



Philippians

A 17 WEEK INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

**SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES
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By Lisa Hughes

Welcome

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?*

There is no better foundation for a believer than the rock-solid Word of God. It's my prayer that your faith and love for the Lord will be strengthened as you study His Word in these lessons. I want your hunger for the Scriptures to grow as you study its truths. And more than anything else, I want you to know that you can live upon the Word of God.

Steadfastness, assurance, and hope are the characteristics of all those who build upon the unshakeable foundation of the Word of God. That's why I'm so thrilled you've found your way to this Bible study. Our Bibles contain all the wisdom and guidance we'll need for our daily life (2 Peter 1:3). God's Word is one of the primary means God uses to strengthen our faith and sanctify our hearts. That's why it's so important to dig into the details of the Scriptures and mine the treasures tucked away for us there.

Scripture Paths Bible Studies are in-depth, inductive studies of the Scriptures. Each lesson endeavors to teach you how to feed yourself when you delve into God's Word. As you spend time on each lesson you will grow in Bible knowledge and understanding, learn how to apply the Scriptures to your life, and become more firmly convinced than ever that God's Word is authoritative, complete, without error, and sufficient for your life.

HELPFUL THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT *SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES*:

1. *Purposefully prepared.* Each lesson has a unique goal, whether it's to train you in the art of studying the Scriptures or to showcase the point of the passage. None of it is busywork—it's lifework for our souls.
2. *Plan ahead.* Adding a Bible study to an already busy life takes preparation. You'll need to figure out when you can complete your lessons. Do you like to set aside bits of time each day to work on the lesson or do you prefer to do it all in one sitting? Try experimenting with a method that works best for you.
3. *Persevere.* Keep going to the Lord for wisdom, for strength, and the desire to press on when life gets busy and you find it difficult to finish your lessons.
4. *Pray.* Ask the Lord to transform you through the study of His Word. Use your study time to get to know the Lord better.

5. *Prompt your memory.* Try to glean little nuggets of truth or application from each lesson, and then share them with someone. This will help solidify what you're learning and encourage someone else too.

6. *Put it into practice.* Nearly every lesson has questions for you to apply to your life. To study just to study is not our goal. Studying to grow in our understanding of the Scriptures, of the Lord, and how to live lives honoring to Him is what we're aiming for. Look for opportunities to apply God's Word.

There are treasures upon the surface of the Word which we may pick up very readily: even the casual reader will find himself able to understand the simplicities and elements of the gospel of God; but the Word of God yields most to the digger. ~Charles Spurgeon

THE GOAL AND PURPOSE OF THIS BIBLE STUDY

John Calvin wrote, “We owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God, because it has proceeded from Him alone, and has nothing of man mixed with it.” It’s that premise which propels me to write and study the Bible for myself and encourage others to study along with me. God has revealed Himself in the pages of Scripture. The Bible is complete and authoritative and contains everything we need to live for His glory. It’s in the study of the Scriptures that we grow in our knowledge of God and are transformed into His likeness. A commitment to lean on and live in God’s Word is a distinguishing characteristic of a Christian, as Jesus explained to a crowd of His followers in John 8:31-32: “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

Because all “Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work,” (2 Tim. 3:16) we study inductively in order to glean as much as we can from the Word of God. Inductive Bible study consists of observation, interpretation, and application. Simply put, *observation* is noticing what the author is saying; *interpretation* is finding out what he means; and *application* is employing those truths in your life.

As you study this book of the Bible, it is my prayer you will grow in your commitment to the Word of God as *the* source of life and godliness, and that you will accept it, not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the Word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe (1 Thess. 2:13). As a young man Jonathan Edwards (one of America’s most famous theologians and preachers) made a list of resolutions he desired, by God’s grace, to do his best to live by. One of those commitments is resolution #28: “Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.” May you see the study of God’s Word making such a difference in your life that you bear the fruit of wisdom and knowledge, overcome sin, and daily grow in godly conduct and love for Christ.

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

Lisa Hughes

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Feel free to tailor this study to your needs. Some have found it works best for them to complete the lesson in one sitting, while others find that breaking up the lesson by answering a few questions each day works the best for them. Try experimenting with different ways to complete each lesson, you'll soon discover what works for you and produces the most spiritual benefit.

Some of the lessons have what I call "Eager Beaver" questions. They're rabbit-trail questions. They don't really fit with the theme of the passage, but they're interesting, nonetheless. They're there for your enjoyment and growth.

Another feature of the Bible studies is the opportunity to do word studies. Whenever I want you to study a word further, I'll include the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance number with it. The Strong's number is basically a reference number attached to most words found in the Bible. That number allows you to search for it in different reference works easily—even when you don't know Hebrew or Greek. The easiest way to find the biblical definition is to use one of the many websites devoted to helping people study the Bible. Sites like www.blueletterbible.com and others like it, allow you to type in the Strong's number easily to find the word's definition. I do have a step by step guide for doing a word study the "old fashioned way," using books! If you plan to do your word definitions that way, then be sure to look for the guide I've put together to help you. *These tools are valuable for any Bible study student, yet not mandatory for completing these lessons.*

If you're new to studying the Bible then you may feel a bit overwhelmed, but I want to encourage you to stick with the study. Studying the Bible takes planning on your part and commitment, but the spiritual blessing and personal growth in Christ makes any "hardship" worth it. Remember, the goal of studying the Bible is that you would grow more in Christ, so start each lesson with a time of prayer asking the Lord for wisdom and His grace to study His Word, then continue to seek the Lord as you complete the lesson.

If you're a leader and you're introducing this study to your ladies for the first time, be sure to encourage them a lot! Though each lesson was written to achieve a specific purpose, you may find your ladies would fare best if they take two weeks to complete each lesson. If that's the case, feel free to do so. You want the ladies to enjoy studying God's Word, so keep encouraging them. Pray together, memorize a chapter out of the book, and dig into each lesson. As you work on the lessons each week you will all gain a clearer picture of our great God, His will for us, and how to live for Him.

And what could be better than that?

Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore, my soul observes them.
 The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.
 I opened my mouth wide and panted, for I longed for Your commandments.
 Turn to me and be gracious to me, after Your manner with those who love Your name.
 Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.

Psalm 119:129-133

Philippians

Lesson #1, Introduction

Read through the book of Philippians two times before you begin answering the questions below.

Using only the text of Philippians, try to answer the following questions. Be sure to note the Scripture references to show where you found your answer from the Bible. *At this point in the lesson you may not be able to answer every question using only your Bible.* You will have an opportunity at the end of this lesson to come back and complete your answers using other Bible study sources.

1. Who wrote the book?
2. To whom is it written?
3. When was the book written?
4. Where was it written?
5. What is the general tone of the author in the book?
6. What is the author's purpose in writing this book?
7. What topics are included in this book?

8. What are the key words of the book? Key words are words that are repeated or carry an important thought.

9. What are the main themes of the book? A theme is the main idea, the overall message.

10. What attributes of God do you see in this book?

11. What attributes of Christ do you find in this book?

12. List any attributes of the Holy Spirit you find in this book.

Now you can go back and add to your answers above using a Bible dictionary or Bible commentary.

13. What insights have you gained thus far in your study of Philippians?

14. What's one verse in the book that has caught your attention? How did it encourage or convict you, or make you want to study and think about it more?

- d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 27-30).
2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

 3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

 4. MARK. On the *Philippians Bible Text* handout mark key words. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. Start with these first. Then mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

5. LIST. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time *God* is mentioned in *Philippians Chapter 1*. Your *Chapter 1* list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Vs. 2 – grace to you and peace from *God*

Vs. 2 – *God* our *Father*

Vs. 3 – I thank *God* when I [Paul] remember you [Philippians]

6. MARK. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be.
7. LIST. Now, list them on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.
8. MARK. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted.
9. LIST. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.
10. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)
11. MARK. Mark any time *so that* is used.
12. LIST. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!
13. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.
14. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.
15. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person. For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only*

begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” From this verse we see that God is loving [because He loved the world]; He is giving [because He gave His Son]; He is eternal [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

16. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action. For example, in Philippians 1:1 *we find a list about Paul’s thankful heart*. We discover 1) he’s thankful when he remembers the Philippians; 2) he’s shows his thankfulness by praying for them; 3) his thankfulness spills over into prayers with joy for them; 4) he’s thankful when he remembers how they participated in the gospel from the very beginning until now.
17. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting.

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in each chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life at this time. Your task at this time is to look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter. Have fun digging into God’s word!

Philippians Chapter 1

1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

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

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,

5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

6 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.

7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.

8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;

16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;

17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

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

22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.

23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

26 so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Philippians

Lesson #3, Chapter 1:1-11

Before you begin this lesson, ask the Lord for His help in gaining the most from His Word. He loves to answer the prayers of His children!

“Paul apparently visited Philippi twice during his third missionary journey, once at the beginning (cf. 2 Cor. 8:1–5), and again near the end (Acts 20:6). About 4 or 5 years after his last visit to Philippi, while a prisoner at Rome, Paul received a delegation from the Philippian church. The Philippians had generously supported Paul in the past (4:15, 16), and had also contributed abundantly for the needy at Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1–4). Now, hearing of Paul’s imprisonment, they sent another contribution to him (4:10), and along with it Epaphroditus to minister to Paul’s needs. Unfortunately Epaphroditus suffered a near-fatal illness (2:26, 27), either while en route to Rome, or after he arrived. Accordingly, Paul decided to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi (2:25, 26) and wrote the letter to the Philippians to send back with him.” John MacArthur¹

1. Right from the get-go we learn some important information about Paul and Timothy. What do we learn about them in verse 1?

2. In verse 1 Paul uses a term to describe himself and Timothy that comes weighted with meaning. Define *bond-servant* [Strong’s #1401 (ESV, NIV *servants*)] using your study Bible notes, a commentary, a Bible word study book or something along those lines (Don’t forget the excellent online tools available for word studies).
 - a. From the following verses try to piece together what Paul wants us to understand about himself: Romans 6:22; 7:6; 1 Corinthians 7:22-23; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 5:14-15; Galatians 1:10. What do you learn about a *bond-servant*, as Paul is using the term, from those verses?

