being given a new, sinless, glorious body that reflects Jesus in every way.

"Paul mentions particularly that the believer will receive a glorified body, like the body of Christ. Today we live in a "body of humiliation" (which is the meaning of the word translated "vile" in Phil. 3:21); but when we see Christ, we will receive a body of glory. It will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye! (1 Cor. 15:42-53) At that moment, all the things of this world will be worthless to us—just as they ought to be, relatively, today! If we are living in the future tense, then we will be exercising the spiritual mind and living for the things that really matter." ~Warren Wiersbe²

"Here is a precious truth for thee, believer. Thou mayest be poor, or in suffering, or unknown, but for thine encouragement take a review of thy "calling" and the consequences that flow from it, and especially that blessed result here spoken of. As surely as thou art God's child today, so surely shall all thy trials soon be at an end, and thou shalt be rich to all the intents of bliss. Wait awhile, and that weary head shall wear the crown of glory, and that hand of labour shall grasp the palm-branch of victory. Lament not thy troubles, but rather rejoice that ere long thou wilt be where "there shall be neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."³ ~Charles Spurgeon

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 93-94.

³ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings, Complete and unabridged*; New modern edition. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006). May 28th, Morning.

Philippians

Lesson #14, Chapter 4 Observation

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study that all too often can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what is in the text. At this stage in the Bible study, you're noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what it means or how it applies to your life—that will come later, I promise. Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. You'll be glad you did!

I've included Chapter 4 at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. SUMMARIZE. To begin, read through Chapter 4. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 4. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.¹
 - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (3:17-4:1).²
Paul urges the believers to follow his example because there are many who are enemies of the Lord Jesus and walk according to their flesh, thinking only of earthly things. He reminds the believers that our citizenship is in heaven where Jesus dwells and who will make our bodies like His post resurrection one. It is for this reason that Paul urges the believers to stand firm in the Lord.
 - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 2-3).
Paul deals with a pastoral matter in urging Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. He brings the whole church in on the dispute and calls on his "true companion" to help bring an end to the discord.
 - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 4-7).
Despite their trials and hardships, Paul tells the believers to rejoice in the Lord, to live humbly, and to remember the Lord is near to help them. He tells them not to be anxious, but to pray about everything and God will supply them His peace.

¹ The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

² Most commentary writers connect Philippians 4:1 with Paul's comments at the end of Chapter 3. Though verse 1 does also provide a transitional bridge into the contents of Chapter 4.

- d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 8-9).

Instead of worrying, the believers are urged to think on all that is good and honoring to the Lord and to practice the things they saw in Paul.

- e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 10-14).

Paul tells the Philippians how greatly he is encouraged by their care for him. Though he appreciates their gift, he also teaches them about how the Lord has built contentment in him so that no change of fortune or circumstances grieves him as he leans upon the Lord's strength.

- f. Summarize paragraph 6 (verses 15-20).

He reminds the Philippians how they were the first of the churches to minister to his needs. Paul rejoices that God is pleased with their gracious giving and knows that God will supply their needs too.

- g. Summarize paragraph 7 (verses 21-23).

Paul then gives his final goodbyes and his benediction to the church.

2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

This chapter is about how to give God glory when there are defections in the faith, when there are conflicts and troubles, when fears and anxious thoughts abound, when the battle for the mind is intense, when physical needs abound. In it all, there is a way to think and respond that brings God great glory.

3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your three to five word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

To God be Glory!

4. MARK. On the *Philippians Bible Text* handout mark key words. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. Start with these first. Then mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

5. LIST. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time God is mentioned in Philippians Chapter 1. Your Chapter 1 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below. Verse 2: grace to you and peace from *God*; verse 2: *God* our *Father*; verse 3: I thank *God* when I [Paul] remember you [Philippians].

God

Verse 6 let your requests be made known to God
Verse 7 the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds
Verse 9 the God of peace will be with you
Verse 18 an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God
Verse 19 my God will supply all your needs
Verse 19 according to His riches in glory
Verse 20 now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever

Jesus Christ

Verse 1 stand firm in the Lord
Verse 2 live in harmony in the Lord
Verse 4 rejoice in the Lord
Verse 5 the Lord is near
Verse 7 God's peace will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus
Verse 10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly
Verse 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me
Verse 21 greet every saint in Christ Jesus
Verse 23 the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit

Brethren Names

Verse 1 beloved [2X]
Verse 1 brethren
Verse 1 my joy
Verse 1 my crown
Verse 8 brethren
Verse 15 Philippians
Verse 15 [church]
Verse 21 saint
Verse 21 brethren
Verse 22 saints

Rejoice

Verse 4 rejoice in the Lord
Verse 4 again I will say, rejoice!
Verse 10 but I rejoiced in the Lord greatly

Content

[only used once but is a key word/major theme in that section]
Verse 11 I have learned to be content

Needs

Verse 12 learned the secret...of having abundance and suffering need

Verse 16 you sent a gift more than once for my needs

Verse 19 my God will supply all your needs

Greet

Verse 21 greet every saint in Christ Jesus

Verse 21 the brethren who are with me greet you

Verse 22 all the saints greet you, especially those in Caesar's household

Peace

Verse 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds

Verse 9 the God of peace will be with you

Gift

Verse 15 no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone

Verse 16 you sent a gift more than once

Verse 17 not that I seek the gift itself

Verse 18 having received from Ephphroditus what you have sent

6. MARK. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be.

7. LIST. Now, list the commands on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.
Verse 1 stand firm in the Lord
Verse 2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony (I urge to live in harmony)
Verse 3 I ask you to help these women (I ask to help)
Verse 4 Rejoice in the Lord
Verse 4 Rejoice!
Verse 5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men
Verse 6 Be anxious for nothing
Verse 6 let your requests be made known to God
Verse 8 dwell on these things
Verse 9 practice these things
Verse 21 greet every saint

8. MARK. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as*, *likewise*, *in the same manner*, or *like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like "light/dark" or "love/hate" and the word "but" will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted.

9. LIST. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you've been using.
See observation sheet.
10. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)
See observation sheet.
11. MARK. Mark any time *so that* is used.
12. LIST. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the "so that" which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 "so that" appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, "Paul prays that the Philippians' love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ." I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!
None in this chapter.
13. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.
See observation sheet.
14. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.
See observation sheet.
15. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person. For example, you might read John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*" From this verse we see that God is loving [because He loved the world]; He is giving [because He gave His Son]; He is eternal [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

Attributes of God

Verse 6 we can make our requests to God because God is all powerful, all wise, sovereign, good. He is personal and hears our prayers. He is trustworthy. He is patient. Verse 7 He is the God of peace. He shares His peace with His children. He is generous. He is protective of us.

