

# PERSEVERING TOGETHER...

*With Joy*





# **Persevering Together With Joy**

## **A Study in Philippians**

### **Study Guide**

### **METWomen 2021**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome! We are about to embark on a 13-week journey through the book of Philippians called Persevering Together...With Joy. Written from prison by the Apostle Paul, this letter was penned to thank, encourage, and inspire the believers in Philippi. Paul called them to persevere together, united in the gospel, trusting that Jesus is sufficient in all circumstances, even in suffering and hardship. This little book will challenge us to press on, finding our joy in Christ and living each day in light of His glorious return.

In the front of this guide, you will find the entire text of Philippians, in multiple versions. Throughout the semester, we will become very well acquainted with this book! We will uncover its many themes and learn to see the letter as a whole, instead of merely a collection of verses. The weekly homework will guide us in exploring each passage personally in advance of the teacher's message.

We hope that as you navigate this difficult season, the Lord will strengthen and bless you through this time in Philippians.



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## TEACHING SCHEDULE

Week 1	January 20	Jessica Dyck	Philippians 1-4
Week 2	January 27	Lois Shepherd	Philippians 1:3-11
Week 3	February 3	Sam Cheng	Philippians 1:12-18a
Week 4	February 10	Andrea Nicholls	Philippians 1:18b-30
Week 5	February 17	Ann Penner	Philippians 2:1-5
Week 6	February 24	Ann Penner	Philippians 2:5-11
Week 7	March 3	Ellen McAree	Philippians 2:12-18
Week 8	March 10	Sam Cheng	Philippians 2:19-30
MARCH BREAK	March 17	No Class	
Week 9	March 24	Jessica Dyck	Philippians 3:1-11
EASTER	March 31	Special Program	
Week 10	April 7	Lois Shepherd	Philippians 3:12-21
Week 11	April 14	Kate Leyenaar	Philippians 4:1-9
Week 12	April 21	Ellen McAree	Philippians 4:10-20
Week 13	April 28	Jessica Dyck	Philippians 1-4





# The Book of Philippians

*In order to enrich our study of Philippians, we have included the full text of the book in a few different Bible versions. It can be helpful to read a passage in more than one translation to gain a deeper understanding of what is being communicated.*

## Philippians 1

### *New American Standard Bible*

<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, <sup>5</sup> in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work among you will complete it by the day of Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may overflow still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you may discover the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ; <sup>11</sup> having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God.

<sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, <sup>13</sup> so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the praetorian guard and to everyone else, <sup>14</sup> and that most of the brothers and sisters, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak

### *New King James Version*

<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,  
To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi,  
with the bishops and deacons:

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and  
the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,  
<sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine making request  
for you all with joy, <sup>5</sup> for your fellowship in the  
gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup> being  
confident of this very thing, that He who has  
begun a good work in you will complete it until the  
day of Jesus Christ; <sup>7</sup> just as it is right for me to  
think this of you all, because I have you in my  
heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the  
defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are  
partakers with me of grace. <sup>8</sup> For God is my  
witness, how greatly I long for you all with the  
affection of Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound still  
more and more in knowledge and all discernment,  
<sup>10</sup> that you may approve the things that are  
excellent, that you may be sincere and without  
offense till the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> being filled with the  
fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ,  
to the glory and praise of God.

<sup>12</sup> But I want you to know, brethren, that the things  
which happened to me have actually turned out  
for the furtherance of the gospel, <sup>13</sup> so that it has  
become evident to the whole palace guard, and to  
all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; <sup>14</sup> and  
most of the brethren in the Lord, having become  
confident by my chains, are much more bold to

the word of God without fear. <sup>15</sup> Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from goodwill; <sup>16</sup> the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; <sup>17</sup> the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking that they are causing me distress in my imprisonment. <sup>18</sup> What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice.

But not only that, I also will rejoice, <sup>19</sup> for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <sup>20</sup> according to my eager 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.

<sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

<sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; <sup>24</sup> yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes. <sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup> so that your pride in Christ Jesus may be abundant because of me by my coming to you again.

<sup>27</sup> 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 about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; <sup>28</sup> and in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and this too, from God. <sup>29</sup> For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf, <sup>30</sup> experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

speak the word without fear.

<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; <sup>17</sup> but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. <sup>18</sup> What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

<sup>19</sup> For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <sup>20</sup> according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup> For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. <sup>24</sup> Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. <sup>25</sup> And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, <sup>26</sup> that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

<sup>27</sup> Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup> and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. <sup>29</sup> For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, <sup>30</sup> having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

## Philippians 2

### *New American Standard Bible*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility consider one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup> do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> For this reason also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>12</sup> 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 own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure.

