

PHILIPPIANS

Joy
In All
Things

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Financial despair, illness, anxiety, troubled personal relationships, the death of someone we love...suffering. If you have lived in this fallen world for very long, you have experienced suffering of some kind. If you have managed to escape it, fear not. It is coming. The Bible tells us over and over again that suffering is a part of the Christian life.

“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” - Acts 14:22

“In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration.” - John 16:33

“For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake.” - Philippians 1:29

What then does the Lord say to this assured suffering (Philippians 4:4)? Rejoice! The Greek in this verse means to be glad, to delight. How can a person find delight in the midst of their pain and hardships? How can we be glad when we are hurting? Thankfully, God doesn't leave us to figure that out on our own.

The book of Philippians gives us a picture of what joy in all things looks like. In this letter to the early church, Paul is writing from prison, literally shackled and chained for doing the good works God sent him to do. He was proclaiming the gospel and setting captives free, only to be made a captive himself. Yet the overarching theme of this letter is joy: joy during captivity, joy while being persecuted, joy in the Lord.

The Lord knows we will suffer. He knows this life is difficult and that living as Christians will bring persecution. He knows the natural response to hardship is not to rejoice. So how wonderful it is that in His incredible mercy and perfect grace He has given us examples like Paul! He has given us His very Word to guide us to joy, no matter what our circumstances may be.

I pray that as you read God's words, as penned by Paul, you are filled with the hope and joy with which they were written. I pray that you would come to know more fully how to experience joy in all things, joy in the Lord. I pray that as you experience more of life, you would experience more of Him.

“Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord.” - Philippians 3:1a

Tips for Studying the Bible

Read the entire passage a few times before starting.

Read it in another translation too. If you usually read out of ESV, try reading a different version like NIV.

Use these three steps when studying the Bible:

Step 1: Observation – What does this passage say?

Step 2: Interpretation – What does this passage mean?

Step 3: Application – What am I going to do about what the passage says?

There is a small section at the beginning of each week for notes. Before answering any questions, take time to mark your observations, interpretations and applications for the chapter.

Observation	What does the text say? What does the text say about God? About me? About the world? Who is it written to? What are the verbs/actions? What are some cause and effect relationships? What are some repeating words/phrases? Who is speaking? What is being said? Where is this happening and in what context?
Interpretation	What does the text mean? What is the historical/cultural background? Look up specific words/definitions. Ask the “why” questions. Why is this instruction being given?
Application	How does this apply to my life? Are there specific commands to obey? How does this relate to my circumstances? Is there an example to follow? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a call to action?

***NOTE: Interpretation is finding out what the text means, NOT what it means to you.**

There is only one meaning to the text; it can have a personal application for you, but its meaning is consistent. Before we can understand how it applies to us today, we must first understand what it meant in its original context.

Pray

Pray that God would give you wisdom and insight, and courage to obey what the text says.

Week 1: Intro

Notes From the Teaching

How are you hoping to grow during this study in Philippians?

Week 2: Encouraging Joy Because Christ Is Coming Again
{Philippians 1:1-11}

Scripture Memory Verse: “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” - Philippians 1:6

Philippians 1-4

1. Read the entire book of Philippians (Chapters 1-4). Make 10 observations. (See page 4 for tips on studying the Bible and how to make an observation.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

2. What repeating words/phrases did you find throughout the letter?

3a. Underline every time you find the words Christ/Christ Jesus in this book. How many times is Christ mentioned in Philippians?

3b. Why is that significant?

4. What major themes did you discover after reading this book? List them below.

Rejoicing in our suffering is a major theme in the book of Philippians. In order to find joy in the midst of pain, we must have proper perspective. That is why Paul continuously reminds us of the gospel and to look to Christ Jesus.

5. How many times is the word “gospel” repeated in this book?

6. What is the gospel in two to three sentences? (Answer without using resources if possible.)

7. When did the gospel become real to you? Share your experience below.

8. In what ways are you currently suffering, struggling or walking through hardship?

9. Write a prayer asking God to use this study to grow closer to Him. Use this time to write out your pain and invite Him to be the Great Physician and Healer over these next eight weeks.

Our stories, pasts and backgrounds shape who we are, good or bad. These things don't have to define us, but they certainly give us perspective and the lens through which we view life. This Philippian church was made up of a group of people who were diverse, whose stories, pasts and backgrounds shaped their worldview and added diversity to this new church in the first century.

Using Philippians 1 as a guide, fill in the blanks below.

10a. Who is writing the letter? _____

10b. Where is the author while writing the letter? _____

10c. Who are the recipients? _____

Acts 16 – Diversity in the Church

11. Below are some of the founding members of this church. Read Acts 16 and record observations about the following Philippians:

Lydia	Slave Girl	Jailer

12. Using the chart above, describe the diversity (gender, age, socioeconomic status, race, etc.) below.

This is the Philippian church. Started by Paul, strengthened by Timothy, and filled with Lydia, the slave girl, the jailer and many more. There were different backgrounds, ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses, yet they were unified through the gospel.

13. Why is the diversity of the Philippian church significant in the first century?

14. How does the diversity of the church in Philippi compare/contrast to your home church in the present day?

15. How well do you engage, befriend or love those who are different than you? What holds you back from pursuing diverse relationships?

16. How can you begin to seek out relationships with others who are different from you (in age, season of life, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.)?

Philippians 1:1-8 – Thanksgiving: He Is Faithful

Now that we've read Philippians as a whole and studied the background/historical context a bit, let's begin to dive in verse by verse.

Have you ever had a friend who encourages you and loves you in a way that lifts you up? Pushes you forward? Helps you endure? I think the apostle Paul would be a friend like this. He is writing this letter in prison, in chains, and writing with JOY. He is so grateful that while he is chained up his friends are out doing the work God has for them to do.

17. Read Philippians 1:1-8. List five observations below.

18. List some of the reasons Paul is thankful and joyful in these verses.

19. According to 1:3-8, describe how Paul feels about those he's writing to.

You can feel Paul's affection for his friends in Philippi. He is so grateful for their partnership, their love for God and their sharing in God's grace with him (v.8). If there's one thing I have learned about the Christian life, it's that it is not meant to be lived alone.

We need each other. There will be days when we want to give up and crawl in a hole, and we need each other to help us out. We will have circumstances that make us feel chained up and we'll need others to help us live free. There will be days when we'll want to shy away in fear or doubt what God has called us to do, and we'll need friends to remind us to be "confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (v.6). We need others to lift us up and push us on.

20. Do you have partners in the gospel—others to lean on and grow with, people you would trust to help you in a time of need, a community to help you live on mission? Describe your partners in the gospel below. If that is something you desire but don't yet have, how can you begin to pursue those kinds of relationships with others?

21. What does it mean to be a partaker of grace?

22. How does that bring you comfort/encouragement in suffering?

23a. Write out Philippians 1:6.

23b. According to this verse, what hope/confidence do we have?

23c. Who completes the “good work” we are doing? Why is this significant?

Many of us believe fighting sin or changing our hearts is up to us, yet we see from this verse our confidence for this good work being completed is found in God. The ESV Study Bible says, “The foundation for spiritual growth is recognizing that it is God who began a good work in you and will bring it to completion. Genuine spiritual progress is rooted in what God has done, is doing, and will do. His faithfulness ensures that He will be with believers until Jesus returns. They can have confidence that the God who has saved them will never let them go, and that they will inherit their eternal reward.”

God is at work. We trust His faithfulness and yield to Him to bring it into completion.

24. In what ways is God doing a good work in you and through you right now? How is God changing you to be more like Jesus?

Philippians 1:9-11 – Prayer for Spiritual Fruit

We discovered earlier this week that Paul is in _____ while writing this letter. He is sitting in prison with a death sentence in the near future, and here in these verses, we find him praying. Look at not only *how* Paul prays (with eternal perspective, joy and thanksgiving), but look at *what* he prays for.

25a. Using the ESV translation for 1:9-11, fill in the blanks below.

“And it is my prayer that your _____ may abound more and more, with _____ and all _____, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be _____ and _____ for the day of Christ, _____ with the _____ that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

25b. List the things Paul prays for the recipients of this letter.

26. Write out the definitions of the words below.

Love:

Knowledge:

Discernment:

Pure:

Blameless:

Filled:

In times of suffering or difficult circumstances, do you pray with joy? Thanksgiving? Hope? Do you pray for others? Paul's prayer life is marked with all of these things because his perspective is heavenly. He knows life is all about the advancement of the gospel and proclaiming God's glory.

