



**PAUL'S LETTER TO THE  
PHILIPPIANS**

**& FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL**

# PHILIPPIANS

## Introduction

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Welcome to *Paul's Letter to the Philippians & Fellowship in the Gospel!*

Philippians is a book filled with memorable truths and promises...

*"...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus..." (1:6)*

*"...For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain..." (1:21)*

*"...Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus..." (2:3-5)*

*"...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling..." (2:12)*

*"...Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe..." (2:14, 15)*

*"...But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ..." (3:7)*

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things..." (4:6-8)*

Together this book forms a beautiful and engrossing picture of what the Christian life *must* be. Paul—possibly the most radical believer the world has known—concludes this book by saying, *"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice."* No Christian should study this book and remain unscathed.

Study this well. Gaze deeply, steadily into its message. Ask God to give you the courage to live it out. Ask God to give you whatever it was that He gave Paul.

*"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* Paul

# PHILIPPIANS

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# PHILIPPIANS

## How to do this study

This study of Philippians will basically be an *inductive* study; i.e., you will be using several study tools, which will enable you to discover the meaning of each passage and the entire book. This type of study will help you gain a firmer grasp on the Scripture through self-discovery. It will also prepare you to be a strong student of the Word for the rest of your life. Below we will give you an introduction to these study tools.

The first study will actually *not* be inductive, but, rather, will be a guided look at the background of the church in Philippi using other Scriptures, which refer to it. The Philippian church's origins are dramatic and looking at them will help you better understand the message of Paul's letter to this church. Also, Paul refers to this church in his second letter to the church in Corinth. This, too, gives us insight into the letter we are studying, as it serves as a small progress report for the Philippian church. Together, these sections will help set the stage for our study, along with the historical background section that precedes them.

The second study will be a guided survey of the letter. This section ought to help you get an overview of the themes and message of the book; to familiarize yourself with the big picture. After all, this is a letter and would have been intended to be read aloud in one sitting. This is the best way to start any study of an epistle.

The final study will be a guided summary of the letter. This section will help you reconnect the lessons from the letter, distill out key lessons and identify the primary application.

The middle seven studies will be inductive. Here's how you do that.

## PHILIPPIANS

**1:1-11**  
After completing the inductive sections, take a moment to consider the following questions and memorize this week's memory verse.

**For consideration**  
How does Paul identify himself and Timothy? Does he use the same title in any of his other letters? Is there significance to their identifying themselves in this way?

What do you think Paul means by "partnership" or "participation" in the gospel?

Paul prays that their love would "abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment." Why do you think such love would enable them to "discern what is best" to be "pure and blameless" and be "filled with the fruit of righteousness"? What do you think these three things look like in a community of believers?

**To memorize**  
"Thank the God every time I remember you. Be all my prayers for all of you. I always long with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who begins a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Phil. 1:3-4

**Observations**  
Write 10-20+ brief observations in the space below. Remember, observations only, record what the text says. Avoid premature interpretations and speculations, as this would be jumping to a conclusion.

Each study will contain a guided section. Make sure to complete the inductive study before going back through this. This section will have a few questions that will further stimulate your thinking on the passage.

Within this section you will find the memory verse for the section. If you will commit these 7 verses to memory, it will allow the truths of this study to remain fresh and to transform you for years to come. The goal of this study is transformation after all.

**Observations** are the first things that need to happen in any inductive study. It is very important to remember that observations answer the question, "What does this say." Often our preconceived notions limit us most significantly in our study of the Scripture. If you will commit to making good observations you will make numerous new discoveries and, inevitably, will have your thinking challenged.

Think of observations as gathering evidence. When brought back to the crime lab, evidence should be as untarnished as possible. Any minor oversight can skew conclusions, so, even if you encounter confusing sections, withhold your interpretations until

you can clearly see what the section is saying. The other tools can help bring greater clarity, as can your group discussion.

# PHILIPPIANS

## How to do this study (cont.)

★
<p><b>Questions</b> Record any questions or things that are unclear below. This will help you make the passage and will serve your study group during your discussion time.</p>
<p><b>Correlation</b> Record any connections or links and any remaining questions. It may be that another passage will help you understand this one better. Use the space below to record insights from elsewhere in Scripture. Look back at Acts 16. How do you see Lydia, the jailer and their households "partnering" in the gospel immediately (i.e., "from the first day") after their conversion?</p>
<p><b>Interpretation</b> You should be in a good place to determine what Paul is saying. Use the space below to record a brief summary of what this passage is saying, something you could use to explain it to someone else.</p>
<p><b>Application</b> Think about how you are living your interpretation, record below the most natural way this passage must be lived out. Also, thoughtfully answer the supplemental questions. Looking at your life, would you say you have reason for confidence that you will be "partnering" in the advance of the gospel for the rest of your life? Explain. What habits, other priorities, sins or distractions worry you about your life, and how do you intend to overcome in these areas?</p>

**Questions** are great tools for examining a passage. You will probably encounter many of these as you work through the observation section. These tell you what things are unclear and may demand more investigation. These also help make for dynamic discussion during your small group. Be especially in tune with those questions that the central meaning and application of the passage hinge on.

Questions shouldn't just be idle or tangential. In Bible study, they should be aimed at understanding the main truths *so that* these truths can have a maximum impact on your life.

The first place you should go to deepen your understanding of *anything* is the *context!* This is no different with Scripture. Exploring other sections that teach on the topic you are studying can enable you to round out your understanding. The Bible is a unit and contains a cohesive message. When doing **correlation** work your way out: sentence, book, author, genre, testament, Bible. Often Paul will communicate more thoroughly on topics in his other writings. This is no different in Philippians. Paul was also a Jewish scholar and an apostle ("sent one") of Jesus, so much of his writing is built on the truths expressed in the Old Testament and the teaching of Jesus.

