



## Context

Author: Paul

Date: 62 AD

Recipient: The Christians in Philippi

## Theme and Purpose

Paul encourages the Philippians to live as citizens of a heavenly city, growing in their commitment to serve God and one another. Jesus is the supreme example of this way of life. Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus try to be good examples as well.

Paul wrote to the Philippians from prison. He had several purposes in mind: to tell them that Epaphroditus had recovered from a serious illness; to encourage them in their faith; to assure them that he was still in good spirits; and to thank them for their continued support.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Introduction to Hebrews," ESV Bible, <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-philippians/>

# Outline of Philippians

**\*\*Note: Sermons on each passage will be preached on the Sunday following the reading\*\***

Week of Monday, February 28, 2022	Philippians 1:1-11
Week of Monday, March 7, 2022	Philippians 1:12-26
Week of Monday, March 14, 2022	Philippians 1:27-30
Week of Monday, March 21, 2022	Philippians 2:1-4
Week of Monday, March 28, 2022	Philippians 2:5-11
Week of Monday, April 18, 2022	Philippians 2:12-18
Week of Monday, April 25, 2022	Philippians 2:19-30
Week of Monday, May 2, 2022	Philippians 3:1-11
Week of Monday, May 9, 2022	Philippians 3:12-21
Week of Monday, May 16, 2022	Philippians 4:1-9
Week of Monday, May 23, 2022	Philippians 4:10-23

Week of Monday, February 28, 2022

## Philippians 1:1-11

*1 Paul and Timothy, 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 give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, 4 always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. -- Philippians 1:1-11 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

## Weekly Devotional

“The important thing is that we must be constantly moving forward – yes, the progressive realization of a predetermined goal. And our growth should never end.”  
– Og Mandino

As a kid, I was always smaller than my classmates. I was short and skinny. I would regularly fret that I would always be smaller than every other guy and that I just wanted to grow and be bigger. I wanted the muscles and build I saw on other guys. I wanted to be as tall as my peers. I hated being so small. Being so small also impacted other areas of my life as well. I had a fear of injury from bigger guys in sports. This impacted my play in football. I played timidly, afraid of being hit too hard by guys so much bigger than I was. Baseball acted as an equalizer for me, because my size had far less impact as long as my mechanics were good. Regardless, I just wanted to grow! If you know me now, you know that I eventually did grow; perhaps too much! After high school, I hit a pretty major growth spurt, gaining 3-4” and 40 pounds within a year of graduation. However, I still have the mind of that too-small-for-his-liking boy who just wants to grow. That explains the time in the gym lifting weights and eating more protein than any one man should ever consume!

I wish I always pursued my growth in Christ the same way. As a Christian I know that growth and sanctification only comes as a work of the Holy Spirit. However, God has found fit to bring that growth through our efforts and our discipline in practicing the spiritual disciplines. That is why we grow in our faith so much when we consistently immerse ourselves in things like Bible engagement, prayer, service, giving, hospitality, fellowship, and evangelism. That is what Paul confidently expresses in this passage as well. He says that the Christians in the church at Philippi have been partners in the gospel and partners in grace. And because of that partnership, presumably a combination of those spiritual disciplines listed above plus others, he is confident that God will grow their faith and grow their righteousness. He says, “I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Do you have that type of confidence in your own growth as a Christian? Are you that confident in the continual work of redemption to bring holiness and righteousness in your own life? If you are consistently engaging in partnership of the gospel and of grace, then you can be! You can be assured that Christ will complete the work He has started in you until the day He returns. You can also know that your pastors and other church leaders are praying with thanksgiving for each of you for that partnership. The reality is that your pastors cannot reach the 60,000 people of Union County on our own. However, together we can. That is why when we talk about the mission God has given us of helping people find and follow Jesus, we also talk about the vision of doing so one person, one family, one community at a time. We must come together, as the church in Philippi did, to partner together for the work of making the name of Jesus known locally and around the world. We love you all and we are thankful for you!

## Read Also:

Philippians 1	[helps understand context of the book]
Philippians 2	[helps understand context of the book]
Acts 16:12-40	[Paul's first days in Philippi]
2 Corinthians 7:1	[God's good work in us brought to completion]
Romans 1:9	[God as our witness]
1 Corinthians 13	[Godly love]
Galatians 5:16-26	[fruit of the Spirit]

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- What is the gospel?
- What does the completion of the work that Christ started in us look like?
- What are the fruits of the Spirit?
- What is joy?
- What is humility?
- Define discernment. How are knowledge and discernment similar and/or different?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- How can your pastors pray for you?
- Which fruit of the Spirit do you feel you have the most room to grow in? What are you doing to pursue that growth?
- Practice sharing the gospel with your group. Who is someone you know that needs to know the gospel that you will commit to sharing it with within the next 30 days? How can your group pray for you or that person as you do that?
- Why is it that so many people view their faith as a private matter? Is it biblical to do so? Why or why not?
- How can you encourage others to be better partners in the gospel and in grace?
- Paul is writing this letter from prison for sharing his faith, yet he shows remarkable humility and joy. How is that possible? How would you respond if you were to find yourself in that situation?
- If the USA made Christian preaching, private or otherwise, illegal, what would you do?
- Tell about someone you know that you have seen remarkable growth in their faith. What was it that led to their growth?
- How do perseverance and growth relate to one another? Is it a relationship of correlation or causation?