27. How does Paul's prayer life contrast to yours in times of suffering?

28. In what ways can you begin to shift to an eternal perspective in suffering?

29a. Which of the qualities/virtues listed above would you like to grow in? List how you can begin to grow, starting today.

29b. Now write a prayer asking God for specific ways to help you grow in these qualities/virtues.

30. How do you want to grow in your prayer life? In what ways are Paul's prayers helpful to guide you into a deeper prayer life?

Summarize

31. Reread Philippians 1-4. List five new things you learned this week from the book of Philippians.

32. From Philippians 1:1-11 what did you learn about:

God:

Prayer:

Suffering:

33. What was the most encouraging part of Philippians 1:1-11?

34. What was the most challenging part of Philippians 1:1-11?

35. Summarize this book in one sentence.

This book is meant to be a book of encouragement, a place to find joy and hope in the midst of suffering. In what ways do you need encouragement—in your real, hard, messy everyday life right now? What circumstances are you walking through that are hard? Write out a prayer below. Write out all of those places you need encouragement and hope.

Together, let's beg God to teach us how to find joy in the midst of suffering. Like this book, we would look to Christ Jesus in all things to bring us hope. Why not let Him surprise us with joy, hope, strength and peace, and actually meet us in our need?

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” - Philippians 1:6

Notes

Week 3: Selfless Joy Because Christ Is My Life
{Philippians 1:12-30}

Scripture Memory Verse: “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” - Philippians 1:21

“Happiness depends on right happenings, but even when things go wrong, you can have joy.” - Warren Wiersbe

Have things ever turned out NOT how you planned, hoped or imagined? You are not the only one answering with a resounding, “Yes!” The Apostle Paul wanted to go to Rome as a preacher (Acts 19:21; Romans 1:15), but instead he went as a prisoner. Many things do not turn out as we hoped or planned, but God’s plans do.

Joy is something we fight for because the enemy wants us to believe the lie that if our circumstances fall apart, we will fall apart because God is not good or to be trusted. But we fight for joy with enduring perspective. We labor for joy and on behalf of the gospel, not to *get* a relationship with God, but because we *have* a relationship with the living God.

Happiness is dependent on circumstances, while joy is dependent on the unchanging faithful God. Knowing Jesus is knowing joy. We can find this joy when we fix our gaze on Jesus and not our circumstances.

In the second half of Philippians 1 we are going to see a selfless joy more concerned about the gospel than personal comfort and preference. And because of Jesus—knowing Him, walking with Him, abiding in Him—we can have joy in ALL things!

1. Review: List two things you learned from last week’s lesson or teaching below.

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2. Write out last week’s memory verse below (Philippians 1:6).

Start this week in prayer. Use Philippians 1:9-11 as a guide to pray for yourself and others as you lean into the Spirit during your study time and service to Christ this week.

3. Read Philippians 1:12-30 today and write down any mention of joy and rejoicing. In each reference, what is Paul joyful about or rejoicing in?

Philippians 1:12-14 – Advancing the Gospel in Chains

4. Think about a time this past week when your agenda or plan got changed. How did you respond and adjust to that?

5. According to verses 12-14, what were some results of Paul's imprisonment in his life and the lives of others?

6. In verse 12, Paul is trying to encourage the Philippians in his circumstances. Why would he need to encourage the Philippians during his imprisonment?

7. What implications may there be for our lives if we viewed everything as Paul did, that everything could serve to advance the gospel?

“Paul did not find his joy in ideal circumstances; he found his joy in winning others to Christ and if his circumstances promoted the furtherance of the gospel, that was all that mattered.” - Warren Wiersbe

8. Paul states in 1:14 that others became confident in the Lord by his imprisonment, his suffering. Who else in Scripture encourages you by how they walked through suffering?

9. Think of someone in your life who has suffered through hard circumstances this past year. What lessons have you learned, good or bad, by how they walked through their suffering?

10. Suffering can make us bold, loosen our grip on material things, change our perspective and strengthen us. What additional attitudes and insights have you gained from your own suffering?

11. Though in chains, Paul is free in Christ. He was bound and limited by chains, yet the gospel is free, advancing and spreading. In what areas in your life do you feel you are in chains, stuck and unable to be free?

We may feel limited, but Jesus is unlimited, and the gospel can do immeasurable things even when we feel we are stuck or suffering.

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. *But the word of God is not bound!*” - 2 Timothy 2:8-9 (emphasis added)

Be faithful in the seemingly small, insignificant places, as God can do significant things in and through you in those very places.

Philippians 1:15-18 – Rejoicing in the Gospel

12. What two reasons does Paul give for his suffering in prison (verses 13 and 16)?

13. Compare the motives of the two groups described in verses 15-17.

Group	Motive
Envy and Rivalry (verses 15a and 17)	
Goodwill (verses 15b and 16)	

There were some who were preaching from envy and rivalry. Either they were teaching a false doctrine in opposition or, more likely, they were at odds with Paul with impure motives, as he would not rejoice in false doctrine being taught (Galatians 1:6-9).

14a. What descriptions do the following passages reveal about the identity of false teachers?

- **Romans 16:17-18**

- **2 Peter 2:1-3, 10, 17-19**

- **1 John 4:1-6**

14b. How do these descriptions relate to any false teachers in today’s culture?

15a. What is Paul's joy even amidst those preaching from envy and rivalry (1:18)?

15b. What power does the gospel have even if proclaimed with false motives?

16. What values and experiences are your greatest joy and delight? What consumes your thoughts and dreams?

17. When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? Confess any lack of desire or joy in sharing the gospel, and pray for the opportunity and boldness to share the gospel with someone.

Philippians 1:19-26 – Delivering Joy in Life or Death

18a. In verse 19 we see Paul's confidence in the work of the Holy Spirit through the Philippians' prayers. What has been your habit of praying for others (set aside time to pray for others, throw up a quick prayer out of habit or duty, etc.)?

18b. How has your belief or lack of belief in the power of prayer impacted your prayer life?

19. It is not our prayers themselves that do the work, but God who works, moving through and acting on our prayers. How does this encourage you in knowing and believing the power of prayer?

Often we want deliverance out of a situation to what we deem good. The Israelites were delivered from Egypt, but wandered in the desert for 40 years to get Egypt out of them and to work in them so they could find their trust, hope and satisfaction in God alone. Joseph was delivered from a pit into slavery and prison for years. Paul knew deliverance did not mean to his preference, but he took on kingdom priorities over his own priorities. He knew his deliverance could be eternal deliverance to glory by death or temporary deliverance freed from prison. He was content with whichever one it was as long as the gospel was made known to more people.

20. What does Paul say is his “eager expectation and hope” in 1:20 (ESV)? Fill in the blanks below.

“It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all _____, but that with full _____ now as always _____ will be _____ in my body, whether by _____ or by _____.”

21. Paul is not concerned about life or death but faithful living. What are some kingdom priorities God is about that we also should be about in this life?

22. Paul’s eager expectation and hope is to not be ashamed, but to be full of courage to honor Christ. What priorities and activities do Psalm 34:5 and 2 Timothy 2:15 reveal about one who is not ashamed?

23. How has shame crept into your life? Maybe there is shame from a sin in your past that you need to embrace the forgiveness of Jesus, or maybe there is a present sin you have not confessed.

24. Are there any misplaced priorities in your life? Identify one priority in your life that you need to remove this week to be about one of God's kingdom priorities.

Philippians 1:27-30 – Walking Worthy of the Gospel

25. If we are saved by grace, not by works, how is it that we are to walk worthy of the gospel?

We make the gospel worthy to others (Ephesians 4:1) by walking as citizens of heaven, reflecting our new life and identity.

“You are writing a Gospel, a chapter each day, by the deeds that you do and the words that you say. Men read what you write, whether faithful or true; just what is the Gospel according to you?” - Author Unknown

26. What actions and attitudes do Ephesians 4:1-3 and Colossians 4:5-6 say about the manner in which we are to walk the Christian life?

27. What qualities does Paul desire to see the Philippians known for in verses 27-28?

28. What could be said of you? What do you want to be known for?

29. What principles does Romans 8:37-39 reveal about why we do not need to be frightened by opposition as Paul says in Philippians 1:28?

Belief AND suffering are gifts (1:29).

“Do not fret over your heavy troubles, for they are the heralds of weighty mercies.”
- Charles Spurgeon

30. How can both suffering and faith be gifts? How are they related?

It may be that the suffering itself is not the gift, but what God does in your life to strengthen your faith through suffering.