Scripture has a fixed meaning. There is only right **interpretation** and we should work to arrive as close as we can to that. Having done observations, asked questions and explored corollary passages you should be able to have a pretty firm grasp on what the passage means. Use this section to record, in your own words, a brief summary of what this section is teaching.

Think, "How would I explain this section to someone who hasn't read or studied it?" That will probably be your interpretation.

Finally, **application** must be the outcome of the study. If knowledge is your primary goal of doing this study, you may actually be taking a step the wrong direction. Scripture is downright redundant about the fact that truth must be applied in order to have real value! (Deut 32:47; Josh 1:8; Ps 19:11; Luke 6:46; John 8:32; 1 Cor. 8:2; James 1:22).

This can take anywhere between 1 and 3 hours each week to do well. That is only 10-30 minutes each day! You may want to use this as part of your devotional life or just carve out a block of time to work on it. Maybe you can even do so with another member of your study and discuss as you prepare.

Enjoy this study. The prayer is that it will be a significant milestone in your Christian growth. It will give you every ounce of what you put into it.

*"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ."*

# PHILIPPIANS

## Background on Philippi

The year is 42 BC. Julius Caesar is dead; assassinated by co-conspirators Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius two years earlier. Brutus and Cassius began a campaign to bring the Roman empire under their control beginning in the east. Pitted against them, with the same aim are the second triumvirate—Lepidus, Octavian, Mark Antony—and their formidable military force. Mark Antony and Octavian marched east with an army of nearly 100,000. Brutus and Cassius encamp in hill city of Philippi; shielded by a narrow pass between marshes and steep hills, which is the only western entry to the city. They, too, have nearly 100,000 men.

For days, Antony and Octavian seek to draw their foes into the field of battle. However, content with their defensive stance, they will not advance. In the meantime, Antony orders a causeway to be built through the marshes in the south in an attempt to flank Cassius' forces. Cassius sniffs it out and builds a transverse dam, severing the causeway and prompting the beginning of the battle on October 3, 42 BC: *the largest civil war battle in Roman history!*

Abandoning the causeway, Antony orders his forces to advance, and they take the camp of Cassius. Cassius commits suicide, believing the battle is lost. Unbeknownst to him, Brutus' forces have made a premature charge; overwhelming Octavian's forces and taking their camp. However, lack of organization and widespread looting by Brutus' forces allow Octavian's army to re-form their line.

During the October 3 battle, forces loyal to Brutus and Cassius intercept and destroy a ship of reinforcements and supplies traveling across the Ionian sea en route to Philippi. Upon hearing this, Antony and Octavian know, without new supplies, their siege cannot last much longer. They urgently prepare for another assault; encircling the city.

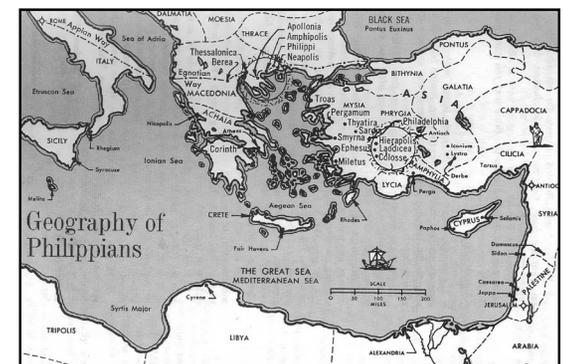
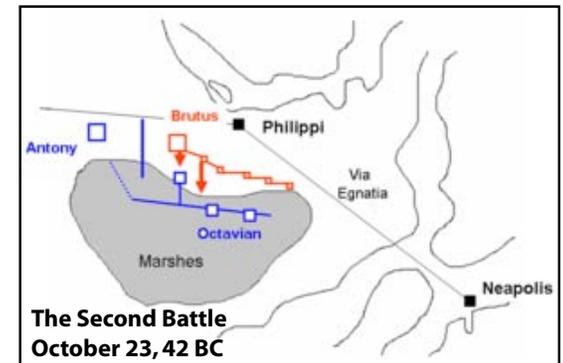
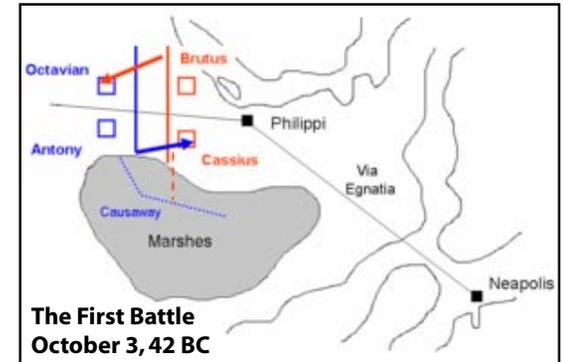
After twenty days Brutus is forced, against his will, to attempt to repel them saying, "I seem to carry on war now, not so much commanding as commanded." Antony's and Octavian's troops aggressively advance, refusing to allow Brutus to reform his lines or assume a defensive position. On October 23, 42 BC, they conquer Philippi. Brutus, too, commits suicide as his forces are overwhelmed.

Fifteen years later, Octavian would become the first emperor of Rome (Caesar Augustus); reigning during the birth of Jesus. The Roman battle cry during Octavian's rule became "Complete the battle once begun"—certainly an acknowledgement of lessons he learned on the plains of Philippi.

Founded by Macedonian King Philipp II in 356 BC, Philippi was valued for agriculture, gold mining and its strategic locale—later along the Roman Egnatian way. During the reign of Augustus, however, the city is resettled as a colony of civil war veterans—a gesture intended to foster unity within the empire.

Much of the first century population of Philippi shared this common background in a city notorious for its place in Roman history.

