

Philippians

A Friendly Note of Thanks

**Five studies for use
by groups studying together**

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Issue 1

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Chapter 3.

Chapter 4.

4. What is the most meaningful part of the book for you?

5. Write down one way you will work to make personal application of truth you learned in this book.

6. Suppose someone asks you what the book of Philippians is about. What will you tell them? (Use your summary sentences to formulate an outline of the book.)

Lesson 5
Summary of Philippians

(Most of these questions can be answered from your completed lessons)

1. Write down some facts about the book. (Author, date written, where written, purpose, etc.)

2. Where would you go in Philippians to see what the Bible says about the following items? Indicate the chapter number.

- Humility
- An example of how to pray for the saints.
- Some things worthwhile spending time thinking about.
- Pressing forward toward the goal.
- Working out your salvation.
- Our reaction when Christ is preached with wrong motives.
- The Apostle Paul's attitude toward his own death.
- Timothy and Epaphroditus.

3. What are some of the major ideas covered in Philippians?

Chapter 1.

Chapter 2.

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Notes for Students

This is a Bible Study working straight from the Bible. The goal is simply to learn what the Bible says so that it can truly be your rulebook for faith and practice.

The study guide is organized around one chapter per lesson. Each chapter is divided into sections roughly following the headings in the NIV Bible. You will be asked to read a section and then answer some questions about what you have just read. Some will be questions of fact and some will cause you to think about how the text can be applied to real life situations.

At the end of the specific questions you are asked to:

1. Write down how you can apply truth learned in the Chapter to your own life.
2. Select the verse that stands out as the most meaningful in that chapter for you. Tell why this verse is meaningful for you.
3. Write a short sentence that tells in your own words what that chapter is about. It will usually be different from that of others in your group and will serve as a “hook” for you to remember what the chapter is about. This is sometimes difficult but *“You have not completed the Chapter study until you have written this sentence”*.

The last lesson is a summary of the entire book. It reviews what you have learned and will help you to remember what is contained in this book.

Comments or suggestions for improvement are welcomed. You may E-mail them to me at mvanfossen@insight.rr.com.

- How can you apply truth from this chapter to your own life?

- What is your favorite verse in this chapter and why?

- Write a short sentence describing this chapter.

the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ¹⁷Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. ¹⁸I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

10. On what basis could Paul say that the gifts sent to Paul were, in fact, a fragrant offering and an acceptable sacrifice to God?

11. Verse 19 is often claimed as a promise by Christians who then expect God to meet all their needs. This promise was made to the Philippian church who had served God by supporting Paul in his missionary work. Does this promise depend upon our service to God? Why or why not?

Read Phil 4:20-23.

²⁰To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. ²¹Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings. ²²All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. ²³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

12. What does this chapter say about helping missionaries?

Introduction to Philippians

Read Acts 16:1-40.

Acts Chapter 16 presents an interesting account of why Paul went to Philippi, what he did there, and some of the things that happened to him while he was there. Paul was dramatically led by the Spirit to Philippi where he began meeting with a prayer group of women. After being harassed for a period of time by a demon-possessed slave girl, Paul cast the demon out of her which greatly angered her masters who were profiting from her ability to prophesy. They incited a mob which resulted in Paul and Silas being jailed and placed in stocks in a prison cell. Late at night while Paul and Silas were singing and praying, an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison and freed all the prisoners being held. But no one escaped and the jailer was so impressed that he and all his family became believers. Paul was released, the Roman officials apologized, Paul met with Lydia, and then continued on to Thessalonica.

The Philippian letter is generally believed to have been written by Paul in about a.d. 60 while he was confined in a prison in Rome. The Philippian church, which regularly supported Paul, had sent Epaphroditus to Paul with a gift. While Epaphroditus was in Rome with Paul he became sick and almost died and his home church was very concerned about him. After his recovery Paul sent him back to Philippi with this letter. The letter is a very personal thank you note which includes words of encouragement, admonishment, and instructions for living in harmony with others and in obedience to God.

In the letter Paul bares his heart to his close friends at Philippi. He expresses his affection for them and addresses some problems in the Philippian church that he has learned about. Read the book as a personal letter between friends expressing love, concern, advice and encouragement.