31. What are one or two difficult circumstances you're presently facing or have recently faced?

32. How can you adopt Paul's attitude toward life and death in light of difficult circumstances?

Summarize

33. Reread Philippians 1:12-30. Write down at least three significant insights from these verses below.

34a. What was the most encouraging part of Philippians 1:12-30?

34b. What was the most challenging part of Philippians 1:12-30?

35. Write out a prayer in response to what you've learned this week. How does Paul's perspective on suffering encourage you? How can you ask God to begin to change you to have an attitude or perspective like this?

“May our hearts make Jesus their anchor, their rudder, their lighthouse, their lifeboat, and their harbor.” - Charles Spurgeon

“Would the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” - Romans 15:13

Notes

Week 4: Humble Joy With Christ as My Example
{Philippians 2:1-11}

Scripture Memory Verses: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” - Philippians 2:5-8

This week, we will study one of the most significant passages in the entire Bible. It is one of the most complete passages that explains the person and work of Jesus Christ, His humanity and His deity, His humiliation and His exaltation. We see the sovereign Lord put on human flesh, take the posture of a humble servant, die so we might live, be raised to new life and exalted to a place of glory.

1. Review: List two things you learned from last week’s lesson or teaching below.

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2. Write out last week’s memory verse below.

Philippians 2:1-4 – Have a Humble Mind

3. Read Philippians 2:1-4. What are the commands to believers in this passage?

4a. According to Philippians 1:27-2:4, what are the things Paul desires most for believers?

4b. Why would Paul want to know they're standing firm in one spirit? (Go back to pages 8-9, questions 11-15, and review what we learned about this church and its diversity.)

The church is a plurality of persons, functioning as one in unity, operating with one mind even in our expressions of diversity.

5. Why would unity and having the same mind be of utmost importance to the church, both then and now?

6a. In what ways do you see disunity in the church today (both our church and the church as a whole)?

6b. How can we remedy the disunity within the church? List some ways we can be of the same love and same mind.

7a. According to verse 3, what is the opposite of selfish ambition or conceit? (Hint: it's one word.)

7b. Look up the word *humility* in a Bible dictionary (or other dictionary), and write out the definition below.

Humility:

8. According the end of verse 3 and all of verse 4, how is humility defined?

9. Is your life marked by looking more to your own interests or looking to the interests of others? In what ways?

Philippians 2: 5-11 – The Incarnation, Humility and Humiliation of Christ

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” -
Philippians 2:5-11

“If the Bible were a mountain range, this passage would be one of the 2-3 highest peaks.” - Tim Keller

When you arrive at a mountaintop, the first thing you do is take in the view. You pause, you look out, you stand in awe. You stand still. Before we dive in and take this passage apart, let's stand at the mountaintop and enjoy the view.

10. Read this passage morning, noon and night. Meditate on it throughout the day.

Read Philippians 2:5-11 in the **morning**. Record three to five observations.

Read Philippians 2:5-11 at **noon**. Record three to five different observations.

Read Philippians 2:5-11 at **night**. Record three to five more observations.

11. What did you discover as you meditated on this passage throughout the day?

12. Respond in prayer. After reading some of the most explicit verses about Jesus, write out a prayer of your thoughts, questions and insights, and worship God through what you've learned.

Philippians 2:6-8 – How Jesus Became a Man

We will never be able to grow in humility without first understanding Jesus Christ as a humble servant. Humility should mark the Christian life, and it is cultivated through a deeper understanding of the gospel.

We read in Philippians 1:27-2:4 to have “one mind.” In Philippians 2:5, Paul finally tells us what that means.

13. According to Philippians 2:6-8, list the kind of “mind” we are to have.

14a. Who are we to model after?

14b. In what ways do we model after Christ?

15. This section of Scripture is referred to as the incarnation. Look up the word *incarnation* (or *incarnate*) and write out the definition below.

Incarnate:

16. What does this passage teach us about Christ’s humanity, what He did in order to become a man? Fill in the chart below.

Before He became a man v.5-6	What He did in order to become a man (form, attitude) v.7	After He became a man v.8

17. What position did He hold as a man when He was on earth?

18a. According to 2:7-8 in ESV, what words are used to describe the process of Jesus becoming human?

“...but _____ himself, by taking the form of a _____, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he _____ himself by becoming _____ to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

18b. List those words below and write out their definitions.

19. Why are these significant to remember when we think of Jesus?

20. In what ways are you struggling to live as a humble servant, obedient and dying to yourself?

21. How does seeing these attributes of Jesus inspire or encourage you to live more like Him?

Why Jesus Became a Man

22a. Go back to page 32, question 16. What is this section of Scripture (2:6-8) referred to as?

22b. Record what these verses teach us about the incarnation and humanity of Christ.

Hebrews 4:15	John 1:1-3, 14	Luke 2:40, 52

23. According to the passages below, **why** did Jesus have to become a man?

- **Hebrews 2:17-18**

- **Mark 10:45**

- **Isaiah 52:13-53:6**

24. Read Isaiah 7:14, Luke 1:32-35 and Matthew 1:20-23. According to these passages, what prophecies were fulfilled about the incarnation?

25a. What name for God is listed in Isaiah 7:14?

25b. What does this name mean?

So much of our Christian life is lived **for** God, rather than **with** God, yet we see according to this week's passage and the additional verses we've studied, "God with us" was the goal. He came to earth to live among us and be with us. He died in our place so we would live with Him and He would dwell with us for all of eternity.

With

God with us. This is the Christian life: living and loving with God and like God, responding to Him and abiding in Him. His presence now on earth and His presence forever in heaven should be our greatest aim and our greatest joy.

26. Read Revelation 21:3. Why is this verse significant when we think of the incarnation or Immanuel, God with us? What is the result of our relationship with God in heaven?

27. In what ways do you spend more of your life *for* God (performing, striving, earning, doing) instead of living life *with* God (resting, abiding, being, delighting)?

28. How can you begin to serve and *do* out of an overflow of being *with* God?

29a. In what ways is your time with the Lord hurried or rushed?

29b. How can you begin to slow down and find margin to be *with* God throughout the day?

30. There are many ways we can cultivate our time *with* God. Being in the Word is one of the many ways (perhaps a foundational way since one of Jesus' names is "the Word"). However, being with God can be spending time in prayer, silence, solitude, sharing a good meal with friends who encourage you in the Lord, worship, laughter, etc. How can you spend time *with* God in a new way this week?

Christ came to earth in humility—to serve, to die and to be exalted.

Of all the ways God could have saved mankind, this was the way in which He did so. He decided the way to redeem those who are His was by sending the Logos, His only begotten Son, to enter in the mess of humanity by becoming human Himself. Putting on flesh to dwell among flesh. Being born into a mess to redeem our mess. Entering into life on earth, moving into the neighborhood and loving those around Him. This act was extraordinary, yet aspects of Jesus' life were just mundane and ordinary. Working, eating, going to parties, going to Temple, serving His family, etc.

31. How can you begin to empty yourself—become humble, obedient and incarnational—to serve those in your family? Neighborhood? Workplace? Community?

Jesus lived through the ordinary and mundane. His evangelism to His neighbors (and mankind) wasn't just throwing out Bible verses and hoping they would believe. He spoke truth and showed love. He built relationships and He served. He was humble and looked for ways to meet their needs.

32. We've confused evangelism with *talking at* people instead of *being with* people. In what ways can you build relationships with those who don't know Jesus (and not just to try and convert them)? Do you have friends outside of the faith you can love and serve? Pray and ask God to reveal who you can enter in with. Write out what He reveals to you below.

Philippians 2:9-11 – The Exaltation of Christ

33. These verses show a contrast of Christ’s humiliation and His future exaltation. Fill out the steps of both His humiliation and exaltation below.

Humiliation (2:6-8)	Exaltation (2:9-11)

34. In what ways are you growing in the virtue of humility?

C.S. Lewis says, “True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.”

35a. Explain what you think this means.

35b. How does the C.S. Lewis quote differ from what you formerly thought of regarding humility?

36. It is said the opposite of humility is pride. Read 1 Peter 5:5-6. What do these verses say about pride and humility?

37a. Why is pride so harmful and dangerous?

37b. How does pride contrast with humility?

38. How does Philippians 2:9-11 increase your faith and endurance in times of suffering or growing in humility?

39. What is the result of this humiliation and exaltation, according to the end of 2:11?

The culmination of Christ's life and death is GLORY. Therefore, it should be the same with our life and death.

40. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. What are we to keep our eyes fixed on during hardship or trial? In what ways does this change your perspective?

41. In what ways are you living to bring God glory with your life? Are you seeking to bring glory to yourself or to God with your actions? Search your heart and ask God to reveal ways you desire more to build your own kingdom rather than His kingdom, and confess below.

