

A STUDY ON  
**philippians**

THE DNA OF A  
CHRIST-LIKE PERSONALITY

# PHILIPPIANS STUDY GUIDE DIRECTIONS

## A Ten Week Study

---

### ***How to use this study***

This study guide offers ten weeks of study on the book of Philippians—covering a small portion of Philippians a week. Each week there are five days of study materials. Each day can be used when your weekly schedule permits: for example you can study Sunday-Thursday and take Friday and Saturday off, or do one study each day of the work week, Monday-Friday and take the weekend off.

St. Andrew's is "Following Jesus Christ to Lead Lives that Reveal God's Goodness". The values of our church are REAL: **R**elational Ministry, **E**xtrême Hospitality, **A**ll Generations Community, and **L**iving biblically. Being REAL people characterizes everything we do. We strive to live biblically because real followers of Jesus are students of His Word and servants of His Way. This study is designed to prepare students of God's Word and to that end, each week of this study includes:

**Day One:** Contemplate God's Word. Read the Word of God allowing it to seep into your heart, mind and life through being still, reflecting, and responding.

**Day Two:** Study God's Word. Engage in the first section of the chapter, reading quotes, answering questions, and in prayer.

**Day Three:** Study God's Word. Engage in the second section of the chapter, reading quotes, answering questions, and in prayer.

**Day Four:** Going Deeper into God's Word. Dig into the message with quotes, research, background studies, and prayer.

**Day Five:** Going Deeper. Let the Word of God transform you from the inside out. This final study of the week is designed to help you live out the message God has for you.

Prepare to receive all that God has to offer each of us, as we are becoming disciples following him. Please feel free to ask questions and to offer feedback as we try out this format for Life Studies, [kellyd@sapres.org](mailto:kellyd@sapres.org), 949.574.2274.

# PHILIPPIANS WORKBOOK

## Table of Contents

---

PHILIPPIANS BACKGROUND	Page 3
WEEK 1: PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2 & ACTS 16:11-16// FOR ALL SAINTS	Pages 4-10
WEEK 2: PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11 // CONFIDENT PRAYER	Pages 11-17
WEEK 3: PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26 // PAUL'S CHAINS	Pages 18-22
WEEK 4: PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30 // LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL	Pages 23-28
WEEK 5: PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 // CHRIST'S HUMILITY	Pages 29-33
WEEK 6: PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18 // SHINING AS STARS	Pages 34-38
WEEK 7: PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30 //PAUL'S HUMANITY	Pages 39-43
WEEK 8: PHILIPPIANS 3:1-14// COUNTING GAINS AND LOSSES	Pages 44-48
WEEK 9: PHILIPPIANS 3:15-4:4// CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN	Pages 49-53
WEEK 10: PHILIPPIANS 4:4-23 //FINAL THANKSGIVING	Pages 54-58
RESOURCES USED	Pages 59-60

# PHILIPPIANS BACKGROUND

## An Overview

---

Paul's letter to the Philippians was written from prison, but you'd never know it. This is one of the most optimistic books of the Bible, with a repeated emphasis on joy. Paul was speaking from experience when he told his readers, "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6)

Paul was "in chains for Christ" (Philippians 1:13), but his work had been helped by his imprisonment, not hindered. The imperial guard was hearing his message, and other people were stepping up to speak where Paul couldn't. Paul realized that some preachers were motivated by selfish ambition, but he wasn't bothered as long as what they said was true and other people got to hear the Gospel.

At this point in his life, Paul said that he would have been equally happy with life or death. Either way it would be good: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body." (Philippians 1:21-24)

Paul told the Philippians that they, too, could expect suffering for Christ's sake (Philippians 1:29-30), and he challenged them to remain humble. Jesus was their example. Jesus had left Heaven (where He was God) so that He could be a servant to human beings. The result had been His humiliating crucifixion, but "God called Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

Paul warned the Philippians to watch out for people who didn't have their best interests in mind—especially those who promoted the necessity of circumcision. While acknowledging how much he had in common with these people, Paul felt that he had moved on. "Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ." (Philippians 3:7)

Philippi was a Roman colony and citizenship was a big deal to the people. So Paul used citizenship as a metaphor for those who believed in Jesus: "Our citizenship is in Heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians 3:20) The knowledge of our citizenship in heaven is what brings about true, lasting joy.

One of the primary issues that prompted Paul to write was to address two women in the Philippian church who had apparently been feuding. Paul pleaded with them to work out their problems. To the whole church he exhorted: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4)

The Philippians had collected a monetary gift for Paul, for which he thanked them. However he said he had learned to be content in all circumstances. Indeed, he was able to attest to that, "I can do all this through Him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13) Recalling that the Philippians had graciously shared what they had with him, Paul promised, "My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:20)

# PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2 & ACTS 16:11-16 // FOR ALL SAINTS

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*I speak to you who have just been reborn in baptism, my little children in Christ, you who are the new offspring of the Church, gift of the Father, proof of Mother Church's fruitfulness. All of you who stand fast in the Lord are hold seed, a new colony of bees, the very flower of our ministry and fruit of our toil, my joy and my crown.*

Augustine (354-430)

## Be Still

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and Scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 1:1-2 & Acts 16:11-16...

## Read

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## Reflect

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2 & ACTS 16:11-16 // FOR ALL SAINTS

Day 2 - Study

...when the apostle Paul arrived in the Greek city of Philippi and found a group of praying Gentile women (Acts 16:6-40), he didn't despair and begin looking for men. He simply sat down and began speaking to the women about Jesus as though teaching theology to women was an everyday occurrence. The consequences were significant, for these women figured prominently in the founding of the first church in Europe.

Carolyn Custis James

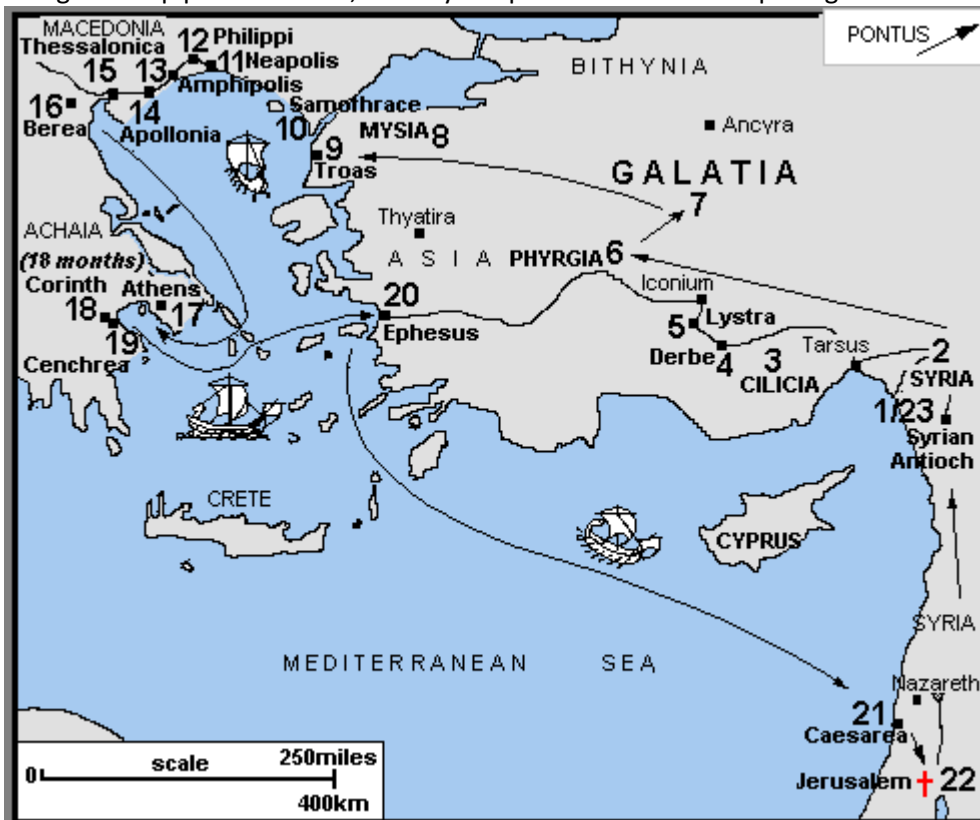
## Pray

Begin your time reflecting on the many ways God has amazed you during this last week. Thank Him for unexpected opportunities, surprising joys and unanticipated provision.