Verse 9 He is the God of peace. He is near. He is eternal. He is omnipresent.

Verse 18 He is worthy of worship. He receives our gifts. He is able to be pleased. He is specific in how He wants to be worshiped.

Verse 19 He is personal. He is knowable. He is powerful, providing, generous. He is bountiful, without need. He never runs short in His resources.

Verse 20 He is our father. He is our God. He draws near and is knowable. He is worthy to receive glory.

Attributes of Christ

Verse 1 He is knowable.

Verse 2 He is peace and peacemaker.

Verse 4 He is eternal. He gives joy.

Verse 5 He is Immanuel—God with us. He is near.

Verse 7 He is guard and protector. He is helper.

Verse 10 He gives joy, stability, faith, wisdom, insight.

Verse 13 He strengthens us. He is all powerful.

Verse 19 He gives out of God's riches. He is generous, bestower, providing.

Verse 21 We have our life in Him. He is eternal life. He is holy.

Verse 23 He gives grace. He is gracious.

16. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action. For example, in Philippians 1:1 *we find a list about Paul's thankful heart. We discover 1) he's thankful when he remembers the Philippians; 2) he's shows his thankfulness by praying for them; 3) his thankfulness spills over into prayers with joy for them; 4) he's thankful when he remembers how they participated in the gospel from the very beginning until now.*

See observation sheet.

17. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting.

Verse 19 I love the grandeur and assurance that comes in this verse. *My God. Assurance and confidence in that God. And—my God will supply all your needs. Such confidence in His character for the sake of others.*

I love the focus of this chapter. It is a prime example of what living by faith looks like—in overlooking our circumstances and instead fastening our minds and hearts on God and His good plans.

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in each chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life at this time. Your task at this time is to look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter. Have fun digging into God's word!

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES

Discovering the Treasures of the Word

Philippians Chapter 4

Diff. 3:17-21
in mind
but give
no effort
about
standing
firm
in the word

1 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

1. Commends to sister + sympathy and the true companion
2. share struggle
3. labored w/ others
3. names in book

1. Peace
2. Surpasses
3. guards

Things to dwell upon
1-8

Things to Practice
1. learned
2. received
3. heard
4. seen

The Process of Contentment

1. do not give from want
2. learned to be content
3. in whatever circumstances
4. get along in hard times
5. live in proportion to all circumstances
7. learned secret of contentment
9. dwell on things needed

The Things Paul Knows

- vs 11 learned to be content
- vs 12 get along humble means
- vs 12 live in proportion
- vs 12 secret of being filled / hungry
- vs 12 secret of attendance / study / prayer
- vs 12

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SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES

Discovering the Treasures of the Word

12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied,

having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.

22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

The gift
 vs 18 full
 vs 18 abundance
 vs 18 amply
 supplied
 vs 18 fragrant
 aroma
 vs 18 acceptable
 sacrifice
 vs 18 well
 pleasing
 to God
 God blesses
 the giver

△ God
+ Jesus
∨ Spirit
♥ Brother
 synonyms
Rejoice
Content only used once
 but is a keyword/major theme

Synonyms ↔
 of commands
 ① Time
greet
needs
 ② Peace

✚ gift
 CMP comparison
 CNT contrast
 TT Transition term

Philippians

Lesson #15, Chapter 4:1-7

TEACHER'S GUIDE

As you prepare to study this passage, be sure to take time to seek the Lord's wisdom and help in learning from His Word.

1. Because Philippians 4:1 begins with *therefore*, we know we shouldn't consider its contents without taking into consideration what precedes it. To do that, let's take a moment and summarize in a word, phrase or sentence Paul's main point or focus for Philippians 3:1-7; 3:8-16; and 3:17-21.

Philippians 3:1-7: Though Paul has all kinds of worldly ways he can recommend himself, he chooses instead to count those ways as loss.

Philippians 3:8-16: Rather than focusing on things that are of benefit to Paul, he instead counts them as loss so they won't distract him from knowing Christ. He desires to gain Christ and to know Him more deeply above all else, daily pressing on toward that goal with Jesus at the end.

Philippians 3:17-21: In contrast to that focused life of "only Jesus" Paul describes those who are enemies of Jesus. He reminds the believers of their true citizenship and the transformation that will take place when Jesus comes again.

2. What do you learn about those Paul is addressing from Philippians 4:1?

They are beloved.

They are brethren.

Paul longs to see them.

They are his joy.

They are his crown.

They are *his* beloved.

3. What command is given in Philippians 4:1?

Stand firm in the Lord.

4. Whatever else may follow, we know that Philippians 4:1 is clearly linked to Paul's closing comments in Chapter 3. Why would Philippians 3:17-21 be important to keep in mind as exhorts his beloved ones in Philippians 4:1?

There are those who defected, who having heard the gospel, then hardened their hearts and have become enemies of Christ, so he urges them to remember where they really belong and of the marvelous promises that await them—which is why he urges them to stand firm. They needed to be reminded of the frailty of the human heart and how prone we are to seek after our own lusts—to our own peril. We must, instead, stand firm.

5. What does it mean to *stand firm* [Strong's #4739 (NKJV *stand fast*)]? What else can you glean about what it means to *stand firm* and what it looks like in our lives? See 1 Corinthians 16:13; Galatians 5:1; Philippians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 3:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15.

Used to describe a soldier standing at his post. “They were tempted to defection. Standing firm is difficult when a panic starts.” [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Php 4:1.]

“Out of this friendship grew exhortation. Paul urged them to steadfastness. Perhaps the language came from the military and, therefore, had significant meaning for the city populated by military families. The Roman armies were known for standing unmoved against the enemy. The church was to stand in the same way. A more significant question is, How was it to stand? The words “that is how” translate the Greek *houtōs*, a word that shows manner. The church was not to be weakened by disunity, turmoil, or wrong values. It was to stand together to accomplish God’s will. The exhortation recalls 1:27, and it was an important aspect of church life.” [Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 145–146.]