Week of Monday, March 7, 2022

## Philippians 1:12–26

*12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is because I am in Christ. 14 Most of the brothers have gained confidence in the Lord from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the word fearlessly. 15 To be sure, some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. 16 These preach out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, thinking that they will cause me trouble in my imprisonment. 18 What does it matter? Only that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice 19 because I know this will lead to my salvation through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 20 My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. 23 I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ — which is far better — 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. 25 Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that, because of my coming to you again, your boasting in Christ Jesus may abound. -- Philippians 1:12–26 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

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## Weekly Devotional

“Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

– Abraham Lincoln

We all remember it well. March 2020, the world is just starting to get an idea of the scale of the burgeoning covid-19 pandemic settling in over our lives. We were told that we needed to collectively commit to “15 days to flatten the curve” by quarantining ourselves in our homes. Do not go to the grocery store. Do not open the doors to your small business. Do not go to school. Do not go to public spaces of any sort. Perhaps the one that has most drastically shifted the future of America was “Do not go to the office.” What was a terrible situation in the whole ended up being something that many Americans turned into a huge win for themselves and their families was that last one. Americans took the work-from-home mandate and made it a major victory for their careers. They turned their office jobs into work-from-anywhere jobs. Many took this as an opportunity to travel with their families and see the country because they could do their work from anywhere. They could attend their Zoom meetings in a car, hotel, RV, or anywhere they wanted. Americans made the most of a bad situation.

Paul, while writing this letter to the church at Philippi, is sitting in prison. Yet, he says “Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is because I am in Christ. <sup>14</sup> Most of the brothers have gained confidence in the Lord from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the word fearlessly.” He, and Timothy with him, refused to wallow in their circumstances; refused to sulk or be angry with God over their unfair imprisonment. Instead, they realized that there was a huge opportunity at hand and that God had placed them in prison on purpose and with a purpose. God had a plan that included their imprisonment. His plan was that the Roman guard would hear the gospel and that those who He would call would respond in faith. The other Christians who had heard of Paul’s imprisonment did not shy from sharing their faith in fear that they, too, would be arrested. Instead, the situation emboldened them to share the gospel even more fearlessly. These faithful believers, Paul, Timothy, and the others made the most of a bad situation.

Paul understands that his imprisonment could lead to his death, yet that does not temper his joy over the gospel or the “fruitful works” that God had given him to accomplish. In fact, he says that he desires to die and to go to be with Jesus in heaven. However, he realizes that God may have other plans. Regardless, Paul knows that he will give glory to Christ through his life or death; whether through the continued proclamation of the gospel to all who would hear or through his unwillingness to cast off Christ in the cause of saving his own life. He will continue with courage the task he has been given and he will seek to further encourage the Philippians to grow in their faith and in their joy regardless of the persecution and suffering they may face in their own lives. Whether in his life, his imprisonment, his mission, or his death, he would make the most of a bad situation.

## Read Also:

Philippians 3

[helps understand context of the book]

Philippians 4

[helps understand context of the book]

Romans 8:38-39

[death does not separate us from God]

Acts 21-26

[the advance of the gospel in persecution]

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- What is heaven? Is it the same now as it will always be?
- Why is it better for Christians to die than to live?
- What happens when we die?
- How does God use suffering and persecution to advance the gospel?
- How does this passage from Paul explain the role of church leaders, specifically pastors?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- How do you feel about this statement that Paul makes: “I long to depart and be with Christ — which is far better?”
- How are you going to use the time you have remaining in the flesh?
- I have heard verse 22-23 explained as Paul experiencing suicidal thoughts; potentially even that this is his “thorn in the flesh.” Do you agree? If so, how should we handle this passage as Christians?
- How does God use those who preach from envy, rivalry, selfish ambition, insincerely, and with a mind to harm others to make His name known? Is it harmful to the gospel? Or is Paul condoning this practice?
- How does Paul’s attitude towards life on Earth inform our mission? How does this align with Living Hope’s mission of “Helping people find and follow Jesus?”
- What does verse 19 mean?
- How can we gain confidence in sharing the gospel from those being persecuted? Tell about someone you know that has impacted you in this manner.



Week of Monday, March 14, 2022

## Philippians 1:27-30

*27 Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, in one accord, contending together for the faith of the gospel, 28 not being frightened in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of destruction for them, but of your salvation — and this is from God. 29 For it has been granted to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are engaged in the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I have. -- Philippians 1:27-30 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

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## Weekly Devotional

“Until my ONE Thing is done – everything else is a distraction.”

– Gary Keller in *The One Thing*

Gary Keller wrote a book called *The One Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results*. In that book, he asks the question, “What is the one thing that the *Star Wars* franchise does?” Before answering, have a look at the numbers. *Star Wars* movies have generated approximately \$5 billion in revenue all-time. *Star Wars* merchandise has topped \$12 billion. Considering that, many would think that the ONE Thing that *Star Wars* does is produce merchandise. However, their ONE Thing is actually producing movies and television series. That may seem backwards, but the reason is that the movies, while costing more and generating less, make the merchandise sales possible. If *Star Wars* simply produced merchandise, they would see sales taper off over time. If they produced movies or television series solely as a backup to their merchandise, you would see a drastic decline in the quality of the media content they produced. They have to get the ONE Thing right in order to support the rest of what they do.

So let me ask a similar question of you. What is the ONE Thing that Christians do? Many would say that it is evangelism. Others would say discipleship. Others may get more specific with things like serving, hospitality, loving others, or giving. However, Paul says something different in this passage. He says “Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.” He continues by saying that by focusing our time and efforts and faith on that one thing, we will, by default, stand firm, be united in faith, share the gospel, and find comfort rather than fear; as we see in 2 Timothy 1:7, we will have a spirit, not of fear, but of power, love, and sound mind. What Paul is saying is that if we focus our lives on the one single thing of living in such a way that we bring honor and glory to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we will inherently get the other things right. Holiness will become more natural. Evangelism will come from an overwhelming burden for others. Giving and serving will flow from us as natural extensions of our faith as Christ served and gave for us.