“The word is *doulos* and refers to one bound to another. Paul was bound to Jesus Christ by the bands of a constraining love. It refers to one born into slavery. Paul was born into slavery to sin by his first birth, and into the position of a loving bondservant of the Lord Jesus by his new birth. It refers to one who is in a

¹ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1818.

relation to another which only death can break. Paul's relation to Satan was broken by his identification with Christ in His death. He now is in a relation to Jesus Christ which will last forever, since Christ can never die again, and Paul's life is Christ. It refers to one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another. Paul's will was at one time swallowed up in the will of Satan. Now his will is swallowed up in the sweet will of God. It refers to one who serves another even to the disregard of his own interests. Paul served Satan to the detriment of his own interests. Now he serves the Lord Jesus with a reckless abandon, not regarding his own interests." Kenneth Wuest²

3. With one word—*bond-servant*—the tone is set for understanding Paul and the book of Philippians, while also laying the groundwork for understanding our own relationship with the Lord. As God's bond-servant, what motivations are the focus of your heart and how do those motivations guide the choices you make throughout the day?

4. To whom does Paul address his letter in verse 1? What do we learn about the recipients?

5. What benediction does Paul give the Philippians in verse 2?

6. Kenneth Wuest points out, "The *grace* spoken of here is sanctifying grace, that part of salvation given the saint in which God causes him to grow in Christ-likeness through the ministry of the Holy Spirit." The word "*peace*" means "the operation of God's grace in binding the believing sinner to God and His life again, ... in bringing that believer in his experience more and more into harmony with God in his life and service."³ When Paul writes his customary greeting of "grace and peace" to his friends and fellow believers, what does he want to communicate to them?

²Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 26–27.

³Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 29-30.

7. What is Paul thankful for when he remembers the Philippians? See Philippians 1:3-5.

8. Describe the beginnings of the Philippian church and its first converts. See Acts 16:11-40.

9. In what way did the Philippian believers *participate* or *partner* in the sharing of the gospel “from the first day until now?” See Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Philippians 1:7; 4:10, 15-16. What does that tell you about this group of believers, even if you know nothing else about them?

10. What assurance did Paul have about these believers according to verse 6?

11. What do you learn about God’s work in the life of a believer from Philippians 1:6? Try to make at least 5 observations from verse 6.

“Though we are renewed, we have not fully recovered from the injury we received by the fall of Adam. If God withdraws His life-giving strength, our secret corruptions will break forth and our interest in holy things will soon disappear. O the glory of God’s grace! From the first to the last we are indebted to it (Galatians 2:20). We can do nothing without Him. When we come to heaven, how will our souls admire the riches of His glorious grace.” Thomas Manton⁴

⁴Thomas Manton, Richard Rushing, editor, *Voices from the Past, Volume 1* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 73.

12. In verse 7, Paul states, “For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all.” What is Paul referring to that encourages him so greatly? See Philippians 1:3-6 and verse 7 for your answers.
 - a. How would you describe this group of believers based off Paul’s description of them in verses 3-7?

13. What is God a witness to according to verse 8?

14. Eager Beaver: Paul frequently uses the idiom, “God is witness.” What does he mean when he uses that saying? See Romans 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:5, 10.
 - a. Where does Paul get the idea of calling a witness, and even more specifically, calling God as witness? See Genesis 31:50; 1 Samuel 20:12; Isaiah 43:12; Jeremiah 42:5.

15. With great affection motivating him, Paul prays for his friends—and what a prayer it is! List what Paul prays for these dear believers. See verses 9-11.

16. Define *knowledge* [Strong’s #1922] and *discernment* [Strong’s #144 (NIV *depth of insight*)].

- a. Why is it so important that the Philippians' love be hemmed in by *knowledge and discernment*? See Romans 10:2; Ephesians 5:1-5; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 Timothy 1:19; 4:15-16.

17. How does love that is informed and grounded in knowledge and discernment help us *approve the things that are excellent*?

"Here are two good tests for us to follow as we exercise spiritual discernment: (1) Will it make others stumble? (2) Will I be ashamed if Jesus should return?" Warren Wiersbe⁵

18. What's the result of having a knowledgeable, discerning love that approves of excellent things? See verse 10.

"A growing love, fed by proper knowledge and moral insight, enables one to see the best way to live in light of the day of Christ." Richard Melick⁶

19. Verse 11 gives us another description of what sincere, blameless lives are like. What do you learn in verse 11?

"The difference between spiritual fruit and human "religious activity" is that the fruit brings glory to Jesus Christ. Whenever we do anything in our own strength, we have a tendency to boast about it. True spiritual fruit is so beautiful and wonderful that no man can claim credit for it; the glory must go to God alone." Warren Wiersbe⁷

⁵Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 66.

⁶Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 66.

⁷Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 66.

20. If Philippians 1:9-11 was the only prayer God chose to answer in your life, what do you think the results would be? How would this answered prayer give you wisdom in dealing the wide variety of events and relationships in your life?

21. What is the ultimate goal of a Philippians 1:9-11 kind of life? See verse 11.

“The day of Christ characterized Paul's thoughts; the glory of God motivated Paul's actions. He saw the entire scope of salvation as an outworking of God's grace and as a contribution to God's glory. The chief end of persons was the glory of God. He reminded the Philippians of their ultimate calling, to reflect God's character in their lives. He explained the reason for their careful living: the glory of God in their lives.”

Richard Melick⁸

22. We've taken apart the pieces of this section of Scripture; now let's put it all back together again to capture the main point of this passage. As you review verses 3-11, what is the main thing Paul wanted to make sure the Philippians understood?

⁸Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 67.

Philippians

Lesson #4, Chapter 1:12-20

As you prepare to study God's Word, come expectantly with your sins confessed, relying on Him to sow great truths in your heart.

1. What does Paul want the believers at Philippi to know? See verse 12.
2. Before we discover more about what Paul's circumstances, what can you learn about his attitude towards them from verse 12? Paul's response gives you insight into his life purposes and what he valued most. What do you discover?
3. What do you learn about Paul's circumstances according to verse 13?
4. In the wisdom of God, what things resulted from Paul's circumstances? See verses 13-14. See also Acts 28:30-31; Philippians 4:22.
5. The gospel advanced in spite of Paul's imprisonment. When God purposes something, what is the result? See Genesis 50:20; Job 42:2; Daniel 4:35; Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4:15-18; Ephesians 1:11.
6. What do you *need to know and believe about God*, if you are going to apply faith like Paul did when your circumstances seem to be taking you backward rather than forward?

“While others may have seen the end of missionary activity, Paul saw the new ways the gospel could advance. The events which seemed to inhibit the freedom of the gospel became its springboard. Paul did not say “in spite of” these events, but rather “through them.” There is a note of sacrifice here. Paul’s private concerns did not matter; the gospel did.” Richard Melick¹

7. Paul spends quite a bit of time reassuring the Philippian brethren about his situation. Based on his comments thus far in the chapter, what do you think they were concerned about for Paul? How would Paul’s response ease their worries?

8. In verses 12-14 we see Paul’s response gave the brethren courage. Our response to our circumstances can also go a long way to strengthening the faith of others. What do you notice from Psalm 119:74-75; Philippians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 3:6-8; 3 John 1:3-4? How does this truth motivate you even more to respond well in difficult circumstances?

9. *Most of the brethren* (from verse 14) were encouraged and strengthened to speak forth the Word of God because of Paul’s steadfastness of faith. In verses 15-16, list what you learn about the groups Paul describes.

10. In verses 15-16 Paul adds more information about “the brethren” mentioned in verse 14.² Whether they were preaching Christ from pure motives or not, Paul indicates they are fellow saints. We learn these “brethren” are operating out of envy and selfish ambition as they purposely cause strife and hope to grieve Paul. Whoa! That is so naughty! And yet,

¹Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 70.

² Some take the view that those who are preaching from selfishly wicked motives are the Judaizers. Though it’s possible Paul meant this group, a better view is that this group are believers, albeit misguided ones. One reason for this view is that Paul is still talking about the response of “most of the brethren” from verse 14. Another reason for taking this view is that the selfish preachers are misguided believers is because the Judaizers were false teachers, who taught that the Gentile converts had to become Jews in order to be saved. If the selfish preachers were spreading a false gospel, Paul in *no way* would have rejoiced in that proclaimed message, yet in verse 18, Paul rejoices that Christ is proclaimed. And still another reason for taking this view is simply context. In his comments thus far in Chapter 1, Paul has not made reference to the Judaizers and their false gospel. It seems best to say that the strife causing preachers were misled believers, since Paul is glad that even through them the gospel is preached, and Christ is made known.

who among us can say that we haven't struggled with attitudes like this before? We can all fall into similar sins. How would you counsel these erring brethren to turn from their fleshly attitudes and actions? Here are a few verses to get you started, but feel free to choose your own or add more: Psalm 119:11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 1:9.

11. Define *appointed* [Strong's 2749 (ESV, NIV *put here*)]. What revealing and important information do we learn about Paul from his use of the word *appointed* in verse 16 (the NKJV moves it to verse 17)? See also 1 Corinthians 9:16-17; Galatians 2:7-8; 2 Timothy 1:11-12.

12. What was it about Paul's *appointment* by God to preach the gospel that moved some of the brethren to jealously preach the gospel? You might find 1 Corinthians 3:1-23 helpful as you form your answer.

13. In verse 17 we see the term "selfish ambition" used (NKJV places it in verse 16). See what you discover about the word *ambition* [Strong's #2052].

14. Though some of the brethren sought to put themselves forward, using the preaching of the gospel to do so, how did Paul choose to respond? See verse 18. How does Paul's response shine light on his own motives for preaching the gospel?
 - a. Though there are many trials associated with Paul's imprisonment and the unkind actions of other believers, Paul chose to exercise faith over his feelings. What are some things we need to know and implement to follow his example? See Psalm 57:1-3; Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 10:35-36; 11:6; 12:1-3; James 1:2-4.

15. Underlying everything Paul did was one all-consuming passion to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. Look up the following verses to see the different ways Paul explained his single-minded focus. See 1 Corinthians 10:31; 16:22; 2 Corinthians 5:9, 14-15; Romans 14:7-8; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21; 3:7-14. What things stand out to you from those verses?
- a. Consider, your own focus and passion toward the Lord. In what ways are you similar to Paul, and in what ways could you devote yourself to the Lord more?
 - b. What verse best sums up your own devotion toward the Lord? Choose a verse from the ones above or choose your own.
16. Sometimes it's difficult to reconcile how God would allow people to continue to minister and preach the gospel when we know their service comes from worldly or wicked motives. Yet, our God's ways are not our ways. He, as Thomas Watson said, is able to "strike a straight blow with a crooked stick." When we see others serving out of selfish ambition, what do we need to keep in mind concerning them—and ourselves? See Romans 12:16-21; 1 Corinthians 4:1-7; Galatians 6:7-10.
- "He was able to rejoice, not in the selfishness of his critics, but in the fact that *Christ was being preached!* There was no envy in Paul's heart. It mattered not that some were for him and some were against him. All that mattered was the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!" ~Warren Wiersbe³
17. The wording of the NASB and NKJV in verse 19 can be a little confusing. The ESV and NIV did a great job translating the verse to help us understand what Paul was communicating. The NIV says, "for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance." From verse 19, what things can you identify that bring comfort to Paul while he undergoes many trials?

³Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 69.

18. In verse 19 Paul says he will be *delivered* in some way. The clue to what he meant is found in verse 20. What do you learn about the deliverance he looked for?

19. What is Paul's earnest expectation and hope from verse 20? Define *earnest expectation* [Strong's #603 (ESV *eager expectation*; NIV *eagerly expect*)].

20. In his letters, Paul often refers to not being put to shame or doing things in vain. What do you learn from the following verses about Paul's attitudes toward his labors and sense of purpose? See 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 6:3; Galatians 4:11; Philippians 1:20; 2:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:1; 3:5.

21. What are some ways those same attitudes and purposefulness might show up in your life?

22. As Paul reassures the Philippians about his circumstances in verses 12-20, what things stand out to you that you would like to implement in your own life? What truths encouraged you from this lesson?

"It does not matter how things go with him. If he dies, his will be the martyr's crown; if he lives, his will be the privilege still to preach and to witness for Christ. As Charles Ellicott nobly puts it, Paul is saying: 'My body will be the theatre in which Christ's glory is displayed.' Here is the terrible responsibility of all Christians. Once we have chosen Christ, by our lives and conduct we bring either glory or shame to him. Leaders are judged by their followers; and Christ is judged by us." ~William Barclay⁴

⁴William Barclay, *The Letters to Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated, The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 31.

“Dearest, how foolish I have been! Why! what does it matter what becomes of me, if the Lord shall but be glorified? . . . If Christ be exalted,” he said,—and his face glowed with holy fervour,—“let Him do as He pleases with me; my one prayer shall be, that I may die to self, and live wholly for Him and for His honour. Oh, wifey, I see it all now! Praise the Lord with me!” ~Susannah Spurgeon recounting a story about her husband, Charles Spurgeon⁵

⁵C. H. Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography, Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records, by His Wife and His Private Secretary, 1854–1860*, vol. 2 (Chicago; New York; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1899), 192.

Philippians

Lesson #5, Chapter 1:21-30

As you prepare to study God's Word, come expectantly with your sins confessed, relying on the Lord to sow great truths in your heart.

1. In this lesson, the portion of Scripture we're studying gains its moorings and depth from Paul's comments in the previous verses. We also see verse 21 begins with *for* to let us know that Paul's opening comment in this section must be viewed in light of what he had said previously. Please explain Paul's ribbon *of thought* from verses 12-20 and how verse 21 ties in.
2. Paul's heart is laid bare for us in verse 21, reflecting his purpose and aim in life. John MacArthur writes, "The Greek phrase rendered *to live is Christ and to die is gain* contains no verb. It literally reads 'to live Christ, to die gain.'"¹ Let's try to plumb its depths by considering what verse 21 looks like *when lived out each day*. It might be helpful to ponder what choices and actions accompany a motivation like verse 21?
3. Because of his fervent love for Christ, what choice is difficult for Paul to make according to verses 22-24?
4. Which of his two desires does Paul ultimately "choose" according to verse 25? Why? See verses 22-25.
5. What is at the root of this single-minded and fervent desire toward the Lord? See 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Philippians 3:7-11, 14.

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 76.

6. Paul often says he does things for the sake of others. Here in verse 24 his desire to remain is motivated out of love for “their sake.” What do you learn from the following verses about Paul’s motivation about doing things for the sake of others? See also 1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11; 4:11-15; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7.

7. Since Paul is convinced his earthly life and ministry will be prolonged, what does Paul hope to do for the Philippians? See verses 25-26.

8. Define *progress* [Strong’s #4297]. See also the other two places this word is used: Philippians 1:12 and 1 Timothy 4:15.

9. Paul’s goal is to build a strong foundation in the Philippians, so they will make progress in their walk with the Lord. How might this be accomplished? See Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:1.

10. Paul also desired the Philippians have “joy in the faith” even while they endured many trials, conflicts, and difficulties. What are some reasons for having “joy in our faith?” Look up the following verses as you form your answer: Matthew 5:10-12; Romans 5:3-5; 8:17-18; 1 Peter 4:12-16. What does it say about us if we *don’t rejoice* in our faith?

11. The NASB and NKJV translate verse 26 a bit awkwardly. The ESV and NIV help us understand Paul’s thoughts better. The ESV says, “so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.” How do the labors of Paul among them (verse 25) contribute to the Philippians’ rejoicing in Christ?

12. Paul's labors on behalf of the Philippians are funneled into one great purpose. What is it from Philippians 1:26 ESV?

13. Paul hopes to come minister to the Philippian believers once again. Yet, whether he comes to them again or remains absent, what does he desire them to do? See the first part of Philippians 1:27 for your answer.

14. Paul gives a description of what *conducting oneself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ* would look like in verses 27-28. What do you learn?

15. Paul frequently urged believers to live "in a worthy manner." What does that kind of living look like according to Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 4:1?

16. There were those among the Philippians who were *not* living in a manner worthy of the gospel. What do you learn about their conduct from Philippians 1:15-17 and 3:18-19?

17. What is the sure end of those who oppose true gospel preaching and instruction? See verse 28. See also 2 Thessalonians 1:5-8.

18. Define *granted* [Strong's #5483] from verse 29. Also see Acts 3:14; 27:24; Galatians 3:18 where the same Greek word is used.

19. What two things have been granted to the Philippians? And for what purpose? See verse 29.

20. What does verse 29 teach us about salvation? See Philippians 1:29 and John 6:29; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 2:8.

21. What does Philippians 1:29 teach us about suffering for Christ? See also Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-20; Acts 5:41; 14:22; Philippians 3:8, 10.

“It is one thing to accept suffering and resign oneself to it.
It is another to realize the privileges that come through it.”² ~Richard Melick

22. In what ways would the Philippians suffer according to verse 30? What are *some* of the things Paul suffered on behalf of Christ? See 2 Corinthians 6:3-10.

23. Two key themes shine in this section of Paul’s letter to the Philippians. One theme is Paul’s all-consuming desire to exalt Christ, as seen in Philippians 1:21. The first theme of putting the Lord on display in every way leads into the second theme of counting *all* things a privilege because they come from God’s hand—even if it means enduring difficulties, afflictions, and sorrows. Paul counted it an honor to suffer, serve, labor and love God with all his heart. When we begrudge the Lord our joyful service, what are we losing sight of? Look up Luke 17:10; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Philippians 3:8-9 as you consider your response.

² Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 91.

“What does Paul expect from them? He expects them *to stand fast*. The world is full of Christians on the retreat, who, when things become difficult, play down their Christianity. True Christians stand fast, unashamed in any company. He expects *unity*; they are to be bound together in one spirit. Let the world quarrel; Christians must be united. He expects a certain *unconquerability*. Often, evil seems invincible; but Christians must never abandon hope or give up the struggle. He expects a *cool, calm courage*. In times of *crisis*, others may be nervous and afraid; Christians will still be serene, in control of themselves and of the situation.

Paul does not suggest that this will be easy. When Christianity first came to Philippi, they saw him fight his own battle. They saw him beaten and imprisoned for the faith (Acts 16:19). They know what he is now going through. But let them remember that a general chooses the best soldiers for the hardest tasks, and that it is an honour to suffer for Christ. There is a story about a veteran French soldier who, in a desperate situation, found a young recruit trembling with fear. ‘Come, son,’ said the veteran, ‘and you and I will do something fine for France.’ So Paul says to the Philippians: ‘For you and for me the battle is on; let us do something fine for Christ.’”³ ~William Barclay

³William Barclay, *The Letters to Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated, The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 36–37.

Philippians

Lesson #6, Chapter 2 Observation

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study that all too often can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what is in the text. At this stage in the Bible study, you're noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what it means or how it applies to your life—that will come later, I promise. Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. You'll be glad you did!

I've included Chapter 2 at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. SUMMARIZE. To begin, read through Chapter 2. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 2. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.¹
 - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-11).

 - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 12-13).

 - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 14-18).

¹The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

- d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 19-30).
2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

 3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your three to five word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

 4. MARK. On the *Philippians Bible Text* handout mark key words. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. Start with these first. Then mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

5. LIST. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time *God* is mentioned in *Philippians Chapter 1*. Your *Chapter 1* list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Vs. 2 – grace to you and peace from *God*

Vs. 2 – *God* our *Father*

Vs. 3 – I thank *God* when I [Paul] remember you [Philippians]

6. MARK. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be.
7. LIST. Now, list the commands on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.
8. MARK. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted.
9. LIST. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.
10. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)
11. MARK. Mark any time *so that* is used.
12. LIST. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!
13. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.
14. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.
15. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person. For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only*

begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” From this verse we see that God is loving [because He loved the world]; He is giving [because He gave His Son]; He is eternal [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

16. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action. For example, in Philippians 1:1 *we find a list about Paul’s thankful heart*. We discover 1) he’s thankful when he remembers the Philippians; 2) he’s shows his thankfulness by praying for them; 3) his thankfulness spills over into prayers with joy for them; 4) he’s thankful when he remembers how they participated in the gospel from the very beginning until now.

17. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting.

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in each chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life at this time. Your task at this time is to look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter. Have fun digging into God’s word!

Philippians Chapter 2

1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,

2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

18 You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

20 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

22 But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;

26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.

27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you.

29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;

30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

Philippians

Lesson #7, Chapter 2:1-11

Before you begin your lesson, be sure to stop and ask the Lord for His help in studying His Word. May these verses be the seed crop that increase the harvest of righteousness in your life.

1. Philippians 2:1 begins with *therefore*, which means it is directly tied to the previous verses. What had Paul just been discussing in Philippians 1:27-30?
2. Though Paul begins his statements with an *if* in Philippians 2:1, we could actually insert *since* in the place of his “if.” Paul is speaking about realities, not uncertainties. Yet, by framing his rhetorical comments with *if* statements, Paul effectively gets us to consider what is true for all believers. What does Paul want us to remember (verse 1)?
3. Define *encouragement* [Strong’s #3874 (NKJV *consolation*)]. See also John 14:26; Acts 15:30-32; Romans 15:4-5; Hebrews 6:18 to gain insight into the word’s meaning. What do you learn?
4. Since there is indeed *encouragement in Christ*, what are some ways you have been helped by Him?
5. What are some ways you have been *consoled or comforted by love of the Lord Jesus* toward you?