Interesting note: “This is another biblical paradox in the relationship between God’s sovereignty and humanity’s free will (compare Ezek. 18:31 with Ezek. 36:26–27). In this verse believers are commanded to “stand firm,” while in Jude 24 it is God who keeps them standing. Somehow, both are true.” [Robert James Utley, Paul Bound, *the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison (Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, Then Later, Philippians)*, vol. Volume 8, *Study Guide Commentary Series* (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 1997), 200.]

1 Corinthians 16:13 *Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.*

Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. [Our freedom leads to our steadfastness]

Philippians 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; [We are to stand firm together, but not just any togetherness, in one spirit, for the gospel]

1 Thessalonians 3:7–10 for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account, as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith? [steadfastness brings joy and blessing to others]

2 Thessalonians 2:13–15 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. [Our calling isn’t subject to the changing whims of the world. We stand firm by adhering to the “ancient paths” (Jeremiah 6:16).]

6. Philippians 4:2 reveals one of the ways the Philippian believers needed to live out the steadfast firmness of their faith. What is the situation?

They needed to deal with some feuding ladies in their church. They were urged to get involved and help the women resolve their differences.

7. Who is being called upon in verse 3? What are they to do?

The true companion was called upon to help these women work through their dispute.

8. What past history do these women share according to verse 3? Why is this situation especially poignant in light of the preceding context from Philippians 3:17-21 and even the tone of the whole book?

They shared Paul's struggle in the gospel beginnings.

They were early workers with Clement and Paul's other fellow workers.

They were considered Paul's fellow workers.

Their names are recorded in the book of life.

Paul reminds them of their past. He reminds them of their godliness and zeal. He reminds them of their "exalted" position in that they were fellow workers with him. He reminds them of their future when they will be in heaven *together*.

Paul weeps at those who have defected, so to think that there would be conflicts and disputes among the brethren is grievous. The whole tone of the book is one of living only for Jesus and His glory. To remain unreconciled and causing conflict is at loggerheads with what Paul is teaching them.

9. How would the scenario in Philippians 4:2-3 require steadfastness of faith on the part of the church leaders and church body?

The situation was obviously bad enough that Paul had to address it in his letter. It was also bad enough that it had to be addressed publicly. That means it had most likely spread in the church and was causing division among the people too. The leaders need to stand firm and go to these women, who had been of such good reputation, and call them to repentance. They were probably well known, women of influence, and well loved by the congregation, which can cause even the most stalwart of leaders a moment's hesitation.

10. *Based on what we've been studying and considering so far in our lesson*, how would you counsel two friends who have fallen into discord and out of harmony?

I would do this very thing. To remind them of where they've been and where they're headed, so that my urging them to repentance would have some weight to it. I would try to remind them of all they are forfeiting by their conflict with each other. More importantly, I would appeal to them that they are not bringing glory to the One whom they both love.

11. After reminding the Philippians to stand firm and help weak and sinning believers to repent, what does Paul exhort the believers to do next in Philippians 4:4? What observations can you make about verse 4?

Paul tells them to rejoice.

They are to rejoice, but not in any old thing. They are to rejoice *in the Lord*. This gives the parameters for our rejoicing.

They are to *always* rejoice.

It's so important that Paul repeats the command.

12. *Why* should believers rejoice? See Romans 5:1-5; 12:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; Titus 2:11-13 to get you started. Also consider what it says about us if we don't rejoice.

Romans 5:1–5 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. WE HAVE BEEN JUSTIFIED AND OBTAINED PEACE WITH GOD. WE EXULT IN HOPE IN THE GLORY OF GOD. WE ALSO REJOICE IN OUR TRIBULATIONS WHEN WE REMEMBER HOW PROFITABLE THEY ARE. WE REJOICE AT OUR MANY BLESSINGS IN CHRIST.

Romans 12:12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, WE HAVE HOPE!

2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word. WE REJOICE AT THE MINISTRY OF THE FATHER AND THE SON IN OUR LIVES AND HEARTS. THEY HELP US!

Titus 2:11–13 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, WE REJOICE AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO OUR SAVIOR'S APPEARING.

If we don't rejoice at those things then we have either forgotten our calling, have never been called to begin with, or we are caught up in some entangling sin.

13. We often forget that Philippians 4:4 is a command. What are some resources God has given to help us obey this command more faithfully? What should we do if we haven't been obeying this command?

We have the Word of God to remind us. We have the promises of God to cling to and to rely on for help in obeying this command. We have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us to help us. We have been given a new heart and new mind to be able to obey this command.

Just like every other command in the Scriptures that we break, we must go to the Lord, confess our sin, see it for the breach that it is, and then ask the Lord for help in obeying it. We need the mind of Christ and to see that our unwillingness to rejoice is in rebellion to His express command and is an unwillingness to turn from our own unbelief.

14. Not only are we to rejoice in the Lord, what else are we to do according to verse 5?

We are to let our gentle spirit be made known to all men. We are to be gentle of spirit.

15. Define *gentle* [Strong's #1933 (NKJV *reasonableness*)]. The same Greek word is used in 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 3:2; James 3:17; 1 Peter 2:18. What else do you learn about the word, its meaning, and its bearing on our lives from those references?

“Your gentleness,” “your sweet reasonableness” (Matthew Arnold), “your moderation.” [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Php 4:5.]

“Epieikēs (gentle spirit) has a richer meaning than any single English word can convey. Hence, commentators and Bible versions vary widely in how they render it. Sweet reasonableness, generosity, goodwill, friendliness, magnanimity, charity toward the faults of others, mercy toward the failures of others, indulgence of the failures of others, leniency, bigheartedness, moderation, forbearance, and gentleness are some of the attempts to capture the rich meaning of epieikēs. Perhaps the best corresponding English word is graciousness—the graciousness of humility; the humble graciousness that produces the patience to endure injustice, disgrace, and mistreatment without retaliation, bitterness, or vengeance. It is contentment.” [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 276.]

1 Timothy 3:3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. [Part of the characteristics of an elder]

Titus 3:2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. [notice that gentle and peaceable are right next to each other]

James 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. [God's wisdom is gentle. The word gains more meaning by its companions in the verse—peaceable, reasonable, full of mercy, etc.]

1 Peter 2:18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

Gentleness can be exhibited in all circumstances in our lives. Even in difficult times or when dealing with difficult people, it can be evident. It is to be a main characteristic in all believers.

16. Where do we get this kind of character quality? See Matthew 11:29; 21:5; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 5:22-23. Since we are new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), have been given a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26-27), and have God's help and resources available to us (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 1:2-4), is there ever a time when we *just can't* be patient, reasonable, or easy to get along with?

