

*P* a woman's walk through  
*Philippians*

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# One

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*Acts 16:1-40*

*Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

*The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.*

*Proverbs 16:9*

## *Following Christ*

God still speaks today. Do you believe it? Has He spoken to you recently? While He does not usually speak audibly, He does still speak, sometimes like a whisper across the heart, sometimes through other Christians and most often through His Word. Today, as we learn about the beginning of the church at Philippi, we are going to discover how God uses obstructions in our life to bring glory to Himself.

### **Read Acts 16:1-40**

Before we can dive into the rich epistle called Philippians, it would be beneficial for us to review who the Philippians are and how they

became Christians.

***Acts 16:1-10 – God Guides***

How was Paul guided to Philippi? Who guided him?

How many times was Paul turned in a different direction than he intended?

How quickly did Paul respond to the vision he received to go to Macedonia?

How quickly do you respond to the prompting of God?

We note from the verses that three times God redirected Paul. Twice the Spirit instructed Paul commanding him not to enter Asia and Bithynia. The third time the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision.

How does God speak to you? How does He direct your steps?

Whether we realize it or not, the Lord is always guiding us,

although sometimes we hear His voice more clearly than others. Proverbs 16:9 tells us “the mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” Just as Paul planned to go into Asia and also to Bithynia, we too can plan to do things, but the Lord may change our plans. How many times have you had your day planned out perfectly and with one “glitch” your plans have been ruined? Could it be that the Lord had different plans for you for that day? Make the most of your opportunities (Colossians 4:5), especially on those days when the Lord “disrupts” your plans, because just as we’ll discover in the next section, the Lord may be offering you an opportunity to change someone’s life!

### ***Acts 16:11-15 – God Provides***

According to verse 12, what do you learn about Philippi?

What did Paul do on the Sabbath in Philippi? Where did he go?

And what did he intend to do there?

What did Paul do instead?

Who was there to hear Paul speak?

What do you learn about Lydia from verse 14?

What happened to Lydia upon hearing Paul speak?

How did she receive the gospel? Who opened her heart?

What was her immediate response to receiving the gospel?

What did she offer Paul in verse 15?

The Lord led Paul to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of the district of Macedonia. On the Sabbath day, Paul and his companions went to the riverside in search of a place to pray. When they arrived, they sat down along the river and began preaching to the women gathered there. A woman named Lydia, a merchant of purple fabrics from the city of Thyatira, was there. The fact that Lydia made purple fabrics indicates that she was likely a woman of wealth. Purple dye was made from the murex shell and was quite expensive to manufacture. Her clientele would surely have been of

the upper class society.

Upon hearing Paul's words, *God* opened Lydia's heart to respond to Paul's message. Immediately following Lydia's conversion, she and her household were baptized. Then she invited Paul and his companions to stay with her in her home.

This portion of Scripture can give us great hope. Not only can we have confidence that God is directing our steps, but we can have confidence that God is directing the steps of others. It was God that opened Lydia's heart, not the words that Paul was speaking. When we are sharing the gospel with others and it seems they are not responding, take heart, God will open their heart in due time. Isaiah 55:11 assures us that God's word does not return void but accomplishes that which He pleases, and it will prosper wherever He sends it.

***Acts 16:16-34 – God Magnified***

What happened as Paul was going to a place of prayer according to verses 16-17?

How long has this been happening?

How did Paul respond to this “annoyance”?

What was the response of the masters?

What happened to Paul and his companions as a result of the accusation of the slave-girl's masters?

Where were they placed? Who placed them there?

What were Paul and Silas doing while in prison? What time of the day was it?

Who was their audience?

What happened while they were singing and praying according to verse 26?

How did the jailer react to this event?

How did Paul respond to the jailer?

What did the jailer do when he confirmed that all the prisoners were still present?

What was Paul's response to the jailer's question?

The jailer, having believed in God, was baptized along with his whole family. What did the jailer do for Paul and Silas?

Yet again we see the hand of God directing Paul. Thus far on his trip to Philippi, Lydia has come to know the risen Christ and a slave-girl has been freed of the demon that was possessing her. The masters of the slave-girl, having many profits to lose on her fortune telling, seized Paul and Silas and brought them before the authorities. They concocted a story that the men were authors of confusion because they were Jews and the people of the city were Roman. The crowd aligned with the masters, and the chief magistrates tore off Paul's and Silas's robes and proceeded to beat them. After being severely wounded, they were thrown in prison. And we see the hand of God here as well. For during the night while Paul and Silas were singing and praying, many prisoners and

the jailer heard their praises. God sent an earthquake and shook the foundations of the jail, the doors were opened and the chains that bound the prisoners were unfastened. (Praise sets us free!) When the jailer saw what had happened, he set out to commit suicide fearing the consequences of what happened on his shift, but Paul cried out, “do not harm yourself, for we are all here!” The lights came on, and the jailer confirmed Paul’s words to be true. Then he “fell down” before the men and asked them a beautiful question of a seeking heart: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Paul answered, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

The man and his household were baptized “that very hour,” and Paul went to stay and feast with him.

How simple, yet profound, is our faith! Just believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. So often we complicate the simple.

Once again, God orchestrated the events around Paul that he would be placed in jail and lead the jailer to Christ. Philippi has yet another member to add to their growing congregation.

### ***Acts 16:35-40 – God Glorified***

When day broke, the chief magistrates gave the order to the policemen to release Paul and Silas. The jailer reported this to Paul and offered him freedom, but Paul, angered by the previous day’s events, demanded that the magistrates themselves come to release

them. When the chief magistrates heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were frightened of the potential consequences of how they had treated their fellow citizens. They came and appealed to the men, set them free, then begged them to leave the city.

Before leaving however, where did Paul and Silas go?

According to verse 40, where did the new church of Philippi likely meet?

### *Apply*

How do you normally respond when your plans have been disrupted?

In learning from Paul's experience, how will you respond to thwarted plans now knowing that God may be the author of the disruption?

How does God speak to His children today? How can we learn to

be more receptive to His promptings?

We read earlier that, although man may plan his way, God directs his steps. Does this mean we are to give up our goals and “coast” through life? What role do our goals have in regard to God’s directing our lives?

### *Review*

Following Christ is simpler than you might think. If we look at the example Paul gave us in this chapter, we see that all it took to follow Christ was obedience to His call. Sometimes the Spirit’s direction does not seem logical (remember Noah?). Paul saw great opportunities in Asia and Bithynia, but God saw greater opportunities in Philippi.

When God calls, He provides. At some point, I’m sure there was the question in the back of Paul’s mind as to where he would sleep or what he would eat, but as we read, Paul was invited to stay and feast with both Lydia and the jailer. You can be sure that when God calls you, He will also guide you, equip you and provide for you.

## *Discussion*

In what ways does God still speak to His creation today?

Has God ever placed obstructions in your path? How did you respond?

From what you learned about Paul today, how might God be using your obstacles?

Who is responsible for changing the heart of the unbeliever? What is our part and God's part in leading someone to salvation?

How did Paul and Silas react to being imprisoned? What did they do while they were in prison?

What was the result of their praising while imprisoned?

How does praise break the chains of bondage?



# Two

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*Philippians 1:1-11*

*Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

***For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.***

*Philippians 1:6*

*Devoted to Christ*

There are a lot of things that demand the devotion of our time and energy. All you have to do is look at the latest women's magazine for a handful of ideas. You need to exercise more. You need to prepare healthier meals for your family. You need to move up the corporate ladder. You need to train your child in this way or that. You need to prepare for your retirement. Yes, there are a lot of goals to which we can devote our life, but how many are truly worth anything in the big scheme of things? In this lesson, we will discover where Paul's devotion lies and how we can follow his example.

## Read Philippians 1:1-11

### *Philippians 1:1 – Devoted to Christ*

Paul is the author of Philippians. It is believed that Timothy, his companion and “son” in the faith, may have penned Paul’s words, but Paul is nevertheless the author through the inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).

How did Paul describe himself and Timothy in verse 1?

***Bondservant:*** *a slave, bondman, man of servile condition; a slave; metaph., one who gives himself up to another's will, those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men; devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests; a servant, attendant. (Strong's #1401, emphasis added)*

In the opening address of this epistle, Paul is defining himself as Christ’s bondservant. He is in essence saying, “I am a slave to Christ’s will. I am totally devoted to Christ. I care only about what Christ wants to do through me. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20).”

What does Deuteronomy 15:12-18 teach us about being a slave?

According to Deuteronomy 15:12-18, if a servant, after being set free, decides to return to the master because he loves him and has fared well with him, the master then takes an awl and pierces it through the servant's ear into the door as a type of branding. Then the servant will belong to that same master for life.

What does your branding for Christ look like? How can your neighbor know that you are a bondservant of Christ?

### ***Philippians 1:2-5 – Devoted to the Gospel***

Why does Paul thank God for the Philippians?

What are some practical ways we can participate in sharing the gospel?

There are so many ways to participate in sharing the gospel. You need not be a missionary, nor do you need to be a minister, but you can love and pray for and provide for those who do carry the gospel to the lost. You may also consider sending letters and care packages to the missionaries of your church. And you can always share Christ with your friends, family and neighbors.

***Philippians 1:6 – Devoted to a Maturing Faith***

According to verse 6, what is Paul confident of?