So live worthy. As Paul tells us in Colossians 1, “walk worthy.” In doing that, you will find that you have to stand firm. Stand firm in suffering, eyes fixed on Christ. Stand firm on the true gospel, making it a “hill to die on” in the contention against those who preach a false gospel or mock your faith. Stand firm in the face of persecution. By standing firm against opponents to the gospel, whether man, institution, or spirit, you can be assured of your salvation. The ability to stand firm is outward confirmation of the inward change that only comes through new life in Christ. And this assurance is not a feeling, but instead it “is a sign of destruction for them, but of your salvation — and this is from God.” So focus on your one thing; living a life lived worthy of the gospel of your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. All glory to Him alone.

## Read Also:

1 Corinthians 16:13	[stand firm]
Galatians 5:1	[stand firm]
Ephesians 6:10-20	[how to stand firm]
2 Thessalonians 2:13-17	[stand firm]
John 17	[Jesus prays for unity]
John 3:16-21	[belief & salvation vs destruction]
1 Corinthians 12:12-27	[unity of Christ's body]
Colossians 1:9-15	[walk worthy]
1 John 5:5-13	[assurance of salvation]

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- What does worthy mean? Are we worthy of the sacrifice of Christ?
- What is unity of believers? What is ecumenism? What are the differences? Which is biblical? How should Christians and local churches decide who to lock arms with for the sake of the gospel?
- What does v29 mean when it says that God “granted to” us belief and suffering?
- What does it mean that we are citizens of heaven? Citizenship means that we have rights and responsibilities to the place of which we are citizens. What are the rights and responsibilities we have as citizens of heaven?
- What is assurance of salvation? How can we have it?
- Can we be assured that our salvation is eternal? Why or why not?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- How do you live worthy of the gospel of Christ?
- How does living worthy of the gospel make the other things easier or more possible?
- How does distraction get in the way of living worthy? What is your greatest distraction? How can you overcome that?
- What are we to stand firm on? What are biblical “hills to die on?” How do you do that?
- How does the confirmation of our salvation make living worthy easier?
- Why is it so easy to allow pride to overwhelm our desire to give all glory to God?
- What is the ONE Thing your employer does? How does your role support that? How does that ONE Thing support your role? Now apply that train of thought to the local church. What is the ONE Thing that the local church does? How does your role in the church support that? How does that ONE Thing support what you do as a Christian?

Week of Monday, March 21, 2022

## Philippians 2:1-4

*1 If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 make my joy complete by thinking the same way, having the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. 4 Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others. -- Philippians 2:1-4 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

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## Weekly Devotional

“Coming together is a beginning. Staying together is progress. And working together is success.”

– Henry Ford

To watch the Los Angeles Lakers this year is to see a team of superstars working as individuals; everyone focused on their own contribution and blaming one another for their collective failures. LeBron James even went so far as to make it sound as if it's all his to win or lose saying, “Until you stomp me out, cut my head off, bury me 12 feet under, then I got a chance. So that's my confidence.” Notice that he didn't talk about the team, he talked about himself. He did not mention the team's chances, but his own. So what you have is a team full of superstars that is in 9<sup>th</sup> place in their conference, 22.5 games behind the 1<sup>st</sup> place Suns, and 7 games under .500. The way it looks and sounds, they have no chance of changing their season's outcome unless they fundamentally shift their focus to the team and a common goal. The Washington Nationals did this in 2019. At the end of May, they were 4<sup>th</sup> place in their division, 12 games under .500, and had a less than 0.01% chance of winning the World Series. However, they collectively shifted their focus to a team first perspective and finished the season on a 72-38 run, winning the World Series. This focus on the organization, rather than self, led them to all be more successful.

This same idea, to focus on the needs of others and of the Church as a whole, is what Paul is calling the Philippian Christians to as well. He is telling them to drop their focus on their own needs and their own sufferings and to consider one another as more important than themselves. Paul says that if all these core gifts of the Holy Spirit, encouragement, fellowship, love, affection, and mercy, exist and are readily available to believers, then we are to show that, not as benefit to ourselves, but as benefit to others. In doing so, he gives us an awesome definition and practical application of humility as well. He says that humility is, at its foundation, an outpouring of all those gifts in the way we think about and treat others. If we truly lean into love, mercy, fellowship, encouragement, and affection, we will naturally view the needs of others as greater than our own and we will serve them sacrificially.

Remembering that this letter is written specifically to Christians, this humility is the foundation of all of our relationships with other believers. It is true of our marriages. When we focus on our own needs and how they are not being met by our spouse, then we will not serve them either and we see the outcome of that in culture, that our marriages flounder and fail. If both spouses shift that focus to the needs of the other and serve those, even at a neglect of our own needs, marriages thrive. The same is true of our friendships, small groups, and local church bodies. We easily see how this lack of humility has led to the downfall of so many churches, specifically.

However, even in our relationships with non-believers, it's easy to see how this attitude towards others acts as a witness to the faith we have in Christ. A broken and fallen world naturally looks out for its own self-interests; pride, the opposite of humility, is the root of all sin. When Christians live humbly, sacrificially meeting the needs of others, the world takes notice and that gives us a chance to tell them about new life found only in Jesus. We have to live and look like Christ or we run the risk of living and looking like the world.

## Read Also:

Matthew 22:34-40

Luke 10:25-37

Proverbs 11:2

Colossians 3:12-17

Romans 5:8

John 3:16

1 Corinthians 7:1-16

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- Define humility. Define pride. How do these stand in contrast?
- What is context? Why is it important to remember the audience and context for the letters/books of the Bible?
- What is authorial intent? Define presuppositions. How do our presuppositions get in the way of us understanding authorial intent?
- Define sacrifice.

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- How are you currently serving your spouse? How can you do better? If you are single, how are you preparing yourself spiritually for serving your future spouse?
- Are you currently serving in the church? Why or why not? Where can you serve that you are not now? Who are you going to talk to in order to get started?
- How are you currently sacrificial in your finances, time, and talents? Can you be more sacrificial?
- How does God's love for us set the example of the love we are to have for one another?
- What are the "one anothers" mentioned so often in Scripture? Is this different from "your neighbors" that are also mentioned often? Why or why not?
- When is a time you saw a lack of common purpose derail a team? How can we protect against this in the church?
- What is a specific way that you can use Christian humility to open doors to share the gospel?
- How does looking "interests of others" also benefit us?
- What is a practical need that you can meet in the life of another right now?
- This passage specifically mentions "encouragement in Christ" and "fellowship with the Spirit." Why the qualifiers on these statements? Does it change the way we approach service, sacrifice, and humility?

