

Philippians

Study and Discussion Guide

I think we can all agree that this year has not gone according to plan. It is easy to bemoan that fact but as believers it is our act of humble obedience to adapt and move forward as a Spirit led church. The study of Philippians will help us look beyond our circumstances toward the heavenly glory that awaits us in Christ. This book is an excellent example of distance learning and social distancing as Paul writes from prison challenging the church to avoid distraction and sinful pride. The purpose of this study guide is to challenge you in much the same way. In the midst of social chaos, where are you looking? Let the words of God through the Apostle Paul encourage you and strengthen you through every difficult time.

- Pastor Barry Schwenk, Fall 2020

Introduction

There is little debate concerning the authorship of this book. The Apostle Paul wrote this letter from prison (most likely in Rome) around 60 AD. Philippi sat in northern Greece and was part of the Roman Republic. Famously, Mark Anthony and his forces avenged Julius Caesar by defeating Brutus and his forces in Philippi. This helped usher in the Roman Empire. Philippi became a Roman colony. The city was entitled to rights like other cities in Italy and its population received Roman citizenship.

The church in Philippi was established by Paul during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:12-40). Philippi had a very small Jewish population. Their numbers were so small that they did not have a synagogue so a few women met outside near the river to worship. It is here that Paul meets Lydia and she becomes a Christian after hearing the Gospel. The church, likely begins to meet in her home. While in Philippi, Paul and Silas cast out a demon from a little girl, which lands them in jail. God miraculously opens the jail and it is through this event that the Philippian jailer,

and his household, turn to Christ adding to the church's numbers. The church grows from there and Paul visits them multiple times during his journeys.

The Philippian church supported Paul and was very generous toward the struggling Jewish-Christian church in Jerusalem. During his first imprisonment in Rome, the Philippians sent a delegation to Rome to encourage him. Paul in turn, writes this letter and sends it back to the church to encourage them. The purpose of this letter is practical. Paul addresses practical concerns during his imprisonment and this gives us some insight into godly focus.

Chapter 1

Read Philippians 1:1-2

1. Who wrote this book and how do they describe themselves?
2. For whom is this letter intended and what are the different designations for these people?
3. What common greeting does the writer use and how does that encapsulate our relationship with God?

Read Philippians 1:3-11

4. What impact do the believers in Philippi have upon Paul according to verses 3-6 and why does he end as he does in verse 6?

5. In verses 7 and 8, how does Paul describe what the bond between believers should be?

6. What does Paul pray for in verse 9 and how does that contradict the normal worldview?

7. Why does Paul pray this way for the Philippians according to verse 10?

8. What is the result of the Philippians growing as Paul prays for them?

Read Philippians 1:12-18

9. What was the effect of Paul's imprisonment and why does he share this with the Philippians (vv.12-14)?

10. What are the differences between the two groups Paul describes in verses 15-17?

11. How does Paul react to his detractors in verse 18?

Read Philippians 1:19-26

12. How is Paul so confident in his deliverance according to verse 20?

13. Why would Paul be ashamed?

14. Which is better for Paul according to verses 21-24 and why?

15. What does progress in faith lead to?

16. What is it about Paul that will cause the Philippians to boast in Christ?

Read Philippians 1:27-30

17. What does it mean to conduct yourself “worthy of the gospel”?

18. What happens to the Body of Christ when they conduct themselves “worthy of the gospel” according to verses 27 and 28?

19. What special gifts have we been given in Christ according to verse 29?

20. What shared struggle is Paul referring to in verse 30 and how does this verse apply to us today?

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Chapter 2

Read Philippians 2:1-4

21. What two thoughts are connected by the word “therefore”?

22. How does God minister to us in our suffering according to verse 1?

23. How is Paul’s joy affected by the actions of the church in verses 2-4 and why?

Read Philippians 2:5-11

24. How does Paul describe the attitude of Jesus in this passage and how does he use this description as an example to the church?