Is there a work that the Lord is doing in your life right now that seems will never come to completion? If so, what is it?

What assurance do you gain from knowing that God is creating a beautiful masterpiece out of every moment of your life — the good, the bad, and the ugly times?

What ultimate purpose is God trying to accomplish in our lives?  
(See Romans 8:29 for additional insight.)

When will God's work be complete according to Philippians 1:6?

Whether you can see His hand or not, God is working in your life right now. I once heard a pastor say that our lives are like a work of needlepoint. If you look at the back of the piece, it's just a big mess of intertwined threads without any rhyme or reason, but if you look

at the front of the piece, it's a beautiful masterpiece. In the same way, God uses each and every event of our lives to create in us a masterpiece, although we may only be able to see the "messy" underside. He uses each heartache and triumph to mold us and conform us to the image of His Son. God's work is not completed until we are transformed completely into the likeness of His Son, whether through death or through the rapture. But you may be assured that His work *will* be completed!

***Philippians 1:7-8 – Devoted to Loving Fellow Believers***

How do you know that Paul genuinely cares for the Philippians?  
What does he want them to know about his feelings toward them?

*Affection: bowels, intestines [the bowels were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, such as anger and love; but by the Hebrews as the seat of the tenderer affections, esp. kindness, benevolence, compassion; hence our heart (tender mercies, affections, etc.)]. (Strong's #4698)*

What feelings do you have toward your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?

Paul longed for the Philippian church. He was their father in the faith. Jesus told us that the world would recognize us as His if we would love one another (John 13:35). How unfortunate that too often we let petty disagreements and misinterpreted words or actions keep us from truly loving one another. (We will be discussing more about relationships in lesson seven.)

Paul mentions in verse 7 that he is imprisoned. According to Acts 24:5-9, some Jews rallied against Paul accusing him of being a troublemaker, trying to incite Jews to riots and rebellion. They also accused him of trying to desecrate the temple by bringing in a Gentile. The Roman government wanted to release him because they found him innocent, but the Jewish leaders protested the decision. So Paul appealed to Caesar. He was put under house arrest for two years while awaiting trial (Acts 28:30). During his house arrest, it is entirely possible that he was handcuffed to a guard the entire time. If not handcuffed, we can be sure that he was cautiously guarded at all times. While this made it impossible for Paul to be out spreading the gospel in person, his imprisonment enabled him to write this fantastic letter to the Philippians that we are still reading today.

For what are you so passionate that you would endure prison? Do you have the same passion for Jesus that Paul did?

***Philippians 1:9-11 – Devoted to a Growing Knowledge of Christ***

What are the points of Paul's prayer for the Philippians?

What does it mean to make one's love abound more and more?

The Amplified Bible adds: "that your love may display itself in greater depth of acquaintance and more comprehensive discernment." How does this version increase your understanding of this verse?

According to Strong's (#4052), *abound* means "to exceed a fixed number of measure, to be left over and above a certain number of measure." How can one's love *exceed a fixed measure*?

What qualities does Paul pray would mark the growth of their love?

***Real knowledge*** in this verse refers to a precise and correct knowledge (Strong's #1922).

How does one acquire a “real knowledge” of God?

What additional insight does 2 Peter 1:2-4 give us into knowledge of God?

What does Paul pray the Philippians will be able to approve (discern)?

What will correct discernment of those things that are excellent bring about for them?

How is one filled with the fruit of righteousness?

How does the fruit of righteousness manifest itself?

What is the purpose of being filled with the fruit of righteousness according to verse 11?

Paul prays that the Philippians would experience love – love that exceeds their comprehension – for each other and for their Savior and that their love would be a manifestation of a correct knowledge of their God. He prays that through this knowledge and discernment they would be able to approve (discover or distinguish between things that differ) all things that are excellent. To know *and follow* those things that are excellent is to be blameless before the Lord. Such knowledge manifests itself in righteous living. And righteous living brings glory and praise to the Father.

The prayers of the Bible hold exceptional power being inspired by God Himself (2 Timothy 3:16) — they are *His* words and therefore His *will*. Using Paul’s prayer as a model, rewrite the prayer (vv. 9-11) in your own words, replacing “your” with a friend or family member’s name for whom you wish to pray or for yourself.

### *Apply*

Can you honestly call yourself a bondservant of Christ? Have you totally given yourself over to Christ’s will for your life? Are you completely devoted to Christ regardless of your own interests? What, if anything, is keeping you from becoming His bondservant?

From what you studied today, what can you glean about where Paul's devotion or priorities lay?

What do you glean about where your own priorities should be?

What, if anything, do you need to do to set your priorities in a proper order?

Make an effort this week to contact a missionary. Write them or send them a little something to let them know that you care. Most of all, be an encouragement to them.

### *Review*

If you've ever wondered how to prioritize your life, Paul gives us a

great guideline. Your first priority should be that of a bondservant to the Lord Jesus Christ. When you are truly His bondservant with full submission of your will to His, everything else will fall into place: your devotion to spreading the gospel, your devotion to the work of the Lord, your devotion to maturing your faith, your devotion to loving fellow believers and Christ, and your devotion to a growing knowledge of Christ. Make it your prayer and your goal to become a genuine bondservant of Christ.

### *Discussion*

What does a Christian's "branding" look like? How can our neighbors know we are Christians?

How can you participate in sharing the gospel?

How does God use each experience of our lives? What is He trying to accomplish? When will He bring it to completion?

Why is a genuine love for one another important in the body of Christ?

Where can we gain proper knowledge of Christ?

How does proper knowledge give us discernment and enable us to

be blameless?

What is the “fruit of righteousness” and how is it manifested?

# Three

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*Philippians 1:12-30*

## *Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

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

*Philippians 1:21*

## *To Live Is Christ*

What is your reason for getting out of bed in the morning? Is it because the alarm went off, and you have to get to work? Or is it because the kids woke you and are screaming for breakfast? Paul had a much different reason for getting out of bed in the morning – he wanted to invest himself in the eternal future of others. God, give us this same passion as we study Your word today!

**Read Philippians 1:12-30.**

*Philippians 1:12-20 – The Gospel of Christ*

We begin our lesson today with the second half of Philippians 1. Paul, imprisoned for his faith while penning this letter, is not as

concerned with his own welfare as much as he is for the eternal welfare of the lost.

According to verses 12-18, what good has come from Paul's imprisonment?

What happened to the gospel while Paul was imprisoned? How did this happen?

What impact did Paul have on the guards and those around him while in prison?

What impact do you have on those around you, no matter the circumstances? How does Colossians 4:5 tell us to act toward those around us?

Why do you think Paul's imprisonment encouraged men to "speak the word of God without fear"?

Why were some preaching the gospel out of "envy and strife"?

How might this contrast with those preaching out of “good will”?

During his house arrest, Paul was heavily guarded at all times, and he was not able to go about daily business, especially ministering to those needing a Savior. Yet, Paul was able to rejoice in his circumstances.

Why was Paul rejoicing?

Would you also be able to rejoice in such dire circumstances if you knew that your suffering was furthering the gospel of Christ?

Is the church today dedicated to its mission of fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)? Are you? What keeps you from spreading the gospel? How can Paul’s example encourage you to speak boldly for the Lord?

According to verse 19, of what was Paul confident? What gave him such confidence?

Paul mentions in verse 20 that no matter what happens, his only concern is that Christ is exalted in his body. How does one exalt Christ in his body?

Paul explains that his imprisonment has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard (the governor's palace), that he is imprisoned for the cause of Christ, not because of a violation of the law. Because of his imprisonment, the whole palace is now hearing the gospel, and his brethren in the Lord have gained confidence to speak God's Word without fear. Some have even risen to preach the gospel out of envy and strife against Paul, but he rejoices because, regardless of the motive, the gospel is being spread. Paul has used this opportunity, not to have a pity party for himself, but to make the most of it for the sake of Christ (Colossians 4:5).

Paul goes on to mention that he is confident of his deliverance, whether by release from prison or deliverance to Christ through death. He credits the prayers of the Philippian believers and the help given by the Spirit of Christ for his confidence in his deliverance. He also notes his hope that his imprisonment would not bring shame, but that every day in every way, he would exalt Christ in his body. That by his every word spoken and by every action Christ would be glorified.

***Philippians 1:21-26 – To Live is Christ***

What do you think Paul means when he says, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”?

How does Paul rationalize through the life and death issues mentioned in verses 22-26?

What does Paul choose according to verse 25 and why?

Paul so identifies his life with Christ that it’s as though “Paul” doesn’t exist. How do you identify with Christ? Sadly, too many Christians today separate their lives into compartments, like “secular” and “sacred” and don’t even realize what they are doing. Their “sacred” life consists of going to church, prayer, and reading their Bible, while their “secular” life includes everything else: relationships, activities, television, thought life, etc.

Paul has his priorities straight. His number one priority was Christ. We see that in his desire to “depart and be with Christ” in verse 23. But we also note that he knew there was still work left for him to do on earth as he nurtured the growing faith of the Philippian believers.

Honestly evaluate yourself. Do you draw an invisible line between

where Christ is and is not allowed? How can you “erase” that line and let Him become part of all of you, everything you are and everything you do?

***Philippians 1:27-28 – Code of Conduct for Christ***

What type of conduct is expected from a Christian according to verse 27?

How do we “conduct [ourselves] in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”? What does this look like in practice?