## Acts 16: 11-12 Questions

Have you ever visited a foreign country? What did you do to prepare for your visit?

Using the map printed below, identify the places named in this passage.



Why do you think Paul and his companions traveled most of the journey by boat?

How does the author describe Philippi? Why do you think they decided to stay there for several days?

### **Acts 16:13 Questions**

Why did the travelers go to the river outside the city on the Jewish Sabbath? What were they seeking?

Do you worship when you are visiting new places? Why/why not?

Who did our travelers encounter at the riverside? Why do you think there were no men at this place of prayer?

What did the travelers do when they met the women? Do you think they might have been disappointed that there were no men at the riverside? If so, why do you think they stayed and spoke to the women?

### **Respond in Prayer:**

Dear God, thank You that Your Spirit moved Paul and his companions to travel to a foreign land to share the Good News of Jesus. Forgive me for the times I am not comfortable moving across the street or outside my comfort zone to share You with those in my own community. Spark in me such an appreciation for You and what You offer that I will willingly go wherever people gather to speak of You. In the Name of the One who journeyed from Heaven to seek me, Jesus Christ, Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2 & ACTS 16:11-16 // FOR ALL SAINTS

Day 3 - Study

---

*Hospitality to strangers, among both Jews and Gentiles in the ancient world, was considered a religious must, a God-given task, a virtue... In the Greek religion, strangers were under the special protection of the gods. And the Jewish tradition recognizes something similar, when we think of the passage in Genesis... Here strangers are shown hospitality by Abraham and Sarah. This is surely a 'background story' to what we much later read in the letter to the Hebrews: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."*

Christine Erb-Kanzleiter

## Pray

Quietly ask the Lord to silence the distractions around you and allow you to hear His living Word today.

## Acts 16:14 Questions

What do we learn about Lydia in verse 14?

Who is responsible for Lydia's receptivity to the message Paul spoke?

How do you feel when you share Jesus with those around you and they do not respond positively?

How do you think the Holy Spirit might have prepared Lydia before that morning at the riverside?

## Acts 16:15 Questions

How does Lydia respond to the message she heard?

Who, besides Lydia, was baptized? What kind of people do you think might be included in this group?

How does Lydia extend hospitality to the visitors from Jerusalem? In what way does this qualify as "extreme hospitality?"

How might you extend hospitality as a way of serving God?

### **Respond in Prayer**

Powerful God, give us eyes to see the work of the Holy Spirit in those around us. Help us not to be discouraged by those who seem like they will never respond to Your grace. Also, bless us with faith so that we may not be astounded when those who seem most unlikely do respond. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2 & ACTS 16:11-16 // FOR ALL SAINTS

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

*...what must tie us together as Christians is this passion for the gospel, this fellowship in the gospel. On the face of it, nothing else is strong enough to hold together the extraordinary diversity of people who constitute many churches...*

D.A. Carson

## Pray

Our God, Sovereign Lord and Master of all creation, in this hour let us hear again Your call, always inviting us to serve by Your side in Your Kingdom work. Equip us, Lord, to serve You well, in the Spirit and power of Christ. Amen.

## Philippians 1:1-2 Application Questions

Many years have passed and Paul and Timothy are no longer in Philippi when they write this brief letter. How do Paul and Timothy describe themselves? Do you feel comfortable describing yourself as Jesus' servant? Why/why not?

Who is this letter addressed to? We will consider the various meanings of "saints," "overseers," and "deacons" in our group meeting. For now, imagine that Paul and Timothy were writing this letter to the people at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. What words might they use to describe us?

What do you think is the significance of the phrase "in Christ Jesus?" How might thinking of yourself as *in Christ* change the way you react to circumstances and others at home, in the community or on the job?

## Respond in Prayer

Close your time by confessing to God the things in your life that you struggle to surrender to him. Remember that every aspect of your life is now hidden "in Christ".

# PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2 & ACTS 16:11-16 // FOR ALL SAINTS

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*“If you were to grant the premise that Paul is addressing the church corporately, then how would you read verse 2 in a corporate way? I would suggest that Paul’s meaning might be paraphrased something like this: “May you, a group of saints who have experienced the grace of God in salvation, now experience and express that grace toward one another in a corporate way. May you be gracious in your dealings with one another, especially when you disagree. May your words and actions bring grace to the rest of the church. And may the peace that you have come to experience in a personal way (through faith in Jesus Christ) now work itself out in the church corporately. May dissension and strife not be found among you, and may you be at peace, one with the other.”*

Bob Deffinbaugh

## Philippians 1:1-2 Application Questions

What do Paul and Timothy wish for this church in Philippi?

What are your fondest wishes for those you love? Stop now and ask God to conform your desires for them to His desires for them.

Do you have “unfathomable peace”?

# PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11 // CONFIDENT PRAYER

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7

## Be Still

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 1:3-11...

## Read

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## Reflect

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11 // CONFIDENT PRAYER

Day 2 - Study

---

*There are different kinds of prayer: adoration, confession, thanksgiving and celebration, heartache and lament—all with biblical roots, and all acceptable conversation, part of the honest relationship among God and his people. There are also many attitudes of prayer. Sometimes God’s people pray with hope, sometimes in despair, sometimes with passion, sometimes out of fear. Sometimes we simply pray, “God please just do something.”*

Elizabeth Steele Halstead

## Pray

Father God, You know everything going on inside me and around me. Quiet me, speak to me, do something in me as I study You, Amen.

## Philippians 1:3-4 Questions

Why did the Philippians bring Paul joy?

- Who is someone of whom you can say, “I thank my God every time I think of you” (1:3) and why?

How does Paul pray in this passage (petitioning for himself, supplicating for others, praising God, voicing laments and struggles, etc.)?

- When you pray, what percentage of your prayer is focused on talking to God, and what percentage is focused on listening for God’s voice and discerning God’s will?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 (if 1 is ‘awful!’ and 10 is ‘awesome!’) how would you rate your prayer life and why?

What specific requests did Paul bring before God when he prayed for the Philippians?

- Have you ever had the experience of someone praying specifically for you? How did that make you feel?

## **Respond in Prayer**

O Lord, in a world where many are lonely, I thank You for my friendships. In a world where many are captive, I thank You for my freedom. In a world where many are hungry, I thank You for your provision. I pray that You will: enlarge my sympathy, deepen my compassion, and give me a grateful heart. In Christ's name, Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11 // CONFIDENT PRAYER

Day 3 - Study

---

*We must be willing to accept also the bitter truth that, in the end, we may have to become a burden to those who love us. But it is necessary that we face this also. The full acceptance of our abjection and uselessness is the virtue that can make us and others rich in the grace of God. It takes heroic charity and humility to let others sustain us when we are absolutely incapable of sustaining ourselves. We cannot suffer well unless we see Christ everywhere—both in suffering and in the charity of those who come to the aid of our affliction.*

Thomas Merton

## Pray

Lord, open my eyes so that I can partner with You today in a new way, Amen.