In 49 AD several visitors to Philippi retraced Mark Antony and Octavian's steps up from Neapolis. It was the Apostle Paul and his companions on a very different conquest. (Acts 16)



# PHILIPPIANS

## Background Study

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*Philippians was a letter written by a real person to real people; people with their own set of struggles, strengths and daily realities. Fortunately we have several Biblical sources to learn more about this group of people and the origins of their church. We'll try to get in touch with these things by looking at the two primary sections that refer to this church; Acts 16 and 2 Corinthians 8.*

## Church Foundations

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### Read Acts 16 and answer the following questions.

What title was Timothy given?

What did Paul see in Timothy that made him want to take him along? What do you think that means and why was that important? (See also Acts 15:36-41)

Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised? What does this tell you about Timothy and Paul? (For context, please look at Acts 15:1-35, 1 Cor 9:19-23, 2 Cor 6:3.)

What do you think about verses 6-10? Why would God forbid Paul and Co. to "preach the word in Asia," and in Troas, a place where there was an "open door for ministry" (2 Cor. 2:12, 13)?

What does the way God led Paul into Macedonia tell us about God's purposes for Philippi?

How is Philippi described?

What is significant about the place Paul and Co. chose to begin their ministry? How do you see God at work here (vv. 13-15)?

What do verses 16-23 show us about the spiritual and social environment in Philippi?

How would you have responded if you were in the shoes of Paul and Co. after verses 19-24? How *did* they respond (v. 25)? Why do you think they were able to respond this way?

Again, how do we see God at work in verses 25-34?

Paul saw two entire households of people trust in Christ. One from a very expected location (v. 15) and one from a very unexpected one (v. 33). What does this teach you about God's sovereignty in your life and how you ought to look at your circumstances?

How would you describe the community that became the foundation of the Philippian church?

Paul rarely made use of his position during the course of his ministry. Why do you think he chose to do so in verses 35-39?

With such a whirlwind mission and such a seemingly hostile environment, would you have given this church much chance for success? Why or why not? What challenges would they face; what hope did they have?

*Several years have passed. Paul has founded churches in Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth and elsewhere. Through letters Paul is seeking to help establish these churches as he continues to fulfill his ambition and call; to "preach the gospel where Christ [is] not known." Eventually he ends up writing these letters from prison. Here we find Paul writing to a confused congregation in Corinth. In the midst of the multiple problems, Paul decides to give them a model to follow: the Macedonian church based in Philippi! See how he describes them.*

## Early Reputation

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### Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 and answer the following questions.

What is said to have been "given" to the Macedonian churches?

What was the result of the "grace"? Write a definition of the word grace from this context and from: 1 Cor 3:10; 15:10; 2 Cor 6:1; 9:8; 12:9.

What is surprising about Paul's description of these churches?

What motivated or allowed a "wealth of generosity" and "abundance of joy" to proceed out of "severe affliction" and "extreme poverty"? Why were they willing and able to "give according and beyond their means"?

Does your ministry, giving and pursuit of Christ tend to be always in "accord to your means" or do you ever "give beyond"?

How did they look at giving (v. 4)? Is giving your life for the kingdom a duty or privilege to you? Explain.

What do you think verse 5 means? (I.e., giving themselves first to God and then, by the will of God, to Paul and his ministry.)

In verses 6, 7 Paul is obviously encouraging the church in Corinth to emulate the church in Philippi. Use the remaining space to record 3 *specific* areas where you can emulate the heart of the Macedonians in your life, giving, ministry, etc.

1)

2)

3)

# PHILIPPIANS

## Survey

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### (1) Read Through

*Philippians is an epistle or letter. Though it was meant to be a detailed treatment of practical and doctrinal issues facing the church—and thus a document that would serve as an ongoing resource for the church—it would have been intended to be read in one sitting; probably aloud. Begin your survey of this book by reading it through two times; preferably in 2 or 3 different translations. Try to put yourself in the place of an original reader and look for the major message of the letter. Ask God to show you His own heart in bringing this letter about before reading.*

Having read through this letter a couple times, complete the remaining steps:

### (2) Record General Information

From: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Other people/parties mentioned.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Repeated words, phrases and ideas

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title of book \_\_\_\_\_

Tone of book \_\_\_\_\_

Theme of book \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of book \_\_\_\_\_

Key verse \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# PHILIPPIANS

## 1:1-11

After completing the inductive sections, take a moment to consider the following questions and to memorize this week's memory verse.

### For consideration

How does Paul identify himself and Timothy? (Does he use the same title in any of his other letters?) Is there significance to their identifying themselves in this way?

What do you think Paul means by "partnership" or "participation" in the gospel?

Paul prays that their love would "abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment." Why do you think such love would enable them to "discern what is best," be "pure and blameless" and be "filled with the fruit of righteousness"? What do you think those three things look like in a community of believers?

### To memorize

*"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."* Phil. 1:3-6

### Observations

Make 10-20+ strict observations in the space below. Remember, observations only record what the text says. Avoid premature interpretations and speculations, as this would be jumping to a conclusion.

## Questions

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Record any questions or things that are unclear below. This will help you dive deeper into the passage and will serve your study group during your discussion time.

## Correlation

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Having recorded the raw data and some remaining questions, it may be that another passage will help you understand this one better. Use the space below to record insights from elsewhere in Scripture.

Look back at Acts 16. How do you see Lydia, the jailer and their households “partnering” in the gospel immediately (i.e., “from the first day”) after their conversion?

## Interpretation

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You should be in a good place to determine what Paul is saying. Use the space below to record a brief summary of what this passage is saying; something you could use to explain it to someone else.

## Application

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This study should change your life. Using your interpretation, record below the most natural way this passage must be lived out. Also, thoughtfully answer the supplemental question(s).

Looking at your life, would you say you have reason for confidence that you will be “partnering” in the advancement of the gospel for the rest of your life? Explain.

What habits, other priorities, sins or distractions worry you about your life, and how do you intend to overcome in these areas?