<sup>14</sup> Do all things without complaining or arguments; <sup>15</sup> 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, <sup>16</sup> holding firmly the word of life, so that on the day of Christ I can take pride because I did not run in vain nor labor in vain. <sup>17</sup> 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

### *New King James Version*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, <sup>2</sup> fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

<sup>14</sup> Do all things without complaining and disputing, <sup>15</sup> that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

<sup>17</sup> Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup> For the same

all. <sup>18</sup> You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. <sup>21</sup> For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. <sup>22</sup> But you know of his proven character, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. <sup>23</sup> Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; <sup>24</sup> and I trust in the Lord that I myself will also be coming shortly. <sup>25</sup> 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, <sup>26</sup> because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. <sup>27</sup> For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold people like him in high regard, <sup>30</sup> because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to compensate for your absence in your service to me.

reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

<sup>19</sup> But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. <sup>20</sup> For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. <sup>21</sup> For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. <sup>22</sup> But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. <sup>23</sup> Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. <sup>24</sup> But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

<sup>25</sup> Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; <sup>26</sup> since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. <sup>27</sup> For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup> Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. <sup>29</sup> Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; <sup>30</sup> because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

### *Philippians 3*

#### *New International Version*

<sup>1</sup> Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

<sup>2</sup> Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:

#### *English Standard Version*

<sup>1</sup> Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

<sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day,

<sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

<sup>7</sup> But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. <sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. <sup>16</sup> Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

<sup>17</sup> Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. <sup>18</sup> For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who, by the power that

of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— <sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

<sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

<sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. <sup>16</sup> Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

<sup>17</sup> Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

### *Philippians 4*

#### *New International Version*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

<sup>2</sup> I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. <sup>11</sup> I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

#### *English Standard Version*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

<sup>2</sup> I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; <sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.



<sup>14</sup> Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

<sup>15</sup> Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; <sup>16</sup> for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. <sup>17</sup> Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

<sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>21</sup> Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. <sup>22</sup> All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

<sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

<sup>14</sup> Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.

<sup>15</sup> And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup> Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>21</sup> Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. <sup>22</sup> All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

<sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.





## Week 1 – Introduction to Philippians



You will find the entire text of Philippians in the front of this guide. Please read it through, start to finish, in one of the versions provided. Alternatively, you can listen to it, which takes about 15 minutes. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/audio-bible/esv/philippians/>

Based on what you find in the four chapters of Philippians, answer the following questions.

1. Who are the authors of this letter? Which one is the chief voice? How can you tell?
2. Who are the recipients of this correspondence? What do we know about them?
3. Each letter in Scripture was written with a specific purpose for its original hearers. What is Paul's motivation for penning this particular letter? Hint: the author's purpose can generally be found in the first ten verses and last ten verses of a Bible book.
4. Where does Philippians fall within the bigger story of the Bible? For example, is it Old or New Testament, where does it occur with relation to the life and death of Jesus Christ, etc. For more information about the birth of this church, see Acts 16.

5. Where was the primary author when he wrote this letter? How do you know?
6. Before this study, had you ever read the entire letter to the Philippians in one sitting?
7. What are some of the key themes, words or ideas that jumped out as you read through it slowly and completely?
8. Do you have a favourite verse in Philippians? If so, write it on the lines below.
- 
- 
9. How could examining the broader context of this letter deepen your understanding of this verse and how it fits into the book as a whole?

*Notes:*

## Week 2 – Thanksgiving and Prayer



Read Philippians 1:3-11

1. Paul is writing this letter from prison, facing possible execution, yet his first words are those of thanksgiving and prayer. Have you ever known someone who responded to adversity in this way? How did observing their steadfast faith impact your own?
2. Take a moment to underline any repeated words/phrases in the study guide for today's passage. Now write them down in the space below.
3. What do these words (from Question 2) reveal about Paul's focus within his thanksgiving and prayer?
4. How does Paul feel about these believers in Philippi? Why do you think he feels this way?
5. Despite not having seen these believers for years, when and how does Paul pray for them?

6. As the father of this church, a partner in the gospel, and one invested in their growth, what does Paul ask for when he prays for them?
7. Based on this passage, what observations can you make about Paul's prayer life?
8. In what ways is Paul's prayer life (frequency, fervency, focus, etc.) different or similar to your own?
9. Are thanksgiving and prayer for others things that come naturally to you? What about in the midst of hard times? How can you incorporate these disciplines into your life?