## Background Information

Philippians is a letter about *partnership* (verse 5), one of the most important words in Paul's vocabulary. Partnership is a joint participation in a common interest or activity. The Greek word here is *koinonia*, which can also be translated as *fellowship*. *Koinonia* was also the Greek word for a business partnership or a community. Although it develops particular Christian meanings - including the delighted sharing of worship, prayer, and mutual support and friendship - in Paul's world it was the normal word for a business partnership, in which all those involved would share in doing the work on the one hand and the financial responsibilities on the other.

## Philippians 1:5-11 Questions

How does Paul partner with the Philippians (1:5-7)?

Paul's gratitude for the Philippians' partnership leads Paul to the prayer in 1:9-11. What does he ask God for and what is the ultimate goal (1:9-11)?

Consider the Christian community of which you are a part. Would you say that you are in partnership for the gospel, or is your fellowship more social? What would you like your fellowship to look like?

The church is an ideal place to begin practicing the kind of partnership Paul talks about. How can you begin to think and act more like partners with Christians around you at St. Andrew's?

## **Respond in Prayer**

Speak, O Lord, and renew my mind; help me grasp the heights of Your plans for me—truths unchanged from the dawn of time, which will echo down through eternity. And by grace I'll stand on Your promises; and by faith I'll walk as You walk with me. Speak, O Lord, 'til your church is built, and the earth is filled with Your glory, Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11 // CONFIDENT PRAYER

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

*From Your hand, O Lord, we receive everything. You stretch Your powerful hand, and turn worldly wisdom into holy folly. You open Your gentle hand, and offer the gift of inward peace. If sometimes it seems that Your arm is shortened, then You increase our faith and trust, so that we may reach out to You. And if sometimes it seems that You withdraw Your hand from us, then we know that it is only to conceal the eternal blessing which You have promised— that we may yearn even more fervently for that blessing.*

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

## Pray

Father God, thank You for creating me in love. Jesus, thank You for saving me and refining me every day. And Holy Spirit, thank You for never leaving me.

## Philippians 1:3-11 Application Questions

What “good work” did God begin in the Philippians? Read Romans 8:28-30 for additional food for thought.

Read Romans 8:34. Notice that Christ’s prayer for His people is ongoing. Close your eyes and try to experience the reality of Christ continuously praying for you. How will this reality impact your day?

Remember and share a specific example in your life when God’s will proved to be best for you despite the circumstances of the moment.

Ruth Haley Barton writes that it is necessary for Christians to hold the “belief in the goodness of God...that God’s will for us is the best thing that could happen... under any circumstance.” What do you think of God’s will for you? In your life, what relationship does God have with goodness?

How is it easy or hard for you to trust God to complete the work He’s started in you? In others? Why?

## Respond in Prayer

Teach me, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility. Test my thoughts and my attitudes in the radiance of Your purity. Cause my faith to rise, cause my eyes to see Your majestic love and authority. Words of power that can never fail—let their truth prevail over unbelief in my life today, Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11 // CONFIDENT PRAYER

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Here are three properties of that sincerity which are acceptable to God: It must bear fruits, the fruits of righteousness, all inward and outward holiness, all good tempers, words, and works; and that so abundantly, that we may be filled with them the branch and the fruits must derive both their virtue and their very being from the all-supporting, all-supplying root, Jesus Christ. As all these flow from the grace of Christ, so they must issue in the glory and praise of God.*

John Wesley, 1755

## Pray

Speak, O Lord, as I come to You, to receive the food of Your Holy Word. Take Your truth, plant it deep in me; shape and fashion me in Your likeness. That the light of Christ might be seen today in my acts of love and my deeds of faith. Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in me all Your purposes for Your glory, Amen.

## Philippians 1:3-11 Application Questions

What is the great promise for Christians in Philippians 1:6?

What does each of the following verses say about righteousness?

- Psalm 1:3
- Colossians 1:6, 10
- Hebrews 12:11
- Revelation 22:1-2

Think about your relationships, your attitude during the day, your words, your actions... What is being produced in your life?

- Claim God's promise in Philippians 1:6 in your life today by surrendering in prayer the things you most need God to work on in your life.

Write a short note or e-mail today for the purpose of providing spiritual encouragement. Who will you write to and why?

# PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26 // PAUL'S CHAINS

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*O Lord, let me not henceforth desire health or life except to spend them for You, with You and in You. You alone know what is good for me; do therefore what seems best to You. Give to me or take from me; conform my will to Yours; and grant that with humble and perfect submission and in holy confidence I may receive the orders of Your eternal providence, and may equally adore all that comes to me from You; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

## Be Still

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 1:12-26...

## Read

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## Reflect

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26 // PAUL'S CHAINS

Day 2 - Study

---

*The opposite of joy is not sorrow. It is unbelief.*  
Leslie Weatherford

## Pray

God, who is the source of all wisdom and faith, please give me an abundance of both as I read Your words to me and absorb them into my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Philippians 1:12-26 Questions

Have you ever experienced a difficult situation that actually turned out to be for your benefit? Describe it.

Why might Paul being in prison seem to put a stop to his ministry?

Instead, what two benefits of his imprisonment does Paul describe?

## Respond in Prayer

Thank You, Father, for Paul's experiences. If he had not endured imprisonment and all the struggles that entailed, I might not be reading this letter today. Help me to see my troubles as momentary and grant to me a glimpse of Your perspective and Your purpose for my life. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26 // PAUL'S CHAINS

Day 3 - Study

---

*Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things. And no good thing ever dies.*  
Shawshank Redemption

## **Pray**

Mighty God, sometimes it seems as if all my plans are being upset and all my dreams are failing. Yet, I know that You have bigger and better plans and dreams than I can ever imagine. Conform my mind to Yours that I might see the obstacles and opponents in my life as You see them. And give me a joyful heart!

## **Philippians 1:12-26 Questions**

What are some of the less than holy motivations that Paul says inspired some to preach while he was in jail?

What was Paul's attitude toward these preachers and their message?

What does Paul say is the most important thing?

Paul's future was very uncertain. Describe Paul's attitude toward living and dying.

## **Respond in Prayer**

Loving Creator, all my days are Yours. May the choices I make today please You and may I focus more and more on the things that last. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26 // PAUL'S CHAINS

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

*They who think outward circumstances essential to peace think so, because they do not know God. They think ... in my circumstances, I cannot rejoice, I am in distress, in solitude, in persecution, in poverty; how can I be glad? How can you? How could the prophet rejoice? He could rejoice by having God for his all-sufficient portion, and his everlasting home. So could you rejoice. If you knew God thus, no suffering, not the most intense, could shake the fabric of your bliss, and throw your soul from its firm resting place, on the Everlasting Rock.*

Charles Finney

## Pray

Precious God, help me to put aside my concerns for today so that I might hear You clearly during this time of study and reflection. Focus my mind, heart and soul on You and free me from distractions. Thank you!

## Philippians 1:12-26 Application Questions

What in your life brings you great joy?

Examine verse 18, 25 and 26. What causes Paul to rejoice?

Do you think this attitude is one all believers should have or is it only required for some Christians such as apostles or pastors?

## Respond in Prayer

Source of Joy, Source of Life, all good things come from You and I thank You for them. However, You are better than all things. I confess that I have looked to people and circumstances for satisfaction, joy and hope in my life. Help me to refocus my life on You and the great, Good News of Your love for me and for the world. Forgive me, for placing my heart in the wrong hands. I give it to Your keeping. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26 // PAUL'S CHAINS

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*"[While] the Christian faith is the most exciting drama that ever staggered the imagination of man," we today have managed to "show the world the typical Christian in the likeness of a crashing and rather ill-natured bore — and this in the Name of One who assuredly never bored a soul in those thirty-three years during which He passed through the world like a flame.*

Dorothy Sayers

## Pray

Father, my life is often anything but exciting, anything but joyful! I am one of those boring believers as I stand in the shallows of life, afraid to plunge into the exciting sea of Your love and Your purpose in the world. Speak to me through this letter from Paul that I might, like him, seek the adventurous life of following Christ. Amen.