What does your conduct say about you?

How can our conduct speak volumes about our priorities in life?

Why is unity (one spirit and one mind, v. 27) in the body of believers so important? (Unity is a recurring theme in Philippians that we will discuss more in the future.)

How does our standing firm and fearless in the face of our adversaries warn them of their impending destruction?

Surely you have heard an unbeliever use the example of the Christian as justification for not attending church. The unbeliever is often heard saying, “The church is full of hypocrites.” Unfortunately, too many times that is true. Too often our conduct does not bear witness to what our mouth speaks. With our words we praise God while our actions reveal something totally different. This is *not* a manner of conduct worthy of the gospel. Our speech and our actions should be unified. Our lifestyle should confirm the truth of God’s word. We are a “new creation” and should no longer conform to the pattern of the world (Romans 12:2).

Paul then pleads with the church to be of “one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (v. 27). Unity in the body of believers is vitally important to the witness the church has on the world. When we argue and debate on the small issues, the gospel has much less impact on the unbeliever witnessing these quarrels. Christ didn’t quarrel; He loved. And we too need to love and let go of the petty issues, focusing our attention on the things that matter like spreading Christ’s gospel. When we stand unified, firm and fearless in the face of opposition, in the end we will be saved, but they will certainly be destroyed.

***Philippians 1:29-30 – Suffering for Christ***

According to verse 29, what has been granted to you as a believer?

How is suffering for Christ a privilege?

How did Paul view his suffering in prison as a privilege for Christ?

What struggles or suffering are you facing right now? Do you trust God to use it for His glory?

What hope do the following verses give to those who are suffering?

Matthew 5:11-12

James 1:12

1 Peter 4:14

How can suffering *ever* be a *privilege*? For Paul it was a privilege because his imprisonment furthered the gospel. Jesus told us that when people persecute us because of Him, we should rejoice and be glad because great is our reward in heaven (Matthew 5:11-12). Suffering and persecution seem directly linked with rewards. James 1:12 tells us that the man who perseveres under trial will gain the crown of life. In 1 Peter 4:14 we note that we are blessed when we are “reviled for the name of Christ” because the “Spirit of glory and of God rests on [us].”

Christ gave his *whole* life for us, in life and death. The very least he asks of us is our loyalty and love. It is when we are suffering that we are most closely united with Christ. Think about this with me for a moment, when are you spending the most time in fellowship with the Father? For me, it’s when I am going through a trial. Trials tend to bring us to the point where we are totally honest before the Father and totally dependent upon Him. We dismiss the prayer “formulas” and open our soul to Him.

### *Apply*

From what you studied today, what can you glean about using every circumstance as an opportunity for spreading the gospel?

Who has God been nudging you to speak to about His plan of salvation? What has kept you from sharing your faith with this person?

What are your priorities? List them, then number them from most important (#1) to least important? Do you need to do some rearranging? How do your priorities compare with Paul's from what you've learned thus far?

What is keeping you from desiring to go and be with Christ? Make a list of things to which you are so devoted that given the choice you may prefer to remain in the body than going with Christ. How can you turn this desire into a fruitful labor for Christ — something with an eternal value?

How does our conduct speak louder than our words? How can we use our conduct to share the gospel?

What can you do to promote unity of spirit and mind and purpose within your local body of believers?

### *Review*

Oh to have the passion of Paul for the gospel of Christ. Too many today (myself included) are much too apathetic. When we sit down and think about the eternal future of the unbeliever, I wonder how we can be so indifferent. I am sure that you are afraid of the persecution that may come with sharing, but Christ Himself promised that we would endure persecution on His account (John 15:20). However, there is great blessing promised to you when you are persecuted for the sake of Christ: your reward in heaven is great (Matthew 5:11) and you will receive the crown of life (James 1:12). May the Lord instill within you (and me) this hope and a new boldness for sharing His gospel!

### *Discussion*

How does persecution impact the gospel?

What sacrifice would you be willing to make to further the spreading of the gospel?

How is every minute of every day an opportunity to share the gospel?

What does it mean to have Christ exalted in your body? How do we put this into practice?

What does it mean to “conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”? What does this look like in practice?

# Four

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*Philippians 2:1-11*

*Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 2:5*

## *The Attitude of Christ*

Humility is certainly not common practice today. What is taught is that it's all about *you* – how you feel and what you are. Life seems to revolve around how you can make yourself look and feel better. It is believed that to be successful you need to step on toes to get somewhere in this life. But is that true? Do you need to be aggressive and deceitful to get ahead? Do you need to put other people down to lift yourself up? Paul gives us some great advice on the proper way to be “lifted up.” Let's examine his advice today.

**Read Philippians 2:1-11.**

***Philippians 2:1-2 – Unity of the Believer***

What four “if’s” does Paul mention in verse 1 that every believer holds in common through Christ? Next to each one, briefly describe a time you experienced it.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3
- 4.

According to verse 2, what four manifestations of the believers’ unity would make Paul’s joy complete?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

We looked briefly at unity in the last chapter, mentioning its importance in the body of believers. Do you feel that the congregation with which you worship is unified in mind, love, spirit, and purpose? If not, what causes disunity where you worship?

What effect does unity have on the impact of the gospel we share?

Paul begins this chapter reaffirming that all believers are able to (and *should*) experience encouragement in Christ, consolation in the love of fellow believers, fellowship with Christ and with other believers through the Spirit, and the exchange of affection and compassion with each other. Anyone with such feelings toward their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ can surely set aside the trivial and focus on being unified in mind, love, and spirit and intent on one purpose: fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

***Philippians 2:3-4 – Humility of the Believer***

Paul tells us in verse 3 to “do nothing” out of what?

How are we to regard one another? And with what type of attitude are we to do so?

How are we called to serve one another according to verse 4?

Think about your day today (or yesterday). Did you ever provide for your own needs or wants before another's? When is it okay to meet your own needs or desires?

Have you ever done anything out of empty conceit – anything prompted by a spirit of vainglory – to make yourself look good? If so, explain. Why do you think Paul cautioned against this?

Why is it so important to think more highly of others than of yourself? Why is it so hard to do?

Selfish ambition and vain conceit are two driving forces in our society. How can we learn to control these forces in our own lives?

How might taking this challenge seriously influence your relationships with your husband, your children, your friends, and your coworkers?

How do selfish ambition and vain conceit hinder our ability to fulfill the call to be a servant?

Society encourages us to “look out for number one” and “obey your needs and desires.” Scripture has a totally different philosophy. Here Paul encourages us to “do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit.” Why? First, we are indirectly implying that we are more important than others, so Paul expounds, “but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.” Secondly, when we do something with a selfish heart or in empty (vain) conceit, we are doing it for our own glory rather than God’s.

Jesus said of Himself, “[I] did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matthew 20:28). Even as a young boy, rather than running and playing with other boys His own age, Jesus was found in the temple “about his father’s business” (Luke 2:49, KJV). As we will note in the next section of this chapter, everything Christ did, He did for you and me, not for Himself.

### ***Philippians 2:5-11 – The Attitude of the Believer***

What type of attitude should we have according to verse 5?

How did Christ exhibit this attitude? What did He give up? What did He become?

What reward was given for his obedient humility?

How would you define *humility*?

*According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), **humility** is “marked by meekness or modesty in behavior, attitude or spirit; not arrogant or prideful.”*

What do you learn about humility from the following verses?

Proverbs 18:12

Proverbs 22:4

Philippians 2:3

James 4:6

1 Peter 5:6

How can we acquire a spirit of humility? How can we put humility into practice in our daily life?

Why is humility essential to servant hood?

What an awesome picture we have here of Christ, and it's certainly one we can learn a lot from. Imagine a glass of ice water being emptied of all its contents. In the same way, Jesus "emptied" Himself of His deity. He gave up His position at the right hand of God in the heavens, His equality with the Father and all that goes along with that – His omnipresence, His omnipotence and His omniscience. He *willingly* laid them aside so He could truly experience life as a mortal human being. He even laid aside His wants and desires and became obedient even to death on a cross. Do you think He *wanted* to die such a death? Of course not! He pleaded with the Father to "remove this cup [of death] from me." But He *also* prayed, "yet not what I will, but what You will" (Mark 14:36). This, my friend, is a picture of true humility and of bond-service to the Lord. *Not my will, but Your will*. Can you utter such a prayer?

## *Apply*

Experience the humility and bond-service of Jesus this week. For one week, lay aside all your selfish desires (like watching mindless television shows or internet surfing) and replace it with doing something for someone else. Visit a shut-in or take a meal to someone who is under the weather. Offer to watch your neighbor's children free of charge for an hour while she runs errands. There are so many great things you can do to help someone else and bring joy into their lives. Record below the results of your efforts.

## *Review*

The walk of the Christian is to become more like Christ with each passing day. Today, we have received a wonderful portrait of Christ, and we have also received a small “checklist,” if you will, of qualities we can attain to.

1. The first quality we discussed was unity with fellow believers – in mind, love, spirit, and purpose. We need to set aside the petty and trivial and become unified in our eternal purpose.
2. The second quality is love – love for one another and meeting the needs of others before meeting your own desires. Be assured, Beloved, that your relationship with your Father through prayer and Bible study is a need that *must* be met in order to meet the needs of others effectively. Just as you wouldn’t drive to the other side of the state without first filling up your gas tank, so you can’t effectively go about your work for God’s Kingdom without your spiritual fuel.
3. And finally we discussed a humble attitude like the one found in Christ. We need to empty ourselves of our own selfish desires and fill ourselves with the will of the Father. He will never lead on any unsafe path, and He has promised to always be with us wherever He may lead. We need not be afraid to fully submit ourselves to Him. He cares for us, and will take great care of us.