# PHILIPPIANS

## 1:12-30

After completing the inductive sections, take a moment to consider the following questions and to memorize this week's memory verse.

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### For consideration

What is Paul's perspective and rationale in life, according to verses 21-26? Do you share this perspective?

What type of life does Paul say is "worthy" of the gospel (vv. 27-28)? Why do you think he feels that way?

Do you think all Christians should be as radical as Paul? Explain.

### To memorize

*"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* Phil. 1:21

### Observations

Make 10-20+ strict observations in the space below. Remember, observations only record what the text says. Avoid premature interpretations and speculations, as this would be jumping to a conclusion.

## Questions

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Record any questions or things that are unclear below. This will help you dive deeper into the passage and will serve your study group during your discussion time.

## Correlation

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Having recorded the raw data and some remaining questions, it may be that another passage will help you understand this one better. Use the space below to record insights from elsewhere in Scripture.

Look back at Acts 16. How is Paul's attitude in his current imprisonment mirrored in his imprisonment in Philippi?

## Interpretation

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You should be in a good place to determine what Paul is saying. Use the space below to record a brief summary of what this passage is saying; something you could use to explain it to someone else.

## Application

---

This study should change your life. Using your interpretation, record below the most natural way this passage must be lived out. Also, thoughtfully answer the supplemental question(s).

During his ministry in Philippi, Paul was beaten and imprisoned unjustly, but spent his time incarcerated singing songs of praise and proclaiming the gospel. Here again we see Paul incarcerated unjustly and here again we see Paul joyfully proclaiming Jesus to his captors. This emboldens the other Christians around him to do the same. Do you recognize God's sovereignty even in your difficult circumstances?

Are you so aware of it that, in all circumstances, you demonstrate a similar eagerness to praise and proclaim Him? Why or why not?

# PHILIPPIANS

## 2:1-11

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After completing the inductive sections, take a moment to consider the following questions and to memorize this week's memory verse.

### For consideration

Do you feel you are deeply experiencing any of the things listed in verse 1?

What would it mean for you to more seriously pursue intimate communion with Christ? Be specific: what are you seeking instead?

What does it mean to actually "count others more significant than yourself"? Do you really do that? Why or why not?

In what ways does Jesus serve as *the* model of how to live in this world? And what does it mean that our "mind"/"attitude" must be the same as His (that it is ours in Him)?

### To memorize

*"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:" Phil. 2:3-5*

### Observations

---

Make 10-20+ strict observations in the space below. Remember, observations only record what the text says. Avoid premature interpretations and speculations, as this would be jumping to a conclusion.

## Questions

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Record any questions or things that are unclear below. This will help you dive deeper into the passage and will serve your study group during your discussion time.

## Correlation

---

Having recorded the raw data and some remaining questions, it may be that another passage will help you understand this one better. Use the space below to record insights from elsewhere in Scripture.

Read Luke 22:39-46 and Hebrews 12:1-2. The writer of Hebrews tells us that it was “joy” that sustained Jesus and allowed Him to endure the cross. How does Philippians 2:5-11 give us insight into this “joy set before Him”?

## Interpretation

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You should be in a good place to determine what Paul is saying. Use the space below to record a brief summary of what this passage is saying; something you could use to explain it to someone else.

## Application

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This study should change your life. Using your interpretation, record below the most natural way this passage must be lived out. Also, thoughtfully answer the supplemental question(s).

Paul seems to take for granted that verse 1 *does* characterize the life of every believer, therefore verses 2-4 can as well. These two things seem inextricably linked. Record below at least one way you can more seriously pursue intimacy with Christ and at least one way you can, in turn, humbly, sacrificially, lovingly serve others—following His example.

# PHILIPPIANS

## 2:12-30

After

completing the inductive sections, take a moment to consider the following questions and to memorize this week's memory verse.

### For consideration

How does not complaining or arguing set someone apart from the rest of the world (like stars in the universe!)? Why do people complain and argue?

How are Paul's, Timothy's and Epaphroditus' lives described in this section?

What did these men have that allowed them to live this way (see 1:27-2:4)? Are you willing to live the same lifestyle as these three? Why or why not?

### To memorize

*"Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing."* Phil. 2:14-16

### Observations

Make 10-20+ strict observations in the space below. Remember, observations only record what the text says. Avoid premature interpretations and speculations, as this would be jumping to a conclusion.

## Questions

---

Record any questions or things that are unclear below. This will help you dive deeper into the passage and will serve your study group during your discussion time.

## Correlation

---

Having recorded the raw data and some remaining questions, it may be that another passage will help you understand this one better. Use the space below to record insights from elsewhere in Scripture.

Look back at Acts 16:25. While Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns, what were the other prisoners doing? How does that illustrate what Paul is telling this church to do in verses 14-15. Is it possible that some of those very prisoners were part of the Philippian church at this point?

## Interpretation

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You should be in a good place to determine what Paul is saying. Use the space below to record a brief summary of what this passage is saying; something you could use to explain it to someone else.

## Application

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This study should change your life. Using your interpretation, record below the most natural way this passage must be lived out. Also, thoughtfully answer the supplemental question(s).

Paul tells us to do “everything” without arguing or complaining. Can that be serious? Strive to put this into practice this week and see how it changes your attitude. Pay attention to when you are tempted to argue or complain. What do you think it will accomplish? And do you really ever have an excuse to do so?

# PHILIPPIANS

## 3:1-11

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After completing the inductive sections, take a moment to consider the following questions and to memorize this week's memory verse.

### For consideration

Paul has been emphasizing humble, selfless love throughout this letter. What do Paul's warnings against legalism in verses 1-3 have to do with this type of love?

Is knowing Christ and making Him known *the* most important thing in your life? What other ambitions are competing in your heart with Him for devotion?

How does Christ's gift on the cross—*"the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ"*—create love and devotion for God that outstrips anything legalism could accomplish?