Matthew 11:29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.”

Matthew 21:5 “SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, ‘BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.’”

2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!

Galatians 5:22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

We learn gentleness from Jesus. He exhibited it and told us to learn from Him. Paul follows Jesus' example. We learn that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is gentleness, as well.

In answer to the second question, ha! Nope! We have all the resources we need to respond with gentleness. We may choose not to respond that way, but the fault lies with us and not with God. There's never a time when we *can't* be gentle.

17. The word *known* in verse 5 refers to knowledge gained through experience, which has direct bearing in how we interact with others. What are some ways others would/could *experience* or come to know that we are reasonable and easy to get along with? We have to interact with them. Also watching how we respond in difficult circumstances. We would need to put it into practice with them, which means a dying to self.

Let your sweet reasonableness, your forbearance, your being satisfied with less than your due, become known to all men. The Lord is near.¹ ~Kenneth Wuest's translation

18. Paul reminds his dear friends that *the Lord is near*, which is referring to the Lord's soon return. How can that truth be an encouragement and a motivation in living out the commands of this passage?

It is a motivation to know He is NEAR—near in proximity, near in His return, near! It helps me narrow down and do what is right when I consider His nearness. Shamefully, I need to think on this more! Knowing the Lord is near makes even the hardest of commands much easier to bear and to do.

"He is happy who feels a jealous fear of doing wrong. Holy fear looks not only before it leaps, but even before it moves. It is afraid of error, afraid of neglecting duty, afraid of committing sin. It fears ill company, loose talk, and questionable policy."² ~Charles Spurgeon

19. We are to rejoice in the Lord, be sweetly reasonable because of the Lord's soon return, and now in the first part of verse 6, what are we to do?

Be anxious for nothing.

20. What prescription does Paul give for the believer's anxiety? See verse 6 after the command.

In everything through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

21. How would applying this simple balm calm our worried and anxious hearts?

¹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 109.

² C. H. Spurgeon, *The Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith: Being Precious Promises Arranged for Daily Use with Brief Comments* (New York: American Tract Society, 1893), 253.

Talking with the God who is all powerful, who is ever near, who is generous and kind, wise and just, in all His ways always calms our hearts. Drawing near to Him and calling out to Him in our troubles is the way to ease our anxiety.

“Anxious care is out of place in a heavenly Father’s presence. Requests are always in place with Him. The words “shall keep,” are from a military word, “shall mount guard.” God’s peace, like a sentinel, mounts guard and patrols before the heart’s door, keeping worry out.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 110.]

The Greek construction indicates that we have here a prohibition which forbids the continuance of an action already habitually going on. The Philippian saints were habitually worrying. Paul exhorts them to stop it. The word *nothing* is literally “not even one thing.”³ ~Kenneth Wuest

22. What comes as a result of applying verse 6 in our lives? See Philippians 4:7.
The peace of God which is beyond comprehension will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

“You can't see the peace of God, but like secret ink, when held to the fire, it reveals itself! e.g., Affliction frequently opens truths to us and opens us to the truth. Experience unlocks truths that were closed. Many passages of Scripture will never be made clear by the commentator, for these must be expounded by experience. Many a verse is written in a secret ink that must be held to the fire of adversity to make it visible. Affliction plows and opens our hearts, so that into our innermost nature the truth penetrates and soaks like rain into the plowed land.”⁴ ~Charles Spurgeon

23. What do you learn about the peace described in verse 7? List at least 5 observations that you notice from Philippians 4:7.

The peace is of God. It comes from Him.

God’s peace surpasses all comprehension.

The peace of God is hard to understand. It must be experienced.

Note the word “all”. God’s peace is beyond all our comprehending powers.

God’s peace guards my mind.

God’s peace guards my heart.

God’s peace comes to me through Jesus Christ.

24. Though it’s not immediately apparent, the details in our passage are tied to the thought that our Lord Jesus will soon return. Finish this thought with *at least 5 items* from Philippians 4:1-7: *Because our Lord’s return is near, we should take care to ...*

Because our Lord’s return is near, we should take care to stand firm in the Lord.

Because our Lord’s return is near, we should take care to urge those in conflict to live in harmony before the Lord.

Because our Lord’s return is near, we should take care to rejoice.

³ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 109.

⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *Beside Still Waters*, pg. 54.

Because our Lord's return is near, we should take care to let our sweet reasonableness, our gracious spirit be evident and on display to all.

Because our Lord's return is near, we should take care to be anxious for nothing.

Because our Lord's return is near, we should take care to make our requests to God about everything.

Because our Lord's return is near, we should take care to go to the Lord so we can experience His perfect peace and receive the guarding of our hearts and minds.

"Anxious care often leads to acts of sin. He who cannot calmly leave his affairs in God's hand, but will carry his own burden, is very likely to be tempted to use wrong means to help himself. This sin leads to a forsaking of God as our counsellor, and resorting instead to human wisdom. This is going to the "broken cistern" instead of to the "fountain," a sin which was laid against Israel of old. Anxiety makes us doubt God's lovingkindness, and thus our love to Him grows cold; we feel mistrust, and thus grieve the Spirit of God, so that our prayers become hindered, our consistent example marred, and our life one of self-seeking. Thus want of confidence in God leads us to wander far from Him; but if through simple faith in His promise, we cast each burden as it comes upon Him, and are "careful for nothing" because He undertakes to care for us, it will keep us close to Him, and strengthen us against much temptation. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.'"⁵ ~Charles Spurgeon

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896).

Philippians

Lesson #16, Chapter 4:8-14

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Ask the Lord for His continued grace and help as you come to His Word. Seek to worship the Lord with a humble and teachable heart.

1. Review the commands given to believers from Philippians 4:1-7.

Verse 1 Stand firm in the Lord

Verse 4 Rejoice in the Lord; Rejoice!

Verse 5 Let your gentle spirit be made known to all men

Verse 6 Be anxious for nothing

Verse 6 Let your requests be made known to God

2. How does Paul begin Philippians 4:8? What does that tell you about what is to come in the verse?

Finally, brethren. Whatever is coming is going to be a summary of what Paul wants the Philippians to know and do. When *finally* is used, it means we should pay attention.

3. What command is given in Philippians 4:8? How would you describe or categorize the list that accompanies his command in verse 8?