Lesson 1

But What Does It Matter

Read the entire chapter in your preferred translation before beginning work on the lesson.

Chapter 1

In this chapter Paul and Timothy send their greetings to all the saints, overseers, and deacons at Philippi. Paul expresses his thanks for the Philippian Christians and tells them how he prays for them. Paul tells the people that he considers them his partners in the work of spreading the Gospel throughout the palace guard where he is a prisoner in Rome. He is encouraged by their support for him and exhorts them to conduct themselves as worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

Read Phil 1:1-2.

¹Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:
²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. What kind of Christian background did Paul assume that his readers had?

Read Phil 1:3-6.

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

7. Verse 9 tells us to put into practice those things we see in Paul. How are some ways we can imitate Paul's actions?

Read Phil 4:10-13.

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

8. Paul said in verse 12 that he had learned the secret of being content whether living in plenty or in want. We were told in verse 9 to put into practice what we see Paul do. Should we who lead affluent lives in the United States be content living in plenty when much of the world is living in want?

9. Verse 13 is often quoted to give ourselves confidence and to motivate others to do things they are reluctant to try. But this was the Apostle Paul speaking who walked far closer to the Lord than most of us. Can we claim this verse as a promise to us? Why or why not?

Read Phil 4:14-19.

¹⁴Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with

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of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

2. Verse 5 tells us to have a life that is characterized by gentleness. Name some ways you can practice gentleness in your life.

3. Instead of being anxious about things (worrying) what are we commanded to do? (See also question 4)

4. What are we promised here when we present our requests to God?

Read Phil 4:9.

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

5. Make a list of at least three things that you might think about that meet the conditions of verse 8.

6. How might thinking about those things you listed in question 5 help you stop worrying about all those bad things that might happen but probably won't?

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2. How were the Philippians working in partnership with Paul?

3. What is the "good work" referred to in verse 6? It is usually thought of as the work of the Holy Spirit that brought salvation to the Philippians but remember the purpose of Paul's letter. Perhaps he is referring to the work of grace in the people's hearts that prompted them to support Paul's missionary work (4:14-18). What do you think?

Read Phil 1:7-8.

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

4. What did Paul mean when he said that all of you share in God's grace with me?

Read Phil 1:9-11.

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

5. How can we use this passage as an example of how to pray for our Christian brothers?

Read Phil 1:12-14.

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

6. Do you think that this is an example of the truth of Romans 8:28? (See also Genesis 50:20) Explain.

7. Think about the scene where Paul spent his time as a chained prisoner. How do you think that Paul might have interacted with the people around him?

Read Phil 1:15-18.

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

8. How can we use this passage to evaluate our own reaction to questionable preaching that we hear on television or read about in the newspaper?

Lesson 4

Think About Good Things and be Content.

Read the entire chapter in your preferred translation before beginning work on the lesson.

Chapter 4

This chapter begins with a plea for unity in a real life problem situation existing within the church. Exhortations to joy, patience, trust, prayer, and thanksgiving follow with promises of God’s presence and peace and Jesus’ return. The letter concludes with a statement of thanks for the recent gift together with greetings and a benediction.

Read Phil 4:1-3.

¹Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends! ²I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

1. What principles from Chapter 2 can be used here to address the problem between Euodia and Syntyche?

Read Phil 4:4-7.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace

- Write a short sentence describing this chapter.

9. What might you look for in order to determine if a speaker is “preaching Christ”.

Read Phil 1:19-26.

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

- 10.** What did Paul mean when he said that for him “to live is Christ and to die is gain”?

- 11.** Just about everyone fears his own death. But it seemed like Paul genuinely did not fear his death. How can we develop an attitude like Paul’s?

Read Phil 1:27-30.

²⁷Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in

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one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel
28without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.
This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will
be saved--and that by God. 29For it has been granted to you on
behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for
him, 30since you are going through the same struggle you saw I
had, and now hear that I still have.

12. What is a “manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”? How do
you conduct yourself in this manner?

- How can you apply truth from this chapter to your own life?

- What is your favorite verse in this chapter and why?