Week of Monday, March 28, 2022

## Philippians 2:5-11

*5 Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, 6 who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. 7 Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, 8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death — even to death on a cross. 9 For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow — in heaven and on earth and under the earth — 11 and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. -- Philippians 2:5-11 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

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# Weekly Devotional

*“Does God ask us to do what is beneath us? This question will never trouble us again if we consider the Lord of heaven taking a towel and washing feet.”*

– Elisabeth Elliot

I would guess that every person, believers, and non-believers alike, who have some knowledge of Jesus Christ could find an attribute about his earthly ministry they desire to imitate. Many would look at his ability to teach and engage people from so many different backgrounds and want to be like that. Others would point to the way he healed the sick and desire to have that ability. I wonder though how many would desire to imitate the humility of Christ. How many would desire to take the path less noticed that often offers no human praise or recognition. What we would discover is those things most people might desire to imitate about Christ, are those things that would bring them personal glory.

There are many examples of Jesus humbling himself in the gospels with the greatest being what Paul writes about in our passage this week, “he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:8 CSB) When you unpack the layers of meaning in that statement it is staggering. God, who spoke our world into existence, willingly stepped into this same creation as a man. He was born into humble circumstances, to live a humble existence, to willingly subject himself to abuse and torture and a most cruel death. This was not some easy death surrounded only by those who loved him, but a death on the cross, a most painful, degrading, humiliating way to die, considered one of the most shameful ways to die in that period. This is Jesus, the perfect God man, our creator, our sustainer, humbles himself to also become our redeemer.

We consider this awesome example of humility for our Lord and should be moved to be more like him. Humility like most things God requires of us begins in the heart. It began when we first came to Christ, in humility understanding we had no way to save ourselves and was fully dependent on him for our salvation. This same spirit of humility must characterize the remainder of our lives as we walk with Christ. This means recognizing false humility that is weirdly disguised pride with the goal of promoting ourselves. You cannot outwardly force a display of humility and truly expect this to become transformational for your life. True humility is inspired by a desire to see God glorified rather than seeking praise for ourselves. It must begin with an examination of our heart and a desire to ensure that our motivations for the way we think, speak and act come from a true desire to serve and esteem others above ourselves. While this pursuit will never be perfected in this lifetime, it will shift our motivation behind why we behave the way we do and how we view others. It will also free us to really serve others with no ulterior motives.

I work for a large company that is big on promoting acts of service in the community. They track the total number of hours that each employee spends serving, and this data is used to promote our workforce as one focused on volunteering. I often wonder would this same company be so willing to allow people during normal working hours go and serve if there was no way to promote this as part of their corporate citizenship campaign. While I can’t answer that question, I can apply that to my own life and the reason I serve.

The next time I am considering serving in some capacity, would I be willing to do this if no one ever knew about it. Am I only serving in this way so that I will get noticed? Is it truly an act of humble service that primarily desires to place others above myself and walk in obedience to God? This doesn’t mean that we should only seek those opportunities that largely go unnoticed, but it does mean we should seriously consider them when they come our way.

– Contributed by Eric Foster



## Read Also:

John 19

Luke 22:24-27

Proverbs 12

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- What is Biblical Humility?
- What does Paul mean by “he emptied himself”?
- Did Jesus diminish His divine power to become a man?
- What is the hypostatic union?
- How can Jesus be God and man at the same time?
- What passage(s) would you use to confirm the deity of Christ?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- Who is an example of true humility in your life?
- What does it mean for us to have the same attitude of Christ?
- How can the attitude of Christ be developed in us each day? What prevents us from having His attitude?
- How does this attitude impact the way we serve others?
- How would this impact our unity as believers?

Week of Monday, April 18, 2022

## Philippians 2:12-18

*12 Therefore, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose. 14 Do everything without grumbling and arguing, 15 so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world, 16 by holding firm to the word of life. Then I can boast in the day of Christ that I didn't run or labor for nothing. 17 But even if I am poured out as a drink offering on the sacrificial service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 In the same way you should also be glad and rejoice with me. -- Philippians 2:12-18 (CSB)*

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# Weekly Devotional

*“Integrity is choosing your thoughts and actions based on values rather than personal gain.”*

– Chris Karcher

As believers we are called to have a faith that is more than just an outward show of Christian values we display in front of certain people. A genuine faith in Jesus Christ should be the driving force of our life, a force that shapes our inner attitudes as well as our outward behavior. How do we come about that faith? In verse 12 and 13 we see Paul mention almost two entirely different thoughts. The first being that “we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.” In the next verse it says “for it is God who works in you...” Is it all God’s doing, the believer’s doing, or a combination of both? John McArthur says, “Paul is not referring to salvation by works, but he is referring to the believer’s responsibility for active pursuit of obedience. The principle of working out salvation pertains to personal conduct, to faithful, obedient daily living.”

Christian life is not passively waiting for God to supernaturally and instantly transform us. When a person comes to faith in Jesus, they are called to a life of obedience. We are meant to build our entire lives around spending time with Him, getting to know Him. By letting God work in us, we are opening our hearts to the Holy presence of God and allowing Him to change us. We sacrifice, get out of our comfort zones, become more disciplined, and put into practice things God has taught us.

We are called to be a light through which God shines His love and brings good news about Jesus. Shine our light in this dark and twisted generation that is full of outrage and complaining, negativism, pessimism, and hopelessness. A world where all we see is grumbling. When we lose focus and start to believe in lies, we become subject to fear, shame, and darkness. Stop! Shine as the light of the world. How? Hold fast to the Word of Life. The Gospel. Count others as more significant than yourself, humble yourself, serve others, spend time with God.