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6. Paul refers to believers enjoying *fellowship with the Holy Spirit*. Look up the following verses to gain a better picture of what Paul means by that phrase: Romans 5:5; 8:9-16, 26; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:18-22; 4:30-32. What are some ways *you* enjoy fellowship (ESV *participation*) with the Holy Spirit?

7. What are some ways God has lovingly shown *affection and compassion* toward you? See also 2 Corinthians 1:3; Philippians 1:8; Colossians 3:12-13.

8. What does Paul desire for the Philippians in 2:2? What bearing does verse 1 have upon the instructions of verse 2?

"I am quite sure that the best way to promote unity is to promote truth. It will not do for us to be all united together by yielding to one another's mistakes." ~Charles Spurgeon

9. Paul urged the Philippians to live harmoniously with each other, by being *intent on one purpose*. What is that one purpose? You can find elements of that single-minded, Godward focus in Philippians 1:18, 20, 21, 27; 2:1.

If we have the single mind of Philippians 1, then we will have no problem with the submissive mind of Philippians 2. ~Warren Wiersbe¹

10. Paul gives further instruction for maintaining godly harmony in the church at Philippi. What do you learn in Philippians 2:3? How would obeying this verse alone promote unity among the brethren?

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 74.

11. Define *selfishness* [Strong's #2052 (ESV, NKJV, NIV *selfish ambition*)]. See also Romans 2:8; Philippians 1:17; James 3:14-16.

12. Define *empty conceit* [Strong's #2754].

Conceit, a seeking of glory which is, in reality, empty because it focuses on the individual rather than on the Lord. ~Richard Melick²

13. How would being humble in heart help you to regard others as more important than yourself? Consider what you learn from the following verses about humility: Proverbs 25:6-7; Matthew 11:29; 20:26-27; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:1-3.

14. More instruction for servant-hearted, humble living is given in Philippians 2:4. What do you learn? Look up the following verses to see some examples of what that might look like in your life: Romans 14:19-22; 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Philippians 2:21. What are more ways to put Philippians 2:4 into practice in your life?

15. On the heels of Paul's admonitions to the Philippian believers, what does Paul command the Philippians in verse 5? What episodes from Christ's life are presented to help us live unselfish, others-focused, humble, servant-hearted lives? See Philippians 2:6-8.

² Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 94.

Pride cannot live beneath the cross. Let us sit there and learn our lesson, and then rise and carry it into practice. ~Charles Spurgeon³

The dramatic distance Jesus traveled from the “form of God” to “the death of the cross” dramatically reveals the servant mind that each believer was to have. ~Richard Melick⁴

16. What does Paul mean when he said Christ *existed in the form of God*? See Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; John 1:1.

17. What does Paul mean when he says Christ *emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men*? See Isaiah 53:2-3; John 5:30; 17:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 5:8.

Paradoxically, being “made nothing” means adding humanity to deity rather than subtracting deity from His person. ~Richard Melick⁵

18. How did Christ *humble* Himself according to Philippians 2:8? See also Luke 2:51; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Hebrews 5:5, 7-8; 1 Peter 2:23.

19. The Scriptures say, “Before honor comes humility (Proverbs 15:33).” Christ, in taking on human flesh and identifying Himself with all things human, certainly humbled Himself. Even in this area the Scriptures were fulfilled in Him. After His humiliation, what honor was given to the Lord Jesus and by whom (Philippians 2:9)?

³ C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896), June 3, evening.

⁴ Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 99.

⁵ Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 103.

20. While on earth, Jesus wasn't given the honor and exaltation He deserved. Even now, He doesn't experience the worship rightfully due Him, but there will come a day when He will receive His just praise. How will Christ be worshiped according to Philippians 2:10-11?

21. When, where, and by whom does this exaltation take place? See 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:20-23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Hebrews 2:9; 12:2; Revelation 4:9-11; 5:11-14.

22. This theologically rich passage demonstrates that how you think matters because it impacts how you live. What threads of thought from Philippians 2:1-11 should be woven into the fabric of your life? How should those precious truths impact your life as seen in verses 1-11.

So we come to the end of this passage; and, when we come to its end, we come back to its beginning. The day will come when people will call Jesus *Lord*, but they will do so *to the glory of God the Father*. The whole aim of Jesus is not his own glory but God's. Jesus draws men and women to himself that he may draw them to God. In the Philippian church, there were some whose aim was to gratify a selfish ambition; the aim of Jesus was to serve others, no matter what depths of self-renunciation that service might involve. In the Philippian church, there were those whose aim was to focus people's eyes upon themselves; the aim of Jesus was to focus people's eyes upon God. So the followers of Christ must think always not of themselves but of others, not of their own glory but of the glory of God. ~William Barclay⁶

A reporter was interviewing a successful job counselor who had placed hundreds of workers in their vocations quite happily. When asked the secret of his success, the man replied: "If you want to find out what a worker is really like, don't give him responsibilities—give him *privileges*. Most people can handle responsibilities if you pay them enough, but it takes a real leader to handle privileges. A leader will use his

⁶ William Barclay, *The Letters to Philipians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated, The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 47.

privileges to help others and build the organization; a lesser man will use privileges to promote himself.”
Jesus used His heavenly privileges for the sake of others—for *our* sake. ~Warren Wiersbe⁷

⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 74.

Philippians

Lesson #8, Chapter 2:12-18

May the Lord grant you much grace as you dive into His Word in this lesson. Ask the Lord to help you see areas to improve in and a heart willing to do it *for His sake*.

1. Paul continues expounding on his theme begun in Philippians 1:27, that the Philippians would *conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ*. Summarize what conducting ourselves in a worthy manner looks like from Philippians 2:1-11.

2. Paul's *so then* (ESV, NKJV, NIV *therefore*) at the beginning of Philippians 2:12 indicates he fully intends to continue his discussion of how the Philippians can live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. What command is given in verse 12?
 - a. How does verse 12 connect to Paul's comments in the previous verses?

 - b. What other observations can you make about verse 12?

3. Notice how the following Scriptures essentially say, "Work out your salvation." See Romans 6:8-13; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 7:1. After reviewing those Scriptures, consider our passage, and explain what Paul means when he says *work out your salvation*.

The words “work out” are the translation of a Greek word which means “to carry out to the goal, to carry to its ultimate conclusion.” We say, “The student worked out a problem in arithmetic.” That is, he carried the problem to its ultimate conclusion. This is the way it is used here. The Philippians are exhorted to carry their salvation to its ultimate conclusion, namely, Christlikeness. The salvation spoken of here is not justification, but sanctification, victory over sin and the living of a life pleasing to the Lord Jesus. They are to see to it that they make progress in their Christian lives. ~Kenneth Wuest¹

Believe as if you had no power. Work as if you had no God. ~Marvin Vincent²

4. We’re told to work out our salvation with *fear* and *trembling*. What does Paul want us to understand about how we are to live before the Lord? See 2 Corinthians 7:15; Hebrews 12:28-29. Please comment on how verse 13 guides the kind of “fear and trembling” we’re to have.

5. The nitty gritty of *how* to apply verse 12 in our lives and what it may look like can sometimes feel a bit nebulous, which is why it’s so comforting to read verse 13. What do we learn in verse 13? Explain how the encouraging truths in verse 13 help us obey the command of verse 12.

"A clipper ship crossing the Banks of Newfoundland in heavy weather strikes an iceberg. She settles rapidly at the bow, and her captain and crew have barely time to leap into the lifeboat. The question, "What must we do to be saved?" is answered by their prompt leap into the lifeboat, which is an act of faith. They trust their lives to it for salvation. From immediate death they are saved.

But, after the ship has sunk, the crew are still out in the deep and dangerous sea. There is a second process necessary. In order to keep out of the trough of the sea and to reach the distant shore, they must stick to the boat and pull lustily at the oars. They must "work out their salvation" now by hard rowing. But this is a continued process of salvation day after day until they reach the shores of Nova Scotia. Never for a moment, however, are they independent of the lifeboat. That must keep them afloat, or they go to the bottom. At last, after hard rowing, they reach the welcome shore. This is their third, final, and complete salvation, for they are entirely beyond any perils of the treacherous sea. Now they are at rest, for they have reached the desired haven." ~Theodore Cuyler³

¹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 73–74.

² Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 437.

³ Theodore Cuyler, *God's Light on Dark Clouds*, page 65.

6. In Philippians 2:14 we're given a very practical way to work out our salvation. What is it? How would obeying this one command be an effective way to walk in a worthy manner before the Lord?

7. Define *grumbling* [Strong's #1112 (NKJV, NIV *complaining*)]. Look up the following verses to see how that same Greek word is used other places. See John 7:12; Acts 6:1; 1 Peter 4:9. What do you learn from those verses about the word?

8. Define *disputing* [Strong's #1261 (NIV *arguing*)]. What else can you learn about arguing and disputing from Luke 9:46; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 3:3-5; 1 Timothy 6:3-5?

9. Instead of disputing, what does the Word of God counsel us to do when we have a difference of opinion? See Romans 12:18; 1 Corinthians 1:10-12; Galatians 5:26; 1 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 12:14; James 3:14-18.

10. We're commanded in Philippians 2:14 to "do all things without grumbling or disputing." What kinds of things might we be tempted to complain or argue about when we, like the Philippians, encounter suffering, hardship, and persecution?

11. The word "prove" from verse 15 means to "show yourself to be" or "may become." The phrasing indicates we are to become or are in the process of becoming something we are not now. If we refrain from grumbling and disputing, what is the result in our lives according to verse 15?

12. Thankfully, the words “blameless” and “above reproach” used in verse 15 don’t mean sinless perfection. (Incidentally, they are variations of the same Greek word.) The words do mean, however, that we live in such a way that unbelievers cannot “rightfully” point a finger at us. Wow! What an amazing testimony! If we want to live without shame or guilt in the midst of world looking for a way to accuse us, then what do we need to do? See Philippians 2:14.

13. Why would implementing this one command have such a far-reaching effect in our lives and to the world around us?

14. Philippians 2:16 begins with “holding fast the word of life.” A better rendering, and one that fits the context better, translates this section as “holding forth” the word of life. The NIV did a good job with the text, saying you will shine like stars in the universe as you “hold out the word of life” to unbelievers. Based on that reading, and according to the near preceding context, what powerfully puts God and His transforming power on display? See verse 14.