## Philippians 1:12-26 Application Questions

What "Mission Measures" do you think Paul possessed? Do you also possess them? Why/why not?

What circumstance are you or someone you love currently enduring that might actually be serving to advance the Gospel? Can you thank God for them?

What might it mean for Christ to be exalted in your body (verse 20) during these trials?

How might the attitude and priorities you choose help others to have more joy in Christ?

## Respond in Prayer

Jesus, may my life overflow with joy as You are exalted in all that I do, say, and think today. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30 // LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel.*

The Westminster Shorter Catechism 1640

## **Be Still**

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 1:27-30...

## **Read**

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## **Reflect**

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30 // LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL

Day 2 - Study

---

*Paul had a special love, respect, and appreciation for the church at Philippi. It was one of the most mature of the churches described in the New Testament. Nevertheless, its members had a few problems.*

*It doesn't take long even for a faithful church to slip into indifference and eventually into moral and doctrinal error. Paul tells them to look carefully into their own hearts to determine if they have spiritual integrity. This appeal applies to every follower of Jesus Christ in every place and time.*

John MacArthur

## Pray

Lord, hold up a mirror to my heart and life, reveal how I may live more worthy of the Gospel today.

## Philippians 1:27-30 Questions

Put a check next to the **seven** qualities or practices that you consider the *most indispensable* in living a life worthy of Christ. (Remember you may only check **seven** things.)

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> joy                | <input type="checkbox"/> love for other Christians | <input type="checkbox"/> compassion         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> love for Christ    | <input type="checkbox"/> involvement in church     | <input type="checkbox"/> zeal               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wisdom             | <input type="checkbox"/> willingness to suffer     | <input type="checkbox"/> love for the lost  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> strong faith       | <input type="checkbox"/> generosity in giving      | <input type="checkbox"/> devotion to prayer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> peace              | <input type="checkbox"/> a hunger for the truth    | <input type="checkbox"/> patience           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a servant mind-set | <input type="checkbox"/> being a peacemaker        | <input type="checkbox"/> self-control       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a grateful heart   | <input type="checkbox"/> witnessing ability        | <input type="checkbox"/> brokenness         |

What descriptive words and phrases of worthy conduct does Paul use to refer to a unified body of believers?

Paul is concerned that Christians not only believe the right things, but that they also behave the right way. Read about the expected behavior of believers in Romans 12:9-21. List the behaviors that stick out to you below.

Consider the situations you will face today and this week. How can you stand firm in your convictions? What will that look like in your life?

## Respond in Prayer

God the Creator, You have changed me. Christ the Redeemer, You have changed me. Holy Spirit, the Binder, You do keep me changed: bind my life together in You today. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30 // LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL

Day 3 - Study

---

*Appropriate public behavior and united work for the Gospel will together send a signal to opponents: we're not afraid. And that signal is itself part of the Gospel message. It functions as a sign to the Christians that they already belong to the Coming King, and to their opponents that a new world is beginning in which the threats of the old one don't work any more.*

N.T. Wright

## Pray

Lord, make Your Good News more real to me than ever before so that I might live more boldly for You.

## Philippians 1:27-30 Questions

Why is it important for Christians' public behavior to match up with the Gospel?

What are some behaviors that do not match up with the Gospel that you see in other Christians? What behaviors in your life do not match up with the Gospel?

Paul does not ask us to be perfect. What does he ask us to do in 1:27-28?

Paul urges the Philippians to stand firm "with a single spirit, struggling side by side with one united intent for the faith of the Gospel" (1:27). The aim is not unity for the sake of unity, because people can stand united for evil purposes. In your experience what is unique about the unity of Christians?

How are Christians saved (1:28b)?

What can you do today to stand firm in the Gospel? How can you help your church community today as we strive together as one for the faith of the Gospel?

## Respond in Prayer

Guide me, O lord, in all the changes and varieties of the world; that I may have evenness and tranquility of spirit: that I may not murmur in adversity nor in prosperity wax proud, but in serene faith resign my soul to Your divinest will; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

Jeremy Taylor (1612-1667)

# PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30 // LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

*As Jesus' earthly life and ministry drew to a close, he spoke urgently and prayed fervently about the unified way his followers should live. In short, Christ wants us living in harmony (John 17) and loving one another sacrificially (John 13:34-35). Such unconditional devotion sets us apart and causes the world to stare in awe. Conversely, when Christians bicker and feud, when churches split, we bring shame on the name of Christ, and the world mocks. It is only in unity that we shine, only together that we fully enjoy all the blessings of God. Shared sorrows are halved sorrows. Shared joys are doubled joys.*

Max Lucado

## Pray

Lord, give me eyes to see you, ears to hear you, a mind to understand you, and the will to live for you.

## Background Information

Philippians 1:27-30 is one long sentence in the Greek, and “conduct,” *politeuomai*, is the main verb. As you might guess it comes from the root word *polis*, city, referring to city-states. Therefore, this verb carries the basic meaning of being a citizen. Not just any citizen, but a truly good citizen, one whose conduct brings honor to the political body to whom one belongs. Philippi had the highly privileged status of being a Roman colony, giving its inhabitants many of the rights enjoyed by citizens of Rome itself. Paul is teaching us that as Christians, we are citizens of the Gospel of Christ. We are members of God's Kingdom here on earth, with Christ as our King.

## Philippians 1:27-30 Application Questions

Because of their citizenship in Christ, what differences should there be between a Christian's conduct and the conduct of Non-Christians?

How does your behavior as a citizen of His Kingdom need to be modified so it reflects His character?

In verse 27, Paul alludes to the reality that people will notice and discuss the behavior of believers. What is your reputation as a Christian? What about your church's?

How would you like your reputation to change? How would you like your church's reputation to change?

What will you change this week to ensure that all your interactions with others are worthy of the Gospel?

### **Respond in Prayer**

Lord Jesus, because you deserve to be represented by believers who are holy and who live in harmony with one another, I make the psalmist's prayer my own: "Lord, try me and test me; look closely into my heart and mind" (Psalm 26:2). Show me any actions I need to change today, and transform me from the inside out by the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30 // LIFE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death ... Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Hebrews 2:14-15, 18

## Background Information

From the first-century Mediterranean world to the twenty-first century in China, in the Sudan and in many other places, there have been plenty of people determined to stamp out Christianity as nonsense and use every trick in the book to do so. In the post-Christian West today, the forces of skepticism and cynicism within our culture are extremely powerful, not least in newspapers and on television. It's easy for Christians to feel intimidated, but Paul insists that we mustn't.

## Philippians 1:27-30 Application Questions

When have you struggled or suffered most as a Christian?

Why did Paul say it was unnecessary for the Philippians to fear their opponents (1:28-30)?

How is the comfort of encouragement that comes from being unified with Christ and with others motivating you in difficult areas of your life?

In what ways can you unite with other believers to live worthy and maybe even suffer for Christ in your own life?

## Respond in Prayer

Lord, I pray for unity among believers, centered on the love of Christ. I lift up the specific issues of disunity I know about, and empower me to help bring reconciliation. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 // CHRIST'S HUMILITY

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*Philippians 2 may be the most countercultural chapter in the Bible, especially for trendsetting, young professionals. Simply stated, the message of Philippians is this: If you want to be truly great, then the direction you must go is down. You must descend into greatness.*

Bill Hybels

## Be Still

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 2:1-11...