Paul wanted nothing more than to leave behind a band of people that shined so bright in the dark sky and faith so strong that we are filled with the joy of the Lord always!

Do your inner attitudes match your actions and vice-versa? Do you have different standards of behavior when you are with different people? Is your faith in Jesus the driving force in your life? Is your light shining? Do you feel intimidated by non-believers?

– Contributed by Lindsey Williams

## Read Also:

Romans 8

Colossians 3

2 Timothy 4:6-8

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- What does Paul mean by “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”? Does that mean we can save ourselves?
- Paul says that God is working His will and purpose in us. What does that teach us about sanctification?
- What does “blameless and pure” mean? Does that mean that we can be sinless?
- What role do pastors play in the sanctification of believers? What is Paul telling us about how your conduct impacts the spiritual life and work of pastors?
- What is the mortification of sin? How do we accomplish that?
- What is a drink offering? How did Jesus fulfill this? What does Paul mean by saying “even if I am poured out as a drink offering on the sacrificial service of your faith”?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- What is something that you find yourself grumbling and complaining about?
- If you have kids, how do you feel about their complaining or their fighting? How does that give us a glimpse of how God feels about us?
- If arguing and confrontation on social media does not change hearts and minds, why do so many Christians do it consistently?
- If purity is not just an outward expression, but an inward reality, how can we ensure that we are truly pure and not just putting on a good face for others?
- What is the difference in information and transformation? Which is the greater? What value does each hold in the life of a Christian? What is the difference in someone who knows all about Jesus and someone who knows Jesus?
- Talk about a time that you had a lot of knowledge about something, but when you actually experienced it, realized that your knowledge only held so much value.
- What does self-denial, dying to yourself, and sacrifice look like in the life of the Christian: individually? within the whole of the Christian church?

Week of Monday, April 25, 2022

## Philippians 2:19–30

*19 Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon so that I too may be encouraged by news about you. 20 For I have no one else like-minded who will genuinely care about your interests; 21 all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know his proven character, because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son with a father. 23 Therefore, I hope to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 I am confident in the Lord that I myself will also come soon. 25 But I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus — my brother, coworker, and fellow soldier, as well as your messenger and minister to my need — 26 since he has been longing for all of you and was distressed because you heard that he was sick. 27 Indeed, he was so sick that he nearly died. However, God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 For this reason, I am very eager to send him so that you may rejoice again when you see him and I may be less anxious. 29 Therefore, welcome him in the Lord with great joy and hold people like him in honor, 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up what was lacking in your ministry to me. -- Philippians 2:19–30 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

## Weekly Devotional

“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has always been the reward for what he gave.” – Calvin Coolidge

I was listening to a video clip earlier this year speaking about the selection process used by Navy Seals. In Seal Training, there are individual benchmarks and metrics for each person – firearms proficiency, physical fitness, intelligence, etc. And while performance in those areas is highly sought after, there is one category that is both immaterial in measure and also the most highly sought-after trait, so much so that the Seal Teams will choose lower performing candidates that have it, over higher performing candidates that don't. “What is it?” you may ask. Simply, it is the willingness to go and help other candidates who are struggling with a task.

In the first 12 verses of Chapter 2 of Philippians, Paul went on to pen some of the most important words in regard to the interactions of Christians, and even more so to those in ministry. “Look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.” Those words were words that were specifically studied by myself and four others in a mission trip I attended last year, and still resonate with the time and memories made. The importance of those words further contextualizes the closing of chapter 2 – as the Paul puts forth the names of two men – Timothy and Epaphroditus – who will be sent to Philippi, describing how they embody that sentiment.

Timothy is mentioned throughout the New Testament, and his relationship with Paul is very well defined – Timothy was, for all intents and purposes, the surrogate son of Paul. He co-authored several of his letters, was with him on his journeys, and suffered many of the same fates as Paul – having been persecuted and imprisoned with him. We know from Paul's letters to him that he was fairly young – and yet he was Paul's go-to-guy in getting a task done. Historically, commentators have inferred that Timothy was reserved, and there is some debate as to how true the description of “timid Timothy” is. And yet, if true, Paul still entrusted him to go where there was conflict and threat of persecution.

You see, regardless of his natural disposition, Timothy was literally described by Paul as one-of-a-kind. He had genuine concern towards those in Philippi, where he first suffered for the Gospel with Paul in Acts chapter 16. In the end, it is irrelevant as to whether Timothy was deserving of the moniker of “timid,” because as Paul implies, others sought the interest of themselves – but Timothy sought the interest of Christ.

Likewise Epaphroditus description is equally important. Brother: denoting a closeness and loyalty towards Paul. Fellow worker: willing to labor and put forth equal amounts as effort as anyone else accompanying him. Finally, soldier: willing to risk the danger and peril that came with preaching the Gospel in the Roman Empire. Epaphroditus was native to Philippi and was dispatched to Paul by the Philippians to give him a gift and message. He proved his worth to Paul in such a way to be described as previously mentioned. We can see that he had deep connections in this community as well; it's clear the church in Philippi was afraid for him due to his illness, and Epaphroditus was concerned with their emotional well-being.

But let's not forget Paul, who though imprisoned, knowing he could be sentenced to death at any moment, sends out these men from his company to aid in lifting the spirits of the Philippian church and assist with the ministry of the Gospel. Nor should we forget the Philippians themselves, who have been partnered with Paul in his ministry since the first day, as described in chapter 1, and have financially supported him as well as being constant in prayer – and sent Epaphroditus to him.

Currently, Living Hope Church Columbus is going through the process of nominating and electing deacons and elders – two groups explicitly mentioned as part of the audience of this letter. While elsewhere in scripture we find direct qualifications for those positions, it is telling that from what we know of these men – that Paul would instruct the church to greet them with honor.