Dwell on these things. This is the list that should govern my thoughts. This is the list that should describe my thoughts in any and every circumstance.

4. Define *dwell* [Strong's #3049 (ESV, NIV *think*; NKJV *meditate*)].

Think, careful reflection. Present middle imperative indicates habit of thought.

Logizomai means more than just entertaining thoughts; it means “to evaluate,” “to consider,” or “to calculate.” Believers are to consider the qualities Paul lists in this verse and meditate on their implications. The verb form calls for habitual discipline of the mind to set all thoughts on these spiritual virtues.” [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 285.]

“It is rather ‘take into account (logos), reflect upon and then allow these things to shape your conduct’.” [Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 177–178.]

5. Dwell, as it is used in our text, is in the present middle imperative, which means *we initiate and participate in the action*. It means we are to be doing something to ourselves. Here we are to begin dwelling and then continue in the action of dwelling on and thinking carefully about certain things. What does this teach you about what God wants us to do when it comes to how and what we are thinking on?

God wants me to be part of the action, part of the work, part of ensuring that my heart is guided by my thoughts.

“Believers must discipline their spiritually sensitive minds to think about right spiritual realities. In this brief list, Paul catalogues eight godly virtues to concentrate on.” [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 289.]

“The human mind will always set itself on something and Paul wished to be quite sure that the Philippians would set their minds on the right things. This is something of the utmost importance, because it is a law of life that, if a man thinks of something often enough, he will come to the stage when he cannot stop thinking about it. His thoughts will be quite literally in a groove out of which he cannot jerk them. It is, therefore, of the first importance that a man should set his thoughts upon the fine things and here Paul makes a list of them.” [William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, electronic ed., *The Daily Study Bible Series* (Philadelphia: The Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 79.]

6. How does the context of the preceding verses, specifically verses 6-7, show us when and why we should apply the command of Philippians 4:8?

We are especially to dwell on the things that are right and true, etc, when we are in trouble, when we are feeling anxious, when we are tempted to sin in fear and unbelief.

Why obey the command? First, because it's commanded and also because verse 9 shows that obedience to this command and following Paul's teaching and example will let us enjoy communion with God—and *the God of peace will be with you*.

7. How would dwelling on the things that are *true* fix most of our sinful struggles? Make a list of 5 or more things that you know are *true* from the Word of God that have helped you when you needed to think on true things.

If I would only think on what is true, then I could get rid of the false narrative in my head and heart. I would be able to filter my thoughts and cast off what is false and dishonoring to the Lord.

- God is righteous—there is no darkness in any of His judgments.
- God loves me and when I am experiencing trials and reproof it's a sign of His commitment and love toward me.
- God is wise—whatever I am experiencing is the very best plan for my sanctification.
- My trials are needed for my sanctification, however galling this might be to my pride. Humiliation and humbling are good for my soul.
- God has given me everything I need to obey Him, to follow Him, and to persevere in my present circumstances.

8. The word *honorable* [Strong's #4586 (NKJV, NIV *noble*)] is rich with meaning. Look up the word to see what you can discover, and why it would be so good to think on honorable things.

“It can be seen from all this that the Greek (*semnos*) is difficult to translate. It is the word which is characteristically used of the gods and of the temples of the gods. When used to describe a man, it describes a person who, as it has been said, moves throughout the world as if it were the temple of God. Matthew Arnold suggested the translation nobly serious. But the word really describes that which has the dignity of holiness upon it. There are things in this world which are flippant and cheap and attractive to the light-minded; but it is on the things which are serious and dignified that the Christian will set his mind.” [William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, electronic ed., *The Daily Study Bible Series* (Philadelphia: The Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 79.]

“In classical Greek an epithet of the gods, venerable, reverend. The word occurs only here and in the pastoral epistles, 1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Tit. 2:2, where it is rendered grave, both in A. V. and Rev. There lies in it the idea of a dignity or majesty which is yet inviting and attractive, and which inspires reverence. Grave, as Trench observes, does not exhaust the meaning. Gravity may be ridiculous. “The word we want is one in which the sense of gravity and dignity, and of these as inviting reverence, is combined.” Ellicott’s venerable is perhaps as near as any word, if venerable be divested of its modern conventional sense as implying age, and confined to its original sense, worthy of reverence.” [Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 458.]

To think on all that is honorable is to think of all that is of the highest, best, most knightly and dignified in the best way. It is similar in scope to women to be “reverent in their behavior.”

9. Why would it be good to think on *right* (ESV, NKJV *just*) things? Also see Acts 4:19; Ephesians 6:1; 2 Peter 1:13 where the same Greek word is used to help you form your answer.

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge;

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 Peter 1:13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

To think on the things that are right and just is to learn to differentiate between the world’s judgment of things and that of God’s. It is to look at things from God’s point of view. See Matthew 16:23 when Jesus rebuked Peter and said, “you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.” Thinking on what is just and right means we are looking for ways to set our minds on God’s interests, rather than our own.

10. As Paul’s list continues in verse 8 there’s a sense in which it almost begins to pick up speed like a snowball gaining momentum as it rolls down a hill. Choose one or two more of the descriptions in the verse to discover their meaning.

“The word “just” is from the Greek word meaning both “just” and also “righteous,” here, “righteous” in a comprehensive sense. The Greek word “pure” speaks of purity in all

things. “Lovely” speaks of that which is adapted to excite love and to endear him who does such things. One could translate by the words, “winsome, pleasing, amiable.” The words “good report” in the Greek text are literally “fair speaking,” thus “winning, attractive.” The word “if” refers to a fulfilled condition. The word “virtue” in the Greek text was used in classical Greek for any mental excellence, moral quality, or physical power. Paul studiously avoids it. Only here does he use it. It seems that the apostle includes it in order that he may not omit any possible ground of appeal. Lightfoot suggests, “Whatever value may reside in your old heathen conception of virtue, whatever consideration is due to the praise of man.” Expositor’s Greek Testament translates, “Whatever excellence there be or fit object of praise.” The word “think” in the Greek speaks of the act of careful reflection. How scarce a commodity this is in our mechanized age.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 110–111.]

