

Philippians Bible Study

6. With what did Paul ask God to bless the Philippians in verse 2? What do those terms convey to you?

7. Who does Paul trust to complete (to perfect) the good work in the Philippians life?

8. When will it be perfected?

9. What does this say about wanting “victory over sin” or “perfect Christlikeness” over night?

In verses 7-8 Paul expresses great affection for the Philippians because they were great ministry partners with Paul and prayed for him and encouraged him while in prison.

10. Is there a person you have great affection for because of the godly support and encouragement you have received from that person? When was the last time you expressed gratitude and affection to that person?

11. What does Paul pray for in verses 9 and 10?

12. Was Paul content with the growth of the Philippians?

13. Practically speaking, is there an area of your life where you are content and say “it’s good enough?”

14. How does one’s love “abound more and more”?

15. What must you have in order to know that your life is abounding?

16. The word “approve” in verse 10 means to discern or to discriminate between things that differ. Paul calls us to grow in our ability to choose what pleases God and what doesn’t. Is there an area of your life where you need to grow in knowledge in order to know what pleases God and what doesn’t?

Days 3 & 4 (Philippians 1:12-14)

17. New Christians in Philippi loved Paul and appreciated his ministry greatly. They knew he had been jailed for 2 years. With what thoughts about God *might* they have been struggling?

18. How does Paul answer these concerns in verse 12?

19. What evidence of Paul’s claim is set forth in verse 13?

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20. What evidence does Paul set forth in verse 14?

21. What do we learn about God and trouble in verses 12-14?

22. How are you handling the “trouble” you are in currently?

23. Who was behind (or ultimately responsible for) Paul’s trouble? To what does Paul attribute his imprisonment?

24. How might you respond if you were imprisoned while serving the Lord in ministry?

25. How did Paul respond? What did he do?

NOTE: Paul desired and intended to preach the gospel. Yet, God in His sovereignty had Paul imprisoned. Paul, however, knew that God is with us in the trouble and He is up to something good. So Paul got involved. Paul preached the gospel to the whole Praetorian Guard (estimated 16,000) and the rest of the palace (est. 30,000-50,000). Soon those troops were sent to Europe where they would carry the gospel to some of our ancestors. While in prison, Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians which is now part of the New Testament. Paul got involved and part of the results he got to see, and part of the blessing he never knew in his lifetime on earth.

26. In your current trouble are you complaining or seeking to get involved in God's work knowing God is up to something good? If you are not involved identify what you can do to get involved.

Day 5 (Philippians 1:15-20)

27. Described the two types of people mentioned in verses 15-17.

28. What does this tell you to expect in times of trouble?

29. What was Paul's response to those preaching Jesus out of envy and strife?

30. How can you remain "God-focused" rather than "me-focused" in your trial? With difficult people?

Note: Paul did not condone the motivation of those preaching out of envy. The message and content of the preaching was right, but the motives of the hearts were not.

31. Based upon verses 19-20, what did Paul expect and have certain hope would transpire?

32. What resources was Paul counting on?

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33. **What did Paul want more than his own life?**

34. **Is an overwhelming desire to honor Jesus your primary concern?**

Day 6 (Philippians 1:21-26)

35. **What did Paul mean in verse 21?**

36. **What did Paul know would be the result if he continued to live in his difficult circumstances?**

37. **What did Paul know would be the result if he died?**

38. **Which did Paul think would be better for him?**

39. **Which did Paul think would be better for others?**

40. **What did Paul believe with conviction would transpire?**

41. In your current trial do you desire to live for Jesus and His glory and for the good of others or do you desire for Jesus to remove you from the trial for your own benefit?

42. How specifically can you live for Christ in your current trial?

NOTE: As Jay Adams points out, Philippians 1:27 starts a theme that is carried on through Philippians 2:13.

Day 7 (Philippians 1:27-30)

43. In verse 27, Paul instructs believers to live a life worthy of the gospel of Jesus. What does that mean?

44. One should remember we are totally dependence on Jesus for salvation (we are not worthy of being saved). Therefore, a Christian should continue to live dependent on Jesus. Where are you not living in dependence on Jesus?