The application of this passage is simple and can be laid out in a single sentence – Honor such men and strive to become like them. – *Contributed by Jon Drown, pastoral intern at Living Hope Church Columbus*

## Read Also:

Acts 16:1-10

Romans 15:1-13

2 Timothy 3

James 2:14-26

1 Corinthians 11:1

1 Timothy 5:17-25

Hebrews 13

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- What is biblical leadership?
- What is the doctrine of lesser magistrates? Is it biblical? How would this look in our lives?
- Define friendship. What does biblical friendship look like?
- Define fellowship. How does this compare and contrast to hospitality?
- What is character? How does the character of God inform what our character should be as image bearers?
- Define blameless. Define above reproach. How does this practically look in the life of a believer?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- Who is someone who imitates Christ? How can you imitate them as they do so?
- Describe a good leader and a bad leader that you know from your life (sports, work, home, etc). What have you learned from them about being a leader?
- Adrian Rogers once said, “Remember again the principle: We will never be over those things that God has set under us until we learn to be under those things that God has placed over us. There is strength through surrender. Are you under the Word of God? Is the Bible your mandate for life? Are you loving it, reading it, obeying it, and living it? Are you consciously filled with the Holy Spirit? Have you yielded every part of the temple of your body to him? Are you grieving him in any way? Are you graciously submitting to those human authorities that God has set over you: in the home, in the church, in civil government, and in the workplace? Have you made Jesus Christ the absolute Lord over everything in your life?” What are your thoughts? Where are you succeeding in this area? Where do you find opportunities for growth?
- If someone was going to write an honest letter to a church about you, what would they say?
- What does it look like to be a “fellow soldier” as Paul describes Epaphroditus?

Week of Monday, May 2, 2022

## Philippians 3:1-11

*1 In addition, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. To write to you again about this is no trouble for me and is a safeguard for you. 2 Watch out for the dogs, watch out for the evil workers, watch out for those who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh — 4 although I have reasons for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, a Pharisee; 6 regarding zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless. 7 But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ — the righteousness from God based on faith. 10 My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, 11 assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead. -- Philippians 3:1-11 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

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## Weekly Devotional

“There is absolutely nothing more likely to dampen the prospects of becoming rich than a nice, fat, regular salary check.”

– Felix Dennis

What is something you want more than just about anything in the world? Don't give me the Sunday School answer. Really, think outside your faith or something about your kids' happiness or health. What is something else that you want really bad? Is it financial security? Is it health? Is it a college degree in a new field? Is it to travel the world? Maybe it's that dream home or car. Regardless of what it is, what is standing in the way of you getting it? What do you have to give up in order to gain what it is you want most? For financial security, it might mean working a job you don't love for the stability of a steady paycheck. For wealth, it might mean giving up the steady paycheck to take a big risk as an entrepreneur. For health, you might lose downtime by going to the gym, lose the convenience of fast food for dinners cooked at home, or, perhaps, lose the comfort of alcohol and drugs. To travel, you might lose opportunities to be with extended family or lose the spacious home in exchange for a smaller apartment that you can afford. Regardless of what we gain or desire to gain in life, there is a cost to it; we will lose one or more things in order to gain another thing. The question is always, “Is the loss worth the gain?”

For Paul, there was never any doubt that the loss was exceeded by the gain. Paul was the Jew's Jew. He gives us his resume in this passage. He tells us all the things that placed him as the elite among the Jews. Paul, in his new birth in Christ, at his salvation, he lost all of those things. He lost the power, the status, the protection, the future income, the prosperity, the comfort, and the education that were assured if he were to remain in what he had. However, he lost every bit of it. For many of us, that would be a devastating blow. As one who had been active in the persecution of the church, literally in the pursuit of Christians when he encountered the True and Living Savior, Paul was well aware that life as a Christian was going to offer no promises of safety for his own life and future. Yet, still, Paul said that all he lost was “dung” in comparison to all that he gained in Jesus.

When we lose our own sense of righteousness through our own good works, we gain the righteousness of Jesus. Jesus imputes his righteousness to us. That means that Jesus credits his righteousness to our account as if it's our own, as if we had earned it ourselves. When we place those things on the scale, there is no way to measure how far his righteousness outweighs our own. It can only be looked at through the lens of what we gained in comparison to what we lost. We lost the wrath of God and gained His promises of hope, grace, and eternity. We lost a works-based salvation in trade for a grace freely given through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We have gained joy and peace in place of shame, guilt, and anxiety. What we have gained in Christ is far greater than all that we lost without him. Even those things that we counted as great in this world, they are dung when placed beside all that we gain in Christ.

## Read Also:

Matthew 13:44-46

Psalm 16

Galatians 2:20

Romans 2:25-29

Romans 3:21-26

Acts 9

Matthew 7:13-23

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- What is the covenant of circumcision? What is circumcision of the heart?
- Define a false teacher. How do we identify them? What does it mean when Jesus calls false teachers wolves in sheep's clothing? How does Satan use false teachers? What is he trying to do by using them?
- Define zeal. What would biblical zeal look like in our lives? What are some dangers associated with zeal?
- What is a pharisee?
- What is imputed righteousness? How does this come through faith?
- What is the mortification of sin?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- What do you want more than anything in this world? What stands in the way of you getting that? What would you have to give up in order to get it? What's stopped you from doing that to this point? What does that tell you about what really matters to you?
- What is the greatest danger to the church (global and local)? Why do you say that?
- What is something that you lost in becoming a Christian? What impact has this had on your life? How do you view that loss?
- What does verse 11 mean? Is Paul saying that there is no assurance of salvation?
- Is your life a reflection of the righteousness of Christ that was imputed to us? Why or why not? What do you need to repent of and how can you do that?
- John Owen famously wrote, "Be killing sin or sin will be killing you." How do you kill sin?
- What areas of your flesh (life, work, etc) you are confident in? Is this confidence a godly one or one of pride? How do you know?