Summarize

42a. What was most encouraging to you from Philippians 2:1-11?

42b. What was most challenging to you from this passage?

43. How did your perspective on humility change after reading this passage?

44. What did you learn about God from these verses?

45. Write a prayer about the ways you would like to grow to be more like Christ according to this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help form your heart and mind to be more like His.

Spend some time this week searching your heart for ways you are not emptied of self, servant-hearted, humbled or obedient and ask the Lord to give you opportunities to grow in those areas. Record your experience below.

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” - Philippians 2:6-8

Notes

Week 5: Obedient Joy Because Christ Transforms
{Philippians 2:12-21}

Scripture Memory Verses: "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." - Philippians 2:12b-13

Philippians 2:12-13 – Obedient Joy Transforms Our Will and Work

Last week we saw the humble and sacrificial life of Jesus in the first half of Philippians 2. We are selfish, by our fleshly nature and our response—I daresay our reflex. Without even thinking, we're selfish. But the work of Christ in our lives transforms our old nature to a new nature that yields joyful obedience.

1. Paul addresses the Philippians in verse 12 as "my beloved" (ESV) or "my friend" (NIV). Here Paul refers to the Philippians differently than in the rest of this letter. Look at his other ways of addressing the Philippians:

- **1:1** "To all the _____"
- **1:12** "Now I want you to know, _____"
- **3:1** "Finally, my _____"
- **4:1** "Therefore, my _____"
- **4:8** "Finally, _____"

2. After pointing to the portrayal and example of Christ in 2:5-11, why might Paul refer to the Philippians with this affectionate name of "my beloved" or "my friend"?

3. How should Christ's example of humility and the gospel affect and penetrate our emotions and affections?

4a. Who does the working *out* and who does the working *in*? Fill in the blanks from verses 12 and 13.

"...work out _____ salvation with fear and trembling, for it is _____ who works in you" (ESV).

4b. This is not a working out *for* your own salvation, but a working out *of* what is being worked in you that God began (Philippians 1:6). Why with fear and trembling?

5. Salvation is worked out in the circumstances of life. What other reason or results do you find in these verses for working out our salvation?

- **Matthew 5:16**
- **Ephesians 2:10**
- **Colossians 1:10**
- **Titus 3:8, 14**

6. It is not Paul who does the work *in* their lives, but God. In light of that, why may it be more significant that there be obedience in Paul's absence more than in his presence (2:12)? What does this demonstrate?

7. Is it easier to do the right thing when others are watching or when we are by ourselves?

8a. Think about work. We labor and work, usually for a paycheck, promotion, raise, praise, etc. How might this kind of work differ from the work Paul is referring to in verses 12-13?

8b. How might they be similar?

9. How does James 3:14-22 relate?

“...both to will and to work for his good pleasure” - Philippians 2:13

True saving faith is transformed and evidences itself by what is worked out, what fruit it produces. God’s work in us extends to the transformation of our will and desires that change our actions. The faith that saves is the faith that works. It’s not a faith in works, but rather a faith that works.

10. Think about what God delights in. What one or two desires, pleasures or priorities might you need to confess that are currently not in obedience to His Word or cause you to neglect God’s kingdom values and priorities?

Philippians 2:14-18 – Obedient Joy Transforms Our Attitude and Witness Through Sacrifice

“If you look at yourself, you shall be as corrupted as you were before. If you look at your environment, it will be as difficult as it has always been. But if you believe in God’s Word, you are able to overcome.” - Charles Spurgeon

Our Attitude

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing.” – Philippians 2:14

ALL things!

We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, not grumbling and disputing.

11. Consider Colossians 3:1-3. How might a grumbling and complaining attitude take your sights off God and His way of life?

12. How can you guard against such an attitude? (See Philippians 4:8-9 and 2 Corinthians 10:5.)

When Paul refers to “a crooked and twisted generation” in verse 15 (ESV), he is not only referring to the generation of that time, but also looking back to the time the Israelites grumbled and complained while in the desert. They not only grumbled against Moses’ leadership and about their circumstances, but also against God, which reflected their attitude toward Him (Exodus 16:2, 17:2; Numbers 11:1, 20:3-5; Deuteronomy 32:5, 20).

13. How might having a grumbling and complaining attitude lead to being “crooked and twisted”?

14. What characterized the generation Jesus referred to in Matthew 17:17? What might be said similarly or differently about our generation?

Our Witness

Rather than grumbling and complaining, followers of Jesus are to be blameless, innocent, and a light even in the midst of a corrupt generation and time (Philippians 2:14-15). A transformed attitude can transform a generation to obedient joy in the here and now, and in the joy to come.

Jesus says, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world...I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (John 9:5, 12:46). We are to walk as children of this light, “for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

“Christians are called to be an alternate city within every earthly city.” - Tim Keller

15. How are we to be the light of Christ, to walk as children of light? Fill in from Philippians 2:16a (ESV).

“_____ to the _____.”

16. What does it mean to hold fast to something? What values, ideas, status or things do you hold fast to?

17. Why the Word? It is the “word of _____” (v.16)! How does *what* we are holding fast to make a difference?

18. Read the following verses and write down what the Word does that gives life.

- **Psalm 19:7-11**
- **Hebrews 4:1**
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
- **Psalm 119:105**
- **Romans 15:4**

Our Sacrifice

Paul made his life about laboring for the souls of men, saying, “I did not run in vain or labor in vain” (Philippians 2:16). He knew this was kingdom work, eternal and lasting.

19. Think of what your life has been centered on, focused on, and what you have been about. Will it remain? Will it abide? Will it stand the test? Consider Luke 6:46-49 and 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

In verse 17 Paul is willing to pour out his life as a drink offering. He writes his last letter to Timothy when he knew his death was imminent for the sake of the gospel of Jesus in 2 Timothy.

20. Read his words from 2 Timothy 4:6-8 and consider Romans 12:1. What does it look like to fight the good fight, to finish your race, keeping the faith and to be a living sacrifice to God?

21. Does that mean sacrificing our physical lives to death, or is there a daily aspect to dying to ourselves? (Also consider Philippians 2:3-5.)

Philippians 2:19-30 – Further Examples of Obedient Joy by Ordinary Obedient Men

After the description of Jesus' humility (2:1-11) and Paul's selfless and sacrificial life (2:16-18), Paul now brings in the example of two helpers in ministry, Timothy and Epaphroditus. These are two ordinary men who are further examples that obedient joy is not for the chosen few or spiritually elite, but for *all* believers.

Timothy is first mentioned in Acts 16 when Paul is heading out on his second missionary journey. He stops in Lystra to pick up the young disciple who accompanies him, assists him and serves as a sort of apprentice under him. Timothy's biological father was Greek, but no evidence is ever given that he was a Christian. So Paul filled the shoes of a spiritual father to Timothy.

22a. What descriptors are given about Timothy in verses 20-22?

22b. What does this say about Timothy's character and service?

23. What contrast do you see in verses 20 and 21? What is not to be of those of Jesus Christ (v.21b) as contrasted to what we are to be? (Consider 2:3.)

Most of our grumbling and complaining happens when we put our own interests ahead of the interests of others, but that was not the case with Timothy. Paul brought Timothy alongside him on his missionary journey. He invited him along, watched him, taught him, mentored him and disciplined him.

There's an African Proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

We need each other to live out the working out of our salvation in the transformation of our will, work, attitude and witness by the laying down of our lives through obedient joy that we may know Jesus and make Him known.

24. Has your life been impacted by a Paul-Timothy type of mentor/discipleship relationship? What was most impactful and meaningful about that relationship?

25a. We are not given much about Epaphroditus besides what is here in these verses. Write out the first three descriptive titles/roles Paul says about who Epaphroditus is to him.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

25b. What two things are said that Epaphroditus is to the Philippians?

1. _____ 2. _____

“The problem in our churches,” states a missionary leader, “is that we have too many spectators and not enough participants.”

26. From those descriptions alone, what would you say about Epaphroditus? What does this implicate about a Christian’s life?

27. What was Epaphroditus really distressed about in verse 26, and what does this say about him?

Summarize

28. What was most encouraging to you from Philippians 2:1-11?

29. What was most challenging to you from this passage?

30. What did you learn about God from these verses?

31. Write out a prayer of what most impacted you during this week’s study. Ask God to work in and through you as you work out your salvation.

Notes

Week 6: Testifying Joy Because Christ Is Supremely Better
{Philippians 3:1-11}

Scripture Memory Verse: “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.” - Philippians 3:8a

1. Before we enter into study, list your accomplishments up to this point in your life. What have been some of your greatest achievements in life? What are you most proud of?