## *Discussion*

How is our witness to the unbeliever affected by the following?

And our call to servanthood?

- Disunity
- Selfishness
- Pride

How does pride bring about destruction (Proverbs 18:12)?

What does it mean to be “humble”?

What does humility look like in practice?

What type of attitude did Christ display and how?

How do we practice the attitude of Christ?

Why is it better to let God exalt you rather than trying to exalt yourself?

# Five

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*Philippians 2:12-30*

## *Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

*Philippians 2:12b-13*

## *Spreading the Light of Christ*

What message are your words and actions communicating to the world? Do they line up with what you believe? If you could watch yourself on television, would you be embarrassed or pleased with your “performance” of the day? Sometimes we forget that our actions are communicating far more to the unbeliever than our words.

**Read Philippians 2:12-30.**

***Philippians 2:12-13 – A Working Salvation***

What did Paul admonish the Philippians to “work out” and how?

***Work Out:*** to perform, accomplish, achieve (Strong’s #2716). To carry to completion.

What does working out your salvation look like in practice?

What part does obedience have in “working out” your salvation?

How does James 2:14-26 explain the relationship between faith and works? Why are works important to your salvation?

According to Philippians 2:12-13, what is our responsibility and what is God’s responsibility in working out our salvation?

To have a fuller understanding of this verse, we must understand that we receive our salvation at the point we accept Christ as Savior. However, our salvation is a continual progress that is completed “in the day of Christ” (v. 16) when we are glorified together with Him. Paul is not telling us in this passage that we need to work for our salvation, but rather He is saying that after we are saved, there is work that needs to be done. Every day, we must continue to choose to be obedient to Christ and to love others. To work out your salvation is to bring it to maturity.

Why with fear and trembling? This is an earnest anxiety to please the Father through a consistent effort of obedience. Fear and trembling could also be a reminder that our works will be made visible at the judgment for all to see, and we will have to give an account to Christ why we did or did not do something in our earthly lives.

Whenever we are working out our salvation, we have great hope in the promise of verse 13 that God is at work in us, giving us the power and will to obey and to work for His good pleasure.

***Philippians 2:14-18 – A Working Light***

According to verse 14, how are we to do all things?

How does Paul explain why we should do everything without grumbling or disputing?

What effect does our grumbling and complaining have on our witness to the world?

According to verses 15-16, how do we become a light to the world?

Saint Francis of Assisi said, “All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle.” What does Jesus say about being a light to the world in Matthew 5:14-16? In what way are we lights?

What does it mean to “hold fast the word of life”?

What does Paul mean when he writes that he is being “poured out as a drink offering”?

Paul uses an analogy of being “poured out as a drink offering” to demonstrate his devotion to the Philippians. He identifies his life as a service and sacrifice to Christ for the sake of the eternal well being and continuing progression of the faith of the Philippians. For

whom would you (or do you) pour out your life as a drink offering?

What does Paul encourage the Philippians to do in verse 18?

Paul has learned to rejoice in all circumstances. How can rejoicing (or praising) bring joy even in the midst of the bleakest hours?

Grumbling and complaining is something that I don't know if I could honestly go a day without hearing, whether from my kids or from *myself*. It just seems like a natural reaction to something that we don't like or something that makes us uncomfortable.

Grumbling and complaining takes place within the walls of the church too. I'm sure you have seen it on more than one occasion. Someone doesn't like the new pastor or the way the tithes are being distributed. Another doesn't like the new Sunday school materials. And still another doesn't like the Sunday school teacher. And most aren't afraid to show their displeasure.

Grumbling is a detriment to the effectiveness of our witness. Who wants to come to a church where the people are complaining or disputing all the time? Or who wants to become a Christian when all the Christians she knows are always unhappy and dissatisfied?

Paul urges believers to prove themselves blameless and innocent,

above reproach. We need to walk in obedience and set a good example for Christ so that we may appear as a light “in the midst of [this] crooked and perverse generation” (v. 15). A light on a hill can be seen for miles and can beckon the lost even through the dense fog of confusion. Our walk speaks more for the authenticity of Christ than our words.

Paul also urges us to “hold fast the word of life.” The Greek word (*epecho*) that is translated as the phrase *holding fast* in this verse has an interesting two-fold meaning. Not only does it mean to “have, hold, or apply,” but it also means, “to hold out or present.” Not only are we to hold onto and apply God’s Word to our life, we are also to *present it* or share it with others.

I admire Paul’s dedication to his children in the faith. Just as a mother commits her life to rearing her children, Paul has committed his whole life to the continued maturity of the believers he led to Christ. He has truly given us a fantastic example of presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

Finally, he ends this paragraph with *rejoice*. Forget the grumbling, and just rejoice. You cannot grumble and complain and dispute at the same time you are offering praise!

### ***Philippians 2:19-30 – Working Examples***

Review what Paul writes about Timothy. What character qualities did he possess?

What character qualities did Epaphroditus possess?

Are there any qualities listed that God spoke to your heart about — something you need to prayerfully work on as you work out your salvation? Which qualities would help you be a better example of Christ to the world?

Timothy was an excellent helper to Paul and is an excellent example to us. He was “working out” his salvation alongside Paul. Timothy genuinely cared for the Philippians. He sought to further the gospel by fulfilling Christ’s will for his life over his own will.

While Timothy ministered *with* Paul, Epaphroditus ministered *to* Paul. He was a messenger for Paul who likely delivered this very letter to the Philippians (vv. 25, 29), and he also provided for Paul those things necessary for his journey that other believers could not supply.

In the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus, we learn that whether we are sent to minister to a group of people or just one person, both callings are equally important in their eternal impact.

## *Apply*

Are you working out your salvation? Just as a person is not mature at birth, your salvation will take a lifetime to fully mature. What can you do to further the development of your salvation? What are you trusting God to do?

Keep a note card with you at all times today and make a list of every time you grumble or dispute with someone today, even if it's just a thought that passes through your mind. Record your "grumbles" here, along with your reflections.

## *Review*

If you are like me, this section of Paul's letter really hit home. As I continue to work out my own salvation, I often get discouraged, as I have not yet attained perfection. But God does not require us to be perfect; He sees us as perfect through the blood of Christ, which has cleansed us from all sin. However, He does require obedience. He does require us to love Him wholeheartedly. We don't have to do this alone; He works in us and through us to give us a heart that

loves Him and the power and will to obey Him. Just as Paul said of the Philippians, “you have always obeyed, not in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,” may it be said of us that we are obedient even when no one is watching. When we have tackled this “hidden” obedience (which includes your grumbling), we will be much more likely to be obedient in public. Then we can let our lights shine freely because the light will not be dimmed by the tarnish of our sin.

### *Discussion*

Why would Paul admonish us to do all things without grumbling or disputing?

How do we “work out” our salvation?

What is the difference between “working out” and “working for” your salvation?

How does knowing that you are a light to the world affect your daily living?

How are we each individually responsible for how the world views the church?

How does rejoicing bring joy?

Why is it important to be obedient even when no one is watching?



# Six

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*Philippians 3:1-11*

*Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

*But whatever things were gain to me, those things I  
have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.*

*Philippians 3:7*

*The Surpassing Value of Knowing Christ*

If someone asked you to stand up and tell a little about yourself, what would you say? I'm a mom, a wife, a mother? Perhaps an employee of a well-known company? Today we will learn a little more about Paul's history. We will catch a glimpse of just how important and influential he was before He came to know Christ. And we will learn why he left his former life and chose to live a life of suffering and persecution, which incidentally made him even

more influential.

**Read Philippians 3:1-11**

***Philippians 3:1-6 – Confidence in Ourselves***

Who does Paul warn his fellow believers to be aware of in verse 2?

Who are the “dogs” of verse 2? These are a group known as the Judaizers. They taught that faith alone doesn’t save, but faith needed to be accompanied by physical circumcision for the men along with the observance of other Jewish traditions.

Can you think of any doctrines today that teach that faith alone is not enough to save someone?

How should we approach the topic of faith with those who believe they need to “do” to win God’s favor? What would you say to someone who believed in a works salvation – that they needed to do good works or adhere to a strict list of rules to get to heaven?

What are the characteristics of the “true circumcision” (genuine

Christians) according to verse 3? Are these part of your daily walk with God? How can you make them part of your walk?

What do you learn about where Paul put his confidence before his conversion? What are some modern day equivalents?

What things or achievements offer you confidence and security?

Do you ever find yourself trusting in your religious activities and efforts more than in God? How does God view your confidence?

So, where *do* you place your confidence? Paul tells us that if anyone had confidence in his or her position or possessions, he had far more. He was of the nation of Israel, God's chosen people, and circumcised on the eighth day according to the Law (Leviticus

12:3). Of the tribe of Benjamin, he was a Hebrew of Hebrews. The tribe of Benjamin is credited with giving Israel their first king, Saul (which was Paul's given name at birth), and was the tribe that held Jerusalem within its boundaries. Paul was also a Pharisee, an elite, arrogant, wealthy, zealous and powerful sect of Jews that held very strictly to the letter of the Law of Moses. They opposed Jesus as the Messiah, Paul himself proud to be a persecutor of Christ's followers. He mentions that he was found blameless according to the righteousness that was in the Law. Paul definitely had some impressive credentials, yet we will see in the next section just what those credentials meant to him after he met Christ.