Do you believe your devotion to Christ is mostly of the legalistic variety or that of gratitude and love?

### To memorize

*"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ."* Phil. 3:7, 8

### Observations

---

Make 10-20+ strict observations in the space below. Remember, observations only record what the text says. Avoid premature interpretations and speculations, as this would be jumping to a conclusion.

## Questions

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Record any questions or things that are unclear below. This will help you dive deeper into the passage and will serve your study group during your discussion time.

## Correlation

---

Having recorded the raw data and some remaining questions, it may be that another passage will help you understand this one better. Use the space below to record insights from elsewhere in Scripture.

Read Paul's testimony in Acts 26:1-29 and Acts 20:24. What created such zealous love and devotion in Paul's life? Do you think he has any greater *cause* for such passion than you do?

Read Luke 7:36-50 and 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. Does this give clues to Paul's zeal? Do you relate more to Simon or the sinful woman?

## Interpretation

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You should be in a good place to determine what Paul is saying. Use the space below to record a brief summary of what this passage is saying; something you could use to explain it to someone else.

## Application

---

This study should change your life. Using your interpretation, record below the most natural way this passage must be lived out. Also, thoughtfully answer the supplemental question(s).

Sometimes we kid ourselves and allow "good" things to come between us and Jesus. If you are legalistic about your relationship with God you will always be asking, "Have I done enough yet?" Behind that is a desire to find fulfillment apart from Christ—we want Him off our back. If your relationship is based on the "indescribable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15) given you on the cross, then you will always be asking, "Can I give more, so that I can know Him more?" Any hint that something is hindering a deeper knowledge of Him will cause you to place it on the alter. Which question typifies your heart? What might you need to put on the alter in order to know Christ more deeply today?

# PHILIPPIANS

## 3:12-4:1

After completing the inductive sections, take a moment to consider the following questions and to memorize this week's memory verse.

### For consideration

What is Paul's picture of "maturity" in this passage? What should all Christians be moving toward?

Paul is contrasting the life and values of the believer with the life and values of those he calls "enemies of the cross of Christ." Below, record the contrasts:

Citizens of Heaven

vs.

Enemies of the Cross

### To memorize

*"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."* Phil. 3:20, 21

### Observations

Make 10-20+ strict observations in the space below. Remember, observations only record what the text says. Avoid premature interpretations and speculations, as this would be jumping to a conclusion.

## Questions

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Record any questions or things that are unclear below. This will help you dive deeper into the passage and will serve your study group during your discussion time.

## Correlation

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Having recorded the raw data and some remaining questions, it may be that another passage will help you understand this one better. Use the space below to record insights from elsewhere in Scripture.

The Christian's "blessed hope" is "the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ". This is very evident in this passage. Read through the following verses, and record a statement about the role of eternity and Christ's appearing in the life of the Christian:

Mat. 24:29-31

1 Thes. 4:16-18

Tit. 2:11-14

1 Cor. 3:12-14

2 Thes. 1:9, 10

1 Pet. 1:7, 13

Col. 3:1-4

2 Tim. 4:1-8

## Interpretation

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You should be in a good place to determine what Paul is saying. Use the space below to record a brief summary of what this passage is saying; something you could use to explain it to someone else.

## Application

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This study should change your life. Using your interpretation, record below the most natural way this passage must be lived out. Also, thoughtfully answer the supplemental question(s).

The picture of Christian maturity that Paul lays out here seems to be *from* worldly mindedness *to* eternal mindedness; a journey in which you should always be leaving things behind as you strive toward what is ahead. The Christian is to "take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of" them. There *are* things God is asking you to put behind for the sake of knowing Him and making Him known. Ask Jesus what that is in your life. When you think He has shown you, write it below and be prepared to share it with someone.

# PHILIPPIANS

## 4:2-23

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After completing the inductive sections, take a moment to consider the following questions and to memorize this week's memory verse.

### For consideration

Having read this letter, what do you think Paul is worried about with Euodia and Syntyche?

Are there strained relationships between you and those you ought to be in fellowship with? Is this a small thing? Is *not* reconciling an option you can consider?

When you think about the lifestyle Paul is calling you to in this book, why would 4:6-7 be important?

Why is your thought-life so crucial in loving others and remaining centered on Christ and His kingdom? (v.8)

Do you take seriously Paul's call to emulate Him? Are you following Jesus in such a way that you would be comfortable telling others to follow your example?

### To memorize

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Phil. 4:6, 7

## Observations

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Make 10-20+ strict observations in the space below. Remember, observations only record what the text says. Avoid premature interpretations and speculations, as this would be jumping to a conclusion.

## Questions

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Record any questions or things that are unclear below. This will help you dive deeper into the passage and will serve your study group during your discussion time.

## Correlation

---

Having recorded the raw data and some remaining questions, it may be that another passage will help you understand this one better. Use the space below to record insights from elsewhere in Scripture.

Read John 15:1-17. How does Jesus' teachings about abiding, bearing fruit and prayer connect with Paul's teachings about the Christian life and prayer?

## Interpretation

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You should be in a good place to determine what Paul is saying. Use the space below to record a brief summary of what this passage is saying; something you could use to explain it to someone else.

## Application

---

This study should change your life. Using your interpretation, record below the most natural way this passage must be lived out. Also, thoughtfully answer the supplemental question(s).

What anxieties are hindering your ability to walk in dependence on Jesus and to live out eternal priorities? Identify them and then, in prayer, entrust them to your Father (4:6, 7, 19) ... Be assured, these anxieties are not from God.

What thoughts have you been entertaining that influence your attitude and relationships negatively. Confess these to your Father, and, commit by His grace to turn away from these thought habits. (2 Cor. 10:5)

# PHILIPPIANS

## Summary

Complete the following four steps, asking God to cause this study to bear much fruit in your life.

### (1) Re-read

Read through this entire letter in one sitting. Ask God to solidify your grasp of the message as you read.