Twitter bios and Facebook profiles can tell a lot about a person. In just a few words or sentences, people’s entire identity is portrayed: wife, mom, entrepreneur, DDS, coffee drinker, University of _____ graduate, marathon runner, etc. They can also be very stressful, because in just a few words or sentences we’re supposed to encapsulate our life, our identity and our accomplishments.

Paul’s Twitter bio would put us all to shame. No one on paper was a better religious person than Paul. He was well-trained, well-equipped, well-accomplished, zealous, from the right family and even circumcised on the eighth day! Talk about bragging rights. Yet his earthly accomplishments were nothing compared to what Christ accomplished for him.

2. Review: List two things you learned from last week’s lesson or teaching below.

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3. Write out last week’s memory verse below.

Philippians 3:1-11 – Everything as Loss

4. Read Philippians 3:1-11. Write out five observations below.

5a. This section of Scripture starts with Paul admonishing the people in Philippi (and us today) to rejoice in the Lord. What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord?

5b. What reasons do you have to rejoice in the Lord?

6. In light of reading Philippians 2, why would Paul remind them to rejoice in the Lord?

7. Who does Paul warn us to “look out for” in 3:2? Describe those groups of people below.

Confidence in the Flesh

8a. What is the warning to us in 3:3? “Put no _____
_____.”

8b. What is “the flesh” referring to here?

9. We listed all of the reasons we could have confidence in the flesh in question 1 this week: our goals, good deeds, accomplishments, etc. Now go back to question 1, cross out your list with a big X and write next to it in big letters: JESUS CHRIST.

Our identity before God, our approval and acceptance does not come from all that we do, have done or will do for God, but comes in knowing and being known by Jesus Christ. We will not stand before God with a list of the things we did in our own flesh, as a means to enter into His presence. No! We will stand before God with one thing: the Name above ALL names, Jesus Christ, who will bring us into eternal rest and bliss. That is our new identity now.

10. In what ways are still you trying to create your list of accomplishments to please God? How are you still trying to earn God’s love and approval?

11. How does understanding the gospel (that Christ died to forgive you of your sin and raised you to a new life and new identity) help you know you are already loved and approved by our Heavenly Father?

Read the first part of 3:3. Paul reminds us of our identity: we are the _____. Paul is not reminding us here of our identity based on a procedure done to 8-day-old baby boys. He is reminding those in Christ that we are the true circumcision.

12. Read the following passages, and record your observations and insight regarding what it means to be the “true circumcision.”

- **Romans 2:25-29**

- **Jeremiah 4:4**

Those who know Christ Jesus and have had their hearts changed because of Him are the true circumcision.

13. Read Ezekiel 36:26-27. What do these verses say about what God will do to our hearts and spirits to identify us as His people?

14. List below Paul’s religious resume (the reasons he is confident in his flesh) according to Philippians 3:5-6. *Optional: list the meaning/significance as well.

Righteousness Through Faith

According to the verses above, Paul talks about his righteousness to the law and calls himself a Pharisee.

15. What is a Pharisee? List what you know or understand about Pharisees below.

16. Now read Matthew 23:1-36. How does Jesus describe Pharisees in this passage?

A Pharisee was more than a “Bible know-it-all.” Pharisees were also known for adding religious rules and laws to what God commanded. That is why Jesus was so opposed to religious leaders and Pharisees of the day; they created legalism and an unbearable yolk to following God.

17. One of the ways a Pharisee is described is “self-righteous.” What does it mean to be self-righteous?

18. How is that different from understanding God’s righteousness and the gospel?

19. Now read Matthew 6:1-18. In what ways do “religious” people become self-righteous, according to this passage?

20. In what ways have you become an accidental Pharisee—adding to God’s laws or ways and becoming self-righteous? In what ways have you done the right things with the wrong motives?

21. How are you “practicing your righteousness before men in order to be noticed by them” (Matthew 6:1)?

22. Another way Jesus refers to Pharisees is by calling them hypocrites. Write out the definition for the word *hypocrite* below.

Hypocrite:

23. In what ways do you see hypocrisy in the church today?

24a. Since we know we don’t *go* to church—we *are* the church—what ways are you currently practicing hypocrisy in your life?

24b. How can you begin to live more authentically and less hypocritically? List below some steps you can begin to take to change areas of hypocrisy in your life.

25. We saw Paul list the reasons he had confidence in the flesh in 3:4-6. Now list his confidence according to verses 3:7-11.

26. How does his list in 3:7-11 contrast 3:4-6? What are his reasons for confidence now?

27. Read Philippians 3:9. In what ways is the righteousness mentioned in this verse different from his righteousness as a Pharisee in 3:5-6?

Philippians 3:7-10 – Suffer the Loss of All Things—to Gain Christ

This life with Christ will come at a cost. It will mean losing things, letting go, moving on, laying down and giving up to chase after the better thing, the eternal prize.

28. What things have you lost in order to gain Christ?

29. Share about a time you lost something, let go of a dream, relationships, etc. in obedience to Christ.

Found in Him

Paul listed the ways he once found his identity, and they weren't all bad things! Some of them were his ethnicity, religious traditions, family roots/heritage, his schooling, etc.

30. Where are you trying to find your identity in things other than Christ?

31. What comfort does that phrase "found in Him" bring to you as you think about your salvation? Your identity? Your suffering?

32a. According to 3:10, in addition to sharing in Christ's power, Paul also says he wants to share in Christ's _____.

32b. What is Paul's attitude toward suffering, according to passages we've read so far in Philippians?

33. How does this encourage you or change your perspective on suffering?

Summarize

34a. What was most encouraging to you from Philippians 3:1-11?

34b. What was most challenging to you from this passage?

35. In what ways did your understanding of the gospel grow after studying this passage?

36. Write out a prayer of confession below for any area of your life you are keeping a list of accomplishments and self-righteousness before God, rather than resting in His righteousness and what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

Notes

Week 7: Enduring Joy Because Christ Is My Reward
{Philippians 3:12-21}

Scripture Memory Verse: “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 3:14

Have you ever tried running a marathon? Rumor has it, it’s not for the faint of heart. It takes months of training, proper nutrition, good shoes, lots of hydration and discipline to finish well. The end goal, the perspective during the race, is not to focus on the pain or exhaustion, but the prize at the end, the amazing accomplishment to finish the race and go the distance. So it is with the Christian life. We can run while focusing on all of our pain, suffering and circumstances, or we can run with our eye on the prize, the cross-centered perspective and the end goal: eternal life with Jesus.

1. Review: List two things you learned from last week’s lesson or teaching below.

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2. Write out last week’s memory verse below.

Philippians 3:12 – Pressing On

3. Read Philippians 3:12-21. Write out five observations below.

4. In 3:12, Paul mentions, “not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own...” Go back to Philippians 3:7-11. What is the “it” he is referring to in this passage?

5. In 3:12, Paul mentions he is not already perfect. For many of us, we have a false perception that our spiritual leaders/mentors/pastors are “perfect.” In what ways do you put your leaders on a pedestal, expecting perfection from them?

6. The word for *perfect* here is referring to our sanctification—the process of becoming more like Christ. Being perfect means being mature, that every area of our being is complete in our sanctification process. How does it bring you comfort to know that we will never be able to attain perfection in this life?

7. While we will not be able to attain perfection this side of heaven, we should strive to grow to be more like Christ. List the areas of your life you would like to grow and mature in Christ.

8. What important thing does Paul do, according to 3:13-14, that helps him grow in his faith and maturity in Christ?

9. What things do you need to forget, let go of or leave behind in order to press on toward Christ Jesus? List them below.

10a. In what ways do you need to “press on” toward Jesus?

10b. Go back to question 7. What action steps do you need to put into place to press on toward the goal of becoming like Jesus?

11. What goals are you pursuing right now?

Not all of our own goals are bad or ungodly, but they can be if they become more important than our sanctification process of becoming more like Jesus. However, for our most of us, our greatest aim is not growing into Christlikeness, but building our own life with our dreams and our own goals. Our prize on this earth should be Christ Jesus. That should be our greatest aim and our greatest joy.

12. How do your goals compare/contrast with Paul’s goal in Philippians 3?

Paul lived his life with purpose and intention, with his eye on the prize of knowing Christ and making Him known.

13a. As you examine your week, in what ways are you living a life of intentionality? How do you live on purpose?

13b. How can you better steward your time, your gifts, your experiences, your places and your life with more purpose or intention?