*Notes:*

## Week 3 – The Gospel Advances



Read Philippians 1:12-18a

In this week's passage, Paul mentions joy (or rejoicing) a second time within this first chapter. Philippians is often called "the epistle of joy" since this theme comes up repeatedly.

1. Write down the Webster's or Oxford dictionary definition for joy (this is probably how our culture would describe it).
2. Review the entire Philippians text in one version of this guide; circle each time you see the word "joy," "joyful," or "rejoice."  
  
How many times did the idea of joy come up?
3. For each one of your circled joy words, note in the margin why Paul is joyful/rejoicing.
4. How does this compare to what others around us (and we ourselves) often rejoice in?
5. John Piper defines Christian joy as "a good feeling of the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as he causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the word and in the world."  
According to Piper, where does Christian joy reside?

6. Who produces Christian joy and how do we experience it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Why is the right perspective on joy so essential for Christians, especially in the midst of hard times?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Are you experiencing Christian joy in your soul these days? According to Paul's prison letter, it is possible in all circumstances. That joy may be mingled with pain, disappointment, sadness, and many other emotions - and that is okay. But if joy has left the building, if it is totally absent from your life right now, ask the Holy Spirit for His help and enlist the support of other Christians to pray for its return.



*Notes:*

## Week 4 – Honouring Christ by Life or Death



Read Philippians 1:18b-30

1. Many commentators believe that Paul was facing execution when he wrote this letter. How does the fact that Paul's life was hanging in the balance impact your reading of this passage?

2. According to verses 19-20, what is Paul's ultimate goal?

3. Write verse 21 on the line below.

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What do you think this statement means?

4. In verses 19-26, Paul considers his own mortality. Which benefits does he associate with staying on earth versus going to heaven?

5. How would you characterize Paul's priorities?

6. Verse 27 shifts the focus away from Paul onto the believers in Philippi. In a sentence or two, summarize the elements of the “worthy life” that Paul is calling them to.
7. What do we know about their current situation (verses 27-30)? How does it compare to Paul’s?
8. The Philippians are to live worthy of the gospel of Christ and to suffer for the sake of Christ. How could these two ideas go together?
9. Verse 29 says 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.” Other versions translate “granted” as “bestowed.” In the original Greek, this word indicates being shown favour or kindness, something that is freely given.

How is the idea that trials are “given” countercultural in our society, perhaps even in some churches? Is the notion that suffering is part of God’s plan a foreign concept to you?
10. How could a person’s view of suffering and death shape areas of practical daily living?

*Notes:*

## Week 5 – Unity in the Body



Read Philippians 2:1-5

1. This section is an appeal to unity in the church of Philippi. Togetherness is another theme in this letter, both partnership in the gospel and harmony within the body. Look back over chapter one and note below any references (direct or indirect) to this concept.
2. What motivation do the believers have to pursue unity (verse 1)?
3. Note the repeated word in verse 1. Why do you think Paul emphasizes that?
4. Look up the word “unity” in the dictionary and write it below.
5. How does the dictionary’s definition compare to Paul’s definition in verse 2? Write down the four specifics of unity that Paul mentions.

6. Do you think this means that believers should never disagree about anything? Why or why not?
7. It is important to remember that each letter in the New Testament was written for a purpose and each aspect of teaching was designed for that particular audience. Based on this section of verses (2:1-5), what were some of the issues Paul needed to address in Philippi? How could these things impact church unity?
8. Do similar problems still exist in modern churches? What could these look like today?
9. Fill in Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV) on the lines below:
- <sup>3</sup> Do \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ ambition or conceit, but in \_\_\_\_\_ count others more significant than \_\_\_\_\_. <sup>4</sup> Let \_\_\_\_\_ of you look not \_\_\_\_\_ to his \_\_\_\_\_ interests, but \_\_\_\_\_ to the interests of others.
10. Paul points to personal humility as the key to restoring relationships (verse 3). How can you grow in humility while building unity within your church or Christian community?

*Notes:*

## Week 6 – Humility of the Lord



Read Philippians 2:5-11

1. Take a moment to underline any repeated words from the passage; write them in the space below.
2. Circle any connecting words that occur (examples: but, for, because, since, therefore, so) and note how they help transition from one idea to the next.
3. Are there any surprising or significant reversals in the passage? If so, note them below.
4. How does this passage emphasize both the humanity and the divinity of Christ?
5. How could you summarize these verses in one sentence?