45. Are you downcast, angry, depressed, frustrated or whiney? If so in what area of your life are those traits most frequently displayed?-----This is an indication you are not living dependent on the 100% dependable Jesus.

46. Does your joyful dependency on Jesus stand out to others?

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47. What trait did Paul want the Philippians to have in Verse 27?
 48. For what purpose did he want them to have that trait?
 49. Are you growing in unity with members of your church?
 50. Do you need to confess and repent of conduct that harms church unity such as speaking against elders or other church leaders, participating in gossip (remember talking negative about someone is still gossip even if true)?
 51. What are the results of unity set forth in verse 28?
- Note: If you are difficult to live with it is harder to experience the unity helpful to overcome your enemies.
52. What two things does Paul say have been granted to the Christian in verse 29?
 53. How does your view of suffering for Jesus (i.e. as a result of being a Christian) change knowing that it has been “granted to you” as an element of God’s grace?

Chapter 2

Days 8 & 9 (Philippians 2:1-8)-It is suggested that you read all of Philippians 2 through once before you answer questions on chapter 2.

54. What does Paul say would make his joy complete if in fact the Philippians were encouraged by Christ, comforted by love, unified in the Spirit and filled with affection and compassion for him?

55. Based upon your answer to the previous question, how would you display in your life what Paul is hoping for (be specific)?

56. What instruction/command does Paul give in verse 3?

57. How broad is Paul's instruction in verse 3? What caveats or "escape hatches" does Paul provide?

58. In what relationships are you repeatedly considering your interest as more important than the other person? Name names and give examples.

59. What is Paul's command (not suggestion) in verse 4? Why is this command hard for you?

60. Are you excused from the command in verse 4 if the other person is not grateful or is not as "needy" as you?

61. Remember, who are you ultimately serving by your obedience to the commands of verses 3 & 4?

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NOTE: The Bible does establish a priority of relationships in this order: 1) Your relationship to God; 2) Your relationship to your spouse; 3) Your relationship to your children; 4) Your relationship to aging parents; 5) Your relationship to your local church; 6) Your relationship to your employer or employees; and 7) finally to your own personal hobbies, pleasures etc. One must not serve one relationship to the detriment of a higher priority relationship.

62. Why do you think Paul, after his instruction in verses 3 & 4, then instructs you to have the same attitude of Jesus?

63. *From verse 6*, what do we learn about Jesus?

64. What perceived rights and privileges are you fighting for at all cost?

65. The word “emptied” in verse 7 (NASB) means “laid aside His privileges”. Write out what Jesus did after laying aside His privilege.

66. *From verses 6-8*, how is your attitude about your perceived rights and privileges like Jesus’ attitude?

67. If Jesus had had your attitude about His rights, would you have ever been saved?

Day 10 (Philippians 2:9-13)

68. How did God the Father reward Jesus for Jesus’ humble service in putting the interest of others before His own?

69. When did/will Jesus receive this reward?

70. How do your answers to the last two questions affect your thinking about you putting the interest of others above yours?

71. *From verse 12*, Paul understood that the Philippians would receive his letter before he could come see them, so what did Paul instruct them to do?

72. The Philippians were already saved (Christ-followers) so what does it mean to “work out your salvation” with fear and trembling?

NOTE: Most commentators believe that in this specific case, Paul was commanding that they put in the work to restore unity (possibly referring to the dispute in Chapter 4), and thus reflect the character of Christ which they received at salvation. Paul was instructing them to work, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to become more like Christ.

73. Even though Paul would not be there in person, what resource did he remind the Philippians they had in “working out there salvation”? (See verse 13).

74. What is the work the Holy Spirit is doing in the believer?

75. “To will and to work” makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is at work in the believer not only to have the strength to do (“to work”) what is pleasing to God but to desire (“to will”) to do what is pleasing to God. Where today do you need to “work out your salvation (growing obedience) with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit? How and when will you begin to do so? Be Specific.

