

Philippians

Joy Along the Journey

**A Study Guide
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Note: All Scripture in this study guide are from the New American Standard Updated Edition (Copyright 1995, Zondervan).

Lesson 1: Christian Fellowship

Philippians 1:1-11

1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus,
 To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:
2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,
10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Background Information and Comments

Paul wrote the book of Philippians while in prison (**v. 7**), and it is a book about joy. The apostle will teach us how to have joy regardless of our circumstances. Joy, even in jail! Joy along the journey of life, wherever God's will may lead.

In **v. 1**, Paul uses the term "bond-servants." This is the Greek word "doulos" and it means slave, bond-servant, or bond-slave.

Doulos refers to someone who was:

- born into slavery
- the lowest position in society and the lowest class of slave
- bound to another's will and interests

This is a powerful term that Paul uses to describe himself and Timothy. It is one of his favorite terms used in his writings to describe himself. The apostle's authority certainly did not go to his head. He was so humble, eagerly giving up his own interests and will in order to be of use to his Master, Jesus Christ.

The word "participation" is the Greek word "koinonia," meaning fellowship. According to Kenneth Wuest, it is a "joint participation in a common interest or activity." The preposition "in" in the phrase "participation in the gospel" denotes motion. Their common interest and activity that was passionately shared was the gospel. They partnered together in the living

and spreading of the gospel. It was the point of commonality between them.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. Who are the three groups of people to whom the letter is addressed?

2. In the text above, do the following (using colored pens, pencils, or highlighters):
 - mark all references to God, the Lord Jesus, or the Holy Spirit (including pronouns)
 - circle all references to how Paul feels about the Philippians

3. What does Paul pray for the Philippians in **v. 9**?

4. What emotion does Paul feel when he prays for the Philippians according to **v. 4**?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

5. Should praying be emotional? Why or why not?

6. What about the Philippians made Paul joyful as he prayed for them?

7. How does **v. 6** tie into **v. 5** and **v. 7**?

8. What lessons does **v. 6** teach you about sanctification (the process of every Believer becoming more and more like Jesus)?

9. What does it mean to have “participation in the gospel” with someone?

10. What does it mean to “approve the things that are excellent?”

Taking It Out - “How does the text apply to my life?”

11. Do you often have joy when you pray? Why or why not?

12. How would being confident that God will continue your sanctification help you to find encouragement and joy along the journey?

13. How does having friends that have the same goals and desires as you help you to run the Christian race?

14. Think of someone who brings you joy because of their fellowship in the gospel. Pray to the Lord, thanking Him for that person's life and consider sending them an email or letter with the prayer that you prayed for them written out.

15. What differences would (or have) come into your life if you thought of yourself more often as a “doulos” of the Lord? (Be specific about differences in your attitudes and actions).

Lesson 2: The Greater Progress of the Gospel

Philippians 1:12-20

12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,
13 so that my imprisonment in *the cause of Christ* has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,
14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.
15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;
16 the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;
17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.
18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice.
19 For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,
20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Background Information and Comments

In v. 13, Paul tells that his imprisonment has become well known throughout the entire Praetorian Guard. This group was an elite set of soldiers set up by Tiberius. There were 10,000 at the start. They received double pay and special privileges. They eventually became so powerful that the emperors had to have their support.

Paul is continually chained to one of these elite soldiers and has won a great many of them to the Lord. Everything in his life is seen as to how it can further the progress of the Gospel. Being in prison. Being in chains. These things are furthering the Gospel according to Paul! May God give us such a passion!

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. What did the Believers gain courage to do because of Paul's imprisonment (v. 14)?
2. What are the reasons that Paul lists in v. 15-17 for preaching Christ?