### ***Philippians 3:7-11 – Confidence in Christ***

How does Paul compare his life before and after his conversion? (You can read more about Paul's dramatic conversion in Acts 9:1-19.)

For what was Paul willing to exchange his worldly confidences (his status and securities) according to verse 7?

How did Paul regard the things he had lost? What is your attitude toward the things you "lost" or gave up when you came to Christ?

***Rubbish:*** any refuse, as the excrement of animals...things worthless and detestable. (Strong's 4657) "This word shows how utterly insignificant and unavailing, in point of salvation, the apostle esteemed everything but the Gospel of Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

Paul counted all things of his previous life as rubbish (dung) when compared to what?

Is anything more important to you than "the surpassing value of knowing Christ"?

How does Paul contrast the two ways righteousness can be attained according to verse 9?

Why is righteousness through Christ better?

What exactly did Paul want to know about Christ and why according to verses 10-11?

***Power of His resurrection:*** refers to the power that God used to raise Christ from the dead. That same power is available to us through the Holy Spirit.

Paul had everything – religious and academic status, wealth and privilege – and he left it all for Christ. Now he sits imprisoned by the Roman government, suffering for his faith. He had everything, and now he has nothing. Paul hungered to know Jesus Christ and the power that raised Him from the dead. He was willing to do whatever it would take to know Christ more fully – even suffering in prison for his faith.

Paul's life purpose was to fully know Christ, understanding the power that was used to raise Jesus from the dead and to suffer for His cause. He desired to be like Christ in every way, even to be united with Him in death that he would also be raised with Him.

Paul finally understood that true righteousness – or a right standing with God – can only come through faith in Christ. True righteousness is *God's* word, not something that can be attained through keeping the Law.

What are you doing in your life right now to grow in your knowledge of Christ Jesus and the power of His resurrection? Are you as willing to suffer for your faith as Paul did just to know Christ more fully?

Nothing is greater than knowing Christ intimately. No power or position on earth can match the power that is available to us through Christ's Spirit. I had nothing at my conversion like Paul did when he was converted. I was merely a young teenager; Paul was a

mature adult with wealth and status. He gave it all away for this man called Christ.

### *Apply*

We saw in this section that Paul gave up everything – his wealth, his status, and his friends – for Christ. If Christ asked you, what would be the hardest thing for you to give up and why? Do you feel this thing or person needs reprioritized behind Christ? How can you make Jesus your top priority?

What are some practical ways you can come to know Christ better? What do you need to do to understand the “surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus”?

Does Christ represent a secure confidence for you? How so? If not, why? What don’t you trust about Him? What would make you trust Him more?

What distracts you from building your relationship with Christ, from getting to know Him better?

What changes do you need to make to pursue Christ more fully?

Have you stopped trusting in yourself and put your full confidence in Christ Jesus? If not, what is holding you back?

### *Review*

Jesus Christ definitely deserves our complete confidence and wholehearted devotion. He is the author of our life and the author of our salvation. It is because of Him that we are able to call the Creator “Father.” Through Christ we have eternal life, and while still remaining in this life, we have His tremendous power at our

disposal. If we truly tapped into the power that comes through the Holy Spirit, imagine the work we could accomplish for the Kingdom!

### *Discussion*

Why is belief in a “works” salvation dangerous? What should you say to someone who believes this way?

Paul mentioned some pretty impressive credentials in verses 5-6. What are impressive credentials in today’s culture?

Where does contemporary society find “success”? Where do they put their confidence?

Do you count your earthly lifestyle as rubbish in relation to knowing Christ? Why or why not?

What is true righteousness? How is it attained? Why is righteousness important?

How did God show His mercy by reckoning a person righteous through faith in Christ rather than through keeping the Law?



# Seven

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*Philippians 3:12-4:1*

## *Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

*But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 3:13b-14*

## *Pressing On Toward Christ*

Just today I read a portion of a book on the importance of setting goals. The book emphasized that you need daily, weekly, monthly, yearly and long term goals. What are your goals? What are you striving for? For some it may be a promotion while for others it may be weight loss. And still others just want to “survive” this current season of their life. Today we will look at the only long term goal that really matters – the goal of Christ.

**Read Philippians 3:12-4:1.**

***Philippians 3:12-16 – Running to Christ***

Paul writes about something he has not yet obtained. Refer back to verses 10-11; to what is he referring?

What is Paul's goal according to verse 12?

What advice does Paul offer to those wanting to move forward to spiritual maturity (vv. 13-14)?

How can our past hold us in bondage and keep us from moving forward toward spiritual maturity?

What is the prize of perseverance to which Paul is referring in verse 14? Is this your goal in life? How can temporary goals get in the way of this eternal goal?

How is life compared to a race in Hebrews 12:1-2?

What race are you running? What is the prize at the end of that race? How can you make this race have an eternal impact?

What distracts you from running your race effectively?

What happens when we take our eyes off the finish line (or prize) to look at other runners, onlookers, the scenery, etc.?

What do we learn about what our attitude should be from verses 15-16 (remember that *perfect* in this verse means *mature*)? What is the standard by which we can measure our progress?

Life is a race. It's not a competition for the fastest runner, but it is a race to the finish line. Some run, some walk and some even crawl, but all will cross the finish line. There are some things Paul taught us about this race that are great life lessons.

1. The first is that until we meet our Savior face to face the race is not over. We must continue on regardless of the circumstances around us.
2. It's *our* race alone. We can't drag someone else along at

the same pace as we are going; they have to run their own race. Nor do we need to feel obligated to keep up with the person ahead of us.

3. If we take our eyes off the finish line to look to where we have been or to the scenery or at other runners, we are going to stumble. Looking to the runner ahead of us leaves us with feelings of failure, while looking at the runner behind us leaves us with an inflated ego (pride). Paul tells us to forget about where we've been; look to where we are going. Your past accomplishments cannot help you in the present, nor can past failures hinder your current progress. Press on toward the goal!
  
4. Just as you have been running in the standard of the truth of the gospel, so continue to run. Follow the road marked out before you for it is the road that leads to your prize – Christ Jesus.

***Philippians 3:17-19 – Walking For Christ***

Who are we to observe?

Who are we not to emulate according to verse 18?

How do the “enemies of the cross of Christ” live (v. 19)?

What is the future for these people?

What should our response be to these “enemies”?

Who are you observing, and are they walking according to Scripture?

Who is (or might be) observing you? What kind of example are you setting for them?

Paul encourages us to take note of more mature Christians and follow the example they lead. *Observe* in this verse is literally *to take aim at* or *to spy*. We can learn a great deal about the life of faith from the experiences of mature Christians. Sit and chat with some of the spiritually mature women of your church. Find out more about their struggles and victories during their own journey of faith. What sustains them as they are running their own race?

We must be sure those whom we *take aim at* are walking according to Scripture. Do not be fooled, because Paul also mentions there some professing Christians in our midst who live not for Christ but for worldly pleasures. These “Christians” are noted for the following:

1. Their god is their stomach. This can certainly refer to those prone to gluttony that cannot say “no” to any desirable food, but it can also include anyone who satisfies the desires of their flesh without thinking about the consequences of their action or with ignoring the conviction of the Holy Spirit. These are those who want what they want when they want it.
2. They glory in their shame. When I first read this I thought of our contemporary entertainment. We have made light of those things God calls detestable and called them pleasure. Yet Ephesians 5:12 tells us that it is “disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.”
3. They set their mind on earthly things. Living in this world, it is impossible to not be part of the world. However, we must be sure that we never get so caught up in earthly pleasures and business that we forget that we are but strangers here, ambassadors for Christ. We are here to fellowship with God and tell others about Him. When our earthly “things” are more important than our relationship

with Christ, a problem arises.

4. Their end is destruction. Just as a woman caught up in immorality risks the possibility of contracting a deadly disease, so our soul, when not properly cared for, risks disease. The soul needs nourished with the Bread of Life (the Word of God) and with prayer. God and His Word give life.

Following such Christians would lead us on a path to destruction as well, so be careful, my sister, that the Christian you “spy” is walking according to Scripture!

***Philippians 3:20-4:1***

Where is “home” for the true Christian?

For what or whom do we wait with great anticipation?

What happens when the Savior arrives according to verses 20-21?

How is one’s perspective different when he is confident of his citizenship in heaven?

What aspect of Jesus' return are you most looking forward to and why?

To what are all things subject?

Knowing this, what additional confidence do you have in Christ?

In what are we to stand firm according to 4:1? (What does the word *this* refer to in this verse?)

If we run with endurance the race marked before us, our prize will be eternal life with Christ. Our citizenship is in heaven with Christ; we are but ambassadors here to point others to Christ. Eagerly we wait for the day we will meet Him face to face. And when He returns or we meet Him through death, He will transform our immoral, filthy bodies into conformity with His glorious body by His incredible power. So stand firm, my friend, in this truth. Stand firm in the truth that Christ will redeem us from our mortal, sin-stained bodies and transform us into His likeness. He will clothe us in pure white splendor and take us as His bride to the marriage

supper of the Lamb. Oh, what a day that will be!