Week of Monday, May 9, 2022

## Philippians 3:12-21

*12 Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, 14 I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus. 15 Therefore, let all of us who are mature think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this also to you. 16 In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained. 17 Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us. 18 For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame; and they are focused on earthly things. 20 Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself. -- Philippians 3:12-21 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

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## Weekly Devotional

“Imitation is not just the sincerest form of flattery – it is the sincerest form of learning.”  
– George Bernard Shaw

It has been widely recognized that one of the greatest sports commercials of all time is the “Be Like Mike” Gatorade commercial. It also happens to be one of my personal favorites. In the commercial, you see clips of Michael Jordan making some of his most well-known and signature plays. Mixed in with those clips, you see him playing basketball with kids and adults. There are moments where you see everyday people playing basketball and emulating his movements, including the trademark tongue hanging out of his mouth. I remember as a kid watching that commercial and relating with it very personally. I had a desire to be like Mike myself. In fact, if you watch me do anything that requires physical exertion, you will likely see me sticking my tongue out just a little bit. By imitating Michael Jordan long enough, I picked up some of his habits and adopted them as my own. Imitation is a powerful means of learning. We see it in our kids when they are still infants and toddlers. They pick up our best and our worst habits. My kids are impatient with slow drivers when we get behind them on country roads. They must get that from their mother (wink, wink).

Paul tells us to imitate him and others of strong faith in this passage when he says “Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us.” This echoes what he says twice in 1 Corinthians. We have to be careful reading this to recognize that he is not calling on his readers to follow him. He is calling for us to imitate him as he follows Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1 puts it this way, “Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ.” Paul is telling us to imitate him, only so far as he imitates Christ. This passage in Philippians is taking that a step further and telling us to imitate others as well.

We are not to follow Paul or others, but to imitate them as far as they imitate Christ in knowledge that their citizenship is in heaven, not of this world. Those of this world live in such a way that their lives are evidence of their own destruction. “Their glory is in their shame.” We see that all over the world today where those who live in direct opposition to Scripture flaunt their shameful behavior as points of pride. Even the names of some of their shame is glorified by them; Pride Parades, Pride Month, and so on. Even outside sexual sin, there are those who glory in the shame of their gluttony by building a massive social media presence where they overindulge in food, up to 20,000 calories in a single sitting for the “viewing enjoyment” of their followers.

Imitate Paul. Follow Jesus. Live according to the Scriptures that were written by man but inspired and given by God. That means imitating the way that Paul faces his suffering, because he is imitating the way that Jesus faced his. Imitate his desire pursuit of holiness, because he is imitating the way Jesus was holy. Jesus is the standard, and others, like Paul, are living examples of that standard for us to imitate as we reach forward towards the goal of God.

## Read Also:

1 Corinthians 4:14-21

1 Corinthians 11:1

Luke 10:21-24

Romans 1

2 Timothy 4:6-8

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- What is the “goal” mentioned in v12?
- What is perfection? Is it attainable?
- Define sovereignty. What does it mean that God is sovereign? Is there anything outside the control or power of God? How does the sovereignty of God impact your daily life?
- Define soteriology. What is the role of God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility in soteriology?
- What is spiritual maturity? What are some marks of it?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- What does it mean to be a citizen of heaven? How does that tell us how to live while on earth?
- Who is someone you’ve always imitated? What about them made them imitation worthy? Who is someone you know that you can imitate their life of faith?
- Why is it important to distinguish between imitation and following?
- How do we see sinful imitation in the world? What is the danger of imitating the wrong things or the wrong people?
- What does v19 mean?
- What are some sins that the world glorifies? How has the church been right or wrong in how they addressed these things?
- Why do you think Paul was writing with tears as he stated in v18? Does that tell us anything about what we are to imitate from him?
- How do you “make every effort to take hold of” the goal and perfection? What steps do you need to take as you make that effort?

Week of Monday, May 16, 2022

## Philippians 4:1-9

*1 So then, my dearly loved and longed for brothers and sisters, my joy and crown, in this manner stand firm in the Lord, dear friends. 2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 Yes, I also ask you, true partner, to help these women who have contended for the gospel at my side, along with Clement and the rest of my coworkers whose names are in the book of life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable — if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy — dwell on these things. 9 Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. -- Philippians 4:1-9 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

## Weekly Devotional

“A rejoicing heart soon makes a praising tongue.”  
– Charles Spurgeon

Jonathan Evans, son of Pastor Tony Evans, eulogized his mother with a powerful sermon. He said, “And as I was wrestling with God, He answered me. He said ‘Number one, you don’t understand the nature of my victory. Because, just because I didn’t answer your prayer your way doesn’t mean I haven’t already answered your prayer anyway. Because victory was already given to your mom. You don’t understand. Because of the victory I have given you, there was always only two answers to your prayers. Either she was going to be healed, or she was going to be healed. Either she was gonna live, or she was gonna live. Either she was gonna be with family, or she was gonna be with family. Either she was gonna be well taken care of, or she was gonna be well taken care of. Victory belongs to me!’” Wow! With a serious focus on the purposes, plans, and promises of God, there can only be rejoicing and praising, even in the midst of very dark times. The Evans family buried their mom just one year after their beloved niece and cousin, Wynter, passed away unexpectedly in her sleep at the age of 38. The day after the funeral of Lois Evans, Priscilla Shirer, Evans family daughter and sister, was undergoing major surgery to have an entire lobe of her lung removed. Yet in those moments, the Evans family chose to rejoice.