3. Over what is Paul rejoicing in this text?
4. What had become well known because of Paul's imprisonment?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

5. What do you think is the significance of the phrase “turned out for” in **v. 12**?
6. Why do you think that Paul's imprisonment encouraged the boldness of the Believers who learned about it?
7. Why is Paul able to rejoice over the preaching of the Gospel even though it is done with wrong motives?
8. What do you think that Paul means by his deliverance in **v. 19**? Why?
9. What is Paul's earnest expectation and hope in **v. 20**? How do you know?

10. What does Paul mean by the phrase “all boldness” in v. 20?

Taking It Out - “How does the text apply to my life?”

11. How would it affect your life to see everything in light of the progress or lack of progress of the Gospel?

12. Are you encouraged to see other Believers standing strong for the Lord in the midst of difficulty? Why?

13. How can you be that kind of Believer (one that others see standing in difficulty)?

14. Paul expected to glorify God with His life. Do you see this kind of expectation in your own life? If not, how can you foster this kind of spirit? If so, how has it impacted your life?

15. List 3 ways that you have seen God furthering the Gospel through the circumstances of your life.

Lesson 3: All About Jesus

Philippians 1:21-30

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

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

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

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

25 And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

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

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

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

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

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

Background Information and Comments

In this passage, Paul tells us the sum-total of his life. We get an insight into his passion, his main reason for living. It is for Jesus Christ! Paul tells us that if he lives, he does so for the purpose of showing the glory of Jesus. If he dies, he will show the glory of Jesus. In either case, and in any circumstance, Jesus is glorified. What a perspective with which to live!

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. What will it mean if Paul stays here on earth for the Philippians (v. 25)?
2. What will it mean for Paul (v. 22)?
3. According to v. 29, what two things are we given as Believers?
4. List the things that Paul wants to see in the Philippians in v. 27.

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

5. Explain why dying is gain for Paul.

6. Why is whether to live or die a hard choice for Paul?

7. What is the outcome of the suffering that the Philippians experience in **v. 29** in **v. 30**?

8. What is the meaning of living worthy of the Gospel?

9. What is a sign of destruction for the opponents of the Philippians? Why?

Taking It Out - “How does the text apply to my life?”

10. How would thinking of suffering as a gift liberate you?

11. List 3 areas in which you could do a better job of living worthy of the Gospel.

12. Do you share Paul's desire to die and be with Christ? If so, what changes does it produce in your life? If not, how can you cultivate that attitude?

13. Write a list of as many things as you can think of that will be better for you when you die.

14. Why is it good to think of these kinds of things (like the list in **v. 13**)?

Lesson 4: Spiritual Unity

Philippians 2:1-4

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

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

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

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

Background Information and Comments

The Greek word translated “if” in verse one implies a positive, certain condition. A better translation of it in this context would be “since,” or “in view of the fact.” The text states four things that are definitely true for Believers. So, based on these certain things, Paul encourages Christian unity. It is a unity based on certain truths. Unity based on other things should not be sought after, but unity based on true doctrines is sorely needed today.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. What four truths are listed in v. 1 (each one preceded by the word “if”)?

2. In the passage above, in v. 2, underline the following words: being, maintaining, united, and intent.

3. What emotion would be evoked in Paul by the Philippians experiencing unity (v. 2)?

4. Define the following words from the text:
 - a. selfishness -

 - b. humility -

 - c. encouragement -

 - d. consolation -

 - e. fellowship -

 - f. affection -

g. compassion -

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

5. Why are the words that you underlined in #2 above important? What do they tell you about Paul's concern for this issue?

6. Do the underlined words seem to imply an easy, one-time task, or hard, on-going work? Why?

7. Why would unity in the Philippians make Paul's joy complete?

8. Since we certainly have encouragement in Christ, consolation in His love, fellowship with His Spirit, and affection and compassion from Christ, how do these truths help produce the foundation for Christian unity?

Taking It Out - “How does the text apply to my life?”

9. What is the difference between doing something for selfish reasons and doing something because you think of others as more important than yourself?