- Write a short sentence describing this chapter.

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with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19Their
destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory
is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. 20But our
citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from
there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21who, by the power that enables
him to bring everything under his control, will transform our
lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

10. Paul said that the people should follow his example. But Paul
was a man born with a sinful nature (See Romans 7:14-25).
Shouldn't we be following Christ and not a man?

11. What does the phrase “their god is their stomach” in verse 19
mean?

12. How should the fact that we now have citizenship in heaven
affect our lives?

- How can you apply truth from this chapter to your own life?

- What is your favorite verse in this chapter and why?

what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

5. What is the prize in verse 14 that Paul was straining to obtain?

6. Paul said he forgot what was behind him and only looked forward toward his goal. What was there in Paul’s life that he needed to forget? (See Acts 8:1-3)

7. Paul said to press forward and not look back. How do we do this?

Read Phil 3:15-16.

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

8. What does it mean to be mature?

9. What does it mean to “live up to what we have already attained”?

Read Phil 3:17-21.

¹⁷Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. ¹⁸For, as I have often told you before and now say again even

Lesson 2

Humility

Read the entire chapter in your preferred translation before beginning work on the lesson.

Chapter 2

This chapter begins with a great definition of true humility. It then follows with the magnificent example of Christ who humbled himself to the point of leaving heaven and coming to earth to live as a man. The chapter then follows with instructions to the people on how to “work out” their salvation and closes with some news about Epaphroditus and Timothy.

Read Phil 2:1-4.

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

1. Paul exhorted the Philippians to be one in spirit and purpose because they had received encouragement, comfort, tenderness, and compassion from Christ. What does it mean to have oneness in spirit and purpose?

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2. Write a practical definition of humility based upon verses 3 and 4.

3. Verses 3 and 4 say that we should consider others better than ourselves and that we should look out for the interests of others. How is it possible to do this and still succeed in a highly competitive workplace environment?

Read Phil 2:5-11.

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

⁷but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death--
even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

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

4. What was Christ's attitude?

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1. Paul speaks very strongly about some men in verse 2 calling them dogs, and doing evil, and mutilators of the flesh. Who were these men and what were they doing that was so bad?

2. Paul spoke harshly about these men. Does this example mean that we are justified in speaking harshly about enemies of Christ?

3. What were Paul's credentials as one who followed the Jewish Law?

Read Phil 3:8-11.

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

4. What was Paul now counting on for attaining heaven and eternal life?

Read Phil 3:12-14.

¹²Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting

Lesson 3

Looking Forward and Upward

Read the entire chapter in your preferred translation before beginning work on the lesson.

Chapter 3

Paul speaks strongly against the false teachers that are infiltrating the church and gives his own testimony as validation of his teaching. He tells the Philippians how he keeps his eyes focused on his goal and does not let his past life hinder him. The Philippians are told that we can follow Paul’s example and thereby learn how to work out our salvation.

Read Phil 3:1-7.

¹Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. ²Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. ³For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh-- ⁴though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. ⁷But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

5. Write a definition of humility based upon Christ’s attitude.

Read Phil 2:12-13:

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

6. What does the phrase “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” mean? (Consider both Ephesians 2:8-9 and James 2:14-26)

7. The New Living Translation translates verse 13 as God giving us both the desire and the power to do His will (*NLT: For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*). Do you agree with this translation? Explain.

Read Phil 2:14-18.

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

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8. Verse 15 says that if you do everything without complaining or arguing you will shine as stars in the universe. This is pretty special. Why is it so significant when we refrain from complaining and arguing?

9. In verse 17 what does the phrase “poured out like a drink offering” mean? (A different translation or a commentary on Philippians is helpful)?

Read Phil 2:19-24.

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

10. What does verse 21 imply about what the priority of Christ should be in our lives?

Read Phil 2:25-30.

25But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that

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when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, 30because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

11. Epaphroditus was a “messenger” sent out from the Philippian church. Would you call him a missionary? How was he the same and how was he different from those who serve in missions today?

- How can you apply truth from this chapter to your own life?

- What is your favorite verse in this chapter and why?

- Write a short sentence describing this chapter.