Days 11 & 12 (Philippians 2:14-18)

76. What are you to do without grumbling and disputing?

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77. Where does God permit you to grumble and dispute (i.e. argue)?
78. In what area(s) of your life are you currently grumbling or disputing?
79. As a Christian, you must replace grumbling with gratitude and focus on Christ and what He has done for you. You must remember that in the situation you are working for Jesus and should be enthusiastic about that. Write a prayer to the Lord asking Him to help you when you are tempted to grumble and complain.
80. You are to do all things without “disputing” (arguing or complaining). Do you think this means you can never disagree with someone? Explain your answer. *See Proverbs 15:1*
81. What result does Paul say you will achieve if you do not grumble or dispute?
82. Where would you particularly stand out as a light in a dark work if you did everything without grumbling or arguing?

83. (verses 16-18) What is Paul's attitude about possibly dying as a result of his current situation?

84. What does Paul encourage you (us) to do in similar times of hardship?

85. Do you see hardship as an opportunity to glorify God or a reason for self-pity?

86. What truths of Scripture will you choose to remember when you are tempted to self-pity?

Day 13 (Philippians 2:19-30)

87. Paul describes Timothy in comparison to others Paul has encountered in ministry. Describe the contrast?

88. Honestly evaluate. Do you work in unity with others in ministry focusing on the needs of others or do you focus on your own interest seeing "ministry" as a job or way of self-promotion?

89. How is Epaphroditus described?

90. What had Epaphroditus done?

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91. Would you be faithful to the point of death in your service to the Lord?

Chapter 3

Day 14 (Philippians 3:1-11) It is suggested that you read all of Philippians 3 through once before you answer questions on chapter 3.

92. Remember Paul is in prison for doing the “right thing”. His circumstances are extremely difficult. Yet, what is his attitude?

93. Why is “rejoicing in the Lord” a safeguard?

94. In verses 2-3, Paul warns of “Judaizers” who were teaching that people must first become Jews before becoming Christians. Where do you need to beware that you might be receiving counsel or instruction contrary to the Bible?

95. Paul described his “pedigree” (human accomplishments) in verses 4-6. In verse 7 Paul uses accounting terms to describe them. What Paul counted as “gain” or “profit” is actually counted as “loss” or “worthless” before Jesus. Do you see your “works” as achieving status, position or favor with God?

96. What does Paul see as more valuable than any of his accomplishments?

97. Where did Paul’s righteousness before God derive?

98. What did Paul want to know more of, and experience more of?

99. Do you have this attitude about your circumstances? Do you value knowing Jesus so much better that you prefer experiencing His power in trial rather than living an easier life?

Day 15 (Philippians 3:12-21)

100. Paul's personal goal was to become more like Jesus (progressive sanctification). How did the great Apostle Paul rate himself in that category?

101. What is the "one thing" Paul does do?

102. Where do you need to forget resting on past virtuous deeds or dwelling on past forgiven sins or failures? Be specific.

103. The goal that Paul refers to is to know Jesus in all His fullness and to become more like Jesus in this life. The prize is perfect Christ-likeness in heaven and to hear Jesus say "Well done, good and faithful servant". Do you have the same goal? Do you strive for, push for, and train for the same goal?

NOTE: In verse 15, Paul encourages us that God will reveal to us where Christ-likeness is not our goal (where we have a different attitude) and then instructs us to live according to the same "standard to which we have attained". When you place faith in Jesus as your Savior, God the Father views you as pure and righteous, and your sins are blotted out. Paul calls us to actually live to this standard.

104. Where are you knowingly not living to this standard?

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105. What are you doing to learn more about God's instruction to you?

106. If you need to learn more about God's instruction to you for your life, what will you do to learn? Be specific and with dates.

107. From verse 19, how does Paul describe those who are not seeking to follow Paul's example, but rather are enemies of the cross?

108. Is this descriptive of you currently?

109. Paul encourages the Christian with the truth that our home is in heaven where we will receive new bodies that are no longer ravaged by sin but like Jesus' body. How often do you meditate on this truth?

110. What difference do you think this truth would make on your thinking, attitude and actions if you were mindful of this truth during your trials and/or temptations?

Chapter 4

Days 16 & 17 (Philippians 4:1-11) It is suggested that you read all of Philippians 4 through once before you answer questions on chapter 4.

111. Paul again refers to the church fondly (my joy and crown) but then after speaking generally about unity he confronts two ladies in dispute. Where are you not living in harmony?