10. How would this text apply to you as you are driving your car? Standing in line? Cleaning your home?

11. Why is it so hard to put others before ourselves?

12. List three things you can do to help maintain the unity of the Spirit in your relationships with other Christians at home and at church.

Lesson 5: Every Knee Will Bow

Philippians 2:5-11

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped ,
 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Background Information and Comments

As stated in **v. 5**, this passage is about an attitude that Paul desires to see cultivated in the Philippians, namely humility. He provides for us the ultimate example of humility, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of note in this passage is the phrase, “even death on a cross.” From the Greek, this is better translated, “even a cross-kind of death.” It speaks of the type of death that dying on a cross represented. It was a humiliating way to die. “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree,” as the Scripture says. Naked before everyone’s gaze. It was a shameful way to die.

Also of importance are the different Greek words translated “form,” “likeness,” and “appearance” in this passage in English. The first occurrence of “form” is in **v. 6**. The word used is “morphe” and it does not speak of shape. It speaks of character. Jesus is in the morphe of God, the character of God. It is a clear reference to the deity of Jesus. Jesus was in the form, or morphe, of God. He was God. Yet, he was made in the likeness of men (**v. 7**). The Greek means that He actually became human. He was made exactly like one of us, while retaining the “form” of God. Incredible incarnation! Finally, he was found in appearance as a man. This Greek word is the word from which we get our word schematics. It means that He took the schema of mankind. This word means the shape or appearance of man. He looked human because He was made in our likeness. He looked human because He became human.

Lastly, “a thing to be grasped” in Greek means that it was not something that He was trying to hold onto. Instead of holding onto His heavenly privileges, He emptied Himself of them. This means that He willingly limited His divine abilities and privileges while incarnate.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. What two things does the passage say that Jesus had the form of?

2. What did Jesus not regard as worth holding tightly?
3. What kind of slave did Jesus become?
4. What did Jesus do that showed His humility in v. 8?
5. Why did God exalt Jesus?
6. What two actions will every created being perform toward Jesus Christ?
7. What is the outcome for God the Father of all people confessing and bowing to Jesus?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

8. What is the significance of Jesus having the form of God and the form of a bond-slave (take special note of the kind of slave, a bond-slave)?
9. How does this challenge the way that religion (and perhaps you) tends to look at God?
10. Why did Jesus not regard holding His privileges and abilities as something to be held onto tightly?

11. What does it mean that Jesus “emptied” Himself?

12. Was becoming human part of His humiliation according to this text? Why or why not?

13. Jesus was obedient to the point of death. Then, the passage qualifies the kind of death. Why do you think it was written this way?

14. What beings do you think are meant by each phrase: in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth?

15. Why are we told that all created beings will confess and bow to Jesus?

Taking It Out - “How does the text apply to my life?”

16. What emotions does this text bring about in your heart? Why?

17. What would it mean in your life if you exhibited the kind of humility of Jesus when He faced a “cross-kind of death?”

18. What are the areas of your life in which you are not allowing the Holy Spirit to bring about this kind of humility that leads to servant-hood and obedience? What will you do this week to change these sinful areas?

Lesson 6: My Role in Sanctification
Philippians 2:12-13

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;
13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

Background Information and Comments

What role do we play in our justification? Our sanctification? Our glorification? These are pivotal truths that have been debated in the church for ages. What is God's role in my justification? My sanctification? My glorification? We are going to explore these truths. I think that this simple chart is a good starting place.

Justification		Sanctification		Glorification	
Past Tense: We were saved		Present Tense: We are being saved		Future Tense: We will be saved	
<i>God's Role</i>	<i>My Role</i>	<i>God's Role</i>	<i>My Role</i>	<i>God's Role</i>	<i>My Role</i>
Active	Passive	Active	Active	Active	Passive

In justification, God regenerates a sinner because He wishes to do so. Once He has given the sinner a new heart and new nature, the sinner immediately then repents of sin and places their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting Him for salvation. At this point, God justifies them based on the faith that they have in Christ. It is important to note that this faith is a gift from God (**Eph. 2:8-9**). We are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ and God now declares us as completely holy and without blemish. He views us just as He views Jesus. I am passive, only responding to God's regeneration of my heart. Yet, I did repent and place my faith in Jesus. I have called this only passive because we are only responders.