### *Apply*

In verse 12, Paul mentions that he hasn't yet come to spiritual maturity (or perfection), but he continues to press on to lay hold of what Christ desires him to become. For what do you think Christ has "laid hold" of you? Do you sense divine direction in your life? If you do not currently sense a divine direction, what can you do to seek God's direction for your life?

Make a list of a few things God has been nudging you to do. Pick at least one to accomplish this week (or this month, however long it may take).

What other runners in the race have you been *taking aim at*? Why have you been observing them? Is it to grow spiritually or is it for an envious reason?

Write down one mature Christian you know who walks according to Scripture. Call them this week and make arrangements to meet with them and listen to how God has been faithful and what He has done in his or her life. Take a pen and this book and write your observations below. What did you learn from them that you would like to implement in your own walk with Christ?

## *Review*

Women succumb to the “comparison trap” far more easily than most will admit. It’s not called a *trap* for nothing. There is no freedom in comparing yourself to others. It only brings bondage, because no matter how hard we try, we will never measure up to what we perceive others are or have.

I will admit that I am guilty of comparing my race to the race of other Christians. Either they are so far ahead of me that I wonder why I can’t keep up with them or they are so far behind that I get frustrated that they won’t pick up the pace a little. And too often I spend too much time looking at the past, mostly at the failures (or

presumed failures) wondering what life might have been like if I had did or didn't do this or that. In either circumstance, I need to remember that I am running my own race, not the race of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. I also need to remember that the past is in the past; it's gone, and nothing can be done to change it. I cannot rely on past accomplishments, nor do I need to fret over past failures. And neither do you, dear sister! Set your mind and aim on Christ and follow Him wholeheartedly! He will guide you. He will light your path and show you the way to go. Trust Him!

### *Discussion*

What is the importance of having goals? How do you prioritize your goals?

How does dwelling on past failures or mistakes hinder our current progress? How does dwelling on past achievements also hinder our current progress?

What example did Jesus offer to encourage us to run with perseverance in Hebrews 12:1-2?

How can we be sure we are observing a true Christian? In what ways should we emulate them?

How do we differentiate between "observing" fellow Christians and falling into the "comparison trap"?

To what aspect of Christ's return do you most look forward?

# *Eight*

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*Philippians 4:2-3*

## *Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

*I urge [you] to live in harmony in the Lord.*

*Philippians 4:2*

## *Harmony In Christ*

Friendships are a wonderful gift. God did not create us to be alone; He created us with a need for fellowship (Genesis 2:18). I'm sure you've felt the highs of a friendship bonded by time and closeness just as I'm sure you have had the lows of the friendship strained by distance or disagreement. And maybe you have even had friendships that came to a breaking point and could not continue. Today, we are going to learn some wonderful Biblical precepts for friendships. And truly, these principles are timeless and beneficial for any relationship.

**Read Philippians 4:2-3.**

***Philippians 4:2-3 – Harmony with One Another in Christ***

What message does Paul have for two women of the church at Philippi named Euodia and Syntyche?

Paul admonishes two women of the church at Philippi, Euodia and Syntyche, to live in harmony with one another. Apparently, these two women have been disputing, and it's become a big enough issue for Paul not just to mention the issue but mention the women by name. What can we learn about strained relationships from the following:

Paul did not take sides...

Paul encouraged others to help the women...

Paul focused on the relationship rather than the issue...

Is it possible to “live in harmony in the Lord” when there are conflicting issues between persons (personal or doctrinal)? If so, how?

The same Greek work for harmony (*Phroneo*) is translated as “mind” in the following verses. What do you learn from the use of this word in these verses? How might the relationship between Euodia and Syntyche improve if they follow the advice given in these verses?

Romans 12:16

Romans 15:5-6

Philippians 2:2

Colossians 3:2

I believe Romans 12:16 is a perfect guide for any relationship: “Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

First of all, we must be of the same mind. We must do our best to live in harmony with one another. Ephesians 4:4-6 gives us a great list of things all Christians have in common: one body (Christ); one Spirit; one hope; one Lord; one faith; one baptism; one God.

Secondly, do not be haughty or proud, but associate those who are regarded as lower class. These are those who are poor not just in money, but perhaps they are poor in spirit or poor in what the world deems as acceptable and good. Cozy up to the humble, godly woman that the world ignores.

Do not boast of great wisdom. Romans 12:3 tells us that we should not “think more highly of [yourself] than [you] ought to think.” Few attitudes turn people off more than a “know-it-all.”

And lastly, “set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:2). James 4:1-2 tells us that it is when we set our desires on the pleasures of the world that we experience conflicts and quarrels because it is these desires that often evoke feelings of jealousy.

What do you learn about quarreling from the following verses?

Proverbs 17:14

Proverbs 20:3

2 Timothy 2:24

Has quarreling ever brought about a desirable result? If quarreling were worth anything, would the Bible caution so strongly against it? No. Quarreling is like the “letting out of water” (Proverbs 17:14). It is like a dam that has burst; the water goes pouring forth and floods everything in its path. In the same way, quarreling is often a heated discussion during which the participants say things they later regret, flooding the relationship with hurt feelings. As a bondservant of the Lord, we must not be prone to quarreling, but must be “kind to all...patient when wronged” (2 Timothy 2:24).

In Philippians 4:3, what does Paul request of the congregation in regard to Euodia and Syntyche?

Paul urges the congregation at Philippi to be peacemakers between Euodia and Syntyche. What does it take to be a peacemaker without showing favoritism?

Paul challenges us “so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men” in Romans 12:18. How is that possible?

How might your efforts at becoming a peacemaker influence your current relationships? And your church?

In as much as it lies within the realm of our responsibility, we are called to pursue peace with all men and women. We are never to be the originator of strife. Yet while we may be pursuing a peaceful existence, others may still rise up against us. For their actions we will not be held accountable, but God will hold us accountable for how we respond to these troublemakers. When we seek quarrels, we are not only causing strife for others but for ourselves also.

The Bible is full of accounts of wonderful people who did great things – Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus, just to name a few. Read the two following accounts. How were each of these

persons remembered?

Matthew 26:6-13

Philippians 4:2-3

How do you want to be remembered? Do you ever think about how your actions today affect those around you and future generations?

### *Apply*

With whom do you have a strained relationship? What was the cause? What has been your response? Do you feel you could have responded differently to the strain? What steps can you take to mend the relationship?

What Biblical relationship advice did you find today that you could implement into your current relationships?

Is there anything in your life right now that may affect future generation? Think carefully. Is there anyone whom you may be influencing by your example?

Take a moment and write out how you want to be remembered. Turn this list into your lifelong goals.

### *Review*

There is a dispute going on at the church in Philippi. Perhaps it is personal or maybe doctrinal. Whatever the dispute is about is not for us to know for God has chosen not to reveal it. However, it was a large enough issue for Paul to mention it in his letter.

In confronting the dispute, Paul did not take sides. Being that it was most likely a frivolous disagreement, Paul chose to be a peacemaker rather than a judge trying to sort out the details and bring to conclusion who was “right.” He focused on the relationship of the women rather than the issue. He also encouraged others closer to the situation to help the women resolve their relationship.

Is it possible to always live in harmony in the Lord? According to

the verses you researched in this chapter, if we set our minds on Christ and accomplishing His work, there will be no need for dispute. If we truly refocus our attention on the things above (Colossians 3:2), we will have no need to dwell on earthly things, which is where the disputes arise.

Paul urges the congregation at Philippi to be peacemakers between Euodia and Syntyche. “Being a peacemaker does not mean ignoring important problems or brushing them under the carpet.”<sup>1</sup>

Peacemakers are the go-betweens. They are the people who *listen* to each side, taking in account each side of the story. Peacemakers bring *love*, not unnecessary advice to the discussion. Peacemakers urge the disputing parties to look at how (and if) the dispute fits into the “big picture.” Most of all, using Paul’s example, peacemakers should focus on restoring the relationship. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God (Matthew 5:9).”

And finally, we discuss our legacy. What legacy do you want to leave? We looked at two examples: the quarrelsome women of Philippians and the woman who anointed Jesus for His burial. How do you want to be remembered? Your actions today affect everyone around you. It may be as simple as saying grace before each meal in witness of your children or offering a friendly smile in a grocery store aisle. If you’ve read any of my other Bible studies, you’ve surely encountered my contrasting examples of Abraham and Jesus. Abraham was promised a son through Sarah, yet chose (at the insistence of Sarah) to take Hagar as his concubine and conceive a child through her. Through the union of Hagar the

concubine and Abraham, Ishmael was born. Later, Sarah became pregnant and bore Isaac, the promised son. Today, 4,000 or so years later, we are still seeing the consequences of that *one decision* in the Middle East fighting that goes on daily. In contrast, the *daily* obedience of Jesus has made it possible for *all men and women* to be saved! Yes, my sister, your actions, no matter how seemingly small, have far reaching consequences – that goes for the good as well as the bad.

### *Discussion*

What do you think is the primary cause of quarrels in the church?

How does pride injure friendships?

How does setting our minds on the “things above” (Colossians 3:2) bring about a peaceful lifestyle?

What does it mean to be a “peacemaker”? How does one go about such a task?

How does each decision – big or small – affect future generations?

What type of legacy do you want to leave?