“**Pure** (ἀγνα [*hagna*]). Old word for all sorts of purity. There are clean things, thoughts, words, deeds. **Lovely** (προσφιλη [*prospihilē*]). Old word, here only in N. T., from προς [*pros*] and φιλεω [*phileō*], pleasing, winsome. **Of good report** (εὐφημα [*euphēma*]). Old word, only here in N. T., from εὐ [*eu*] and φημη [*phēmē*], fair-speaking, attractive. **If there be any** (εἰ τις [*ei tis*]). Paul changes the construction from ὅσα [*hosa*] (whatsoever) to a condition of the first class, as in 2:1, with two substantives. **Virtue** (ἀρετή [*aretē*]). Old word, possibly from ἀρεσκω [*areskō*], to please, used very often in a variety of senses by the ancients for any mental excellence or moral quality or physical power. Its very vagueness perhaps explains its rarity in the N. T., only four times (Phil. 4:8; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:3, 5). It is common in the papyri, but probably Paul is using it in the sense found in the LXX (Isa. 42:12; 43:21) of God’s splendour and might (Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, p. 95) in connection with “praise” (ἔπαινος [*epainos*]) as here or even meaning praise. **Think on these things** (ταυτα λογιζεσθε [*tauta logizesthe*]). Present middle imperative for habit of thought. We are responsible for our thoughts and can hold them to high and holy ideals.” [A.T. Robertson, [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Php 4:8.]

11. And if the command to dwell on such praiseworthy things wasn’t enough, what command is given in verse 9?

Practice the things you have learned, received, heard, and seen in Paul.

12. What is the result of such obedience according to the end of verse 9? Notice the connection with Philippians 4:7. If we put these commands from verses 4-9 into practice in our lives, what will be the result?

The God of peace will be with you.

Verse 7—the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds as we talk to Him about our concerns. Then as we think on the things that please Him, we will enjoy fellowship with Him.

When we obey these commands and seek to think rightly and live rightly, we will draw near to God and He to us. What a blessed thought!

“The key to godly living is godly thinking, as Solomon wisely observed: “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23).”¹ ~John MacArthur

13. What new subject does Paul introduce in Philippians 4:10? In what way did the Philippians show their concern for Paul? See Philippians 4:15-16.

Paul begins to talk about how they have sent a love gift for his needs. He begins to talk about how the Philippians generously sought to show their concern by sending a gift to help ease his needs.

14. In verse 10, Paul says he *rejoiced* in the Philippians’ gift. Why is that? See Philippians 4:17.

He rejoiced because he knew that it was done unto the Lord and gave God glory. God “credited” it to their account, so to speak.

15. Though Paul was happy about their gift of love and faith toward him, what does he hasten to assure them in Philippians 4:11?

He wants them to know that he is content in his circumstances and that he isn’t seeking out their gift.

16. We want to take note of Paul’s statement in Philippians 4:11, as learning to be content in any circumstances implies many biblical and life lessons taken to heart and then applied. Before we study *how* Paul learned this important lesson, take some time to come up with at least 5 observations about Philippians 4:11 as you consider what you learn about Paul and what he knew about his God.

Paul isn’t speaking from his sense of want or need.

Paul has learned contentment.

There was a time when Paul hadn’t mastered this life lesson.

He is content in any circumstance.

Paul has learned that circumstances don’t dictate his contentment.

His contentment is unshakeable.

Believers must learn this lesson just like Paul did.

17. Why is contentment *essential* for *every* believer? What does a contented spirit communicate about us and how we view our lives? See 1 Samuel 3:18; Job 2:10; Psalm 73:25-28; 2 Corinthians 9:8; 1 Timothy 6:6-9; Hebrews 13:5-6.

1 Samuel 3:18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “*It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him.*” HE IS SOVEREIGN AND WISE, JUDGING ALL SITUATIONS RIGHTLY.

Job 2:10 But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. *Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?*” In all this Job did not sin with his lips. HE WISE AND KNOWS WHAT IS BEST FOR US.

Psalm 73:25–28 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, *I desire nothing on earth.* My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I

¹John F. MacArthur Jr., [Philippians](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 290.

have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works. MY CIRCUMSTANCES BRING ME TO THE PLACE WHERE MY HEART IS AT REST AND LONGING FOR HIM.

2 Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;* GOD GIVES GRACE TO GO THROUGH ANY TESTING AND TRIAL.

1 Timothy 6:6–9 *But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.* LEARNING CONTENTMENT TEACHES US TO ACCEPT WHAT GOD GIVES US.

Hebrews 13:5–6 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, *“I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,”* so that we confidently say, *“THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?”* BECAUSE THE LORD IS NEAR, THEN I DON'T NEED TO BE AFRAID, NO MATTER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES I MAY FIND MYSELF.

Contentment indicates trust in the Lord, belief that He knows what is best, submission to the Father's will, and a complete devotion to the Lord. No “thing” or circumstance stands before the Lord, so no situation can disrupt the heart's rest in the One whom our soul loves.

18. Paul details some of the aspects of his soul's training in Philippians 4:12. What do you learn? Explain how the wide range of Paul's experiences trained him in contentment. His training ground came from living in humble means. He also learned important lessons while living in prosperity—or in going from one end of the spectrum to the other. Being filled. Going hungry. And yet still CONTENT! Having abundance and suffering need. And yet still *content* in the Lord's wisdom, will, goodness, justice, nearness, and omniscient power.

19. According to Philippians 4:13, from where does true contentment come? Through the Lord who strengthens me.

Verse 13 can literally be translated, “I can do all things through Him who infuses strength into me.” One commentator, Lenski, says, “Being connected with the Lord who keeps empowering him, Paul always has the strength for everything in his life and his work.”

20. God strengthens you for whatever He brings in your life. Consider some of your life situations, temptations, and struggles as you look up the following Scriptures that show how God strengthens you. What do you learn from the verses that follow? See Isaiah 40:29-31; 41:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 3:16-19; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:11.

Isaiah 40:29–31 *He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount*

up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Isaiah 41:10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. *I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*'

2 Corinthians 12:9–10 And He has said to me, "*My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.*" Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Ephesians 3:16–19 that *He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man*, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*

Colossians 1:11 *strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might*, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

21. How does Paul close his explanation to the Philippians in verse 14? Why does he add this comment after his statements on contentment?

Philippians 4:14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

He wants to affirm what a good work it is to give and to be generous, even though Paul himself feels the Lord has amply supplied him. Paul is glad they are giving for their sakes.

22. We have covered a lot of ground in this lesson! What is one part of your study that stood out to you that you want to remember and apply?

I loved the verses in question #20 on being strengthened by the Lord. What a blessing! I was also blessed by the verses in question #17 on contentment. I also want to call the mind the incredible things to dwell upon so I can apply it from question #7.