### (2) Book summary

Book title: \_\_\_\_\_

Key verse: \_\_\_\_\_

In your own words, record a 3-4 sentence summary of this letter below \_\_\_\_\_

### (3) Key Lessons

Distill out the top 5 lessons that stood out during your study of this letter.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) \_\_\_\_\_



# PHILIPPIANS

NASB

## Philippians 1

1Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

2Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### *Thanksgiving and Prayer*

3I thank my God every time I remember you. 4In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

7It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

### *Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel*

12Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. 13As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

15It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. 20I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

27Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel 28without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,

30since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

## Philippians 2

### *Imitating Christ's Humility*

1If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

5Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### *Shining as Stars*

12Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

# PHILIPPIANS

## NASB (cont.)

14Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe 16as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. 17But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

### **Timothy and Epaphroditus**

19I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. 21For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

25But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, 30because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you

could not give me.

### **Philippians 3**

#### ***No Confidence in the Flesh***

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

2Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. 3For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

7But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. 10I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

#### ***Pressing on Toward the Goal***

12Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already

been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

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

17Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. 18For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. 20But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

### **Philippians 4**

1Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

#### ***Exhortations***

2I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. 3Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the

# PHILIPPIANS

## NASB (cont.)

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book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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

Thanks for Their Gifts

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

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. 17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. 18 I

have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### ***Final Greetings***

21 Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send 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. Amen.

# PHILIPPIANS

## Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

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### **Introduction**

The Philippians felt a very deep interest for the apostle. The scope of the epistle is to confirm them in the faith, to encourage them to walk as becomes the gospel of Christ, to caution them against judaizing teachers, and to express gratitude for their Christian bounty. This epistle is the only one, among those written by St. Paul, in which no censures are implied or expressed. Full commendation and confidence are in every part, and the Philippians are addressed with a peculiar affection, which every serious reader will perceive.

### **Chapter 1, Verses 1-7**

The highest honour of the most eminent ministers is, to be servants of Christ. And those who are not really saints on earth, never will be saints in heaven. Out of Christ, the best saints are sinners, and unable to stand before God. There is no peace without grace. Inward peace springs from a sense of Divine favour. And there is no grace and peace but from God our Father, the fountain and origin of all blessings. At Philippi the apostle was evil entreated, and saw little fruit of his labour; yet he remembers Philippi with joy. We must thank our God for the graces and comforts, gifts and usefulness of others, as we receive the benefit, and God receives the glory. The work of grace will never be perfected till the day of Jesus Christ, the day of his appearance. But we may always be confident God will perform his good work, in every soul wherein he has really begun it by regeneration; though we must not trust in outward appearances, nor in any thing but a new creation to holiness. People are dear to their ministers, when they receive benefit by their ministry. Fellow-sufferers in the cause of God should be dear one to another.

### **Chapter 1, Verses 8-11**

Shall not we pity and love those souls whom Christ loves and pities? Those who abound in any grace, need to abound more. Try things which differ; that we may approve the things which are excellent. The truths and laws of Christ are excellent; and they recommend themselves as such to any attentive mind. Sincerity is that in which we should have our conversation in the world, and it is the glory of all our graces. Christians should not be apt to take offence, and should be very careful not to offend God or the brethren. The things which most honour God will most benefit us. Let us not leave it doubtful whether any good fruit is found in us or not. A small measure of Christian love, knowledge, and fruitfulness should not satisfy any.

### **Chapter 1, Verses 12-20**

The apostle was a prisoner at Rome; and to take off the offence of the cross, he shows the wisdom and goodness of God in his sufferings. These things made him known, where he would never have otherwise been known; and led some to inquire after the gospel. He suffered from false friends, as well as from enemies. How wretched the temper of those who preached Christ out of envy and contention, and to add affliction to the bonds that oppressed this best of men! The apostle was easy in the midst of all. Since our troubles may tend to the good of many, we ought to rejoice. Whatever turns to our salvation, is by the Spirit of Christ; and prayer is the appointed means of seeking for it. Our earnest expectation and hope should not be to be honoured of men, or to escape the cross, but to be upheld amidst temptation, contempt, and affliction. Let us leave it to Christ, which way he will make us serviceable to his glory, whether by labour or suffering, by diligence or patience, by living to his honour in working

for him, or dying to his honour in suffering for him.

### **Chapter 1, Verses 21-26**

Death is a great loss to a carnal, worldly man, for he loses all his earthly comforts and all his hopes; but to a true believer it is gain, for it is the end of all his weakness and misery. It delivers him from all the evils of life, and brings him to possess the chief good. The apostle's difficulty was not between living in this world and living in heaven; between these two there is no comparison; but between serving Christ in this world and enjoying him in another. Not between two evil things, but between two good things; living to Christ and being with him. See the power of faith and of Divine grace; it can make us willing to die. In this world we are compassed with sin; but when with Christ, we shall escape sin and temptation, sorrow and death, for ever. But those who have most reason to desire to depart, should be willing to remain in the world as long as God has any work for them to do. And the more unexpected mercies are before they come, the more of God will be seen in them.

### **Chapter 1, Verses 27-30**

Those who profess the gospel of Christ, should live as becomes those who believe gospel truths, submit to gospel laws, and depend upon gospel promises. The original word "conversation" denotes the conduct of citizens who seek the credit, safety, peace, and prosperity of their city. There is that in the faith of the gospel, which is worth striving for; there is much opposition, and there is need of striving. A man may sleep and go to hell; but he who would go to heaven, must look about him and be diligent. There may be oneness of heart and affection among Christians, where there is diversity of judgment about many things.

# PHILIPPIANS

## Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary (cont.)

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Faith is God's gift on the behalf of Christ; the ability and disposition to believe are from God. And if we suffer reproach and loss for Christ, we are to reckon them a gift, and prize them accordingly. Yet salvation must not be ascribed to bodily afflictions, as though afflictions and worldly persecutions deserved it; but from God only is salvation: faith and patience are his gifts.