Philippians 3:12-15 – The Upward Call

14. What is the “upward call of God” Paul refers to in 3:14?

This is the buzzword of our generation. We want to know our calling, what we were made for, find our purpose, discover our passion and get paid \$100,000 a year to pursue it. This calling mentioned here is different. It’s the call every Christian receives when reconciled to God. In his book *The Art of Christian Contentment*, Jeremiah Burroughs says:

“If you are a Christian, God has called you to a higher calling; your general calling is a high calling, though your particular calling is but low and mean. [*The Puritans taught that believers have a twofold calling: their particular calling, which was to their daily occupation and work; and their general calling, to be Christians. So every Christian has a high calling of God in Christ Jesus: God has called him to the highest thing to which he has called any creature he has made.]”

Let’s spend time this week starting the process of understanding our general calling as Christians and our specific callings in this life.

15. What is the general calling ALL Christians have?

Have you ever considered God may also have a specific calling on your life? We are all called as Christians into salvation and sanctification, but God has also gifted you with specific experiences and talents, in specific places (families, homes, neighborhoods, work environments) to use those gifts and experiences for His glory.

We won't hear our calling if we don't know the voice of our Caller. Sit with the Lord in silence and solitude this week. Ask Him to show you, according to His word, the gifts you've been given. Turn to page 93 for a list of gifts and deeper study for how you might be gifted.

16a. Write out some of what you discovered about your gifts below.

16b. Write out a prayer asking Him how you can use those gifts for His kingdom. Meet with a few friends from your small group and ask them to speak into your life. What do they see?

A calling is not often handed to us in a nice neat package when we become Christians. It's found in living in community, working with and serving alongside other Christians, growing in the Word with others and allowing others to speak into your life. Everyone may not have a specific passion or call to non-profit type of work; some callings will be that of mother, wife, friend, etc. We do, however, have gifts that are given that we will stand before our Maker, face to face, and give an account for.

17. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. Write out Ephesians 2:10 below.

17b. What good works did God possibly create you for?

17c. How can you begin to walk in those today?

Philippians 3:17-19 – Imitate, Follow and Beware

18. What does Paul admonish his readers to do in 3:17?

19. Write out the definition for the word *imitate* below.

Imitate:

The Lord has the Christian life set up in such a way that we need each other. We need those who are a season ahead of us to look up to, model after and be encouraged by.

20. Do you have someone in the faith you look up to, someone you can imitate? What qualities in that person do you want to imitate?

21. List the characteristics of the mentor-type relationship in Titus 2:3-5.

22. Is there someone you have noticed around you, mature in their faith, who you could simply spend time with? Is there someone you have wanted to be mentored by? Write down who comes to mind, and pray and consider entering that kind of Titus 2 relationship. Write out a letter or give them a call this week and ask.

Most mentoring relationships stick when you make the first move. If you need help or resources for what a mentor/mentee relationship can look like, visit melissadanisi.com for ideas!

It's important not only to have someone mentor us as we pursue Christ, but part of the call on our lives is to also be pouring into and discipling the next generation. It does not take the spiritually elite to be in a mentoring relationship. Paul simply brought Timothy alongside him in what he was doing. It is inviting others in, to do life together with the intentionality of pursuing Jesus and becoming more like Him, together. We learn from each other and need each other.

23a. Are you currently discipling someone or pouring into the next generation? Is there someone you have noticed around you, who is young in their faith, that you could simply spend time with?

23b. What holds you back from doing so?

24. What command does Jesus give about discipleship in Matthew 28:18-20?

25. How can you take a step of obedience this week toward fulfilling the Great Commission?

If you need ideas for how to do so, one way to start is by building relationships with someone a season behind you or sign up to help with Kids Co or WSM (Well Student Ministries). For more information on places to serve the next generation, visit our website: thewellcommunity.org/serve.

26. What is it that moves Paul to tears, according to 3:18?

27. How does it sober you knowing many will start out following God and fall away, becoming enemies of the cross?

28a. An enemy of the cross does not just mean a persecutor or hater of Christians. It could merely mean “worldly” people. According to verse 3:19, Paul lists four attributes of those who have fallen away or become worldly/enemies of the cross. List them below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

28b. What behaviors might one exhibit as an enemy of the cross?

29. What steps can you take starting today to guard against falling away or becoming worldly? In what ways can you help those around you do the same?

Philippians 3:20-21 – Heavenly Citizenship

30. What does Paul tell us in 3:20 that reminds us we are not of this world?

31. What does it mean to be a “citizen of heaven”? Write out everything you can think of below (our identity, our calling, our worldview, our goal in life, our eternal blessings, etc.).

32. In what ways should living as a citizen of heaven on earth look different than those of this world?

33. How does understanding our heavenly citizenship change your perspective on the following:

Time	
Relationships	
Money/Possessions	
Success	

34. Paul closes this chapter yet again with a reminder and a promise of what is to come. What promise does He give us in 3:21?

35. This is not our best life now; the better life is coming. How does that bring you encouragement today in your own suffering or circumstances?

Summarize

36. What was most encouraging to you from Philippians 3:12-21?

37. What was most challenging to you from this passage?

38. How did God change your perspective on calling this week?

39. Close in prayer, reflecting on “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.” Ask God to help you forget what lies behind and refocus this week on what truly matters.

Notes

Week 8: Trusting Joy Because Christ Is Peace
{Philippians 4:1-9}

Scripture Memory Verses: "...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." - Philippians 4:6-7

We all talk to ourselves. Our own thoughts speak more than we realize. When troubled with fear, our thoughts make us shirk back or doubt. When facing temptation, our minds can convince us it's not really that dangerous. When battling guilt, shame, insecurity or comparison, we let our minds and our negative self-talk spiral us down into a pit of despair. Rather than telling ourselves the truth—God loves us, He wants good for us and we can trust Him—we get lost in fear and anxiety. When we're anxious and worried, we should stop listening to the lies and replace our thoughts with the gospel, with what is true, good and lovely.

1. Review: List two things you learned from last week's lesson or teaching below.

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2. Write out last week's memory verse below.

3. Read Philippians 4:1-9. Write out five observations below.

Philippians 4:1 – Stand Firm

4. Throughout this whole letter we see Paul's love and affection for the Philippians. What does 4:1 teach us about how Paul feels for the Philippians?

5. What is his admonishment to them in 4:1?

“Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, _____
_____ thus in the Lord, my beloved.”

Those two words “stand firm” are all over the Bible. In fact, they are repeated, especially in the New Testament to believers. Read Ephesians 6:10-20 and Hebrews 3:12-14.

6. According to the passages above, how are we able to “stand firm” in our faith?

7. Why would New Testament believers (us included) be told repeatedly to stand firm or hold fast to Christ?

8. Share an experience or situation that is currently causing you to stand firm, and not be moved or shaken.

Philippians 4:2-5 – Do Not Be Divided

9. What is the situation in 4:2-3 that needs to be resolved?

It may seem hard to believe, but two women in the church, Euodia and Syntyche, were not getting along. There was division, dissension and distraction from what truly matters: unity in Christ. There is nothing new under the sun.

10. From memory (if you can), recall what type of “mind” Paul encourages believers to have in Philippians 2. (See 2:1-4 if you need a refresher.)

Paul’s desire is for everyone in the church to get along, to be unified and reconciled, to stand firm and partner in the gospel. This will not happen if there is dissension within the family.

11. What does Paul ask of the Philippians in 4:3 to assure they will be reconciled with one another?

One of the hardest things to do in the Christian life is work through conflict and dissension. However, for the sake of the gospel we must learn to resolve our conflicts with one another in a godly, peacemaking, honest way.

12. Read the following passages about peacemaking and conflict. Record your observations below.

- **Matthew 5:9**

- **Matthew 5:21-24**

- **Matthew 18:15-20**

- **Romans 12:16-18**

13a. As you study those Scriptures, is there someone God is laying on your heart right now that you need to pursue in peace? Who are you in conflict with?

13b. What are some steps you can take this week toward reconciliation?

Philippians 4:6 – Do Not Be Anxious

14a. Read Philippians 4:4-7 in ESV and fill in the blanks below.

“_____ in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; _____ about anything, but in everything by _____ and supplication _____ let your requests be made known to God. And the _____ of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

14b. Write out the words from the blanks in a list below.

15. Where was Paul when he was writing this letter?

From prison, Paul writes to us words like “rejoice...do not be anxious...pray with thanksgiving.”

16. What is surprising to you about Paul’s words from prison? Are these the type of words or counsel you would give others while you sat in prison?