"A contented Christian does not choose his cross, but is willing to take that which God chooses, and is content with the kind and the duration of the cross. He will wait for God's providence to remove it, but never force the door to escape from it."² ~Thomas Watson

"A contented Christian is like Noah in the ark: although tossed upon the waters, he reposed confidently in his God. The soul that is safe in the ark of contentment, sits quiet and sails above all the waves of trouble, and can even sing amid the deluge. The wheels of a chariot are an emblem of contentment: the wheels move, the axle stirs not. When change and motion are around us, a contented spirit remains firm in its centre."³ ~Thomas Watson

²Thomas Watson, *Puritan Gems; Or, Wise and Holy Sayings of the Rev. Thomas Watson, A.M.*, ed. John Adey, Second Thousand. (London: J. Snow, and Ward and Co.; Nisbet and Co.; E. F. Gooch, 1850), 25–30.

³ Ibid.

Philippians

Lesson #17, Chapter 4:15-23

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Rich, life-changing truths await us in the final verses of the book of Philippians. Be sure to ask the Lord for His grace and help as you complete your final lesson in this God-exalting book.

1. Philippians 4:10-14 flows right into our passage for this lesson. By way of review, look at verse 10 to see why Paul rejoiced. What was the reason?

Paul rejoiced that the Philippians had revived their concern for him and again sent a gift to meet his needs. He rejoiced because of what it said about their hearts and walk with the Lord. He rejoiced because it pleased the Lord and gave God glory.

2. Paul was quick to reassure the Philippians of an important truth he had learned. What was it? See verses 11-13.

He had learned to be content in whatever circumstances the Lord placed him. He was able to be content through the Lord's strengthening work.

3. What commendation did the Philippians' receive from Paul? See verse 14. They have done well to share with him in his affliction.

4. What do we learn about the Philippian believers according to Philippians 4:15-16? They were the only church to share in giving to Paul's needs. Nor was it the first time they had done so!

5. The gracious gift Paul received from the Philippians had far-reaching effects for the Thessalonian and Corinthian believers too. What did the Philippians' gift allow Paul to do according to 2 Corinthians 11:8-12; 12:11-18; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8?

2 Corinthians 11:8–12 I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to serve you; and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so. As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. *Because the Philippians gave then Paul didn't have to be a burden to anyone. It also kept people in Achaia from accusing him of using the ministry for gain.*

2 Corinthians 12:11–18 I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong! Here for this third time I

am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit. Certainly I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I? I urged Titus to go, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit and walk in the same steps? *Again, it allowed him not to be a burden on the churches in Achaia. He couldn't be accused of taking advantage of them.*

1 Thessalonians 2:9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. *Paul worked at his own job and receive the supplementation from the Philippians so that the Thessalonian believers didn't have to support him.*

2 Thessalonians 3:8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; *Paul wasn't a mooching shepherd. He was faithful to take care of himself so as not to be a burden, though he had a right to expect their care according to the Scriptures.*

6. What truths and attitudes seemed to have undergirded the Philippians' giving? See Matthew 6:19-21; Hebrews 10:32-34; 13:5-6; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

Matthew 6:19–21 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. *They valued heaven and labored to store up treasures in heaven.*

Hebrews 10:32–34 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. *They gave to the suffering and remembered that they had a better and lasting possession in heaven.*

Hebrews 13:5–6 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,” so that we confidently say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?” *They were content in their circumstances and found greater joy in the Lord's nearness, than in acquiring more.*

2 Corinthians 8:1–5 Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. *They gave out of joy, on their own initiative, with great zeal, for*

the privilege of serving others. They gave themselves to the Lord first and then their giving flowed from there.

1 Timothy 6:17–19 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. *The Philippians understood that God is the One who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.*

7. What is Paul quick to assure the Philippians in verse 17?
He doesn't want the gift for its own sake, but he wants the gift because of the blessing it will be for the Philippians.

8. One of the paradoxes of kingdom living is highlighted when Paul talks about how the Philippians' giving "increases the profit to their account." How would their giving result in some profit to themselves? See Proverbs 19:17; Matthew 10:40-42; Luke 14:12-14; Hebrews 6:10.

Proverbs 19:17 One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed. *What we do for the least of these, we do the Lord Himself. How gracious He is to take such a feeble offering for Himself!*

Matthew 10:40–42 "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." *God rewards us for giving to those in need. How crazy is that?!*

Luke 14:12–14 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. "But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." *God repays us for the gifts we give to those who can't return the favor. We are never the Lord's debtor. He always gives more than we ever can.*

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. *God remembers our deeds of faithfulness and rewards us for it. So gracious of Him since we are only doing that which He would do—and does—for us!*

9. What else does Paul assure the believers of in Philippians 4:18?
He's received everything in full and has an abundance. He feels he is amply supplied by their gift!

10. Describe the Philippians' giving from verse 18?

It is abundant. It is ample. It is a fragrant aroma. It is an acceptable sacrifice. It is well-pleasing to God.

- a. What connection does Paul want them to see and understand when it comes to giving? See Exodus 29:18; Romans 12:1; Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:16; 1 Peter 2:5.

Exodus 29:18 “You shall offer up in smoke the whole ram on the altar; it is a burnt offering to the LORD: it is a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Philippians 4:18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Hebrews 13:16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Paul wants them to understand how truly spiritual and pleasing their giving is to the Lord. Our giving can be an act of worship that He finds acceptable. Everything we do can be an act of worship to our worthy King if we will recognize it and take the time to give it to Him. God is pleased by our sacrificial giving. We are built up to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

- b. How should these truths about worshipful giving and service guide you? They elevate giving and service so that it takes on golden hues of lavish devotion to the Lord. They help us view our mundane and daily acts as something valuable and pleasing to the Lord.

"We Give Thee But Thine Own"
by William W. How, 1823-1897

We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

11. How does Paul continue to encourage the Philippians in verse 19? List *at least 4* observations you can make about Philippians 4:19.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

- The relationship with God is personal. He is *my* God.
- And it is *my* God who will minister to you.

- Paul is confident in God’s desire to minister to others, to keep His promises, and to supply what is needed.
- God is willing and able to supply your needs.
- God sees your needs. He knows what they are.
- God is willing and able to supply *all* your needs, not just some of them.
- No need is out of His reach to supply. He is able, powerful, omniscient, wise, good, and loving enough to supply our needs.
- God supplies our needs *according to* His riches, rather than *out of* His riches. Both are incredible, but “according to” is even more magnificent in its scope.
- His riches are found in His glory.
- His glory is revealed in Jesus.