# Nine

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Philippians 4:4-7

## *Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 4:6-7*

## *Rejoicing In Christ*

You are in your car about to set off on your way to work or maybe to run an extremely important errand. You turn the key in the ignition and the car doesn't start; it won't even "turn over" for you. This is your only means of transportation, and now you will most surely be late. How do you typically react to problems like these? Have you ever noticed that it's the little, every day annoyances that

steal our joy the most. For some reason, in the midst of a tragedy it's easier to find peace and joy than in the middle of a chaotic day. Today we are going to look at some great ways to respond to our problems that will not only be pleasing to our Father but will be beneficial to our health as well.

**Read Philippians 4:4-7.**

***Philippians 4:4 – A Rejoicing Spirit***

According to verse 4, how are we to react? And how often are we to react this way? (This can also be noted in 1 Thessalonians 5:16.)

Paul has just referred to the tension in the church between Euodia and Syntyche, and then he tells the congregation to “rejoice always.” Can you rejoice and argue at the same time? How can we learn to rejoice during trials?

Note: this does not mean we have to be joyful *because* we are going through a trial, but we can rejoice in God's sovereignty and goodness *during* the trial.

The Greek word for *joy* (*chara*) comes from Greek word for rejoice

(chair) and both mean *glad(ness)*. Where does joy come from according to Romans 15:13?

It is vital to remember that joy and happiness are not the same. Happiness is an emotion that relies on your *feelings*. You can still be joyful without feeling happy. Have you experienced the inner joy that could come only from the Lord Himself? Explain.

Rejoice! It is impossible to be a grumbler or a complainer or a quarreler when you are rejoicing. So rejoice always! I know that it is easier said than done, but it's worth a try, isn't it? "Praise makes the devil flee and releases the anointing of God. Even the secular world knows the benefits of praise. The medical profession says that a person who is joyful is more healthy than a person who is morbid and depressed. Praise stops a negative attitude."<sup>3</sup>

### ***Philippians 4:5 – A Gentle Spirit***

What type of spirit are we to possess? And what are we to do with that spirit?

How would you define *gentle*?

*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000) offers the following definition for **gentle**: “1. Considerate or kindly in disposition; amiable and tender.  
2. Not harsh or severe; mild and soft.”*

What is God’s view of a gentle spirit according to 1 Peter 3:3-4?

Why is it important to maintain a “gentle and quiet spirit”? (Just a note: “quiet” here means *tranquil*.)

How can we show gentleness through our words, actions, and demeanor?

How did Jesus display gentleness?

Can gentleness be learned? If so, how?

Gentleness seems like it would be a character quality that some

have and some don't. I certainly wish I were gentler. But according to Paul and Peter, this trait is one that can be learned. Peter commands us to "adorn" ourselves with a "gentle and quiet spirit." How can such a spirit be described?

- Considerate
- Kind
- Amiable (friendly or agreeable)
- Tender
- Mild
- Soft
- Meek
- Tranquil

Do you know anyone with a gentle spirit? What makes you think of them in this way?

***Philippians 4:6-7 – A Peaceful Spirit***

Is there anything in your life right now that is causing you anxiety or tension? If so, briefly describe the situation.

According to verse 6, what are we to be anxious for?

How are we to make requests known to God?

What is the result of our prayer according to these verses?

What does Jesus teach us about anxiety in Matthew 6:25-34?

Describe a time when you experienced a peace from Christ that surpassed your comprehension.

The Greek word that is translated as “guard” in verse 7 is actually a military term meaning “to guard, protect by a military guard, either to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight” (Strong’s #5432). If we can have confidence that the peace of God is guarding our hearts and minds, why do we let the devil come back and take over, coercing us into an anxious state again?

Knowing that you can present your requests to God and *leave them there*, thus obtaining His perfect peace, can you now find a reason to rejoice during trials?

Worry is frequently an unrelenting issue for women. I don't know a single woman who isn't prone to worry (although some worry a lot more than others, myself included). Most of the time, the worry is only a perceived threat that never comes to pass, and therefore, you have spent your energy worrying in vain (not that it pays to worry at any time). Jesus has given us some excellent advice when He commanded us not to worry. If we follow His advice, we will save ourselves a lot of health concerns (which will inevitably add to our worry! Yes, it's a vicious cycle.). According to *Mosby's Medical, Nursing, & Allied Health Dictionary*, there are numerous objective characteristics of anxiety, including "cardiovascular excitation, superficial vasoconstriction, pupil dilation, restlessness, insomnia, glancing about, poor eye contact, trembling and extraneous movements, facial tension, quivering voice, continuous focus on the self, increased perspiration, and expressed concern regarding change in life events."<sup>4</sup> In laymen's terms, your heart races, your veins constrict (leading to headaches and muscular stiffness), you are restless with little or no sleep, you have trouble concentrating and you feel frightened.

My friend, God does not want you to worry. He has assured us in Isaiah 41:13, "For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of

your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you” (NIV). If you are consumed with anxiety, your issue may be in trusting the Lord to take care of you and those you love. 1 John 4:16 tells us that God is love, and “*There is no fear in love*; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love” (1 John 4:18, emphasis mine). We need to learn to trust the Lord more. There is no problem too small or too large to set before the Lord. He desires for us to “cast *all* [our] anxiety on Him, because He cares for [us]” (1 Peter 5:7, emphasis mine). He already knows the future, so should we not “trust in the LORD with all [our] heart, and do not lean on [our] own understanding (Proverbs 3:5).” Proverbs 29:25 give us this promise: “The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever leans on, trusts in, and puts his confidence in the Lord is safe and set on high” (AMP). The Lord is waiting patiently for you to rely on Him. When you lay your problems and worries at His feet, He will take care of them for you and keep you safe. “In...trust is your strength” (Isaiah 30:15). For “those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever” (Psalm 125:1, NIV). Peace comes when we truly have committed all our anxieties to the Lord to let Him handle them.

May I leave you with one of my favorite passages?

*Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose trust is the Lord.*

*For he will be like a tree planted by the water,  
That extends its roots by a stream,*

*And will not fear when the heat comes;  
But its leaves will be green,  
And it will not be anxious in a year of drought  
Nor cease to yield fruit.  
Jeremiah 17:7-8*

### *Apply*

Can you find a reason to rejoice in your current struggle(s)?

What causes you the most anxiety? Does your anxiety reflect a lack of trust in God's protection and provision?

What can you do today to control your anxiety?

How does rejoicing help us control our negative attitudes and anxiety?

## *Review*

How appropriate that we would study rejoicing and anxiety in the same lesson. Rejoicing is a great “cure” for anxiety. Rejoice that God cares. Rejoice that God is taking care of you. Rejoice that He sees and is involved in your trials. Rejoice that He loves you and is providing for you. Rejoice that He loves your husband, parents, children, family and friends even more than you love them. Rejoice, sister, rejoice!

## *Discussion*

What causes you to most anxiety and why?

How can rejoicing be a remedy for trials? Anxiety? A negative attitude?

How are we to treat anxiety according to what we learned in this lesson?

Why is it important to be thankful when we are praying?

How did Paul describe the peace of God? What does this peace do for us?

How does prayer alone relieve anxiety?

# Ten

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*Philippians 4:8-23*

## *Write on the Tablet of Your Heart*

*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

*Philippians 4:8*

## *Content in Christ*

Complete this phrase: If I just had/was \_\_\_\_\_, then I would be content. America is not a content country. We are always striving for more – more house, newer cars, more money and more prestige. In truth, if we were to sit for a moment and think about all that we *do* have, surely we could be grateful! America is one of the wealthiest nations in the world. Even the poorest in America have

so much more than those in third-world countries. Why can't we be thankful for the clothes on our back, the roof over our head and the food on our table, not to mention clean drinking water? Today, Paul reveals to us the secret of His contentment. Join me as we finish exploring this rich epistle.

**Read Philippians 4:8-23.**

***Philippians 4:8-9 – Thinking Like Christ***

What is one area of your thought life over which you wish you had more control?

According to verse 8, what types of thoughts should we be thinking?

***Dwell:*** the Greek word *Logizomai* (Strong's #3049) is a word that deals with the facts only, not suppositions. It means "to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over...to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on."

***Right:*** Those things that are righteous. (Strong's #1342)

***Lovely:*** Acceptable and pleasing. (Strong's #4375)

***Excellence:*** A virtuous course of thought, feeling and action; any particular moral excellence, as modesty, purity. (Strong's #703)

On what do you dwell?

Why is it important to keep our thought life pure?

How is it possible to come to a continuous state of meditating on those things that are true and honorable, right and pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent and worthy of praise?

What types of “things” did Paul urge the Philippians to practice?

What promise does Paul offer in verse 9 to those who practice these things?

What benefit does peace of the mind bring?

Paul gives us a mental checklist here to measure the quality of our thought life. Not a lot of exposition is needed as these qualities are to the point, but I would like to expound on a couple.