In sanctification, God is in the process of making us more like Jesus Christ in character and behavior. He has already declared us righteous and has transferred the righteousness of Jesus to our account, but, we now must learn to make our life match our calling. In this area, God is actively working for our sanctification (Phil. 1:6; 2:13), and we are to work out our own salvation, too (Phil. 2:12). In this role, we are actually responding to grace, but, our cooperation with and submission to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God is key. Therefore, I have listed our part as active.

In glorification, everyone agrees that God will glorify us and that we will simply be acted upon by Him. We do not possess the ability to glorify ourselves. He will restore our bodies into resurrection bodies, like Jesus has now.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. What, according to our text, had the Philippians always done?
2. What title does Paul use for the recipients of this letter in **v. 12**?
3. What two responses are involved with working out your salvation according to the end of **v. 12**?
4. What two things does Paul tell the Philippians that God is doing in them?
5. What does he tell them to do?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

6. Why does Paul call them beloved?
7. What does it mean that the Philippians had always obeyed?
8. What part does obedience play in sanctification? Is it the only part? Explain your answer.
9. What does it mean to “work out” your own salvation?

10. Why are fear and trembling involved in working out your salvation? Please list several verses if you can to support your answer.

11. Since fear and trembling are involved, what does it tell you about the seriousness of working out your salvation?

12. Why is **v. 13** tied with **v. 12**?

13. We often err on either being too passive in our sanctification or too aggressive. What is wrong with each tendency?

14. What is God willing and working for according to the end of **v. 13**? What does this mean?

Taking It Out - "How does the text apply to my life?"

15. List 3 ways this week that you have seen God willing in you and working in you (note: not around you, but in you).

16. In the extremes of being too passive or too aggressive in your sanctification, which is your usual tendency? How can you correct this behavior?
17. Noting that the Philippians had always obeyed, what kind of a standard should you be applying to your own sanctification? Are you being too hard on yourself or too soft? Why?
18. Showing us Jesus as our example in **v. 5-11**, Paul then encourages obedience. How does Jesus' example inspire you to obey more fully?

Lesson 7: Stop Complaining

Philippians 2:14-16

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

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

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

Background Information and Comments

Here is the way that Kenneth Wuest, a noted New Testament scholar and commentator, put the passage: “All things be constantly doing without discontented and secret mutterings and grumbings, and without discussions which carry an undertone of suspicion or doubt, to the end that you may become those who are deserving of no censure, free from fault or defect, and guileless in their simplicity, God's children without blemish, in the midst of a perverse and distorted generation among whom you appear as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life, to the end that I may have a ground for glorying reserved for the day of Christ, this glorying being because of the fact that I did not run in vain nor did I labor to the point of exhaustion in vain.” Take special note of the word used for grumbling. It means a murmur or undertone of dissatisfaction. It is not open and loud complaint, but secret discontentment said under the breath. The word for disputing has the idea of discussion that leads to doubt. It has to do with suspicion. The phrase, “prove yourselves to be” in **v. 15** is better translated “so you you may become.” The word lights in the passage means reflectors. They are not sources of light, but they reflect the light of another source.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. What things are to be done without complaining according to **v. 14**?

2. What three things will we prove if we do things without complaining in **v. 15**?

3. Please identify and define the words used to describe the generation in Paul's day (his generation) from **v. 15**.
 - 1.

 - 2.

