



MORIAH WOMEN'S MINISTRY • FALL BIBLE STUDY

PHILIPPIANS



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INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS

RESOURCES

SCRIPTURE JOURNALS

- Scan the QR code for a free double-spaced PDF of Philippians (ESV)
- Search for “Philippians Scripture Journal” for other Bible translations on Amazon

Philippians (ESV)



COMMENTARIES

- *ESV Study Bible*
- *ESV Expository Commentary: Ephesians - Philemon (Volume 11)* by Iain M. Duguid and others
- Search for “Philippians” on wtsbooks.com for other commentaries and Bible study resources

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

- *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* by Robert L. Plummer
- *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart
- *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament* by Andrew David Naselli
- *Inductive Bible Study* by Richard Alan Fuhr Jr. and Andreas J. Köstenberger
- *Transformed by Truth: Why and How to Study the Bible for Yourself as a Teen* by Katherine Forster

PHILIPPIANS

THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST



Jesus Washing the Feet of His Disciples at the Last Supper

Purpose

The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians to call for unity and harmony among believers based on the imitation of Christ's humble servanthood (2:1–11, 14; 4:2). As in every human institution, people in the church at Philippi did not always get along. Complaints and arguments are common occurrences, but believers are called by God to look to a higher example in Christ. Jesus put all his personal preferences aside and went to the cross, first in obedience to the Father and second in order to redeem the world. We are called to this kind of life.

The letter also warns against certain false teachings and practices (3:2–6, 18–19). False teaching under the pretense of being the real thing has plagued the church from the beginning. The Philippians are warned against teachers that wished to exchange the grace of the gospel for a merit system of religion.

Finally, this letter encourages believers to live a life worthy of their calling (2:12–16; 4:8–9). The life believers are to follow is not easy. The model for the believer is Christ, who is the highest goal of all thought and action.

Outline

1. Greeting, Thanksgiving, and Prayer (1:1–11)
2. Paul's Imprisonment (1:12–30)
3. Imitating the Incarnation (2:1–18)
4. Timothy and Epaphroditus—Paul's Envoys (2:19–30)
5. Paul's Exhortations (3:1–4:9)
 - a. Warnings against Judaizers (3:1–11)
 - b. Encouragement to press on (3:12–4:1)
 - c. Plea for unity and high-mindedness (4:2–9)
6. Thanks and Final Greeting (4:10–23)

Background

Author: The author of Philippians is the apostle Paul (1:1).

Date: Paul wrote this letter while under house arrest in Rome, around AD 60–62.

Audience: Paul probably had a personal connection with the church at Philippi. Philippi was Paul's first stop in his preaching of the good news in Europe. The occasion of the letter centers on Epaphroditus who had been sent by the church with a financial gift for the apostle. The care that this body of believers had for Paul indicates a receptive audience.

Philippi was in northern Greece and was a Roman colonial city on the royal trade route. Though there was a Jewish presence, the population was predominantly non-Jewish and proud of its Roman connection. Although a small city, it received special favors from Rome. Roman citizenship was very important in the city, as Paul's use of citizenship as a metaphor reveals (3:20).

Themes

Servant Leadership (2:5–11). Just as Christ humbled himself and became one of us, our relationships ought to be modeled by the same humility.

Unity of Believers (2:1–4). Humility and love must be present in all our relationships, especially with other believers. This unity reflects our submission to Christ (1:21; 3:7–14).

Rejoicing in the Lord Always (1:18; 3:1; 4:4–13). Being under house arrest in Rome made this exhortation especially relevant to the apostle. His joy springs from the conviction that Christ provides for believers (4:13).

Epaphroditus

Epaphroditus was the Philippian believer who brought the church's financial gift to Paul. He apparently contracted a life-threatening illness while on this mission. Paul uses him as an example of someone who risked his life for the sake of the gospel (2:25–30).

Every day around the world there are believers who risk their lives for God's kingdom. It is good to remember them, and that we are all called, sometimes in simple ways, to put our lives on the line for Jesus.

Key Verses

... 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. 1:6

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

Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! —Phil. 2:5–8

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

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

Fascinating Facts

- Phil. 2:5–11 may have been an early Christian creed set in the form of a hymn. In many translations these verses are set apart in poetic style. Paul may have composed the lines himself or merely used something that was held in common already.
- Philippians has two endings: One is in 3:1 (“Finally my brothers...”) and the second at 4:8 (“Finally brothers...”). It looks like the apostle had an afterthought, what we might call a P.S.

Being God’s People

God promises to honor and glorify those who serve. Paul called believers to preserve the unity of all believers in love and humility. God challenges us to work against our selfishness and put others first as we serve him.

Jesus in Philippians

The view that Paul offers of Jesus in this letter is breathtaking. The glorious Lord humbled himself to become like one of us. Such humility is best demonstrated in his obedience, which led him to a gruesome death. Yet, God lifted him up (exalted him) from his humiliation and put him above all things. The apostle Paul makes this song a paradigm (an example) for all believers to follow: “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

THE SETTING OF PHILIPPIANS



WEEKLY WORKSHEETS

PASSAGE: PHILIPPIANS 1

CONTEXT – What is the context of the book you are studying?

Who?

To whom?

When?

Where?

What genre?

Why?

OBSERVATION – What does it say? *(These notes are just for you to help you capture the content.)*

OBSERVATION – What are the key and repeated words? Look up any unfamiliar words in the dictionary.

OBSERVATION – What is the main idea for this passage? Write one sentence or one sentence per section.