112. Paul also appears to call on the teaching elder ("true companion") to counsel the two women to reconcile. This emphasizes that the public teaching of the Word of God is not enough. It must also be practically applied. Where are you not living out the teaching you know you have received? Be specific; don't simply say "I could do better at all of it".

113. What are the people instructed to do in verses 4-5?
114. What is the reason for this instruction in verse 5?
115. There are two commandments in verse 6. A “don’t” and a “do”. What are they?
116. Do you understand that worry and anxiety are sin?
117. Why is worry sin? (Read Matt 6:25-34)
118. What are the instructions concerning prayer in verse 6? Break down each component?
119. Prayer is to be fervent (continued and in everything), specific (make your request known) and with thanksgiving. Are you thanking God for the problems you pray about (not for the pain but for what He is doing in the situation)?
120. What is the promise in verse 7 if you have prayed as instructed in verse 6?

NOTE: A person may pray as commanded in verse 6, yet not experience the peace promised in verse 7. Verse 8 also instructs us that to experience peace one has to think differently. Each of the words used in verse 8 have significance. Please see the excellent resource from the Bible Study *Scriptural Salve for Your Soul* ©2010 at the end of this study for an explanation of these terms. When you are tempted to be anxious or fearful about a situation, use the attached to develop a “Think List” to help you think accurately about God, you and your circumstances.

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121. Paul says in order to experience peace, one must pray right (v7), think right (v8) and what else from verse 9?

122. Verse 9 makes it clear that peace follows practicing what we have been taught. What is the difference between saying you should “do” something vs. saying you should “practice” something?

Day 18 (Philippians 4:10-23)

123. From verses 11 & 12 how did Paul come to know “to be content in whatever circumstances” and “the secret of being filled and going hungry”?

124. How does the fact that Paul came to know these things as a learning process encourage you? Challenge you?

125. What words used by Paul in verse 12 indicate that the learning process is difficult?

126. From verse 13, where did Paul get the strength to learn contentment in these hard circumstances?

NOTE: Philippians 4:13 is frequently quoted out of context. The verse does not mean you can do anything you want, but it does mean Jesus will give you the strength to please Him in all circumstances.

127. In what current hard circumstances do you need Jesus strength to please God?

128. What do you need to do in Jesus strength in those hard circumstances in order to please God?

129. In the balance of chapter 4, Paul thanks the Philippians for their generosity and faithfulness to them. Will you thank someone today who has been faithful and generous to you with their time and/or resources?

130. Who can you encourage with your time, effort and resources? Will you do so this week?

Lesson 5 resource on Philippians 4:8

True=whatever is real as opposed to whatever is fake, or true as opposed to false

Is it true?—Or is what I'm thinking a lie, a rumor, a suspicion? Am I entertaining facts...or hearsay...or speculation? Am I second-guessing or reading between the lines? And most importantly, is what I'm thinking true to God's character and His Word?

What is REALLY true about the situation and what am I imagining?

What is true of this situation and about myself, from a biblical perspective? (1 Cor 10:13, Gal 5:17, Phil 4:19, James 1:13)

Is what I'm thinking true about God, particularly His Fatherly care for me?

Am I ascribing a sinful motive to someone w/o actually knowing their motive?

Honorable= seriousness; non-frivolous; Proper motives, proper manners, proper morals; worthy of reputation or honor

Think about what is worthy of awe and adoration and respect—the sacred as opposed to the profane; seriousness of purpose; important; opposite of trivial; **Priority check: My greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important; schedule & plan**

Is it noble?—Is this thought dignified and excellent? Is it my best, highest thought? Or is it shoddy, second-rate, cheap, beneath the dignity that should characterize everything about my life as a Christian...including this thought? Is it sacred, or is it profane? Is it unworthy of me as God's child and of the person it's aimed at? Better yet, does it have the decency and dignity of holiness upon it? Does my thought reflect the knowledge that He is wonderful, kind, loving, wise, and powerful? Does my thought put another person in the best possible light?