4. How do we appear to the world according to **v. 15**?

5. What are we to do with the Word of Life?

6. According to v. 16, when will Paul take pride in the Philippians?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

7. Why are all things supposed to be done without complaining?

8. In light of the previous verses in the chapter, what should we do instead of complain?

9. Since by stopping their complaining, they might become innocent and blameless, what does that tell you about the effect of their complaining spirit?

10. How does not complaining help us to show the world that we are children of God?

11. Explain why you think the Bible is called the Word of Life in this passage? Use verses in your answer if possible.

12. What do you think is the significance of Paul rejoicing over the Philippians on the day of Christ (if they do what he is asking here)? What would happen to Paul on the day of Christ if they do not listen to him?

13. What does this suggest about whether others will see us being judged? What does this

say about churches (in other words, will they be judged together)?

Taking It Out - "How does the text apply to my life?"

14. What steps can you take to foster a spirit of gratitude instead of complaining?

15. Taking note of the word lights in the passage, in light of the note in the background, what is the source of light in a Christian's life? How can you be a better reflector of this Light Source?

16. This passage speaks clearly about the world seeing our attitudes and actions and it influencing them. In light of this reality, write out a prayer to God below.

Lesson 8: For Your Joy

Philippians 2:17-18

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

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

Background Information and Comments

The Greek text for “poured out” speaks of Paul’s blood being spilled the same way a sacrifice was conducted and poured out. Words in the passage which carry the notation of priestly sacrifice are “poured out”, “drink offering”, “sacrifice”, and “service.” The fact that Paul’s death would be a sacrifice that would be poured into the lives of the Philippians. This caused the Apostle joy and he wanted the Philippians to share in that joy and respond to it with joy and to share that joy with Paul. This is a picture of the joy sharing of each member of the Trinity as they delight in each other and fuel each other’s delight. It is also the model that Jesus gave to His disciples in **John 17:13-26**. What a wonderful picture of what life will be like in Heaven.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. What is the context of the verses before **v. 17** that tie into the words “even if”?

2. What was a “drink offering”?

3. What does Paul’s joy cause him to do?

4. How does Paul want the Philippians to respond to his joy?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

5. In various texts, Paul encourages other believers to follow him as he follows Christ and to imitate his life. Sometimes he tells them to be like him in what they believe and teach. In other words, *in doctrine*. Other times, he tells them to live after the pattern that they see him live. In other words, *in lifestyle or behavior*. In this passage, he tells them to use his own life as the pattern for their *feelings or emotions*. In this case, joy. Was this arrogant of Paul? Why or why not? Why do we not see many ministers telling their congregations to pattern themselves after their lives? Should we?

Taking It Out - "How does the text apply to my life?"

10. List the top 5 things that bring you the most joy in this life.

11. Paul's pleasure came from serving others. Do you derive the most pleasure from right things or wrong things? If they are wrong, how can you make them right?

12. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not passionate at all, and 10 being extremely passionate for God), rate your passion for and joy in God. Note the reason for your answer as well.

13. Why is it important to have a high level of passion for and joy in God?

14. "Not being joyful in God is a sin." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

15. List the top 5 things that you allow most often to steal your joy.

16. What is your plan of attack to stop this from happening in the future?

Lesson 9: Follow Timothy's Example

Philippians 2:19-24

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

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

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

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

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

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

Background Information and Comments

For the rest of chapter two, Paul is going to commend two men for their extraordinary service to Christ, to Paul, and to the Philippians. They are Timothy and Epaphroditus. In **v. 19**, the word translated “encouraged” means “cheerful or of good spirits.” The word “genuinely” in **v. 20** means of legitimate birth. The word “kindred spirit” comes from two Greek words meaning “equal soul.” Paul had no one else who had an equal soul for the cause of Christ. “Proven worth” is the same term used of metals that had been smelted and refined. The metal had been tested and found worthy.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. How quickly did Paul hope to send Timothy to the Philippians?
2. How many other people did Paul know that had the same spirit as he had for Christ?
3. List the qualities of Timothy that Paul lists in the text.