6. What does this week's passage (verses 5-11) teach us about the mind/attitude of Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. According to verse 5, as Christians we have been given the mind of Christ. Based on what we have read so far in Philippians, what marks of the Christ-like mindset do you see in the Apostle Paul?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Have you seen some of those same characteristics in yourself or other believers that you know?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Philippians 2:10-11 proclaims 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."

Take a few moments to meditate on these words. What thoughts, words, images, or emotions come to your mind?

*Notes:*

## Week 7 – Salvation Worked Out



Read Philippians 2:12-18

1. Today's passage begins with the word "therefore." Why is this connecting word significant?
2. Paul urges the Philippians (a second time, see also 1:27-28) to live godly lives and to do it both in his presence and his absence. He calls them to be consistent in their obedience while he is away. Do you find it tempting to behave differently in different company? If so, when?
3. Paul calls the believers to work out their salvation but also assures them that God is the one who works in them (Philippians 1:6, 2:13). Are these opposing or complementary ideas? Explain your answer.
4. Verse 15 says that the Philippians are to "shine as lights in the world." Why do you think that Paul uses this imagery?

5. What sorts of things will distinguish these believers from the people around them?
6. How is Paul's joy tied to the perseverance and maturity of these Philippian believers (verses 16-18)?
7. Who are the people in your life whose spiritual wellbeing is close to your heart?

Take a moment to pray for their salvation and/or sanctification.

**\* Salvation** = The spiritual and eternal deliverance granted immediately by God to those who accept His conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus. (Vines, p.545)

In other words, salvation means that a person has made a personal commitment to Christ Jesus and become a Christian. As a result, in the future, he/she will be saved from God's judgement upon his/her sin at the end of the age. Believers are also saved from the bondage of sin and are no longer mastered by it but have become servants of Christ.

**\* Sanctification** = The (intentional) separation of the believer from evil things and ways. Sanctification is God's will for the believer and the purpose in calling him by the gospel. Sanctification is learned from God and He teaches it by His Word. Sanctification must be pursued by the believer and is an individual possession, built up, little by little, as a result of obedience to the Word of God and following the example of Christ. (Vines, p.545)

In other words, sanctification is a lifelong process of the believer growing in personal holiness. This is achieved through grace-driven effort on the part of the believer and the power of the Holy Spirit working in him/her to transform him/her to become ever more like Christ.

***Notes:***

## Week 8 – Godly Examples



Read Philippians 2:19-30

1. Take a few minutes and read the whole book over again. Do you see anything new after re-reading all four chapters, start to finish? Note any observations below.
2. Today's passage (2:19-30) gives insight into two of Paul's associates. How is Timothy described in verses 19-24?
3. According to verse 25, what five roles has Epaphroditus played? What does that tell you about him?
4. What particular hardship did Epaphroditus endure?
5. Which familial terms does Paul use for these men?

Timothy =

Epaphroditus =

Despite his obvious affection, Paul does not intend to keep them near; what is his plan and why?

6. How do Timothy and Epaphroditus demonstrate the type of character that Paul has been outlining for the Philippians in the first two chapters?
7. Who are the helpful Christian examples that God has brought into your life, past or present?
8. What have you learned from spending time with them?
9. In chapter 2 verse 29, the Philippians are directed to receive Epaphroditus in the Lord with all joy and to honour such men. How could present day believers do a better job receiving and honouring Christian workers, especially missionaries?

***Notes:***



## Week 9 – Righteousness Through Faith



Read Philippians 3:1-11

1. Who are the three groups that the believers in Philippi are to look out for?
2. How do they compare to the “we” of the next verse?
3. Why do you think Paul lists all of his achievements according to Jewish customs? Is he bragging?
4. Are there similar Christian “accomplishments” that we could be tempted to use as a measuring stick for righteousness in our day? If so, what might they be?
5. According to the passage, what does Paul count as loss and what does he count as gain?

6. What does the word righteousness mean? Write your own thoughts; then go back to the dictionary and compare.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What does this passage teach about our righteousness and where it comes from?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Paul says that it is no trouble to repeat these things to them, so evidently he has emphasized this point before. Why is this reminder about the true source of our righteousness so important for the Philippians and for us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. In what ways can we combat legalism (the idea that we are made right with God through our own actions and merit) when it creeps into various areas of our lives?