15. There’s no getting around it in this text—if we want to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ and put feet to our salvation, then we cannot grumble or complain, especially when we’re under pressure. What does it say about us and our God if we do resort to grumbling and arguing among ourselves?

“Paul is not saying that they would become children of God by avoiding complaining and disputing. They were already children of God. His point is rather that they would become known as children of God by avoiding these things. Certain things are simply out of keeping with the Christian faith, and when unbelievers see these things in us, they are quick to conclude that there is nothing to our Christianity. Complaining and grumbling are certainly among those things.

Christians believe that God is sovereign over all things, including even those circumstances that they find unpleasant and undesirable. When we complain and grumble, we are telling those around us that we believe God is doing a very poor job, and, if given the opportunity, we could do much better.

We can go a long way towards conquering grumbling and complaining by keeping constantly in mind the world in which we live, and our responsibility in it. This world is a dark place—it is both ‘crooked’ and ‘perverse’ (v. 15). This world is not as God made it. It has been warped and twisted by sin, but God’s people are not like the world. We are those in whom the darkness has been dispelled by the light of the gospel, and we are now to ‘shine as lights in the world’ (v. 15).” ~Roger Ellsworth⁴

16. Besides becoming a shining testimony of God’s redeeming grace by not grumbling or arguing, what is another reason Paul desires the Philippians to live well? See Philippians 2:16.

17. Look up the following verses and explain what you learn about Paul and his stewardship of the time, gifts, and ministry God had given him. See 1 Corinthians 9:27; Galatians 2:2; 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 3:5.

18. No one wants to waste their time or efforts on things that won’t bear fruit—and neither did Paul. It’s obvious from the verses above (and more we didn’t look at) that Paul wanted his labors for the Lord to bear fruit. Yet, it’s important to examine *why* Paul wanted to work so faithfully. What is it that motivates his faithfulness and makes him long to see fruit in his ministry? See 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Philippians 1:18, 20, 21; 3:14.
 - a. How does living with such a clear sense of purpose and goals make life simpler?

⁴Roger Ellsworth, [*Opening up Philippians*](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2004), 44–46.

19. Even if we don't understand all the "offering" references Paul uses in Philippians 2:17, we still get a sense of what he wants to communicate to the Philippians. What does he want them to know in verse 17?
20. Define *poured out* [Strong's #4689]. Round out the word's meaning and how Paul is using it in Philippians 2:17 by looking up the following verses where he employs the same word or speaks in a similar way: Acts 20:24; 2 Corinthians 12:15; Philippians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Timothy 4:6.
- a. Based on what you've just learned, please explain what Paul is communicating in Philippians 2:17.
21. What does Paul hope to receive from the Philippians in 2:18?
- a. Rather than a vague, general kind of joy, Paul has something specific in mind. What kind of joy does he desire to see in the Philippians? See Romans 5:1-2; 15:13; Philippians 1:25.
- b. How would this kind of joy be a blessing to all?
22. What things stood out to you in this lesson that you'd like to continue to think on and live out?

What various hindrances we meet
In coming to a mercy seat?
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there.

Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright;
And Satan trembles, when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

While Moses stood with arms spread wide,
Success was found on Israel's side;
But when thro' weariness they failed,
That moment Amalek prevailed.

Have you no words? Ah, think again,
Words flow apace when you complain;
And fill your fellow creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent,
To Heav'n in supplication sent;
Your cheerful song would oftener be,
Hear what the Lord has done for me!

~William Cowper⁵

⁵ William Cowper, "What Various Hindrances We Meet," <http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/w/v/h/vvhwmeet.htm>

Philippians

Lesson #9, Chapter 2:19-30

Have you prepared your heart for the study of God's Word? Have you asked for the Lord's help and insight? Have you confessed your sins and thanked the Lord for making His Word accessible to you?

1. Paul ended the previous section referring to his death in service for Christ (Philippians 2:17). Though he longs to depart and be with Christ, he believes the Lord still has vital ministry for him to do (Philippians 1:18-26). Until Paul can be among the Philippians in person, what does he desire to do and why? See Philippians 2:19.
2. What things were happening in the Philippian church that concerned Paul about their spiritual health? We've already discussed some of these reasons, so it should be familiar to you. Scan through the book and see what you can find.
3. Why did Paul trust Timothy to go and check on the Philippians? See Philippians 2:20-22.
4. What do you learn about the bond between Paul and Timothy? See 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:20, 22; 1 Timothy 1:2, 18; 2 Timothy 3:10-11.
5. When will Timothy come to be with the Philippians according to verses 23-24?
6. In verse 23 Paul says he's waiting to see how things go for him. What is he waiting to discover? See Philippians 1:19-20, 21-26.

- a. What does he think is going to happen? See Philippians 2:24.

7. In Philippians 1:19-26 and here in 2:23-24, we see Paul submitting his plans to the Lord's good and perfect will. Paul had many ministry plans (Romans 15:28-29; Philemon 22), but he had learned to hold them loosely. What did he know, understand, and apply in his life? See Proverbs 16:1, 9; 19:21; 21:1; Psalm 37:23; Isaiah 46:10; Matthew 6:9-10; Luke 22:42.

8. Like Paul, we can know and understand these truths, yet find it challenging to give up our cherished plans in the face of God's different ones for us. Besides the truths above in question #7, what are some other truths that help you *willingly submit* to God's plans for your life? Here are some to get you started: Luke 9:23; 17:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:21; 3:7-8; James 4:13-17. Any others?

9. While Paul waits to see what God's plans are for his life, what does Paul put into the works? See Philippians 2:25. Why? See Philippians 2:25-26.

10. What do we learn about Epaphroditus and the kind of man he was from verses 25-28 and Philippians 4:18?

11. Paul makes a distinction between being a *fellow worker* and a *fellow soldier*. Look up the following verses to piece together what might have been in Paul's mind when he used those descriptive terms. For *fellow worker* see Romans 16:3, 9, 21; Philippians 4:3; Philemon 1, 24. For *fellow soldier* see 1 Timothy 1:18; 2 Timothy 2:3-4; 4:7; Philemon 2.

12. The Philippians are to *receive* Epaphroditus in verse 29. What implications does the word *receive* carry with it, and what heart response does it require of the Philippians?

13. How does Paul want the Philippians to respond to Epaphroditus when he arrives among them? See the first part of Philippians 2:29. See also Matthew 10:40-41; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Colossians 4:10.

14. Paul gives further instruction in the second half of Philippians 2:29. What's the next way they are to receive Epaphroditus?

15. The following texts address how a church can show high regard for the men who minister to them. Summarize what you learn from Luke 10:7; Acts 28:10; 1 Cor. 9:5-14; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6. For a principle found in the Old Testament, see 2 Chronicles 31:4.

16. Often churches don't consider how to bless and encourage those who minister the Word of God to them. Think for a moment how *you* obey the command to *receive in the Lord with joy* and *regard highly* those who faithfully serve you by preaching and teaching God's Word.
 - a. First, consider *your own response* to those whom God has placed in your life for your spiritual growth. In what way have *you received* your preachers and teachers *in the Lord* and *with joy*? How do *you* obey the command to *regard* your preachers and teachers *highly*?

- b. How does your church do in obeying this command for your preachers and teachers? Often church members *assume* the church is “taking care of the pastors,” but never find out for sure. What can you do as a church member to ensure that your church is ministering to your pastors and teachers as the Lord commands?
17. Paul explains why he wants the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus. What do you learn from Philippians 2:30? See also 1 Corinthians 16:15-18; note the progression from Philippians 4:10 to verse 18; Philemon 13.
18. Epaphroditus’ stellar character continues to shine as he steps in to serve Paul, even at risk to his own life. The clue for how he was able to live so sacrificially can be found in Philippians 2:30. What do you find? See also Acts 20:24.
19. This section of Philippians spotlights the godly example of Timothy and Epaphroditus, whose examples we are to emulate. See Philippians 3:17; 4:9; Hebrews 13:7. What traits from these men would you like to follow in your own life?

Oh how desirable, how profitable to the Christian life
 Is a spirit of holy watchfulness
 And godly jealousy over myself.
 When my soul is afraid of nothing
 Except grieving and offending Thee, the blessed God,
 My Father and Friend,
 Whom I then love and long to please,
 Rather than be happy in myself!
 Knowing, as I do, that this is the pious temper,
 Worthy of the highest ambition, and closest pursuit
 Of intelligent creatures and holy Christians,
 May my joy derive from glorifying and delighting Thee.

The Valley of Vision, “Devotion,” page 130.

Philippians

Lesson #10, Chapter 3 Observation

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study that all too often can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what is in the text. At this stage in the Bible study, you're noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what it means or how it applies to your life—that will come later, I promise. Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. You'll be glad you did!

I've included Chapter 3 at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. SUMMARIZE. To begin, read through Chapter 3. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 3. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.¹
 - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verse 1).
 - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 2-6).
 - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 7-11).
 - d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 12-16).

¹The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 17-21).

2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your three to five word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

4. MARK. On the *Philippians Bible Text* handout mark key words. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. Start with these first. Then mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

5. LIST. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time *God* is mentioned in *Philippians Chapter 1*. Your *Chapter 1 list about God* should begin by looking something like the one below. Verse 2: grace to you and peace from *God*; verse 2: *God* our *Father*; verse 3: I thank *God* when I [Paul] remember you [Philippians].

6. MARK. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be.

7. LIST. Now, list the commands on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.
8. MARK. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted.
9. LIST. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.
10. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)
11. MARK. Mark any time *so that* is used.
12. LIST. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!
13. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.
14. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.
15. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person. For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is loving [because He loved the world]; He is giving [because He gave His Son]; He is eternal [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

16. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action. For example, in Philippians 1:1 *we find a list about Paul's thankful heart*. We discover 1) he's thankful when he remembers the Philippians; 2) he's shows his thankfulness by praying for them; 3) his thankfulness spills over into prayers with joy for them; 4) he's thankful when he remembers how they participated in the gospel from the very beginning until now.

17. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any "nuggets" you observed which you thought were interesting.

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in each chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life at this time. Your task at this time is to look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter. Have fun digging into God's word!

Philippians Chapter 3

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

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

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

8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Philippians

Lesson #11, Chapter 3:1-7

Prepare your heart to study God's Word by asking Him for His help and insight, confessing any known sin, and thanking Him for the treasure of the Scriptures that guide, sustain, and teach you.