## Read

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## Reflect

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 // CHRIST'S HUMILITY

Day 2 - Study

---

*Thanks is what multiplies the joy and makes any life large, and I hunger for it.*  
Ann Voskamp

## **Pray Psalm 139: 23-24:**

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Amen.

## **Philippians 2:1-4 Questions**

What are four incentives for Christians to get along with each other in harmony (2:1)? What are four characteristics of a Christian community that we should strive for (2:2)?

What are two things that destroy community (2:3)? What are two things that will keep a Christian community from problems (2:3-4)?

What do you think it means to consider someone "better than yourself"? How does humility differ from being a doormat?

Who do you admire for truly putting the others' interests ahead of your own? Why?

## **Respond in Prayer**

Lord, as I go from this place of quiet, help me to see others as You see them as children made in Your image. Teach me to pray for those You will place in my path today. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 // CHRIST'S HUMILITY

Day 3 - Study

---

*Never think in lowering yourself you have less power for good.*  
Charles de Foucauld

## Pray

At Your Word, O Lord, the worlds were created, and by Your Word new life is given. Open now my ears that I may hear Your special Word spoken to me today. Amen.

## Philippians 2:5-11 Questions

What are the humbling steps Christ took when He came to earth as a man? Find seven in Philippians 2:6-8.

Who is Christ in His very nature (2:6)? How does this affect His choice to humble Himself?

Spend some time looking upon God in the form of the vulnerable infant that came to earth. What does this image teach us about God? His ability to identify with us?

What is the significance of how the Father responded to the humility of Jesus (2:9)?

What is the importance of the scene described in verses 10-11?

## Respond in Prayer

Lord, I am Your servant, ready to do all things that You command, for I do not desire to live to myself, but to You. Would to God that I might live worthily and profitably, and to Your honor. Amen.  
Thomas a Kempis

# PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 // CHRIST'S HUMILITY

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

*The Christian is under both instruction and authority...He believes what he believes because Jesus taught it, and he does what he does because Jesus told him to do it.*

John Stott

## Pray

Open your time in silent prayer. Then repeat the words, "Here I am Lord," until you feel attentive and ready to listen.

## Philippians 2:1-4 Application Questions

Of all the groups you have belonged to in your life, which was the most united behind a common purpose and goal?

The term "like-minded" literally means, "think the same way." The Greek word for "think" is more comprehensive and involves not only one's mind but one's feelings, attitudes and will. Paul is calling for a far deeper form of unity than simple doctrinal conformity. Is there some particular relationship(s) in your life that you find this call particularly challenging? What is God prompting you to do in response? Spend some time writing the names of those that came to mind and a specific action you will take toward establishing unity with them.

Try to relate the principles in this passage to your family situation. For each principle, put a number between 1 (No Problem) to 10 (Big Problem) in the box beside the trait to indicate how much you feel this principle is actually true of your life together as a family.

Like mindedness (we think the same way)	
Same love (we have a deep, genuine love)	
One in spirit (we share spiritual oneness)	
One in purpose (we are committed to the same goals)	
Without selfish ambition (we work at advancing each other's lives)	
Without vain conceit (we recognize the best in each other)	
Consider others better (we treat each other with respect and dignity)	
Look to others' interests (we genuinely care about each other's lives and interests)	

## Respond in Prayer

Memorize Philippians 2:5. While looking at your Bible as little as possible, write it here:

# PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 // CHRIST'S HUMILITY

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*Submission is the way we allow God's kingdom agenda to shape our choices, relationships and vocations. And it always works in conjunction with our personal freedom.*

Adele Ahberg Calhoun

## Philippians 2:5-11 Application Questions

How does Philippians 2:5-11 challenge today's standards about what makes a person a "success"? What would it mean for you to pursue Jesus' style of success?

*"Jesus adopted the essential nature of a slave. He did not "play act" being a slave for a time. The use of the word "slave" here emphasizes the fact that in the incarnation Christ entered the stream of human life as a slave, that is, as a person without advantage, with no rights or privileges of his own for the express purpose of placing himself completely at the service of all mankind." (Hawthorne)*

Does Jesus' example challenge you to make any changes in your life? What are some changes you want the Holy Spirit to do inwardly and then outwardly through your life? Be specific.

## Respond in Prayer

To close, spend some time in prayer. Place your palms in the downward position and quietly release everything you are holding onto (stress, anger, bitterness, anxiety, fear, etc.). Ask the Lord to take these from you. Then, when you feel as though you have surrendered everything you are carrying to the Lord, turn your palms facing upward and ask the Lord to give you an awareness of the many blessings He has for you to receive today.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18 // SHINING AS STARS

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*The tragedy of modern faith is that we no longer are capable of being terrified. We aren't afraid of God, we aren't afraid of Jesus, we aren't afraid of the Holy Spirit. As a result, we have ended up with a need-centered Gospel that attracts thousands...but transforms no one.*

Mike Yaconelli

## Be Still

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 2:12-18...

## Read

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## Reflect

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18 // SHINING AS STARS

Day 2 - Study

---

*Only I can make my salvation concrete in my everyday life; at the same time it is only God who can accomplish this in me. God is at work to carry out His gracious will, to make real in our lives what was the reality of Jesus' life. But we must equally be at work each day of our lives to spell out the implications.*

Earl Palmer

## Pray

O Lord, take our minds and think through them; take our lips and speak through them; take our lives and live out Your life; take our hearts and set them on fire with love for Thee; and guide us ever by Thy Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(The Prayer of Eventide, William H.M.H. Aitken)*

## Philippians 2:12-13 Questions

The first sentence of this passage sounds like our effort makes our salvation occur; how does this balance with verse 13 (“for it is God who works in you to will and to act to fulfill His good purpose”)?

Many have trouble understanding verse 12 in light of Paul’s many statements that salvation is a gift that we cannot earn by our efforts. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. In light of this passage, what does it mean to “work out your salvation”?

This passage begins with a “therefore” – how does this paragraph connect with the previous thought (that we should imitate Christ’s humility)?

How does the legacy of Christ’s obedience (2:5-11) help you in your struggle to live a life that reflects the salvation you have received from God?

## Respond in Prayer

Close your time by spending 5 minutes in silence reflecting on God’s presence with you. Acknowledge where and when you sensed Him with you today.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18 // SHINING AS STARS

Day 3 - Study

---

*A Christian should stand out in today's culture like a traffic light in the Gobi Desert.*  
Wil Willimon

## Pray

Offer the Lord this time of study. Write down any distractions that come to your mind as you prepare to be present with the Lord and His Word. Since they are written down, rest knowing that your "to do" list will be there for you when you return to your normal daily rhythm.

## Philippians 2:14-18 Questions

Read Exodus 29:38-41, which describes the "drink offering" and its place in the worshipping life of Israel. How is Paul being "poured out like a drink offering"?

Think about the circumstances of your life. In what way, if any, are you being sacrificed as an offering?

How does that sacrifice further God's work and strengthen others' faith?

Based on verses 14-16, how can anyone be able to distinguish a follower of Jesus from the rest of the world?

The topic for the sermon this week is "unfailing love" – reflecting on Philippians 2:14-18, how can your life increasingly be marked by unfailing love? What impact would your increasing love have on your surroundings (the people and systems of your world)?

## Respond in Prayer

God the Sender, send us, God the Sent, come with us, God the Strengtheners of those who go, empower us, that we may go with You and find those who will call You Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.  
*Prayers Encircling the World*

# PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18 // SHINING AS STARS

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

*Work as if everything depends on you. Pray as if everything depends on God.*

Ignatius of Loyola

## Pray

Living God, at times we are strangers on the earth, disconcerted by the violence, the harsh oppositions; And You breathe upon us the Spirit of peace like a gentle breeze. Transfigure the deserts of our doubts and so prepare us to be bearers of reconciliation wherever You place us, until a hope of peace arises in our world. Amen.