Paul writes, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” But, does he really mean “always?” As in all the time? What about those times in life where there seems to be nothing but pain, heartache, and anger? As we all know from observation and experience, there are times in life where the darkness seems to be overwhelming. In those moments, we have a choice: we can allow the darkness to stifle our joy, or we can rejoice anyway. The option we choose will hinge on where we place our hope and our joy. In order to rejoice anyway, we have to find our joy in Christ. We have to look upon him and know that we have been given victory by his death and resurrection. The victory over the hurt and sin of this world has already been won and it is ours to claim in Christ. When you place your joy in that, there is nothing in this world that can strip that from you; regardless of what other emotions accompany the joy.

Happiness is a wonderful thing. However, it is fleeting and dependent upon circumstances. Joy, on the other hand, is eternal and fixed on Christ. I once heard it put as, “Happiness is based on happenings. Joy is found in Jesus.” That is why it drives me crazy to hear parents say, “I just want my kids to be happy.” That is setting them up for failure. It is impossible to be happy all the time, because we are going to go through things that make us sad, angry, or any emotion other than happy. It is impossible to look at abortion and be happy. It is impossible to go through the sudden loss of a loved one and be happy. However, joy can withstand all those things when we rest in Christ. Joy > Rejoicing > Praising. Give glory to God always, no matter what or when.

## Read Also:

1 Corinthians 16:13-14  
Ephesians 6:10-20  
Galatians 5:16-26  
Luke 10:17-20  
Psalm 118  
Psalm 9:1-2  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- Define rejoice. How does rejoicing lead to praising? How does this glorify God?
- What is the book of life?
- Describe the “peace of God.”
- Who are Euodia and Syntyche and why is Paul seemingly calling them out?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- When have you struggled to rejoice? How did that lack of rejoicing impact your outlook on the circumstances?
- When is a time that you were not happy but were still joyful?
- How would you describe the difference between joy and happiness? How do you know which you are experiencing?
- How do we dwell on these things found in v8 when there is turmoil, temptation, and sin abounding in the world around us and within us?
- We are told often throughout Scripture “do not worry” and “do not be anxious.” Are worry and anxiety sins? Why or why not?
- How do you reach forward, press towards the goal, and other commands given to us in Scripture, but also “stand firm?”
- Describe moral excellence. Who do you know that exhibits moral excellence? What can you learn from them about how to live a Christ-honoring life?



Week of Monday, May 23, 2022

## Philippians 4:10-23

*10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because once again you renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it. 11 I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. 12 I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content — whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. 13 I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me. 14 Still, you did well by partnering with me in my hardship. 15 And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that is increasing to your account. 18 But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided — a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, 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 glory forever and ever. Amen. 21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you greetings. 22 All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. -- Philippians 4:10-23 (CSB)*

## HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

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## Weekly Devotional

“All the misfortunes of men spring from their not knowing how to live quietly at home in their own rooms.”  
– Blaise Pascal

Paul in the closing of his letter to the church at Philippi writes “I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need.” (Philippians 4:12) Here he touches on what may be the most elusive concept to those outside of Christ, true contentment. I’m sure most everyone has wrestled with contentment at some point in their life. For many it is that dream of more money and all the stuff that comes with it. We look at our lives and what we have and then to the lives of those wealthier and long to be able to obtain that same level of wealth. Some perhaps motivated by this desire put in hours, weeks, months, and even years working towards that. Sadly, many never really reach that ultimate goal of fulfillment and contentment and are constantly reaching for the next big thing. Others already have the wealth or fame, and many times find themselves envious of those who have a much simpler life, if only they could have a less stuff that got in the way of a more normal quiet life.

What most people miss is that true lasting contentment has nothing to do with our stuff, or position, or even human relationships. We can be content with those things but not because of them. Even Paul at some point had to work through this process as he writes that he “...learned the secret of being content...”. This insight helps us understand that our fallen nature pushes us towards the pursuit of this in the wrong direction through the wrong things. This understanding helps us see that contentment is only truly possible through the new birth of a believer in Christ, that in our new nature we must keep our focus on the source of this true fulfillment.

The first step towards this type of contentment began when we placed our faith in Christ. As hard as one might try there is no other way to fully experience sustainable contentment other than through Jesus. Every other pursuit will ultimately let you down and fall short. It is only through our new birth in Christ that this contentment becomes a reality. But it does not stop there as Charles Spurgeon wrote that “contentment is one of the flowers of heaven and if we would have it, it must be cultivated. It will not grow in us by nature.” So then by God’s grace as we grow in our faith, we must daily work to ensure our focus remains fixed on the eternality of Christ and not on the temporary things of this life.

Having this perspective does not mean we never work to better ourselves or improve our situation. It rather keeps us from making those things an idol in our life. Warren Wiersbe wrote that “Contentment is not complacency, nor is it a false peace based on ignorance. The complacent believer is unconcerned about others, while the contented Christian wants to share his blessings. Contentment is not escape from the battle, but rather an abiding peace and confidence in the midst of the battle.” That idea is what escapes the world, it is not when this next thing happens, then I will be content, it is I have found this in Christ, and it does not matter what comes next. For believers lasting contentment is the same as lasting joy, unmoved by this life because it is fixed on the unchanging perfection of Jesus. May our contentment in this life point others to the source of that satisfaction to the glory of our great God! – *Contributed by Eric Foster*

## Read Also:

1 Timothy 6:5-8  
2 Corinthians 9:8  
2 Corinthians 12:10  
Hebrews 13:5

## Group Discussion Questions – Theological Considerations

- What is biblical contentment?
- What is the prosperity gospel? Does this belief align with the teaching of Christ?
- What is divine providence?
- How does our view of providence impact our perspective on contentment?

## Group Discussion Questions – Digging Deeper

- Are you content? If not, what is keeping you from this? If yes, what advice do you have for the rest of the group?
- Does anything positive ever come from a spirit of discontentment in your life?
- Why is contentment such a struggle, even for those who are in Christ?
- When was the last time that you felt contentment in the middle of a difficult circumstance? How about in the middle of a joyful season?
- What can you do to develop an attitude of contentment in all circumstances?