1. Paul has given instruction and encouragement to the Philippians from the moment he began his letter to them. To remind yourself of the ground Paul has covered, peruse Philippians 1:1-2:30 and choose any 5 of his previous commands, warnings, or encouragements and list them here. (I limited the selection to 5 so it wouldn't feel too overwhelming, but if you prefer to list them all, please do!)
2. The Greek word for *finally* in Philippians 3:1 has been translated various ways, depending on its context. Here in verse 1, it would be better translated *furthermore* or *henceforth*, which then provides a bridge between all Paul has previously instructed and the new information he now gives. What does Paul command the Philippians in chapter 3 verse 1?
3. Eager Beaver: Paul repeatedly uses the word *rejoice* in different ways in the book of Philippians. Review how he uses the word *rejoice* or *joy* and who it's directed toward from Philippians 1:18; 2:17, 18, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10.
4. Why would Paul desire the Philippians to find joy in the Lord (3:1), based upon what you know of the Philippians' circumstances?
5. We too are commanded to *rejoice in the Lord*, no matter what our situation. In fact, the more distressing our circumstances, the greater need for us to obey this command (Philippians 3:1). Consider *why* you should rejoice in the Lord in all things and at all times.

- a. Next, consider some of the specifics about the Lord and your salvation that give you joy. Start with 5 items, though feel free to continue if you have more!

 - b. How can you incorporate *more* rejoicing in the Lord, especially when you are in distress?

 - c. Finally, think about what attitudes or actions on your part might hinder your rejoicing in the Lord. What are some ways you can grow more aware of these temptations?
-
6. While the Philippians rejoice in the Lord, what does Paul intend to do for them and why (verse 1)?

 7. What kinds of things do we tend to remind people about? For what purpose?

 8. What do you learn about this valuable discipleship tool in Romans 15:14-15; Hebrews 5:11-12; 2 Peter 1:12-15; 3:1-2?

 9. What warning does Paul give the Philippians in verse 2? What do you learn about this group from the description (verse 2)?

10. The following passages from Galatians 2:3-4; 5:1-12; and 6:12-15 help us see how dangerous it was to be influenced by this group. What do you learn? What was at stake for the Philippians, if they were persuaded by this group?

11. What is the difference between the *false* circumcision and *true* circumcision according to Philippians 3:3? See also Romans 2:25-29; Galatians 6:12-15; Colossians 2:8-12.

12. What does it mean to *worship in the Spirit of God*? See Deuteronomy 30:6; John 4:23-24; Romans 7:6.

13. How can you *glory in Christ Jesus*? See Psalm 105:3; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Philippians 3:7-9.

14. What does it mean to *put no confidence in the flesh*? See Proverbs 3:5-7; Galatians 3:3; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:4-11; Hebrews 13:9.

15. What does it look like *in the day to day of life* to worship in the Spirit, glory in Christ, and put no confidence in your own works? How can you remind yourself of these important attitudes?

16. Paul continues to dismantle the false teaching hurting the church. After his statement that he puts no confidence in the flesh in verse 3, what does Paul reveal in Philippians 3:4-6?

- a. Why does he introduce this information from Philippians 3:4-6?
-
17. Consider what you know about each of the items Paul lists in Philippians 3:4-6 that might tempt him to put his confidence in them. See Genesis 17:14; Acts 26:4-5; Romans 10:2-5; 11:1; 2 Corinthians 11:22-30; Galatians 1:13-14.

 18. What's a stake if we put "confidence in the flesh?" See Matthew 16:24-26; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17, 21; Galatians 2:15-16, 21; Philippians 3:8-11; Hebrews 11:24-26.

 19. In Philippians 3:7 Paul leverages his exhortations to a new level. What does he say and what does it encompass?

 20. What are some of the things that are *gain* to you in your life?
 - a. How do your "gains" lure you away from relying on Christ's work and righteousness?

 - b. What's the answer for not taking comfort in your "gains?"

21. Paul often talks about doing things for *the sake of Christ*. What are some of the things Paul does for the sake of Christ? See Romans 9:3; 1 Corinthians 4:10; 8:9-13; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 12:10; Ephesians 3:1.
22. How does framing your life around doing all *for the sake of Christ* change how you do things, how you think about them, and how you're motivated?

"I'll Rest in Christ"

~Isaac Watts and David Ward

No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the deeds that I have done;
I leave the hopes I held before
To trust the merits of Your Son.

*So I'll come to You and rest
From my so-called righteousness.
I will cease my striving and put my hope in Jesus.
Trusting in His work for me.
I'll rest in Christ.*

By sov'reign love I bear His name,
What was my gain I count my loss.
My former pride I call my shame
And nail my glory to His cross.

The finest works of my own hands
Dare not appear before Your throne:
But faith can meet Your law's demands
For Jesus' deeds are now my own.

Philippians

Lesson #12, Chapter 3:8-14

God's Word has such richness to it that we cannot come to study it without His eye-opening and soul-stirring help. Be sure to take time to ask the Lord for His wisdom to gain insight into this passage, so your heart is changed as a result.

1. Paul begins Philippians 3:8 with the phrase, *more than that I* (ESV *indeed, I*; NKJV *yet indeed I also*; NIV *what is more*). What is he comparing between Philippians 3:7 and 3:8?
2. Why is Paul willing to *count all things loss* according to Philippians 3:8?
3. What *kind of things* does Paul count as loss? See 1 Corinthians 3:18-23; 8:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:18, 22-33; Philippians 3:3-6.
4. How would counting all things *loss* help you know Christ better, in the way Paul is speaking in Philippians 3:8? How do the "things" get in the way of knowing Christ?
5. What information about Jesus in Philippians 3:8 helps us see *why* Paul counted things loss *for the sake of Christ, because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ, and to gain Christ*?
6. Define *Lord* (Strong's #2962). *Lord* is the Greek equivalent of Yahweh, the memorial name of God as seen in Exodus 3:14. See also Exodus 3:13-15; John 20:28; Acts 2:36;

Philippians 2:10-11; 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4 to understand the meaning behind “Lord” as used in Philippians 3:8.

7. Paul so highly values the Lord Jesus that he counts it a privilege to know Him. What else does Paul desire according to verse 9?

8. Why is this characteristic, as seen in verse 9, essential for all who would know Christ? See 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:16; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:3-7.

9. Just as Paul has done in verse 9, take some time to consider how Jesus’ righteousness is given to all who turn to Him in faith. In what way have these awesome and precious truths impacted how you think and live?

10. In this passage, Paul says he desires to *gain Christ* (verse 8) and *be found in Him in His righteousness* (verse 9), yet that’s not all. What else does Paul desire from the Lord Jesus according to verse 10?

11. See what you can learn about the word *know* as used here [Strong’s #1097].

12. What experiential, relational ways did Paul desire to know the Lord Jesus in Philippians 3:10?

“Paul already knew Christ as his Savior. But he wanted to know Him more intimately as his Lord.”
~The Bible Knowledge Commentary¹

“Paul wants to come to know the Lord Jesus in that fulness of experimental knowledge which is only wrought by being like Him. He wants to know also in an experiential way the power of Christ’s resurrection. That is, he wants to experience the same power which raised Christ from the dead surging through his own being, overcoming sin in his life and producing the Christian graces.” ~Kenneth Wuest²

“An unknown God can neither be trusted, served, nor worshipped.”
~A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, from the Preface

13. In verse 10 Paul writes about knowing Christ better through suffering. Look up the following Scriptures, then explain what you learn about the “fellowship of suffering” with Christ. See John 15:18-20; Romans 8:16-17; 2 Corinthians 1:5; Galatians 2:20; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Peter 4:12-13; 5:9.

14. The last item in Philippians 3:10 is a result of entering into Christ’s sufferings. What happens as we fellowship with Christ in our sufferings according to verse 10?

15. Look up the following verses to gain a better grasp of what it means to be “conformed to His death.” See Luke 9:23; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12; 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21; 2:3-8.

16. What does Paul mean when he says he desires to “attain to the resurrection from the dead” in Philippians 3:11? See Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:16-17, 20-23; Philippians 3:21; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

¹ Robert P. Lightner, [“Philippians.”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 661.

² Kenneth S. Wuest, [Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader](#), vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 93.

- a. How should that knowledge and understanding about our future resurrection change how we live?
-
17. The ESV and NKJV connect verse 11 to Paul's previous comments, so that the transition from verse 10 into verse 11 reads, "...becoming like Him in His death, *that by any means possible* I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." Explain how verse 11 further reveals Paul's intense desire to *know Christ*. See also Romans 8:18, 23.

 18. After ardently giving voice to his deepest heart desires, what is Paul quick to concede in verse 12?
 - a. Define *perfect* [Strong's #5048]. See Philippians 3:21.

 - b. Define *press on* [Strong's #1377]. See also 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 12:1 to gain a picture of what Paul meant.

 19. What does Paul mean when he says he desires to *lay hold of that for which he was laid hold of by Christ Jesus*? As you look up the following verses to help you form your answer, consider why God grabs hold of anyone. What is your purpose as a believer? See Ephesians 1:4; Philippians 3:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 2:11-14.

 20. Because Paul is not yet made perfect, what does he do according to verse 13?

21. Obviously, we will remember things that happened to us in the past, so what does it look like *practically* to “forget what lies behind” and “reach forward to what lies ahead?”
- a. How does the passage we’re studying in this lesson provide a framework for not being encumbered by the past?
22. What lies ahead for all believers according to Philippians 3:14?
23. Sometimes we need to be reminded of the goal, of what we’re really living for, and what we’ve been called to do as believers. How does Philippians 3:12-14 help direct your heart and mind in how you need to live? What are some ways you can live more faithfully with your eye on *the goal*?

“Yes, for His sake I have been caused to forfeit all things, and I count them but dung, in order that I might come to know Him in an experiential way, and to come to know experientially the power of his resurrection, and a joint-participation in His sufferings, being brought to the place where my life will radiate a likeness to His death, if by any means I might arrive at the goal, namely, the out-resurrection out from among those who are dead.” ~Kenneth Wuest’s translation of Philippians 3:10-11³

³ Kenneth S. Wuest, [*Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*](#), vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 95.

My Goal Is God Himself
by Frederic Brook

My goal is God Himself, not joy, nor peace,
Nor even blessing, but Himself, my God;
'Tis His to lead me there—not mine, but His—
At any cost, dear Lord, by any road.

So faith bounds forward to its goal in God,
And love can trust her Lord to lead her there;
Upheld by Him, my soul is following hard
Till God hath full fulfilled my deepest prayer.