*Prayer for Each Day*

## Philippians 2:12-13 Application Questions

How is this life of obedience that comes from faith developed with “fear and trembling”? What does that look like in your life?

How are you “working out” your salvation? What things are you doing to grow in faith? When do you find that the rewards/joys of the Christian life are increased, when the work is harder or when the work comes more easily?

How is “working out” your salvation just like working out your body through exercise? How deliberate and intentional is your workout regimen for your salvation (i.e., your making your salvation concrete in your everyday life)?

How does God’s “working in” you give you confidence about your own choices as you “work out” your salvation?

## Respond in Prayer

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Confess where God’s priorities have been replaced with your own. What might partnering with God around his will look like?

# PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18 // SHINING AS STARS

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.*  
Anonymous

## Philippians 2:14-18 Application Questions

Look back on your last week. How has the phrase “for it is God who works in you to will and to act” been true in your life (be as specific as you can about this)?

How has God’s working in you fulfilled His good purpose? Again, be as specific as you can.

Evaluate yourself. When it comes to living so that the light of Christ might shine to others, how well do you “do everything without grumbling or arguing”? Here are some options:

- ✓ I do this poorly, I argue and grumble way too much
- ✓ I grumble, but I don’t argue (some call this passive-aggressive)
- ✓ I argue, but only when life’s worth arguing about
- ✓ I neither grumble nor argue, but I’m not much good at “shining like a star” with God’s love for others to see
- ✓ I’m pretty shiny here, and people see it and respond

Below is a scale from 1 to 5 – where on this scale are you on most of your days? Would your best friend agree? Would your coworker(s) agree?

Arguing	Grumbling (quietly)	“I’m working on it (so stop bothering me)”	Occasionally glistening	Shining with love!
1	2	3	4	5

# PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30 // PAUL'S HUMANITY

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*In prayer we seek God. We do not seek peace, quiet, tranquility, enlightenment; we do not seek anything for ourselves. We seek to give ourselves...to God. He is the all of our prayer.*

M. Basil Pennington

## **Be Still**

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 2:19-30...

## **Read**

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## **Reflect**

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30 // PAUL'S HUMANITY

Day 2 - Study

---

*Anyone who has ever worked with others in ministry knows that they would give their right hand (or perhaps both) for a person with proven character. People who own their own business or those who are managers know that nothing is more important than hiring and working with people who possess strength of character.*

Greg Herrick

## Pray

Lord, thank You for this time of study. Help me to hear Your Word to me in this letter so that I might respond willingly and quickly to Your leading. Amen.

## Philippians 2:19-24 Questions

How does Paul portray Timothy? In what ways is he a good example of the person described in verse four of this chapter?

What does Paul hope to accomplish when he is able to send Timothy to Rome? What keeps Paul from sending Timothy to the church in Philippi?

Does Paul expect to remain in jail for much longer? What are his plans upon his release?

## Respond in Prayer

Thank you for the people in my life who I can count on when times are tough. Help me to be the kind of person others can depend on. May the strength of my character serve to advance Your Kingdom and bring You glory. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30 //PAUL'S HUMANITY

Day 3 - Study

---

*The bones of God's greatest heroes lie in unmarked graves.*

Neil Cole

## Pray

Lord, thank You for Epaphroditus and all the Christians who came before me, some with names that are hard to pronounce and many forgotten by everyone but you. Thank You that I do follow Jesus alone but have the example and encouragement of scores of faithful believers. Amen.

## Philippians 2:25-30 Questions

How does Paul portray Epaphroditus? What is his relationship to Paul? What is his relationship to the church in Philippi?

Why was Epaphroditus especially concerned about the church in Philippi?

What does Paul urge the Philippian Christian to do when Epaphroditus returns to Philippi? Why should they have this response?

## Respond in Prayer

Close your time by spending 5 minutes in silence. Offer your day, your gifts, those you will encounter throughout the day and your work to the Lord.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30 //PAUL'S HUMANITY

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

Paul realizes that the Christian church is not only an army engaged in a contest but also a fellowship in which people need to appreciate and honor each other

Earl Palmer

## Pray

Lord, speak to me this day through Your Word. Help me to see past strange names, faraway places and past times to how I might live more faithfully in my present circumstances. Amen.

## Philippians 2:19-30 Application Questions

Contrast Timothy and Epaphroditus with the people described by Paul in 1: 15-18.

What influence do you think these two had on Paul and the early church?

Do you think there are individuals in our congregation who serve in faithful and humble ways who may be having a profound impact on the church? How can you honor them?

## Respond in Prayer

God, please help me to remember and honor those who serve You, who are often unnoticed and unappreciated. Help me to be willing to be counted among them. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30 //PAUL'S HUMANITY

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*But we who would be born again indeed, must wake our souls unnumbered times a day.*  
George MacDonald

## Philippians 2:19-30 Application Questions

In what ways do you find that you are looking out for your own interests as opposed to those of Jesus Christ? How might God be calling you to change?

Is there anyone in ministry who might call you his/her son or daughter, brother or sister, fellow worker or soldier? Why/why not? What can you do to become more of a partner in the Gospel with other believers?

How might the examples of Timothy, Paul and Epaphroditus help you to live with uncommon friendship?

# PHILIPPIANS 3:1-14// COUNTING GAINS AND LOSSES

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*The pace of life and our preoccupation with unimportant things take so much of our attention. The significant things, like taking time to develop friendship, to read and pray,...to listen to God—these all get sacrificed on the altar of good works and Christian busyness.*

Luci Shaw

## Be Still

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 3:1-14...

## Read

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## Reflect

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 3:1-14// COUNTING GAINS AND LOSSES

Day 2 - Study

---

*At any price, give me the book of God! Here is knowledge enough for me. In God's presence I open. I read this book for this end: to find the way to heaven.*

John Wesley

## Pray

Open your time of study by “rejoicing in the Lord”. Praise Him for the many ways, great and small, you have experienced His presence and His righteousness over the course of this past week.

## Philippians 3:1-6 Questions

What is the main point or topic in this section? Summarize this passage in your own words.

What has Paul been saying that he wants to repeat again? Why is repetition helpful?

What was Paul's warning to the Philippians in 3:2? To whom was he referring?

In 3:2-3, Paul speaks of a circumcision that transcends the physical realm. How did he describe this “true” circumcision?

In his religious bragging section (3:4-6) what are six things Paul claims and what is the significance of each?

## Respond in Prayer

Lord, I give myself to You as a gift of love. I place my life in Your hands to do with as You will. Only use me, my Lord, that my life be not wasted. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 3:1-14// COUNTING GAINS AND LOSSES

Day 3 - Study

---

*Because Jesus Christ is the Reality, the Real Factor, the Agent, in who the lofty is humbled, the solid shattered, assurance dispelled, man in his self-made goodness exposed, Israelitic man in the splendor of his religious system declared guilty before God—because this Jesus Christ is my Lord, so that in effecting all this he is absolutely authoritative for me, and because he has given me to know that he is my Lord—therefore I consider the whole thing loss.*

Karl Barth

## Pray

Here I am Lord. I commit this time to you and ask that you speak to me through Your Living Word. Illuminate the dark places within me. Expose the pride, reveal my need for control. I surrender myself to You. Amen.

## Philippians 3:7-14 Questions

What are some things you treasured or have benefitted from? Consider not only physical objects but also achievements, honors and privileges.

On his “profit and loss” accounting system (3:7-8), how does Paul figure the worth of his religious upbringing?

What is the one, supreme, overriding goal of Paul’s life (3:8)?

What relationship does Paul draw between resurrection and suffering (3:10-11)?

## Respond in Prayer

Thank the Lord for the certainty of His love for you. Pray that you will never fall back into trying to accumulate credits with God, but will continue to trust what Christ has done for you.