17. List below the things Paul has to rejoice about from prison.

Philippians 4:6-7 is probably one of the most familiar verses in the Bible, with that famous phrase, “Do not be anxious about anything.”

18. Look up the word *anxious* and write out the definition below.

Anxious:

While there is clinically diagnosed anxiety, in which you experience physiological symptoms that may require medical intervention, the anxiety mentioned here is similar to worry, your thought life running amuck, you taking on burdens that are really only in God’s control.

19. What are the things you are anxious about?

20. Read Matthew 6:25-34. Record your observations about what Jesus has to say regarding anxiety.

If anyone in the whole world had the right to be anxious, it would be Jesus and Paul. Both knew of their imminent death and yet both tell us, “Do not be anxious.”

21. What was Jesus' remedy to worry and anxiety, according to Matthew 6:33?

22. How many of the things causing anxiety that you listed above are building your kingdom as opposed to building God's kingdom?

23. Notice the small phrase just before Paul commands us to not be anxious. Write out the four to five words (depending on the translation) just before "do not be anxious" below:

“ _____ ”

24. How does (or how should) understanding that the Lord is near and present with you always change your perspective when you're anxious, worried or fearful?

25. Where else in Scripture do you see God remind His children of His presence when they are afraid, worried or anxious?

Often, in the height of anxiety, spending time with God or trying to recall Scripture is overwhelming. That's why this work against anxiety has to be done long before that tidal wave rushes over you. There is a daily, small drip of God's Word and basking in His presence that must happen regularly so that when worry or anxious thoughts take over, you have something deeply rooted within you to fight with. Spending time with God day in and day out fills you and prepares you when suffering, anxiety, fear, worry, doubt, etc. rush in.

26a. In what ways do you regularly (daily/weekly) enjoy God's presence?

26b. How can you regularly spend time in His Word, knowing the God who is near?

There is more to just knowing God is near; we must know the God who is near. How well do you know God? Have you studied His character/attributes? Knowing God is present is one thing, but we must seek to know more about who God is and cultivate a deep trust-filled relationship with Him.

Philippians 4:7 – Pray With Thanksgiving

27. What does Paul exhort us to do in the midst of our anxiety, according to 4:6?

28. Describe/define the words below.

Prayer:

Supplication:

Thanksgiving:

29. How would you describe your prayer life currently? When do you pray? How do you pray? What are some of the things you pray for?

30. Read the following passages on prayer. Record your observations below.

- **Matthew 6:7-15**
- **Luke 18:1-8**
- **Ephesians 3:14-21**
- **Colossians 1:9-12**
- **Psalms 100**
- **Matthew 7:7-11**

31. Using the Scriptures above, and others you may know, how would you define prayer? When are we to pray? How are we to pray? What are we to pray for?

32a. Go back through the letter to the Philippians. Count how many times Paul prayed for his circumstances to change.

32b. How much of your prayer life consists of asking God to change your circumstances?

32c. How does this contrast to the way Paul and other authors of the Bible prayed?

33a. How much of your prayer life is “with thanksgiving”?

33b. How can you begin to grow in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving? List the things you have to be thankful for even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

34. What is the outcome of not being anxious, but praying with thanksgiving, according to 4:7?

35. Write out the definition for the word *peace* below.

Peace:

Sheila Walsh says, “Peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of Christ.” According to these verses, I think Paul would agree with that. We can have peace in the midst of hard, chaotic, terrible circumstances because the Lord is near; He is present, and for that we can be thankful.

36. How does the peace that surpasses all understanding differ from the world’s definition of peace?

37. Have you ever known someone who has, or have you yourself, experienced this type of peace? Share about someone you know or a time when you have been filled with a peace from God that was beyond understanding.

Philippians 4:8 – Think on These Things

Paul's remedy for helping us "not be anxious" is to 1) remind us of God's presence: "the Lord is near," 2) remind us to pray with thanksgiving, 3) let the peace of God guard our hearts and minds, and 4) adjust our thought life.

We all talk to ourselves. The question is: what are we saying? For most of us caught up in the midst of worry or anxiety, we are telling ourselves negative things or thinking of all the things that could go wrong.

38. Read Philippians 4:8. What things does Paul tell us to think of in the midst of anxiety?

39. When life is a struggle or you are filled with anxious thoughts, it's good to have a list of things you can recall in the moment to redirect your thinking. Fill in the chart below with things you can recall that are true, lovely, honorable, etc.

Think on these things	What do you know to be true, honorable, just, etc.
True	
Honorable	
Just	
Pure	
Lovely	
Commendable	
Excellent	
Worthy of praise	

The way we think in the midst of suffering, in the midst of anxiety, can change our perspective completely. We must be willing to recognize the lies and fears we tell ourselves, and replace them with the gospel.

40. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5. What does this verse tell us to do with our thoughts?

41. How can you preach the gospel to yourself in the midst of anxiety? Write down the truth you know and the Scriptures you can recall when you're overcome with fear, anxiety or worry.

42a. Spend some time in prayer asking God to reveal what lies you are currently believing about yourself. What truth from Scripture can you use to replace it?

Lie

Truth

For more resources on how to recognize lies and preach the gospel to yourself, visit selftalkthegospel.com.

42b. Write out a prayer or a battle plan below for when you are faced with anxiety. Use this as a guide or resource the next time you struggle with anxiety.

Summarize

43. What was most encouraging to you from Philippians 4:1-9?

44. What was most challenging to you from this passage?

45. In what ways did God change your perspective on anxiety/worry, prayer or your thought life this week?

46. How have you started to recognize your negative self-talk?

47. In what ways are you currently preaching the gospel to yourself?

Notes

Week 9: Satisfying Joy Because Christ Is Enough
{Philippians 4:10-23}

Scripture Memory Verse: “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.” - Philippians 4:11b

Language, though innate, must also be learned. Most human beings are born with the capacity to speak, listen, write, read, comprehend and communicate through language, but these are skills that must also be taught, practiced and learned. The same is true of contentment. We all have the ability to be content, in little or in much, in difficulty or in comfort. We don't have to wait for perfect circumstances to be content. We can learn to be content in all things through the help of Christ.

1. Review: List two things you learned from last week's lesson or teaching below.

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2. Write out last week's memory verse below.

Philippians 4:10-12 – Learning to Be Content

3. Read Philippians 4:10-23. Write out five observations below.

4a. What circumstances is Paul facing, according to 4:10-18?

4b. How did the Philippian church help him during his trouble?

5a. Paul mentions something very significant in 4:11. He says he has _____ to be content.

5b. What does it mean to be *content*?

Content:

6. Why do you think he says he has *learned* to be content?

7. Contrast the different ways Paul has learned contentment, according to verses 4:11-12.

Contentment is not found when we have everything we want; it's learning to find joy in what we have. One author said it this way: "Contentment is not about adding to what you already have, but subtracting that which you desire." Paul was so satisfied and content in Christ, nothing else really mattered to him aside from basic necessities.

8. In what ways do you struggle with contentment? What is currently causing discontentment in your life?

9. Paul says he knew how to be content in abundance and need. Both the rich and poor struggle to be content. Why do you think that is?

10a. Read Proverbs 30:7-9 and record your observations below.

10b. What are these verses teaching us about contentment?

11. You have to learn to be content, meaning it does not come naturally. In what ways are you learning contentment in your life right now?

Philippians 4:13 – Living in the Strength of Christ

12. Write out Philippians 4:13 below.

13. How does your perspective on Philippians 4:13 change when you read it in the context of learning contentment?

14. What things in your life seem impossible right now to endure?

15. In what ways can you grow more dependent on the strength of Christ rather than your own strength to endure hardship?

16. Why is Paul so thankful in 4:16-18?

Philippians 4:14-19 – Giving Back

Most people don't realize the incredibly difficult task it is to pastor, teach, lead and shepherd others. That is why acts of gratitude and gifts of support encourage your leaders so much.

17. In what ways can you give a gift of appreciation this week to those who have pastored you, mentored you or discipled you? How can you give back to those who have sacrificed for you? Get creative! Make a phone call, send a letter, leave a gift on their porch, etc.

While giving can take on many forms, here it is obvious that financial support was what Paul needed to continue his ministry in advancing the gospel.

18a. Do you give/tithe financially to your local church? Do you give to ministries that advance the gospel? Why or why not?

18b. What keeps you from giving/tithing both to the church or ministries that advance the gospel?

18c. In what ways can you take steps to begin to give financially to your local church and/or gospel-centered ministries?

19. What promise does Paul remind his readers of in 4:19?

20. How does that bring you comfort knowing every need of yours will be met by our Heavenly Father?

Philippians 4:20-23 – Closing

21. How does Paul close this letter in 4:22-23?

All that he does is to bring honor and glory to our Lord!