- Our thoughts should first be *true*, dwelling on only those things that are *fact*. This would eliminate all our “what if” thinking. This would also eliminate all thoughts of what we think others are doing, saying or thinking; second guessing another’s motives is out of the question.
- Think about *honorable* (noble, honest) things. This would eliminate all deceitfulness.
- Whatever is *right*, or righteous. This would include all the attributes of God and His Word or anything that is moral, holy or virtuous. This would not include most (not all) worldly entertainment.
- Fourth, whatever is *pure*. These are chaste thoughts in regard to your mind and body.
- Whatever is *lovely*. This refers to whatever is amiable or loving or loved.
- Whatever is *of good repute*. “That is, whatsoever is truly reputable in the world at large. There are actions which all men agree in commending, and which in all ages and countries are regarded as virtues. Courtesy, urbanity, kindness, respect for parents, purity between brothers and sisters, are among those virtues – and the Christian should be a pattern and an example in them all. His usefulness depends much more on the cultivation of these virtues than

is commonly supposed.”<sup>5</sup>

- Whatever is *excellent* (or virtuous). This includes anything that is of moral character or virtue.
- Whatever is *worthy of praise*. This not only includes the praises we offer to our Father, but also the praise of someone deserving of our commendation. An example might be praise for your children upon receiving a good report from school or a fellow brother or sister who leads well in your church.

The old adage, “garbage in, garbage out,” perfectly applies here. However, if we put good things in (like the Word of God), that is exactly what will come out. “For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart” (Matthew 12:34). I have noticed since I have been writing Bible studies that the more I study and the more I ingest God’s Word, the more I think about it. As I go about my daily tasks, I often find myself pondering, “How can I make this verse apply to the lives of the women who will be studying with me?” In the same way, as you ingest God’s Word, your thought life will be transformed. A “renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2) takes place, and you will find yourself dwelling on the things that matter to God. Such a thought life will mold your character and make you more like Christ.

These are the things to practice. These are the thoughts and actions that bring the peace of God.

***Philippians 4:10-13 – Content in Christ***

What caused Paul to rejoice greatly in the Lord according to verse 10?

What great virtue did Paul learn according to verse 11?

How did he learn this according to verse 12?

What was the secret to Paul's contentment according to verse 13?

Paul commends the Philippians for doing what in verse 14?

According to Hebrews 10:32-34, how might the Philippians become "sharers" with Paul in affliction?

Where can we find complete contentment according to Hebrews 13:5?

What is one practical step we can take to move toward a content state?

What is the difference between having goals and being discontent?

What a lesson we can learn from Paul, although I will admit I have yet to fully understand it. Paul was content whether he had plenty or little, whether walking in freedom or bound in prison. His secret for contentment is found in verse 13: “I can do all things though Him [Christ] who strengthens me.” So, next time you are discontent because you aren’t keeping up with the Jones’s, remember that the secret to your contentment is found in Christ Himself, not in the big house, fancy cars and unlimited income.

***Philippians 4:15-23 – Givers for Christ***

How did the Philippians aid Paul according to verses 14-15?

Paul mentions that it was not the gifts of the Philippians that he sought, but what?

How can giving bring a profitable increase? (For insight, see Luke 6:38 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-8.)

What should be our motive for giving according to 2 Corinthians 9:7?

How did Paul describe in verse 18 the gifts the Philippians sent?

What does 1 Corinthians 9:13-14 teach us about those who proclaim the gospel?

And whose responsibility is it to provide their living?

Why are our gifts to ministers of the gospel so pleasing to God?

How does God reward those who give to the ministers of the gospel according to verse 19?

How does our giving bring glory and honor to God?

In the Old Testament, the Levites (the tribe of Levi) were appointed to care for the temple and offer the sacrifices. They did not inherit land like their brothers for the Lord was their inheritance (Numbers 18:20). When their fellow Israelites brought their tithes and offerings, the Lord instructed the Levites to offer a tithe (a tenth of the portion) of the tithe to the Lord and the remainder was a provision for the Levites (Numbers 18:20-26).

In the same way, the Philippians supplied Paul with necessities for his ministry. The sacrifice the Philippians made to provide for Paul rose as a fragrant aroma to God and was well pleasing to Him.

How do we see the same principle in our church today to care for our pastors and staff?

I'm sure you've heard the quote: "Work for the Lord. The work is hard, the hours are long, and the pay is low, but the retirement benefits are out of this world." What a shame it is to us, the stewards of God's finances and creation, that the men and women who carry the gospel to the lost are some of the most under paid in the workforce. It is a clear command from the Lord that we are to be the supporters of our pastors and missionaries. We are to provide their living. We are to make sure they can afford a home and food

and clothing.

Do you provide for your pastor? Do you provide for another ministry?

“You can’t take it with you.” We cannot take our things (possessions) with us when we die, but there are some other “things” we can take. The time and money we offer that provide the gospel to the lost – that’s what will be waiting for us in heaven. That is what will build our home in heaven. That’s what this life is all about!

What promises are provided for those who give according to the following verses?

Malachi 3:10-12

Luke 6:38

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Philippians 4:19

It is written, dear sister, that when we provide for others, God will in turn provide for us. He is the God of multiplication! I know from personal experience that when my husband and I pay our tithe (a ten-percent offering of our income), the ninety-percent that remains stretches so much further than the whole one-hundred-percent ever did before we started giving.

God provides all our needs “according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Who has God used to provide for you as a child and as an adult and how?

Has there ever been a time God has pleasantly surprised you with provision you weren’t expecting? What was it? How did He do it?

What are some spiritual blessings that you have in Christ that no one can take away from you? How does this bring you joy and contentment?

God is pleased when we sacrifice of ourselves to provide for another, especially those who carry His Good News to a dying world. It is an act of worship when we give to share with those in need and can be compared with the offerings made by fire in the Old Testament; they were a “fragrant aroma, an acceptable

sacrifice” to the Lord. In the same way, God is delighted when we give of our time and money, two things that are most valuable to us, to care for another.

### *Apply*

What keeps you from giving freely (to *reputable* charities, the needy, the church, etc.)?

Keep a mental “checklist” with you this week. Remind yourself often of the goal of the quality of your thought life. Record below any thoughts that are contrary to Philippians 4:8 and how you mastered those thoughts.

Reaffirm your goals. Be sure they are not showing discontent in what God has provided you. Take a moment to write a prayer thanking God for His goodness and provision and asking God to help you find contentment with what you have and where He has placed you.

Give! If you are not a tither (one who offers a tenth of their income), try tithing this week. I know that the first time you tithes is a *huge* sacrifice, but trust God to bless you for your obedience. He will make your remaining ninety percent stretch so much farther than the one hundred percent could on its own! If you are already a tither, give in a new way this week. Offer your time or offer a service for free. Record your results and emotions below. Then praise God for giving you the ability to offer your time and money to use for building His Kingdom.

### *Review*

Imagine with me for a moment that you can hear your thoughts as Christ hears them. What must He be thinking when we are grumbling or scheming or lusting? What about when we are dreaming of “bigger and better” possessions? Christ has given His all in His life and death so that we might live. He has given us breath in our lungs and clothes on our backs and food to eat; yet we complain. Let us find our contentment in Christ and His provisions. Let us offer praise instead of complaint. He deserves our gratitude!

## *Discussion*

What types of thoughts please God? (Using the qualities in Philippians 4:8, describe why each is important.)

Why is it important to keep your thought life pure?

What would it take to make you content? How does this measure up to what Paul wrote about contentment?

How does the world make it difficult for one to be content?

What did Paul reveal is the secret of his contentment? How does this apply to you?

Why are we called to be givers? For what purposes does God use our gifts?

Are there additional ways to be a giver besides money? If so, what are they?

# *From the Author*

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Dear Sister in Christ,

What an awesome privilege it is to know that you are holding this book and studying God's precious word with me. It is my desire to give women a passion for the Word of God, and I know from experience that some women want to study God's Word but don't know where to begin. Beloved, God's Word brings life and healing. It offers us direction and guidance. It is my aspiration to lead you through the Bible and reveal how to apply what you read to everyday life.

Have I met that goal in this Bible study? Do you feel like I have showed you that what Paul penned through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit nearly 2,000 years ago is just as relevant today?

I look forward to hearing how this Bible study has inspired you or how I can improve. Please visit me at my web site <http://sheilagrieb.com> where you can personally contact me and learn more about my ministry.

God bless you as you continue to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

*Sheila*



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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Coffey, Ian, *Philippians Free to Be God's People* (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994) p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Philippians 3." *The Adam Clarke Commentary*. <http://studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=php&chapter=003>. 1832.

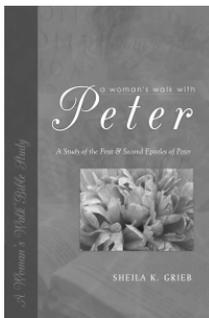
<sup>3</sup> Wommack, Andrew. "The Effects of Praise." URL: [http://www.awmi.net/extra/article/effects\\_praise](http://www.awmi.net/extra/article/effects_praise).

<sup>4</sup> *Mosby's Medical, Nursing, and Allied Health Dictionary, Fourth Edition*. Missouri: Mosby-Year Book, Inc., 1994. p. 108.

<sup>5</sup> Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on Philippians 4". "Barnes' Notes on the New Testament".  
<<http://www.studylight.org/com/bnn/view.cgi?book=php&chapter=004>>.

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### ***A Woman's Walk With Peter: A Study of the First & Second Epistle of Peter***

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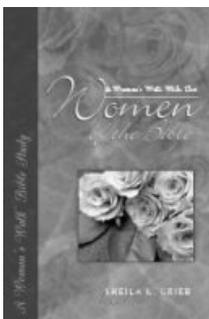
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