*Notes:*

## Chapter 10 – Pressing On Toward the Goal



Read Philippians 3:12-21

1. Have you ever worked really hard at something that was important to you? How did that feel?
2. What is Paul pressing on and straining towards?
3. What impression do those words give you about Paul's efforts?
4. Does his straining seem strange in light of last week's teaching? Why or why not?
5. Verse 12 reads, "not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ has made me his own." What do you think that "this" and "it" refer to?

6. What indications are there in this week's passage that Paul is looking beyond his present circumstances?
7. In verses 17-21, Paul contrasts those who walk as enemies of the cross to "those who walk according to the example you have in us." What are the key differences?
8. Write verses 20-21 on the lines below:
- 
- 
9. Do you often reflect on your heavenly citizenship? How could embracing that truth change your outlook on both your present and your future?

*Notes:*

## Week 11 – What Are You Dwelling On?



Read Philippians 4:1-9

1. What two terms of endearment does Paul use for the recipients of this letter in verse 1?

Skim over the whole book of Philippians and circle each time those two words are used.

2. At first glance, verses 2 and 3 seem out of place in this passage. How could they flow out of and into the verses around them?

3. This week's lesson is called, "What Are You Dwelling On?" and encourages us to examine our thoughts. Write verse 6 on the lines below:

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4. What is the one "do not" in this passage? In which areas do you find it difficult to obey this command?

5. What are we called to do instead and what will the results be (verse 7)?

6. How does it feel to remember that God knows every one of our thoughts?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. According to Paul (verses 8-9), what sorts of thoughts should fill a believers mind?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Are there things that need to be added to your life or eliminated from it so that you can grow in the area of holy thinking? Pray and ask God to help you overcome any negative thought patterns and replace them with what is wholesome and good.



*Notes:*

## Week 12 – God's Provision



 Read Philippians 4:10-20

1. What are some of the ways that this church supported Paul's ministry?
2. Is Paul asking for more help now? Why or why not?
3. List the types of situations in which Paul has found contentment?
4. What is the secret to Paul's contentment?
5. Is it tough for you to be content and joyful in all circumstances (especially when you are experiencing financial or material needs)? How could last week's message on holy thinking help with that?

6. Write verse 13 on the line below. What do you think it means?

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7. Note the way Paul describes the gifts from the Philippians in verse 18. How is giving an expression of worship for Christians?
8. Often one Christian has enough because another Christian is generous. Describe a time when you have seen this principle at work.
9. Verse 19 promises that those who give sacrificially will not be left wanting. How does God bountifully provide for his people?

*Notes:*

## Week 13 – Final Greetings



Read Philippians chapters 1-4

1. Please take a few minutes to re-read the whole letter once again. As you do so, look for the different themes that we have studied.
  - unity in the body, partnership in the gospel
  - thanksgiving and prayer
  - the future hope for believers
  - joy in the Lord at all times
  - persevering in the faith
  - the sufficiency of Christ
  - the sovereignty of God
  - humble and sacrificial leadership
2. State 3-4 truths about God/Christ that you have learned or been reminded of in this study.
3. Based on your study of Philippians, identify 3-4 things God is calling believers to do or pursue.
4. Put a star beside one truth and one aim that are most significant for you right now.

5. How can you be intentional about remembering and implementing what you have learned?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  6. After repeated readings of Philippians, which verse stands out to you most. Write it on the line below. Take time this week to commit it to memory.
- 

As we conclude our study, let's pray and ask God to help us persevere together in the gospel amid these challenging days. Let's ask him to help us experience joy in the Lord at all times. Finally, let's thank him for enabling us to live in His strength while we await the glorious return of Christ.

*Notes:*

## *Prayer Requests:*



## *Prayer Requests:*

## *Resources:*

### **ARTICLE**

John Piper, July 25, 2015

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-do-you-define-joy>

### **PODCAST**

Nancy Guthrie and John Piper, May 21, 2015

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/help-me-teach-the-bible/john-piper-on-philippians-part-1/>

### **VIDEO**

The Bible Project – Philippians overview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oE9qqW1-BkU>

### **BOOKS**

*Basics for Believers: The Core of the Christian Faith and Life, a Study in Philippians*, D.A. Carson, Baker Books, 1996

*The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Philippians*, ed. John Stott and J.A. Motyer, Inter-Varsity Press, 1984

*ESV Study Bible*, Crossway, 2008

*How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, 4<sup>th</sup> edition*, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, Zondervan Academic, 2014

*The New Bible Commentary 21<sup>th</sup> Century Edition*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1953

*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words*, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1984

*Women of the Word*, Jen Wilkin, Crossway, 2014