No matter if the way be sometimes dark,
No matter though the cost be oft-times great,
He knoweth how I best shall reach the mark,
The way that leads to Him must needs be strait.

One thing I know, I cannot say Him nay;
One thing I do, I press towards my Lord;
My God my glory here, from day to day,
And in the glory, there my great Reward.

Philippians

Lesson #13, Chapter 3:15-21

God's Word has treasures upon its surface, but often precious gems must be dug out and examined so they can be enjoyed. Philippians chapter 3 contains many such sections and this lesson is no different. As you prepare to study this book, take time to ask the Lord for His help and a willingness to gain His mind in your studying.

1. Our passage is fairly straightforward, but there are a few sections we need to consider carefully to gain the full impact of Paul's teaching. Let's do a bit of review to get us in place and ready. First, in Philippians 3:8-11, what does Paul desire above all things?
2. Next, in Philippians 3:12 what does Paul mean when he says, "Not that I have already obtained *it*?" See Philippians 3:10-11 and verse 21 for your answer.
3. What does Paul press on to do in Philippians 3:12? What does Paul mean when he says, as the ESV puts it, "I press on to make it my own because Christ has made me His own?" See also 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Titus 2:11-14.
4. What is one way Paul intends to apply that will help him press on to his goal? See Philippians 3:13.
5. What surprising bit of information does Paul convey at the beginning of Philippians 3:13?

6. Paul reiterates the motivating goal of his life in Philippians 3:14. What is it? See also 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

7. With Paul's previous words fresh in our minds, we're now ready to tackle our passage for this lesson. What command are we given in verse 15?

8. What are we to imitate? To what is Paul referring in his command from verse 15? For sure, your answer should include verse 14, though you may consider Paul's command reaches to include verses 12-14.

9. Paul uses different forms of the *same* Greek word in Philippians 3:12 and 3:15. The NASB translated the word as *perfect* for both verses, while the ESV, NKJV, and NIV chose to translate the word in Philippians 3:12 as *perfect* and in Philippians 3:15 as *mature*. The reason for this translation difference can be found in the context of the passage. To whom is the command addressed in Philippians 3:15?

10. What distinction in thought is exposed in verse 15?

11. Why is it completely reasonable to expect believers, especially mature and maturing believers, to have Paul's same attitude? See John 15:8, 16; Romans 7:4; Ephesians 4:14-16; Titus 3:14.

12. What should the mature and maturing believers continue to do according to verse 16?

13. What seems absolutely clear from Paul's comments is that there's no going backward or regressing for those whose goal is the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. What words or phrases does Paul use in this section that underscore that attitude? See verses 12-16. What else do we glean from the following verses? See 1 Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1, 10; 2 Peter 1:5-10; 3:18.

14. What is Paul instructing believers to do in verse 16? As you consider your answer, review Paul's comments in verse 12, which will help you put your thoughts together. For some examples, you can refer to Philippians 1:27; 1 Timothy 4:12; James 1:2-4.

15. Not only does Paul desire all believers to have an attitude of pressing on toward the goal while maintaining and progressing in their walk with the Lord, what else does he urge us to do in verse 17?

16. What do you learn in verse 17 about *your* role in the body of Christ?

17. Paul contrasts the way true believers walk with another group. Who are they and how do they walk? See verses 18-19.

18. Define *appetite* [Strong's #2836 (ESV, NKJV *belly*; NIV *stomach*)]. See also Matthew 6:31-33; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Peter 4:3.

19. For a fun exercise, take the description about the unbelievers from verses 18-19 and instead tailor those verses to describe believers. For example, "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even *rejoicing* that they are *friends* of Christ..."

20. What do we learn about believers from verse 20?

21. Define *citizenship* [Strong's #4175]. See also Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 12:22-23; Revelation 21:10-27.

22. What do you learn about being a *citizen* from verse 20?

"Paul reminds them of one great truth: 'Our citizenship', he says, 'is in heaven.' Here was a picture the Philippians could understand. Philippi was a Roman colony. Here and there at strategic military centres, the Romans established their colonies. In such places, the citizens were mostly soldiers who had served their time—twenty-one years—and who had been rewarded with full citizenship. The great characteristic of these colonies was that, wherever they were, they remained fragments of Rome. Roman-style clothes were worn; Roman magistrates governed; Latin was spoken; Roman justice was administered; Roman morals were observed. Even in the most remote regions, they remained unshakably Roman. Paul says to the Philippians: 'Just as the Roman colonists never forget that they belong to Rome, you must never forget that you are citizens of heaven; and your conduct must match your citizenship.'" ~William Barclay¹

¹ William Barclay, *The Letters to Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated, The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 81.

23. Another reason why we wait for and eagerly anticipate the Lord's return is given in verse 21, which is a fulfillment of Philippians 3:11. What will happen according to verse 21? See also 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 48-54; 2 Corinthians 5:2-4, 8; Philippians 1:21.
24. From this passage, we see that there is one thing that all believers have in common. What is it? See 1 Corinthians 1:7-8; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2.
25. Remember, Paul was writing from prison to a church that was experiencing intense pressure, conflict, and trouble from all sides. Review the soul-refreshing truths from Philippians 3:12-21 and list the truths you find encouraging to think about in your own times of trouble.

“Paul mentions particularly that the believer will receive a glorified body, like the body of Christ. Today we live in a “body of humiliation” (which is the meaning of the word translated “vile” in Phil. 3:21); but when we see Christ, we will receive a body of glory. It will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye! (1 Cor. 15:42–53) At that moment, all the things of this world will be worthless to us—just as they ought to be, relatively, today! If we are living in the future tense, then we will be exercising the spiritual mind and living for the things that really matter.” ~Warren Wiersbe²

“Here is a precious truth for thee, believer. Thou mayest be poor, or in suffering, or unknown, but for thine encouragement take a review of thy “calling” and the consequences that flow from it, and especially that blessed result here spoken of. As surely as thou art God’s child today, so surely shall all thy trials soon be at an end, and thou shalt be rich to all the intents of bliss. Wait awhile, and that weary head shall wear the crown of glory, and that hand of labour shall grasp the palm-branch of victory. Lament not thy troubles, but rather rejoice that ere long thou wilt be where “there shall be neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.”³ ~Charles Spurgeon

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 93–94.

³ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings, Complete and unabridged*; New modern edition. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006). May 28th, Morning.

Philippians

Lesson #14, Chapter 4 Observation

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study that all too often can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what is in the text. At this stage in the Bible study, you're noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what it means or how it applies to your life—that will come later, I promise. Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. You'll be glad you did!

I've included Chapter 4 at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. SUMMARIZE. To begin, read through Chapter 4. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 4. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.¹
 - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (3:17-4:1).²
 - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 2-3).
 - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 4-7).

¹ The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

² Most commentary writers connect Philippians 4:1 with Paul's comments at the end of Chapter 3. Though verse 1 does also provide a transitional bridge into the contents of Chapter 4.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

5. LIST. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time *God* is mentioned in Philippians Chapter 1. Your Chapter 1 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below. Verse 2: grace to you and peace from *God*; verse 2: *God* our *Father*; verse 3: I thank *God* when I [Paul] remember you [Philippians].

6. MARK. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be.
7. LIST. Now, list the commands on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.
8. MARK. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as*, *likewise*, *in the same manner*, or *like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted.
9. LIST. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.
10. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore*, *wherefore*, *finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)
11. MARK. Mark any time *so that* is used.

12. LIST. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!

13. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.

14. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.

15. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person. For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is loving [because He loved the world]; He is giving [because He gave His Son]; He is eternal [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

16. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action. For example, in Philippians 1:1 *we find a list about Paul’s thankful heart*. We discover 1) he’s thankful when he remembers the Philippians; 2) he’s shows his thankfulness by praying for them; 3) his thankfulness spills over into prayers with joy for them; 4) he’s thankful when he remembers how they participated in the gospel from the very beginning until now.

17. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting.

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in each chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life at this time. Your task at this time is to look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter. Have fun digging into God's word!

Philippians Chapter 4

1 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 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.

9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.

22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Philippians

Lesson #15, Chapter 4:1-7

As you prepare to study this passage, be sure to take time to seek the Lord's wisdom and help in learning from His Word.

1. Because Philippians 4:1 begins with *therefore*, we know we shouldn't consider its contents without taking into consideration what precedes it. To do that, let's take a moment and summarize in a word, phrase or sentence Paul's main point or focus for Philippians 3:1-7; 3:8-16; and 3:17-21.
2. What do you learn about those Paul is addressing from Philippians 4:1?
3. What command is given in Philippians 4:1?
4. Whatever else may follow, we know that Philippians 4:1 is clearly linked to Paul's closing comments in Chapter 3. Why would Philippians 3:17-21 be important to keep in mind as exhorts his beloved ones in Philippians 4:1?
5. What does it mean to *stand firm* [Strong's #4739 (NKJV *stand fast*)]? What else can you glean about what it means to *stand firm* and what it looks like in our lives? See 1 Corinthians 16:13; Galatians 5:1; Philippians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 3:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15.

6. Philippians 4:2 reveals one of the ways the Philippian believers needed to live out the steadfast firmness of their faith. What is the situation?

7. Who is being called upon in verse 3? What are they to do?

8. What past history do these women share according to verse 3? Why is this situation especially poignant in light of the preceding context from Philippians 3:17-21 and even the tone of the whole book?

9. How would the scenario in Philippians 4:2-3 require steadfastness of faith on the part of the church leaders and church body?

10. *Based on what we've been studying and considering so far in our lesson*, how would you counsel two friends who have fallen into discord and out of harmony?

11. After reminding the Philippians to stand firm and help weak and sinning believers to repent, what does Paul exhort the believers to do next in Philippians 4:4? What observations can you make about verse 4?

12. *Why* should believers rejoice? See Romans 5:1-5; 12:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; Titus 2:11-13 to get you started. Also consider what it says about us if we don't rejoice.

13. We often forget that Philippians 4:4 is a command. What are some resources God has given to help us obey this command more faithfully? What should we do if we haven't been obeying this command?

14. Not only are we to rejoice in the Lord, what else are we to do according to verse 5?

15. Define *gentle* [Strong's #1933 (NKJV *reasonableness*)]. The same Greek word is used in 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 3:2; James 3:17; 1 Peter 2:18. What else do you learn about the word, its meaning, and its bearing on our lives from those references?

16. Where do we get this kind of character quality? See Matthew 11:29; 21:5; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 5:22-23. Since we are new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), have been given a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26-27), and have God's help and resources available to us (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 1:2-4), is there ever a time when we *just can't* be patient, reasonable, or easy to get along with?