12. Define *supply* [Strong’s #4137 (NIV *meet*)].

“The word “supply” is the translation of the same Greek word translated “I am full.” That is, God’s treatment of the Philippian saints will correspond to their treatment of Paul. They filled full Paul’s every need to overflowing. God will do the same for them. The measure of the supply which God the Father has is determined by His wealth in glory, which wealth in glory is in Christ Jesus, an infinite supply.” [Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 117.]

“They would discover that it is impossible to outgive God.” [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 308.]

Fill, be made complete, be made full, to carry out to the full.

13. How does reading verse 19 in its context of Philippians 4:15-20 help protect us from treating God like a cosmic vending machine? Based on what Paul has been saying in this passage, what attitudes and thoughts should guide our understanding about verse 19? In context, Paul is praising the Philippians and rejoicing in their desire to do good to him because of their love for the Lord. Paul encourages them with biblical truths that God is using them to bless him, that God sees their sacrificial giving as an offering of faith and worship. He then reminds them that though they gave out of their meager resources to abundantly bless Paul, God will abundantly bless and supply them with riches of His glory in Christ.

The context is reverential and focused on blessing others, solely for the purpose of blessing them, and not for anything we might receive in return. In doing so, then treating God like a vending machine isn’t even on the radar. Yet, God, always blesses His children and rejoices to see them live unselfishly and with a servant heart for the sake of others.

“Paul does not see this gift as simply coming from Philippi. He sees it as the supply of his need from heaven.” ~Warren Wiersbe¹

14. There are so many truths packed into that little sentence in Philippians 4:19! Paul deals with the same truths in a more in-depth way in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. Read through the 2 Corinthians passage and note what you learn about God and the principles for giving in the passage.

2 Corinthians 9:6–15 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it is written, “HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER.” Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

- God sees our giving.
- God loves a cheerful giver.
- God is able to give us grace to give.
- God is able to give us grace so we give generously, even when supplies are small.
- God gives us everything, so to hoard what He gives to us is foolish and small-minded and small of heart.
- God promises to meet our needs when we do what is right, trusting Him.
- He will supply what we need so we can continue to give!
- He is worthy of praise and thanks for His gift.
- His gift is indescribable.
- The way we give is noted by the Lord. God’s supply is in direct proportion to our heart giving.
- We must purpose in our hearts to give.
- Our giving is not to be grudging or under compulsion.
- Our giving is to be cheerful.
- God supplies us with everything so we can also give toward others.
- God blesses us so we can give more, especially when we have a pattern for giving.
- Our giving is an act of worship to the Lord.
- Our giving gives praise to the Lord.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 99.

- Our giving causes others to praise and thank the Lord.
- Our giving causes others to pray for us and long to be with us.

“God has not promised to supply all our ‘greeds.’ When the child of God is in the will of God, serving for the glory of God, then he will have every need met. Hudson Taylor often said, ‘When God’s work is done in God’s way for God’s glory, it will not lack for God’s supply.’” ~Warren Wiersbe²

15. What is the ultimate goal and attitude that should accompany our giving according to Philippians 4:20?

God’s glory! Forever and ever!

16. Imagine having Philippians 4:20 foremost in your thoughts throughout the day! How would having a daily, even hourly, Philippians 4:20 focus change how you live and how you respond?

I wouldn’t be selfish, give into the flesh, I would be intentional, proactive, purposeful. I would be willing to die to self. I would be believing, trusting the Lord to work all things out as He sees fit. *Now to our God be glory forever and ever. Amen!*

17. What are the believers told to do in Philippians 4:21? What do you learn from Paul’s use of *every* (NIV uses *all*) in reference to believers in verse 21?

Greet every saint in Christ.

Hmmm. Every saint is a believer. According to verse 21, every saint is *in Christ*. It also means there’s no partiality shown—all the saints receive a greeting, not just the leaders, those who serve, those who are mature, or whatever.

18. In Philippians 4:22 what surprising bit of information do we learn about some of the believers? Take a moment to consider what this teaches us about God. See also Isaiah 59:1; Philippians 1:12-13.

There were believers in Caesar’s household! God can infiltrate the most hostile places with the gospel. The Lord’s work in the hearts of men can rescue and redeem in the most unlikely of places.

Isaiah 59:1 Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.

Philippians 1:12–13 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

Such a grand scope, so encouraging to consider, especially as life grows more hostile toward believers and God Himself. He is mighty to save!

Isaiah 63:1 Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? “It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 99.

19. It's fairly easy to quickly pass over the benediction of this book, yet it too is significant. What is the purpose of a benediction or a final word to someone?

To give a blessing. It sums up all that is best and the sweetest blessing for someone. It's the best thing you want for someone.

20. What final blessing does Paul desire for the Philippians as he closes his letter? See verse 23.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. His grace with my soul, my inward part. That I would experience His grace inwardly so that it flows out in my words and actions. It is a perfect, all-inclusive benediction that all need!

21. John MacArthur provides some insight into why Paul desires *grace* for the believers. He writes, "Believers are not only saved by grace, but also sustained by grace. They are governed by grace, guided by grace, kept by grace, strengthened by grace, sanctified by grace, and enabled by grace. They are constantly dependent on the forgiveness, comfort, peace, joy, boldness, and instruction that come through God's grace."³ How does Paul's blessing grow in scope as you consider all that is meant in the simple words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit"?

Kind of what I said in question #20. It is the highest best. It is the best present you can bestow on someone—the grace of the Lord Jesus.

22. Take some time to review the letter to the Philippians. What things have stood out to you as you have studied this book? What admonitions or lessons do you want to continue to think on and apply after you complete your study of Philippians?

Most recently, I want to live upon Philippians 4:5 (Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.) and Philippians 4:19 (And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.). I long to live more faithfully by the theme of this book—that it is all for Jesus, all to Jesus, that He is all, the focus and force of my life. I want be more others focused and do more "for your sakes" rather than seeking to do things for "my own sake." I want to have the attitude that Paul does in chapters 1 and 4 of trust, joy, and rest in whatever wayward or crazy circumstances I find myself.

What a privilege to study this book—and we barely scratched the surface!

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philippians 4:23

³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 318.