What can I do that will give the most honor to the Lord? (1 Cor 10:31, Col 1:10, 1 Thess 5:17, 22, Heb 4:14-16)

Right/Just= things which are right between man and man; observing divine laws; justice; Thinking from God's point of view and doing the right thing, the God-approved thing

Is it just?—Is this a right and righteous thought, lining up with the regulations of God's truth (His will and law)? Is this thought in harmony with God's divine standard of holiness? Is it encouraging me to do what is right toward my fellow man, to follow through on my duties and responsibilities, to live up to God's Word and His guidelines for my life? Is it just and fair towards others? Does it injure or defraud their reputation?

What is God's perspective on my situation?

What is the right thing for me to do in this situation that would please God?

What is the right way for me to respond to the temptation? (Ps 119:11, Matt 4:4-10)

Pure=holy as being free from admixture of evil or separate from it as in holy; clean things, thoughts, words, and deeds; dwell on morally pure and undefiled things

The most pure thoughts possible are thoughts of God and His Word (Ps 19:8). Examples: Consider what great things He has done. Also Ps 19:7-1; Scripture memorization

Is it pure?—Is what I'm thinking holy, spotless, wholesome, completely without sin? Could this thought be brought into the presence of God? Does my thought cast doubt on God's goodness or the truth of His promise? Does it elevate my own importance or desire?

What does the Bible say about my situation?

What must I do to keep myself pure in this situation?

What steps should I take to flee from this temptation? (2 Tim 2:22, 1 Pet 3:8-16, 1 John 3:3)

Lovely= acceptable, pleasing, winsome; Adapted to excite love, and to endear him who does such things; that which inspires brotherly (phileo) love; planning or concentration which will bring about a loving act

Is it lovely?—Is this a thought of 100% moral and spiritual beauty, or is it tainted with vileness and evil? Is it gracious? Is it set on that which is kind and forbearing, or is it critical and harmful? Do my thoughts flow from a heart filled with tenderness and affection for the Lord and bring Him pleasure?

What can I do that would be lovely in this situation? Is it attractive?

What lovely thing could the Lord be doing in my life through this very situation?

What opportunities is God giving me to show His character to others? (Rom 8:28-29)

Good report= 1) sounding or speaking well 2) uttering words of good omen, speaking auspiciously well spoken of, i.e. reputable: attractive; fair speaking; winning and gracious; that which is highly regarded or well thought of in the world at large

Searches for the good rather than the bad in another; opposite of fault-finding; focus on the ground gained, not where they ought to be

Is it of good report?—If someone else were privy to this thought, would that person think it was commendable? Would it speak well of me and of the one thought about? Is this thought worthy of being contemplated, let alone of being verbalized? Is it kind and gracious, high-toned, and directed at the fine, good things in others? Are my thoughts grounded in faith?

What good can I find in the one causing me pain?

How can I follow the example of Xt in this situation as His ambassador? (2Cor 5:20, 1Pet 2:21-23)

Virtue= moral goodness

Give and do my best; don't be spread too thin; Did I do my best? Why not?

Is there any virtue?—Is this vein of thinking filled with all moral excellence? Will it motivate me to live a better life for Christ? Is it commendable even to my own conscience?

What can I do to keep a clear conscience and show myself blameless right now? (2 Cor 1:12, Phil 2:14-16, 3:13-16)

Do my thoughts cause me to be fearful or do they fill my heart with courage and strong commitment to virtuous living?

Praise= worthy of praise

Think on good qualities and actions of God

Is it praiseworthy?—Would this thought merit the praise of others? Of God? If this thought were verbalized, would it pass the test of the Bible's guidelines? Would it meet with God's approval? Would my thoughts bring Him glory?

In this situation, for what can I praise the Lord? (2 Cor 1:3-5, Col 3:16-17, Heb 13:15)

Think=esteem them highly, recommend them heartily, and practice them fervently (Clarke)

Let them be the object of your careful attention and study, so as to practice them. Think what they are; think on the obligation to observe them; think on the influence which they would have on the world around you. (Barnes' notes)

This material has been gathered from the following sources:

Life Management for Busy Women, Elizabeth George, Harvest House Publishers, 2002.

In the Arena of the Mind, John Vandegriff, Ask, Seek, and Knock Publishing, 1992.

Self Confrontation Manual, John C. Broger, Biblical Counseling Foundation, Palm Desert, CA, 1991.