INTERPRETATION – Read the passage in at least one other translation. *(Note new insights and translation used.)*

INTERPRETATION – Make note of other places in Scripture that communicate a similar message. *(How does the passage connect to the passages before and after? How does the passage fit into the greater story of the Bible – creation, fall, redemption, restoration? Hint: Follow the cross-references in your Bible.)*

INTERPRETATION – Dig deeper using at least one commentary. *(Examine the culture and historical context.)*

APPLICATION – What does the passage say about God?

APPLICATION – What does the passage say about God's children? *(Our responsibilities, our sin, who we are in Christ, etc.)*

APPLICATION – What does God want you to do today or this week to develop Christ-like character and habits? *(Is there something you need to pray about or confess? Whom do you need to forgive, encourage, or serve?)*

REMEMBER – Use this space to make note of something you want to remember from your time in God's Word this week. *(What Bible verse was most significant to you during your time of study? What one thing do you want to be sure to remember?)*

NOTES

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PASSAGE: PHILIPPIANS 2

CONTEXT – What is the context of the book you are studying?

Who?

To whom?

When?

Where?

What genre?

Why?

OBSERVATION – What does it say? *(These notes are just for you to help you capture the content.)*

OBSERVATION – What are the key and repeated words? Look up any unfamiliar words in the dictionary.

OBSERVATION – What is the main idea for this passage? Write one sentence or one sentence per section.

INTERPRETATION – Read the passage in at least one other translation. *(Note new insights and translation used.)*

INTERPRETATION – Make note of other places in Scripture that communicate a similar message. *(How does the passage connect to the passages before and after? How does the passage fit into the greater story of the Bible – creation, fall, redemption, restoration? Hint: Follow the cross-references in your Bible.)*

INTERPRETATION – Dig deeper using at least one commentary. *(Examine the culture and historical context.)*

APPLICATION – What does the passage say about God?

APPLICATION – What does the passage say about God's children? *(Our responsibilities, our sin, who we are in Christ, etc.)*

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PASSAGE: PHILIPPIANS 3

CONTEXT – What is the context of the book you are studying?

Who?

To whom?

When?

Where?

What genre?

Why?

OBSERVATION – What does it say? *(These notes are just for you to help you capture the content.)*

OBSERVATION – What are the key and repeated words? Look up any unfamiliar words in the dictionary.

OBSERVATION – What is the main idea for this passage? Write one sentence or one sentence per section.

INTERPRETATION – Read the passage in at least one other translation. *(Note new insights and translation used.)*

INTERPRETATION – Make note of other places in Scripture that communicate a similar message. *(How does the passage connect to the passages before and after? How does the passage fit into the greater story of the Bible – creation, fall, redemption, restoration? Hint: Follow the cross-references in your Bible.)*

INTERPRETATION – Dig deeper using at least one commentary. *(Examine the culture and historical context.)*

APPLICATION – What does the passage say about God?

APPLICATION – What does the passage say about God's children? *(Our responsibilities, our sin, who we are in Christ, etc.)*

APPLICATION – What does God want you to do today or this week to develop Christ-like character and habits? *(Is there something you need to pray about or confess? Whom do you need to forgive, encourage, or serve?)*

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PASSAGE: PHILIPPIANS 4

CONTEXT – What is the context of the book you are studying?

Who?

To whom?

When?

Where?

What genre?

Why?

OBSERVATION – What does it say? *(These notes are just for you to help you capture the content.)*

OBSERVATION – What are the key and repeated words? Look up any unfamiliar words in the dictionary.

OBSERVATION – What is the main idea for this passage? Write one sentence or one sentence per section.

INTERPRETATION – Read the passage in at least one other translation. *(Note new insights and translation used.)*

INTERPRETATION – Make note of other places in Scripture that communicate a similar message. *(How does the passage connect to the passages before and after? How does the passage fit into the greater story of the Bible – creation, fall, redemption, restoration? Hint: Follow the cross-references in your Bible.)*

INTERPRETATION – Dig deeper using at least one commentary. *(Examine the culture and historical context.)*

APPLICATION – What does the passage say about God?

APPLICATION – What does the passage say about God's children? *(Our responsibilities, our sin, who we are in Christ, etc.)*

APPLICATION – What does God want you to do today or this week to develop Christ-like character and habits? *(Is there something you need to pray about or confess? Whom do you need to forgive, encourage, or serve?)*

REMEMBER – Use this space to make note of something you want to remember from your time in God's Word this week. *(What Bible verse was most significant to you during your time of study? What one thing do you want to be sure to remember?)*

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REFLECTIONS ON PHILIPPIANS

Before completing this worksheet, pray and take a fresh look at the book in its entirety by reading it from start to finish.

What were the repeated words and ideas in the book of Philippians?

Summarize the book of Philippians in one sentence.

If you had to choose just one word, what word would you use to describe the book of Philippians?

What do you want others to know about the book of Philippians?

Flip back through your notes and your Bible in search of verses you recorded or highlighted.

Which verse(s) did God specifically and personally draw to your attention during your study? Choose at least two and write them below. Challenge yourself to memorize one of the verses you've noted.

What is something you may not have understood without the help of a commentary or cross-reference?

What new things have you learned about God? Perhaps an attribute of His character, a new fact you discovered, or something you knew but appreciate more now.

What new things have you learned about God's children during your study of Philippians?

Describe an action, step of faith, or act of obedience you have taken, or God is prompting you to take, as a result of this study.

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