22. When the letter of your life closes, how do you want it to end?

23. How are you living NOW with the glory of God in mind?

24. Go back and read the opening of this letter (1:1-2) and reread the end (4:20-23). What word is repeated?

25. What is Paul's aim in writing this letter, according to the introduction and conclusion?

26. Write out the definition for the word *grace* below.

Grace:

Summarize

27. How did you grow in grace after studying this letter?

28. How did you grow in your understanding of the gospel?

29. How did you learn to rejoice in all things during this study?

30. How did your love for Christ Jesus grow after studying Philippians?

Philippians: Review

Author:	Place:	Recipients:	Summarize:	Personal Application:
Major Themes:			Philippians 1:	
			Key Verses:	

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” - Philippians 4:4

Spiritual Gifts

A pastor once shared a story about how to discover your spiritual gifts. If a couple you know is having a difficult time in their marriage, perhaps a separation or near divorce, how would you respond?

If you desire to open God's Word with your friend, and say, "Let's look at what the Bible has to say about marriage according to Ephesians 5," and you begin to explain the passage with clarity, you probably have the gift of teaching.

If you tell your friend you'd love to meet for coffee every Saturday just to check in and hear how she's doing, perhaps pray with her and memorize Scripture, you probably have the gift of encouragement.

If you have heard of an incredible marriage conference and you offer to pay for both her and husband to attend, you probably have the gift of giving.

If you offer to watch their kids while they go to the conference, you probably have the gift of service.

If you come over and sit next to her and cry with her, offering little advice or counsel, you probably have the gift of mercy.

While not all of the gifts are listed above, it's helpful to think of ways you are moved to respond to help those in need. When children are starving to death, I think the prophets are calling out the injustices of world hunger, the exhorters are challenging us to action, the leaders are paving the way, the ones with the gift of mercy and service are on a plane flying to feed the hungry, the administrators are organizing how to accomplish a goal, and the shepherds are caring for those doing the work.

This is the church, gifted differently, but meant to be used for one another. Like a puzzle, there are different pieces shaped and made to fit together to complete the whole. Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30, Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Peter 4:9-11 all mention spiritual gifts. It's important to note not one of the lists are the same; therefore, we may not have a complete picture of "all" of the gifts. We do know every single person in Christ has been given at least one gift, and it is meant to be stewarded and used to build up those within the body of Christ, the church.

Gene Wilkes defines spiritual gifts as "an expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers which empowers them to serve the body of Christ, the church."

Below are some definitions of different spiritual gifts (not an exhaustive list) adapted from an article by Gene Wilkes at LifeWay. You can find that article here:

https://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_PDF_Discover_Your_Spiritual_Gifts.pdf

- Leadership—Leadership aids the body by leading and directing members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church. Leadership motivates people to work together in unity toward common goals (Rom. 12:8).

- Administration—Persons with the gift of administration lead the body by steering others to remain on task. Administration enables the body to organize according to God-given purposes and long-term goals (1 Cor. 12:28).
- Teaching—Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God’s Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).
- Knowledge—The gift of knowledge manifests itself in teaching and training in discipleship. It is the God-given ability to learn, know, and explain the precious truths of God’s Word. A word of knowledge is a Spirit-revealed truth (1 Cor. 12:28).
- Wisdom—Wisdom is the gift that discerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the body and applies His teachings and actions to the needs of the body (1 Cor. 12:28).
- Prophecy—The gift of prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God boldly. This builds up the body and leads to conviction of sin. Prophecy manifests itself in preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6).
- Discernment—Discernment aids the body by recognizing the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:10).
- Exhortation—Possessors of this gift encourage members to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. Members with this gift are good counselors and motivate others to service. Exhortation exhibits itself in preaching, teaching, and ministry (Rom. 12:8).
- Shepherding—The gift of shepherding is manifested in persons who look out for the spiritual welfare of others. Although pastors, like shepherds, do care for members of the church, this gift is not limited to a pastor or staff member (Eph. 4:11).
- Faith—Faith trusts God to work beyond the human capabilities of the people. Believers with this gift encourage others to trust in God in the face of apparently insurmountable odds (1 Cor. 12:9).
- Evangelism—God gifts his church with evangelists to lead others to Christ effectively and enthusiastically. This gift builds up the body by adding new members to its fellowship (Eph. 4:11).
- Apostleship—The church sends apostles from the body to plant churches or be missionaries. Apostles motivate the body to look beyond its walls in order to carry out the Great Commission (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).
- Service/Helps—Those with the gift of service/helps recognize practical needs in the body and joyfully give assistance to meeting those needs. Christians with this gift do not mind working behind the scenes (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7).
- Mercy—Cheerful acts of compassion characterize those with the gift of mercy. Persons with this gift aid the body by empathizing with hurting members. They keep the body healthy and unified by keeping others aware of the needs within the church (Rom. 12:8).
- Giving—Members with the gift of giving give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. Cheerfulness and liberality are characteristics of individuals with this gift (Rom. 12:8).
- Hospitality—Those with this gift have the ability to make visitors, guests, and strangers feel at ease. They often use their home to entertain guests. Persons with this gift integrate new members into the body (1 Pet. 4:9).

God has gifted you with an expression of His Holy Spirit to support His vision and mission for the church. It is a worldwide vision to reach all people with the gospel of Christ. As a servant-leader, God desires that you know how He has gifted you. This will lead you to where He would have you serve as part of His vision and mission for the church.

As you read through this list, here are some reflection questions to answer:

1. What are some of the most significant experiences in your life that have shaped you?
2. What are some things you are passionate about?
3. Describe your personality below.
4. When you think of the pain and suffering in this world, what are some of the issues that concern you the most?
5. What are some skills/strengths you have? Ask those who know you best what they see in you.
6. In what ways do find the most joy and pleasure in doing things for others?

7. What drains you?

8. What excites you or energizes you?

9. If money were no object, what would you do for a living? How would you spend your days?

10. Do you see a theme/pattern developing as you reflect on these questions in light of spiritual gifts?

I think one of the unique aspects of spiritual gifts is going beyond discovering passions and your strengths, but how you can use those for the kingdom of God. If you love to exercise and teach fitness classes, how can that same strength/skill be used to build up the church? If you love spending time with others and talking about life, how can that be used to build up the body of Christ? Go back through those questions and reflect on them with the lens of serving others within the body of Christ.

For more info on spiritual gifts, you can take a thorough assessment on the Lifeway website: lifeway.com/Article/Women-Leadership-Spiritual-gifts-growth-service.

For more information on your personality and how God has uniquely wired you (which will influence how you steward your gifts) visit the Your Unique Design website: youruniquedesign.com/default.aspx.

What Is the Gospel?

by R.C. Sproul

There is no greater message to be heard than that which we call the Gospel. But as important as that is, it is often given to massive distortions or over simplifications. People think they're preaching the Gospel to you when they tell you, 'you can have a purpose to your life', or that 'you can have meaning to your life', or that 'you can have a personal relationship with Jesus.' All of those things are true, and they're all important, but they don't get to the heart of the Gospel.

The Gospel is called the 'good news' because it addresses the most serious problem that you and I have as human beings, and that problem is simply this: God is holy and He is just, and I'm not. And at the end of my life, I'm going to stand before a just and holy God, and I'll be judged. And I'll be judged either on the basis of my own righteousness – or lack of it – or the righteousness of another. The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus lived a life of perfect righteousness, of perfect obedience to God, not for His own well being but for His people. He has done for me what I couldn't possibly do for myself. But not only has He lived that life of perfect obedience, He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice to satisfy the justice and the righteousness of God.

The great misconception in our day is this: that God isn't concerned to protect His own integrity. He's a kind of wishy-washy deity, who just waves a wand of forgiveness over everybody. No. For God to forgive you is a very costly matter. It cost the sacrifice of His own Son. So valuable was that sacrifice that God pronounced it valuable by raising Him from the dead – so that Christ died for us, He was raised for our justification. So the Gospel is something objective. It is the message of who Jesus is and what He did. And it also has a subjective dimension. How are the benefits of Jesus subjectively appropriated to us? How do I get it? The Bible makes it clear that we are justified not by our works, not by our efforts, not by our deeds, but by faith – and by faith alone. The only way you can receive the benefit of Christ's life and death is by putting your trust in Him – and in Him alone. You do that, you're declared just by God, you're adopted into His family, you're forgiven of all of your sins, and you have begun your pilgrimage for eternity.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”

Notes