17. The word *known* in verse 5 refers to knowledge gained through experience, which has direct bearing in how we interact with others. What are some ways others would/could *experience* or come to know that we are reasonable and easy to get along with?

Let your sweet reasonableness, your forbearance, your being satisfied with less than your due, become known to all men. The Lord is near.¹ ~Kenneth Wuest's translation

¹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 109.

18. Paul reminds his dear friends that *the Lord is near*, which is referring to the Lord's soon return. How can that truth be an encouragement and a motivation in living out the commands of this passage?

"He is happy who feels a jealous fear of doing wrong. Holy fear looks not only before it leaps, but even before it moves. It is afraid of error, afraid of neglecting duty, afraid of committing sin. It fears ill company, loose talk, and questionable policy."² ~Charles Spurgeon

19. We are to rejoice in the Lord, be sweetly reasonable because of the Lord's soon return, and now in the first part of verse 6, what are we to do?

20. What prescription does Paul give for the believer's anxiety? See verse 6 after the command.

21. How would applying this simple balm calm our worried and anxious hearts?

The Greek construction indicates that we have here a prohibition which forbids the continuance of an action already habitually going on. The Philippian saints were habitually worrying. Paul exhorts them to stop it. The word *nothing* is literally "not even one thing."³ ~Kenneth Wuest

22. What comes as a result of applying verse 6 in our lives? See Philippians 4:7.

² C. H. Spurgeon, *The Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith: Being Precious Promises Arranged for Daily Use with Brief Comments* (New York: American Tract Society, 1893), 253.

³ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader, vol. 5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 109.

“You can't see the peace of God, but like secret ink, when held to the fire, it reveals itself! e.g., Affliction frequently opens truths to us and opens us to the truth. Experience unlocks truths that were closed. Many passages of Scripture will never be made clear by the commentator, for these must be expounded by experience. Many a verse is written in a secret ink that must be held to the fire of adversity to make it visible. Affliction plows and opens our hearts, so that into our innermost nature the truth penetrates and soaks like rain into the plowed land.”⁴ ~Charles Spurgeon

23. What do you learn about the peace described in verse 7? List at least 5 observations that you notice from Philippians 4:7.
24. Though it's not immediately apparent, the details in our passage are tied to the thought that our Lord Jesus will soon return. Finish this thought with *at least 5 items* from Philippians 4:1-7: *Because our Lord's return is near, we should take care to ...*

“Anxious care often leads to acts of sin. He who cannot calmly leave his affairs in God's hand, but will carry his own burden, is very likely to be tempted to use wrong means to help himself. This sin leads to a forsaking of God as our counsellor, and resorting instead to human wisdom. This is going to the “broken cistern” instead of to the “fountain;” a sin which was laid against Israel of old. Anxiety makes us doubt God's lovingkindness, and thus our love to Him grows cold; we feel mistrust, and thus grieve the Spirit of God, so that our prayers become hindered, our consistent example marred, and our life one of self-seeking. Thus want of confidence in God leads us to wander far from Him; but if through simple faith in His promise, we cast each burden as it comes upon Him, and are “careful for nothing” because He undertakes to care for us, it will keep us close to Him, and strengthen us against much temptation. ‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.’”⁵ ~Charles Spurgeon

⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *Beside Still Waters*, pg. 54.

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896).

Philippians

Lesson #16, Chapter 4:8-14

Ask the Lord for His continued grace and help as you come to His Word. Seek to worship the Lord with a humble and teachable heart.

1. Review the commands given to believers from Philippians 4:1-7.
2. How does Paul begin Philippians 4:8? What does that tell you about what is to come in the verse?
3. What command is given in Philippians 4:8? How would you describe or categorize the list that accompanies his command in verse 8?
4. Define *dwell* [Strong's #3049 (ESV, NIV *think*; NKJV *meditate*)].
5. Dwell, as it is used in our text, is in the present middle imperative, which means *we initiate and participate in the action*. It means we are to be doing something to ourselves. Here we are to begin dwelling and then continue in the action of dwelling on and thinking carefully about certain things. What does this teach you about what God wants us to do when it comes to how and what we are thinking on?
6. How does the context of the preceding verses, specifically verses 6-7, show us when and why we should apply the command of Philippians 4:8?

7. How would dwelling on the things that are *true* fix most of our sinful struggles? Make a list of 5 or more things that you know are *true* from the Word of God that have helped you when you needed to think on true things.

8. The word *honorable* [Strong's #4586 (NKJV, NIV *noble*)] is rich with meaning. Look up the word to see what you can discover, and why it would be so good to think on honorable things.

9. Why would it be good to think on *right* (ESV, NKJV *just*) things? Also see Acts 4:19; Ephesians 6:1; 2 Peter 1:13 where the same Greek word is used to help you form your answer.

10. As Paul's list continues in verse 8 there's a sense in which it almost begins to pick up speed like a snowball gaining momentum as it rolls down a hill. Choose one or two more of the descriptions in the verse to discover their meaning.

11. And if the command to dwell on such praiseworthy things wasn't enough, what command is given in verse 9?

12. What is the result of such obedience according to the end of verse 9? Notice the connection with Philippians 4:7. If we put these commands from verses 4-9 into practice in our lives, what will be the result?

“The key to godly living is godly thinking, as Solomon wisely observed: “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23).”¹ ~John MacArthur

13. What new subject does Paul introduce in Philippians 4:10? In what way did the Philippians show their concern for Paul? See Philippians 4:15-16.

14. In verse 10, Paul says he *rejoiced* in the Philippians’ gift. Why is that? See Philippians 4:17.

15. Though Paul was happy about their gift of love and faith toward him, what does he hasten to assure them in Philippians 4:11?

16. We want to take note of Paul’s statement in Philippians 4:11, as learning to be content in any circumstances implies many biblical and life lessons taken to heart and then applied. Before we study *how* Paul learned this important lesson, take some time to come up with at least 5 observations about Philippians 4:11 as you consider what you learn about Paul and what he knew about his God.

17. Why is contentment *essential* for every believer? What does a contented spirit communicate about us and how we view our lives? See 1 Samuel 3:18; Job 2:10; Psalm 73:25-28; 2 Corinthians 9:8; 1 Timothy 6:6-9; Hebrews 13:5-6.

18. Paul details some of the aspects of his soul’s training in Philippians 4:12. What do you learn? Explain how the wide range of Paul’s experiences trained him in contentment.

¹John F. MacArthur Jr., [*Philippians*](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 290.

19. According to Philippians 4:13, from where does true contentment come?

Verse 13 can literally be translated, "I can do all things through Him who infuses strength into me." One commentator, Lenski, says, "Being connected with the Lord who keeps empowering him, Paul always has the strength for everything in his life and his work."

20. God strengthens you for whatever He brings in your life. Consider some of your life situations, temptations, and struggles as you look up the following Scriptures that show how God strengthens you. What do you learn from the verses that follow? See Isaiah 40:29-31; 41:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 3:16-19; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:11.

21. How does Paul close his explanation to the Philippians in verse 14? Why does he add this comment after his statements on contentment?

22. We have covered a lot of ground in this lesson! What is one part of your study that stood out to you that you want to remember and apply?

"A contented Christian does not choose his cross, but is willing to take that which God chooses, and is content with the kind and the duration of the cross. He will wait for God's providence to remove it, but never force the door to escape from it."² ~Thomas Watson

"A contented Christian is like Noah in the ark: although tossed upon the waters, he reposed confidently in his God. The soul that is safe in the ark of contentment, sits quiet and sails above all the waves of trouble, and can even sing amid the deluge. The wheels of a chariot are an emblem of contentment: the wheels move, the axle stirs not. When change and motion are around us, a contented spirit remains firm in its centre."³ ~Thomas Watson

²Thomas Watson, *Puritan Gems; Or, Wise and Holy Sayings of the Rev. Thomas Watson, A.M.*, ed. John Adey, Second Thousand. (London: J. Snow, and Ward and Co.; Nisbet and Co.; E. F. Gooch, 1850), 25–30.

³ Ibid.

Philippians

Lesson #17, Chapter 4:15-23

Rich, life-changing truths await us in the final verses of the book of Philippians. Be sure to ask the Lord for His grace and help as you complete your final lesson in this God-exalting book.

1. Philippians 4:10-14 flows right into our passage for this lesson. By way of review, look at verse 10 to see why Paul rejoiced. What was the reason?
2. Paul was quick to reassure the Philippians of an important truth he had learned. What was it? See verses 11-13.
3. What commendation did the Philippians' receive from Paul? See verse 14.
4. What do we learn about the Philippian believers according to Philippians 4:15-16?
5. The gracious gift Paul received from the Philippians had far-reaching effects for the Thessalonian and Corinthian believers too. What did the Philippians' gift allow Paul to do according to 2 Corinthians 11:8-12; 12:11-18; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8?
6. What truths and attitudes seemed to have undergirded the Philippians' giving? See Matthew 6:19-21; Hebrews 10:32-34; 13:5-6; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

"We Give Thee But Thine Own"
by William W. How, 1823-1897

We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

11. How does Paul continue to encourage the Philippians in verse 19? List *at least 4* observations you can make about Philippians 4:19.

12. Define *supply* [Strong's #4137 (NIV *meet*)].

13. How does reading verse 19 in its context of Philippians 4:15-20 help protect us from treating God like a cosmic vending machine? Based on what Paul has been saying in this passage, what attitudes and thoughts should guide our understanding about verse 19?

"Paul does not see this gift as simply coming from Philippi. He sees it as the supply of his need from heaven." ~Warren Wiersbe¹

14. There are so many truths packed into that little sentence in Philippians 4:19! Paul deals with the same truths in a more in-depth way in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. Read through the 2 Corinthians passage and note what you learn about God and the principles for giving in the passage.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 99.

21. John MacArthur provides some insight into why Paul desires *grace* for the believers. He writes, “Believers are not only saved by grace, but also sustained by grace. They are governed by grace, guided by grace, kept by grace, strengthened by grace, sanctified by grace, and enabled by grace. They are constantly dependent on the forgiveness, comfort, peace, joy, boldness, and instruction that come through God’s grace.”³ How does Paul’s blessing grow in scope as you consider all that is meant in the simple words, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit”?

22. Take some time to review the letter to the Philippians. What things have stood out to you as you have studied this book? What admonitions or lessons do you want to continue to think on and apply after you complete your study of Philippians?

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philippians 4:23

³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 318.