### **Chapter 2, Verses 1-4**

Here are further exhortations to Christian duties; to like-mindedness and lowly-mindedness, according to the example of the Lord Jesus. Kindness is the law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his school, the livery of his family. Several motives to brotherly love are mentioned. If you expect or experience the benefit of God's compassions to yourselves, be compassionate one to another. It is the joy of ministers to see people like-minded. Christ came to humble us, let there not be among us a spirit of pride. We must be severe upon our own faults, and quick in observing our own defects, but ready to make favourable allowances for others. We must kindly care for others, but not be busy-bodies in other men's matters. Neither inward nor outward peace can be enjoyed, without lowliness of mind.

### **Chapter 2, Verses 5-11**

The example of our Lord Jesus Christ is set before us. We must resemble him in his life, if we would have the benefit of his death. Notice the two natures of Christ; his Divine nature, and human nature. Who being in the form of God, partaking the Divine nature, as the eternal and only-begotten Son of God, [John 1:1], had not thought it a robbery to be equal with God, and to receive Divine worship from men. His human nature; herein he became

like us in all things except sin. Thus low, of his own will, he stooped from the glory he had with the Father before the world was. Christ's two states, of humiliation and exaltation, are noticed. Christ not only took upon him the likeness and fashion, or form of a man, but of one in a low state; not appearing in splendour. His whole life was a life of poverty and suffering. But the lowest step was his dying the death of the cross, the death of a malefactor and a slave; exposed to public hatred and scorn. The exaltation was of Christ's human nature, in union with the Divine. At the name of Jesus, not the mere sound of the word, but the authority of Jesus, all should pay solemn homage. It is to the glory of God the Father, to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; for it is his will, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father, [John 5:23] Here we see such motives to self-denying love as nothing else can supply. Do we thus love and obey the Son of God?

### **Chapter 2, Verses 12-18**

We must be diligent in the use of all the means which lead to our salvation, persevering therein to the end. With great care, lest, with all our advantages, we should come short. Work out your salvation, for it is God who worketh in you. This encourages us to do our utmost, because our labour shall not be in vain: we must still depend on the grace of God. The working of God's grace in us, is to quicken and engage our endeavours. God's good-will to us, is the cause of his good work in us. Do your duty without murmurings. Do it, and do not find fault with it. Mind your work, and do not quarrel with it. By peaceableness; give no just occasion of offence. The children of God should differ from the sons of men. The more perverse others are, the more careful we should be to keep ourselves blameless and harmless. The doctrine

and example of consistent believers will enlighten others, and direct their way to Christ and holiness, even as the light-house warns mariners to avoid rocks, and directs their course into the harbour. Let us try thus to shine. The gospel is the word of life, it makes known to us eternal life through Jesus Christ. Running, denotes earnestness and vigour, continual pressing forward; labouring, denotes constancy, and close application. It is the will of God that believers should be much in rejoicing; and those who are so happy as to have good ministers, have great reason to rejoice with them. [Phil. 2:19-30]

### **Chapter 2, Verses 19-30**

It is best with us, when our duty becomes natural to us. Naturally, that is, sincerely, and not in pretence only; with a willing heart and upright views. We are apt to prefer our own credit, ease, and safety, before truth, holiness, and duty; but Timothy did not so. Paul desired liberty, not that he might take pleasure, but that he might do good. Epaphroditus was willing to go to the Philippians, that he might be comforted with those who had sorrowed for him when he was sick. It seems, his illness was caused by the work of God. The apostle urges them to love him the more on that account. It is doubly pleasant to have our mercies restored by God, after great danger of their removal; and this should make them more valued. What is given in answer to prayer, should be received with great thankfulness and joy.

### **Chapter 3, Verses 1-11**

Sincere Christians rejoice in Christ Jesus. The prophet calls the false prophets dumb dogs, [Is. 56:10]; to which the apostle seems to refer. Dogs, for their malice against faithful professors of the gospel of Christ, barking

# PHILIPPIANS

## Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary (cont.)

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at them and biting them. They urged human works in opposition to the faith of Christ; but Paul calls them evil-workers. He calls them the concision; as they rent the church of Christ, and cut it to pieces. The work of religion is to no purpose, unless the heart is in it, and we must worship God in the strength and grace of the Divine Spirit. They rejoice in Christ Jesus, not in mere outward enjoyments and performances. Nor can we too earnestly guard against those who oppose or abuse the doctrine of free salvation. If the apostle would have gloried and trusted in the flesh, he had as much cause as any man. But the things which he counted gain while a Pharisee, and had reckoned up, those he counted loss for Christ. The apostle did not persuade them to do any thing but what he himself did; or to venture on any thing but that on which he himself ventured his never-dying soul. He deemed all these things to be but loss, compared with the knowledge of Christ, by faith in his person and salvation. He speaks of all worldly enjoyments and outward privileges which sought a place with Christ in his heart, or could pretend to any merit and desert, and counted them but loss; but it might be said, It is easy to say so; but what would he do when he came to the trial? He had suffered the loss of all for the privileges of a Christian. Nay, he not only counted them loss, but the vilest refuse, offals thrown to dogs; not only less valuable than Christ, but in the highest degree contemptible, when set up as against him. True knowledge of Christ alters and changes men, their judgments and manners, and makes them as if made again anew. The believer prefers Christ, knowing that it is better for us to be without all worldly riches, than without Christ and his word. Let us see what the apostle resolved to cleave to, and that was Christ and heaven. We are undone, without righteousness wherein to appear before God, for we are guilty. There

is a righteousness provided for us in Jesus Christ, and it is a complete and perfect righteousness. None can have benefit by it, who trust in themselves. Faith is the appointed means of applying the saving benefit. It is by faith in Christ's blood. We are made conformable to Christ's death, when we die to sin, as he died for sin; and the world is crucified to us, and we to the world, by the cross of Christ. The apostle was willing to do or to suffer any thing, to attain the glorious resurrection of saints. This hope and prospect carried him through all difficulties in his work. He did not hope to attain it through his own merit and righteousness, but through the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ. [Phil. 3:12-21]