# PHILIPPIANS 3:1-14// COUNTING GAINS AND LOSSES

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

*Scripture is like a river, broad and deep, shallow enough here for the lamb to go wading, but deep enough there for the elephant to swim.*

Gregory the Great

## Pray

“Lord, You said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command.”

**Forgive us our lukewarm love and our disobedience.**

Lord, You said, “You may ask for anything in My name.”

**Forgive us when we think we need to solve our own problems.**

Lord, You said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

**We confess that our lives are often consumed by worry and anxiety.**

Lord, You said, “If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.”

**Forgive us our barren lives, Lord.**

Lord, You said, “You must testify, for you have been with Me.”

**We confess, Lord, that we have been too often silent.**

Lord, You said, “Love each other as I have loved you.”

**In this and in so many ways, we confess our failures and shortcomings. Amen.**

Jessie Schut, from *Reformed Worship*

## Philippians 3:1-6 Application Questions

Every generation has heard “Christ *and...*” teaching, undermining God’s free gift: Christ *and* a particular method of baptism; Christ *and* membership in the correct church; Christ *and* a particular evidence of conversion; Christ *and* striving to live a “good” life. Christ followers seem inclined to want to hedge their bets just in case the truth of Christ might not be quite true enough. Paul knew the danger of “Christ *and...*” teaching. Faith in Christ alone guarantees our eternal relationship with God.

Paul instructs the Philippian Christ followers to “Rejoice!” saying it will safeguard them from “Christ *and...*” teaching. How have you experienced this to be true in your own life?

## Respond in Prayer

Spend some time reflecting upon the ways you try to *earn* (Christ *and...*) your membership in Christ’s family. Confess these to the Lord. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 3:1-14// COUNTING GAINS AND LOSSES

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*Genuine Faith will inevitably produce transformation in a person's life; false or dead faith will not. Scripture nowhere points people back to a conversion experience to validate their salvation; the issue is a changed life.*

John MacArthur

## Philippians 3:7-14 Application Questions

Where are the outer limits in your life of faith right now? What things do you know about Jesus that you do not yet trust? Do you live in hope because of your achievements or because of God's promise of eternal life?

What distinguishing marks of true faith are present in your life? What signs are missing?

How has Jesus Christ "taken hold" of you? What is there about Jesus that you would more fully like to explore, to understand, or to trust?

## Respond in Prayer

Close your time by praying or singing the words of the great hymn, *Be Thou My Vision*:

"Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that Thou art—  
Thou my best thought by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,  
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:  
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,  
High King of Heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;  
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all."

Dallan Forgaill, 6<sup>th</sup> century

# PHILIPPIANS 3:15-4:4// CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*“Think often on God, by day, by night, in your business and even in your diversions. He is always near you and with you; leave Him not alone.”*

Brother Lawrence

## **Be Still**

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 3:15-4:4...

## **Read**

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## **Reflect**

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 3:15-4:4// CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

Day 2 - Study

---

*You don't have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body.*  
C.S. Lewis

## Pray

Spend five minutes intentionally relaxing your body and breathing deeply. Afterward, spend some time noticing where your mind wants to go. Offer these things to God. End your prayer by breathing in God's love. Go with the awareness that your every breath is God's gift.

## Philippians 3:15-21 Questions

Define citizenship. What privileges or benefits do citizens receive over non-citizens?

What is Paul's wish for Christians, especially those who are older in the faith (3:15)? What caution does Paul give to those who have a degree of spiritual maturity (3:16)? If someone does not understand what a Christian lifestyle looks like, what does he advise (3:17)?

Paul boldly invites the Philippians to imitate his behavior (3:17). How have you been helped by the example of other believers?

How does Paul describe the lifestyle of the false teachers to guard against (3:18-19)? In contrast, how can you tell a true Christian by his or her lifestyle (3:20)?

How will things be different when the Lord comes from Heaven (3:20-21)?

## Respond in Prayer

Close your time saying to God, "Here I am. I am with you." Remember that He is present with you today.

# PHILIPPIANS 3:15-4:4// CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

Day 3 - Study

---

*Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. Its been found difficult and not tried.*  
G.K. Chesterton

## Pray

Pray Psalm 139:13-14. Slowly read the verses aloud. Substitute your own name for the pronouns *me* and *I*. Don't hurry. Thank God for the promises of your citizenship that are revealed in this passage.

## Philippians 4:1-4 Questions

What does Paul mean when he tells the Philippians to stand firm in the Lord (4:1)? How has Paul already demonstrated this to them?

Some in the Philippian church were Roman citizens and some weren't. Regardless, Paul wants his readers to think about what it means to give their primary allegiance NOT to Rome but to Heaven, not to Caesar but to Jesus. What would it mean for St. Andrew's to live as a community working together to bring God's Kingdom to earth in Newport Beach?

In 3:2-3 there is a special appeal to two women in Philippi who are in conflict. Apparently the situation has been going on for some time, since Paul must have heard about it from Epaphroditus. When have you seen a dispute between Christians handled in a positive and healing way? What did that do for your life of faith?

## Pray the Lord's Prayer

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."  
Matthew 6:9-13

# PHILIPPIANS 3:15-4:4// CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

*If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased.*

C.S. Lewis

## Pray

Illuminate the eyes of my heart, Lord so that I may know the hope to which I have been called, the riches of your glorious inheritance in the saints and the incomparably great power that is available to those who believe. Amen.

Ephesians 1:18-19

## Philippians 3:15-21 Application Questions

The Greek word “mature” in 3:15 is the same word that is translated “perfect” in verse 12. Paul uses this word in a slightly ironic way here: Those of us who might think we are ‘perfect’ know that there is no such thing as true perfection. There is only continual striving to comprehend Christ. If you had to compare your spiritual life right now to a track race, where would you be: sitting on the sidelines? Warming up? At the starting line? Running as hard as you can? Feeling muscle cramps? Just keeping up with the group? Giving up?

## Read and Respond

*“Some people expect very little from salvation, and they get it. They expect God’s salvation to cure a few of their bad habits and to help them live more decently. They expect to be able to believe the right doctrines without raising any question about them. And they expect God to be night watchman over their possessions until they die and go to heaven.*

*Others seem to expect too much—or at any rate, too much too early. These are people who expect sinlessness or the wealth of heaven or rest from their labors or unceasing ecstasy. They want glory now.”*  
—Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Beyond Doubt*

Based on this quote, are you expecting too much or too little from your faith? Why?

# PHILIPPIANS 3:15-4:4// CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*Thanks be to You, Lord Jesus Christ: in all my trials and sufferings You have given me the strength to stand firm; in Your mercy You have granted me a share of eternal glory.*

Irenaeus of Sirmium

## Pray

My Lord and friend, in the quietness of this hour, reconcile my contrary motives and conflicting desires. Give me a singleness of purpose that I may come into Your presence unashamed and sit under your gaze without blushing. Amen.

*A Guide to Prayer For All God's People*

## Philippians 3:15-4:4 Application Questions

Unlike most Greek women who remained in the background and had little to do with public life, Macedonian women were in every way as active and involved as the men. A business woman, Lydia, was Paul's first convert in Philippi. She organized the first house church there. These two women, Syntyche and Euodia, are, apparently, leaders in the present Philippian church. Their opinions are very important, so much so that their disagreement is threatening to split the church. Their unity is crucial to the unity of the whole body.

How do you deal with disagreement? Where did you learn this behavior?

What, for you, is the difference between "going to" church, "being part of" a church, and "being" church? Which description most accurately depicts your experience?