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

4. Why did Paul want to send Timothy to the Philippians so quickly?
5. What was the hold up on sending Timothy to them?
6. What does this hold up tell you?

Lesson 10: Follow Epaphroditus' Example

Philippians 2:19-24

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

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

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

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

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

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

Background Information and Comments

After commending Timothy, now Paul begins to praise and commend Epaphroditus. He had faithfully ministered in Philippi and had a special relationship with the recipients of this letter. He was chosen by the church to take the love gift they were giving to Paul and to serve Paul's needs. It is important to note that his name means "belonging to Aphrodite," so he was probably raised in a Greek setting like Timothy. He was not an elder, preacher, deacon, or apostle as far as we know. He is just an ordinary lay-person who had an extraordinary commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ!

Tearing It Apart – "What does the text say?"

1. List the 5 things Paul calls Epaphroditus in v. 25.

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.

2. Look up the phrases "fellow worker" and "fellow soldier" in the Greek language (use a concordance, lexicon, commentary, or study Bible) and define them below. What is the idea behind the word "fellow?"

3. Why was Epaphroditus distressed?

4. According to the passage, what would have given Paul sorrow upon sorrow?
5. Why did Epaphroditus risk his life?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

6. From the descriptions given of Epaphroditus, what strikes you most about him?
7. Describe the friendship of Paul and Epaphroditus based on this text.
8. Why might it be significant that Epaphroditus was a lay-person?
9. What does Paul mean by “what was deficient in your service toward me?”
10. What does it mean that we are to hold men like Epaphroditus in high regard? Isn't this giving honor to men?

Taking It Out - “How does the text apply to my life?”

11. List at least one area of your life that you would like to emulate Epaphroditus.
12. Do you show enough honor to those who are examples to you in the Lord? If so, how do you show the honor? If not, how can you show more honor?

Lesson 11: Telling True Christians from Counterfeit Christians

Philippians 3:1-3

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

3 for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Background Information and Comments

Paul is warning the Philippians of trouble and he mentions that he is happy to repeat himself because it is no trouble for him and it keeps them safe. Along with true Believers, there will always be those who appear to be saved, but actually are not. There are also those who will try to deceive the flock in order to taken some advantage of God's people or to lead them astray.

Paul says that true believers:

1. Are Joyful
2. Are Discerning
3. Worship in the Spirit
4. Glory in Christ Jesus
5. Put no confidence in the flesh

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. What is the first command that Paul gives in this passage?

2. What is a safeguard for the Philippians?

3. What are the three things that are given as characteristics of the true circumcision in v. 3?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

4. Why does Paul need to warn the Philippians of false believers?

9. What does it mean to worship in the Spirit?

10. What would you say to a person who tells you that they believe all of the Gospel yet seem not to value Jesus Christ?

11. What does it mean to glory in Christ Jesus?

12. How would you define putting confidence in the flesh?

13. Why is this a defining characteristic of Christians (that they put no confidence in the flesh)?

Taking It Out - "How does the text apply to my life?"

14. Can you think of someone in the church today in America that qualifies as of the false circumcision, that is that they believe they are saved but probably they are not? How should you respond to people like this?

15. List three specific ways that you can glory in Christ Jesus this week.

16. What encouragement did this lesson bring you about worship? What, if anything, will change in your worship?

Lesson 12: I Press On

Philippians 3:4-16

4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

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

9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

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

11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead,

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

15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

16 however, let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained.

Background Information and Comments

This text is laced with rejection of the flesh, and a single-hearted, passionate pursuit to know Jesus Christ. In this passage, more than any other text, the Apostle Paul opens up his heart to us and reveals what he is truly about. His words are a challenge to anyone reading them. I pray that we will all be gripped by these powerful words and captivated by the same goal, knowing Jesus!