25. How is Jesus different from Adam according to verse 6 and how do we see this difference continue today?

26. What do we learn about the nature of Jesus in verses 5-8?

27. What two thoughts are connected by the word “therefore” in verse 9?

Read Philippians 2:12-13

28. How much does Paul like the word “therefore”?

29. What two thoughts are connected by the word “therefore” in verse 12?

30. Verses 12 and 13 can be difficult to understand. Let me give you a few definitions to help us understand and explain these two verses.

Work out = strive to accomplish down to the end point

Fear = reverence, respect

Trembling = weakness, inability

Read Philippians 2:14-18

31. What should be the attitude that defines our obedience according to verse 14?

32. What does the word “become” signify?

33. How do verses 15 and 16 fit with Matthew 5:14-16?

34. Why does Paul refer to his life as a drink offering and how can we utilize Numbers 15:5, Numbers 15:10, Luke 22:20 and Romans 12:1 to better understand this passage?

Read Philippians 2:19-24

35. How does Timothy serve as an example of what Paul has been writing thus far?

36. What motivates Paul's plans?

Read Philippians 2:25-30

37. How does Ephaphroditus serve as an example of what Paul has been writing thus far?

38. How does Paul suggest they treat Ephaphroditus and why does he go out of his way to say this?

Chapter 3

Read Philippians 3:1-6

39. What does it mean when Paul says, "Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord"?

40. What is the connection between the three groups Paul lists in verse 2?

41. How does Paul defend his stance against these groups in verses 3-4?
(See also Rom 2:25-29)?

42. What reasons does Paul give if he wanted to boast in himself (vv.5-6)?

Read Philippians 3:7-11

43. How does Paul use accounting terms to reflect on his own righteousness in verse 7?

44. What does Paul say that he gained in Christ?

Read Philippians 3:12-16

45. How does Paul use the analogy of a runner to represent the Christian life and what is the goal?

46. How does verse 12 describe the difference between positional and progressive sanctification?

47. What imagery does Paul use in verses 13 and 14?

48. What role does spiritual maturity play in our progressive sanctification according to verses 15 and 16?

Read Philippians 3:17-21

49. If no one is perfect like Christ, why does Paul tell the Philippians to be like him in verse 17?

50. How do verses 18 and 19 reflect the same message Paul gave in verses 2 and 3?

51. How does Paul justify his position and why does he use the image of "citizenship"?

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Chapter 4

Read Philippians 4:1

52. What two thoughts are connected by the word “therefore”?

Read Philippians 4:2-3

53. What is Paul addressing in these verses, how does he tell the Philippians to solve this issue and why? (see Phil. 2)

Read Philippians 4:4-7

54. Why does Paul repeat himself in verse 4?

55. What does the word reasonableness/gentleness mean in verse 5?

56. Why does Paul tell us not to be anxious according to verse 5?

57. How does Paul tell us to avoid anxiety in verse 6?

58. According to verse 7, what is God’s response when we deal with our anxieties as He desires?

Read Philippians 4:8-9

59. How do the things listed in verse 8 also help deal with anxiety?
60. What does Paul say is necessary to have the God of peace with you?

Read Philippians 4:10-13

61. Why was Paul thankful in verse 10?
62. What characteristic is Paul talking about in verses 11-13 and how does that tie into verse 10?

Read Philippians 4:14-20

63. Why does Paul include verses 14-16?
64. What is the benefit of their assistance according to verse 17?
65. How does verse 18 point to a cheerful giver versus a tithing obligation from the law?

66. How would God respond to their sacrificial giving?

67. According to verse 20, what is the proper response to the truth found in verse 19?

Read Philippians 4:21-22

68. What do we learn about Paul in verse 21?

69. How does verse 22 testify to the message of suffering, joy and contentment that Paul has been sharing in this letter?

70. What final word does Paul leave with the Philippians?

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