Paul returns to this central admonition which pervades the whole epistle. Here he concludes his teaching about joy by identifying how to rejoice even though the situation is difficult. In fact, "rejoicing" is the first of a series of attitudes that make it possible to cope successfully in hard times. If one is rejoicing, by definition, one cannot be despairing. Paul is not calling for people to rejoice because of the situation. Rather, it is the Lord who is the source and cause of rejoicing.

How does your disposition influence your attitude toward gratitude?

How are you addicted to criticism, analysis and negativity? How might thankfulness be an antidote to a critical spirit?

# PHILIPPIANS 4:4-23 // FINAL THANKSGIVING

Day 1 - Contemplate

---

*Now Christ is the only food of our soul, and therefore our Heavenly Father invites us to Christ, that, refreshed by partaking of Him, we may repeatedly gather strength until we shall have reached heavenly immortality.*

John Calvin

## Be Still

Find a quiet place, free from distraction (as much as possible). Sit quietly with your Bible, close your eyes, and place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Make this time an offering to Jesus and commend to Him all the worries, obligations and hassles of the day. They will still be there when you finish, or they will be resolved through prayer and scripture meditation.

Open your Bible to Philippians 4:4-23...

## Read

Read the passage attentively, reverently, slowly. Listen to the Word and wait patiently for the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Read the passage several times, or linger on one particular phrase or word. Whatever you do, don't rush through it.

## Reflect

On your second or third prayerful reading, listen for a particular word or a phrase God might cause to rise up from the page and stand out to you. Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, and on listening to what God has to say through this word or phrase. In the space provided below, write down the word or phrases that jump out at you.

# PHILIPPIANS 4:4-23 // FINAL THANKSGIVING

Day 2 - Study

---

*Every evening I turn my worries over to God. He's going to be up all night anyway.*  
Mary C. Crowley

## **Pray:**

Father, help me to hear Your voice as You speak to me through the Scriptures today. Destroy excuses and remove regrets that I might have the courage to change - to become a person of joy and not of fear.

## **Philippians 4:4-9 Questions**

What does Paul say is the cure for anxiety?

How does worry affect your heart and your mind? How does God protect both?

With what should we fill our minds? Why?

In verse 9, Paul offers himself as an example to the Philippian believers in four ways. What are they?

## **Respond in Prayer**

God of peace, I commit myself to living in your peace as I fill my mind with things other than worry. May my gentleness, not my anxieties, be evident to all, to Your glory. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 4:4-23 // FINAL THANKSGIVING

Day 3 - Study

---

*My crown is in my heart, not in my head, nor decked with diamonds and Indian stones, nor to be seen;  
my crown is called contentment. A crown it is, that seldom kings enjoy.*

William Shakespeare

## Pray

God, you are the source of all strength and the provider of all needs, yet I struggle with discontentment. Help me to see “contentment” with Your eyes even if it means changing my goals and desires. Amen.

## Philippians 4:10-23 Questions

What have the Philippians done that causes Paul to rejoice?

Who benefits from the gifts the Philippians sent to Paul? Why?

Is Paul dependent upon circumstances for his contentment? Why or why not?

## Respond in Prayer

Generous God, may deep-rooted contentment result in unrestrained generosity. And may my generosity please You. May it spring from confidence in Your provision and trust for my future. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 4:4-23 // FINAL THANKSGIVING

Day 4 – Going Deeper

---

*We are not at peace with others because we are not at peace with ourselves and we are not at peace with ourselves because we are not at peace with God.*

Thomas Merton

## Pray

I want to know Your peace, God. That peace, that unfathomable peace that You promise Your people. Yet, my mind travels in ruts of worry and stress. Transform my way of thinking so that I might be like Paul, walking in paths of peace as I trust in You.

## Philippians 4:4-9 Application Questions

List 3 things about which you are anxious. How might the application of verses 4-8 help?

What in your life is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable or praiseworthy? How can you keep your mind on these things throughout the day?

In verse 9, Paul urges the Philippians to follow his example. Are there people in your life who imitate you? If so, are you confident enough to encourage them to do so?

## Respond in Prayer

Precious Lord, as I go on to the life You have for me, remind me of the verses I studied today and of my commitment to become a person of peace. Help me to stop in my tracks when I begin old habits of worry and assist me to think in new ways. Renew my mind. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS 4:4-23 // FINAL THANKSGIVING

Day 5 – Going Deeper

---

*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*

I Timothy 6:6

## Pray

God, I have the disease of our days, the “I wants.” People and institutions all around me encourage dissatisfaction, yet you call for contentment. Help me to understand what you want for me and to seek after it with the same passion with which I have sought after possessions. Amen.

## Philippians 4:4-23 Application Questions

How do you define contentment? Do you think Paul would define it that way?

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being very content), how content are you today?

When is it not desirable to be content? What do you think Paul would say to your answer?

Paul speaks of the “secret of being content.” Based on this passage, what do you think that “secret” is?

## Respond in Prayer

Father, I want to be a person of unquenchable joy no matter what the circumstances! This isn't something I can manufacture on my own but I can cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in my life. I agree to do so. Amen.

## RESOURCES USED

---

Carson, D.A. *Basics for Believers: An Exposition of Philipians*. Baker: Grand Rapids, 1996.

Craddock, Fred. *Philipians Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. John Knox Press: Atlanta, 1985.

Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*. InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, 2005.

Cole, Neil. *Journeys to Significance: Charting a Leadership Course from the Life of Paul*. (Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series).

Deffinbaugh, Bob. *Paul's Perspective as a Servant*. <http://bible.org/seriespage/paul's-perspective-servant-phil-11-2>

*Dwelling with Philipians – A Conversation with Scripture through Image and Word*.

Editors: Halstead, E. S., Detterman, P., Borger, J., Witvliet, J. D., Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, MI, 2010.

Erb-Kanzleiter, Christine, *Sermon on Acts 16*. <http://www.peacechurch.de/html/sermons.html>.

Finney, Charles. "Joy in God" *The Evangelist*: Oberlin Ohio, September 27, 1843.

Herrick, Greg. *Timothy and Epaphroditus: Two Examples of Humility and Unity*.

<http://bible.org/seriespage/timothy-and-epaphroditus/twoexamples-humility-and-unity-philippians-219-30>.

James, Carolyn Custis. *Women Theologians: A Spiritual Goldmine for the Church*.

[http://sites.silaspartners.com/partner/Article\\_Display\\_Page/0,,PTID323422\\_CHID664014\\_CIID2140766\\_00.html](http://sites.silaspartners.com/partner/Article_Display_Page/0,,PTID323422_CHID664014_CIID2140766_00.html).

Job, P. Rueben, and Norman Shawchuck. *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and other Servants*. Upper Room Books: Nashville, 1983.

Job, P. Rueben, and Norman Shawchuck. *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and other Servants*. Upper Room Books: Nashville, 1983.

Lucado, Max. *Life Lessons with Max Lucado - Book of Philipians*. Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN, 2007.

MacArthur, John. *Philipians – Christ, the Source of Joy and Strength*. MacArthur Bible Studies. Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN, 2007.

Palmer, Earl. *Integrity: A Commentary on the Book of Philipians*. Regent College Publishing: Vancouver, 1992.

Sayers, Dorothy. *Topical Encyclopedia of Living Quotations* (Minneapolis, Bethany House, 1982), no. 261.

*Serendipity New Testament for Groups*. Editors: Coleman, L., Rydberg, D., Peace, R. and Christopherson, G., Serendipity House, 1986.

Shakespeare, William, [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 3, Scene 1.

The Navigators. *Life Change Series: A NavPress Bible Study on the book of Philippians*. NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO, 1997.

*The Spiritual Formation Bible, New Revised Standard Version*. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999.

Wright, N. T. with Dale and Sandy Larsen. *Philippians – 8 Studies for Individuals and Groups*. IntersVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL, 2009.