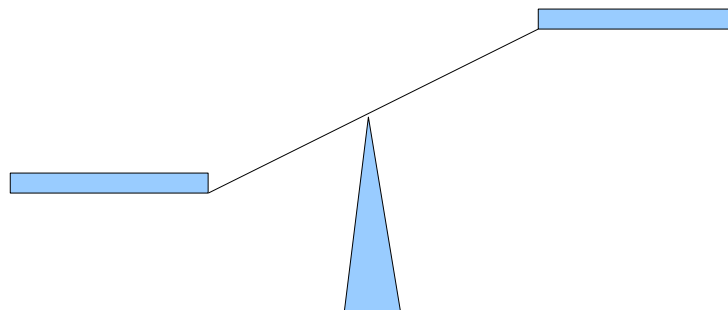
Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. List the things that Paul says might have given him a mind to put confidence in the flesh.

2. Paul compared anything and everything that he lost for Christ as what?
3. According to v. 9, what is the opposite of a righteousness that comes by the law?
4. In what two ways does Paul say he wants to know Jesus?
5. What does Paul want to be conformed to?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

6. What is the goal that Paul is pressing toward in the passage?
7. Why does Paul not put confidence in the flesh even though he had the seven reasons he listed?
8. Why does Paul compare the things that he had lost for Christ like giving up rubbish?
9. What does it mean that Paul suffered the loss of all things?
10. Below, on the balance, put what things might go on each side according to the passage.



11. What has Paul not yet attained?

12. What is the one thing that Paul does? What does this mean that he only does one thing?

13. What is the “upward call of God in Christ Jesus?”

14. How does God reveal sinful motives to us?

15. What does it mean to keep living by the standard to which we have obtained?

Taking It Out - “How does the text apply to my life?”

16. Do you feel as if you have a single focus in life like Paul? If not, what can help you attain this focus. If so, what things help you maintain the focus.

17. Of the godly woman (and the same would certainly be true of a godly man) in **Proverbs 31**, it says she “smiles at the future.” Comment on that phrase in light of “forgetting what lies behind, and reaching forward to what lies ahead.” Then, evaluate your own life in light of this challenge. What can you do to forget what lies behind and reach forward for the glory of God?

Lesson 13: Citizens of Heaven

Philippians 3:17-21

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ,

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Background Information and Comments

John MacArthur had some wonderful words about this passage. He said:

“It is consistent for believers to have a heavenly focus, because **our citizenship is in heaven**. *Politeuma* (**citizenship**) appears only here in the New Testament, though Paul used the related verb in **1:27**. It refers to the place where one has official status, the commonwealth where one’s name is recorded on the register of citizens. Though believers live in this world, they are citizens of heaven. They are members of Christ’s kingdom, which is not of this world (**John 18:36**). Their names are recorded in heaven (**Luke 10:20; cf. Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 13:8; 21:27**); their Savior is there (**Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16**); their fellow saints are there (**Heb. 12:23**); their inheritance is there (**1 Peter 1:4**); their reward is there (**Matt. 5:12**); and their treasure is there (**Matt. 6:20**).

Though they do not yet live in heaven, believers live in the heavenly realm (**Eph. 2:6**); they experience to some degree the heavenly life here on earth. They have the life of God within them, are under the rule of heaven’s King, and live for heaven’s cause.”

We are bound for Heaven! Paul tells us about an eternal focus. Heaven awaits all who will pursue one thing as Paul mentioned in the verses from last week’s lesson. He now gives advice about how to practically live the life he aspired to live.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. List at least one other place in the New Testament that Paul tells us to follow his example.
2. Look up the word “observe” from **v.17** in a Greek concordance or lexicon. What does it mean?