### **Chapter 3, Verses 12-21**

This simple dependence and earnestness of soul, were not mentioned as if the apostle had gained the prize, or were already made perfect in the Saviour's likeness. He forgot the things which were behind, so as not to be content with past labours or present measures of grace. He reached forth, stretched himself forward towards his point; expressions showing great concern to become more and more like unto Christ. He who runs a race, must never stop short of the end, but press forward as fast as he can; so those who have heaven in their view, must still press forward to it, in holy desires and hopes, and constant endeavours. Eternal life is the gift of God, but it is in Christ Jesus; through his hand it must come to us, as it is procured for us by him. There is no getting to heaven as our home, but by Christ as our Way. True believers, in seeking this assurance, as well as to glorify him, will seek more nearly to resemble his sufferings and death, by dying to sin, and by crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts. In these things there is a great difference among

real Christians, but all know something of them. Believers make Christ all in all, and set their hearts upon another world. If they differ from one another, and are not of the same judgment in lesser matters, yet they must not judge one another; while they all meet now in Christ, and hope to meet shortly in heaven. Let them join in all the great things in which they are agreed, and wait for further light as to lesser things wherein they differ. The enemies of the cross of Christ mind nothing but their sensual appetites. Sin is the sinner's shame, especially when gloried in. The way of those who mind earthly things, may seem pleasant, but death and hell are at the end of it. If we choose their way, we shall share their end. The life of a Christian is in heaven, where his Head and his home are, and where he hopes to be shortly; he sets his affections upon things above; and where his heart is, there will his conversation be. There is glory kept for the bodies of the saints, in which they will appear at the resurrection. Then the body will be made glorious; not only raised again to life, but raised to great advantage. Observe the power by which this change will be wrought. May we be always prepared for the coming of our Judge; looking to have our vile bodies changed by his Almighty power, and applying to him daily to new-create our souls unto holiness; to deliver us from our enemies, and to employ our bodies and souls as instruments of righteousness in his service.

### **Chapter 4, Verse 1**

The believing hope and prospect of eternal life, should make us steady and constant in our Christian course. There is difference of gifts and graces, yet, being renewed by the same Spirit, we are brethren. To stand fast in the Lord, is to stand fast in his strength, and by his grace.

# PHILIPPIANS

## Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary (cont.)

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### **Chapter 4, Verses 2-9**

Let believers be of one mind, and ready to help each other. As the apostle had found the benefit of their assistance, he knew how comfortable it would be to his fellow-labourers to have the help of others. Let us seek to give assurance that our names are written in the book of life. Joy in God is of great consequence in the Christian life; and Christians need to be again and again called to it. It more than outweighs all causes for sorrow. Let their enemies perceive how moderate they were as to outward things, and how composedly they suffered loss and hardships. The day of judgment will soon arrive, with full redemption to believers, and destruction to ungodly men. There is a care of diligence which is our duty, and agrees with a wise forecast and due concern; but there is a care of fear and distrust, which is sin and folly, and only perplexes and distracts the mind. As a remedy against perplexing care, constant prayer is recommended. Not only stated times for prayer, but in every thing by prayer. We must join thanksgivings with prayers and supplications; not only seek supplies of good, but own the mercies we have received. God needs not to be told our wants or desires; he knows them better than we do; but he will have us show that we value the mercy, and feel our dependence on him. The peace of God, the comfortable sense of being reconciled to God, and having a part in his favour, and the hope of the heavenly blessedness, are a greater good than can be fully expressed. This peace will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus; it will keep us from sinning under troubles, and from sinking under them; keep us calm and with inward satisfaction. Believers are to get and to keep a good name; a name for good things with God and good men. We should walk in all the ways of virtue, and abide therein; then, whether our praise is of men or

not, it will be of God. The apostle is for an example. His doctrine and life agreed together. The way to have the God of peace with us, is to keep close to our duty. All our privileges and salvation arise in the free mercy of God; yet the enjoyment of them depends on our sincere and holy conduct. These are works of God, pertaining to God, and to him only are they to be ascribed, and to no other, neither men, words, nor deeds.

### **Chapter 4, Verse 10-19**

It is a good work to succour and help a good minister in trouble. The nature of true Christian sympathy, is not only to feel concern for our friends in their troubles, but to do what we can to help them. The apostle was often in bonds, imprisonments, and necessities; but in all, he learned to be content, to bring his mind to his condition, and make the best of it. Pride, unbelief, vain hankering after something we have not got, and fickle disrelish of present things, make men discontented even under favourable circumstances. Let us pray for patient submission and hope when we are abased; for humility and a heavenly mind when exalted. It is a special grace to have an equal temper of mind always. And in a low state not to lose our comfort in God, nor distrust his providence, nor take any wrong course for our own supply. In a prosperous condition not to be proud, or secure, or worldly. This is a harder lesson than the other; for the temptations of fulness and prosperity are more than those of affliction and want. The apostle had no design to urge them to give more, but to encourage such kindness as will meet a glorious reward hereafter. Through Christ we have grace to do what is good, and through him we must expect the reward; and as we have all things by him, let us do all things for him, and to his glory.

### **Chapter 4, Verse 20-23**

The apostle ends with praises to God. We should look upon God, under all our weakness and fears, not as an enemy, but as a Father, disposed to pity us and help us. We must give glory to God as a Father. God's grace and favour, which reconciled souls enjoy, with the whole of the graces in us, which flow from it, are all purchased for us by Christ's merit, and applied by his pleading for us; and therefore are justly called the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.