3. List the characteristics that Paul lists of those who do not follow the pattern that Paul set.

4. What do we eagerly wait for?

5. What will Jesus do when we meet Him?

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

6. What does it mean that we are citizens of Heaven (think of what citizenship implies)?

7. Why does Paul mention Heaven in this passage?

8. List at least two people that we know from the book of Philippians that have followed the pattern that Paul set?

9. What does Paul mean by the pattern that was displayed in his life? Pattern of what?

10. Why does it make Paul weep that some men are enemies of Christ?

11. Why does Paul mention that in Heaven we will be transformed into the likeness of Jesus?
How does this fit with the rest of the chapter?

12. Compare and contrast the people who live according to the pattern that Paul set and those who do not.

Taking It Out - "How does the text apply to my life?"

13. What steps can you take to "eagerly wait" for the Savior?

14. Having observed those who did not follow his example, Paul wept for them. How does this passage shape the way that you think and feel about those who do not live a godly life?

Lesson 14: Spiritual Disciplines

Philippians 4:1-9

1 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of* the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near .

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension , will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely , whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Background Information and Comments

Discipline is a hard word. We prefer formulas and shortcuts. We want to skip the periods of character building and get to the “good stuff” of living the victorious Christian life. Yet, the way to victory is by the discipline of the cross. When it comes to doing things for the Lord, the old adage is true, “no pain, no gain.”

Paul is closing his letter and, in typical fashion, he is giving a list of practical things to practice for spiritual health.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

1. What people does Paul encourage the church to help to live in harmony?

2. Define harmony.

3. According to **v. 3**, are the feuding ladies Believers?

4. List all the commands given in **v. 4-9**.

5. List the things that we are told to dwell upon in v. 8 and define each one.

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

6. Why is it important that the ladies that are struggling to get along are Christians?

7. Why should Christians live in harmony?

8. How can the church help people to live in harmony?

9. List all the references in this book to joy or rejoicing. Why is it repeated so often?

10. What is a “gentle spirit?” What is the opposite of a gentle spirit?

11. Why does Paul tell us that the Lord is near when he commands us to display gentle spirits to all men?

12. How are we supposed to accomplish the command to “be anxious for nothing?”

13. How is the “always” from **v. 4** tied to **v. 6**?

14. What is the result of not being anxious but praying about everything instead?

Taking It Out - “How does the text apply to my life?”

15. Meditate for a period of time on each of the things listed in v. 8 for us to dwell on. Record any insights, applications, or questions that you have from that meditation below.

16. What, according to **v. 6-7** and **v. 9** is the key to having God's peace on our lives?

Lesson 15: Final Encouragement

Philippians 4:10-23

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

11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

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

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.

22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Background Information and Comments

In Paul's typical fashion, he ends his letter with practical Christian living, an encouragement to greet the saints, and a plea for God's grace to be with the Philippians. In this closing section, he teaches them about money. He teaches them about contentment. He points them to eternal rewards. Our study of the book of Philippians has been rich. I hope that you have enjoyed it as much as I have.

Tearing It Apart – “What does the text say?”

What caused Paul to rejoice in **v. 10**?

2. List the circumstances Paul lists in **v. 12**.

Thinking It Through – “What does the text mean?”

3. What does Paul mean in **v. 10** that in the past the Philippians lacked the opportunity?

4. How do you think Paul learned to be content?

5. Explain **v. 13** in given it's context in this chapter.

6. Why did the Philippians give Paul money so often?

7. Why did Paul like getting financial gifts from the Philippians?

8. What account is Paul talking about in **v. 17**?

9. How does Paul describe God's view of these gifts in **v. 18**?

10. Explain the conditions behind the promise given to Christians in **v. 19**.

11. List three truths that strike you from **v. 20-23**.

Taking It Out - "How does the text apply to my life?"

12. Are you a generous Christian? Why or why not?

13. Are you content in life? If so, why? If not, list three areas of discontentment and then list the attribute or promise of God that you are ignoring that is causing that discontentment. Make this a matter of prayer.

14. What have you learned from our study of Philippians?

15. What questions do you have from this study of Philippians?