

PHILIPPIANS

for growing believers

14



PHILIPPIANS
for growing believers

Bible Study Guide

From the leadership development ministry of

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH MISSIONS

Acknowledgments

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Progression Toward Maturity

- **Phase 1 – Relationship with God** – (Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:9) – Call of God is first to Himself - “Creation to Christ” - (Foundation for salvation)
- **Phase 2 – Position with Christ** (1 Cor. 1:30a) New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17) – “Positioned in Christ” and “New Birth Explained” – (Foundation for Sanctification)
- **Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit** – (2 Cor. 3:17-18) – (Holy Spirit is the Spirit-of-Truth – John 16:13-14) – **Introduction of the Church** - (Church is the Pillar and foundation of Truth – 1 Tim. 3:15) - “Acts for Growing Believers”
- **Phase 4 – Practical sanctification** - **Identification with Christ/Co-crucified with Christ/ Conformed to image of Christ** – (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:28-29) – Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers, “Principles of Spiritual Growth”, God’s Masterpiece the Cross,” and “Looking unto Jesus” lessons
- **Conclusion** – **Recommended order of study**

Detailed Explanation of Each Phase

Phase 1 – Foundation for Salvation - (“Creation to Christ”)

The Christian life is a relationship; therefore our desire is to lead our readers into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In order to grow into that level of relationship with God, there are foundational truths that must be clearly taught and understood. These foundational truths include the following;

- The attributes of God - His love, power, grace, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, immutability, hatred of sin, faithfulness.
- The sinfulness of man, his helplessness to save himself, and his need for a Savior.
- Only God can provide a way of salvation
- The Gospel.

Phase 2 – Foundation for Sanctification - (“Positioned in Christ” and “The New Birth Explained”)

The moment someone is born again, there is an immediate change of position that takes place in his or her life. At that very moment, one becomes a child of God, and is taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. All that Christ is, and all that Christ has, becomes ours. Therefore, before service to God is considered, one must be grounded in an understanding of who we are in Christ. Some important foundational truths that should be emphasized in phase 2 teaching, includes the following;

- Placed into Christ
- Justified (declared righteous) and accepted in Christ.
- Child of God
- Restored to oneness with God
- Eternally secure in Christ
- His Divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through His finished work on the cross.
- Our part is to believe.

Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit and introduction of the church – (“Acts for Growing Believers”)

The position change that takes place in every believer's life at salvation, is immediate and complete. The daily "living out" of that position, on the other hand, is a growth process. It is the progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is working all believers through in His process of conforming us to the image of Christ.

In order for believers to move on to maturity, we must learn to walk and depend upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our purpose in phase 3 teaching is to reveal the Holy Spirit's ministry, and His faithfulness to lead, guide, feed, and protect God's children, as well as to introduce the church. Some of the important foundational truths that should be emphasized include the following.

- The Holy Spirit's ministry to lead, guide, feed, protect, and establish us in truth.
- To emphasize the FAITHFULNESS of the Spirit to fulfill all that Jesus promised.
- To reveal the early church's dependence upon the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is as faithful in our lives today, as He was to the early church in the book of Acts.
- Introduction of the church and her role.

Phase 4 – Practical sanctification; Identification with Christ; Conformed to the image of Christ – (“Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers,” Principles of Spiritual Growth, God’s Masterpiece the Cross of Christ,” and “Looking Unto Jesus” lessons.)

The Holy Spirit is teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, with Christ becoming more and more the object of our hearts.

In phase 4, we will study through the epistles with the purpose of learning to rest in our identification with Christ and His finished work. As we, by faith, begin to appropriate identification truths, our co-crucifixion with Christ, our lives will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

Some of the important truths that will be emphasized in Phase 4 includes the following.

- The believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Crucified with Him, and raised to newness of life)
- Sanctification is the process of walking less and less in the flesh and more and more in the Spirit.
- Our part in the process is faith in the finished work of Christ, and our identification with it.
- What it means to truly walk in the Spirit
- Putting off the old and putting on the new.
- Manifesting the life of Christ/ fruit of the Spirit.

Conclusion: Recommended Order of Study:

Being that there truly is a progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is taking all believers through, therefore our Bible lessons have been developed and arranged to line up with that work of the Spirit in our lives. Each set of lessons contain the foundational truths that must be in place in a person's heart in order to facilitate their growth unto the next stage of spiritual growth. Therefore, we believe that it is important to teach the lessons in the following order:

1. Creation to Christ
2. Positioned in Christ
3. *Acts for growing believers*

4. Romans *for growing believers*
5. Ephesians *for growing believers*
6. 1 Corinthians *for growing believers*
7. 1 Timothy *for growing believers*
8. Titus *for growing believers*
9. 1 & 2 Thessalonians *for growing believers*
10. Revelation *for growing believers*
11. Galatians *for growing believers*
12. Colossians *for growing believers*
13. 2 Corinthians *for growing believers*
14. Philippians *for growing believers*
15. Philemon *for growing believers*
16. 2 Timothy *for growing believers*
17. 1 & 2 Peter *for growing believers*
18. 1, 2 & 3 John *for growing believers*
19. Hebrews *for growing believers*
20. James *for growing believers*
21. Jude *for growing believers*
22. The Old Testament *for mature believers*
23. Acts through Revelation, *verse by verse for mature believers*

PHILIPPIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 1

A. Introduction

- Paul founded the church of Philippi while on his second missionary journey. Sometime later while in a Roman prison. Paul wrote this epistle to the Philippian church.



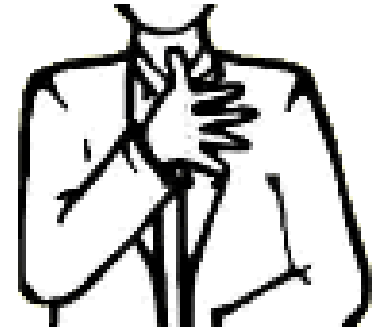
“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:” Philippians 1:1

- As previously mentioned, Paul was imprisoned in Rome and apparently Timothy was visiting during the time he was writing this letter.

- Paul refers to both he and Timothy as bondservants of Jesus Christ; willing servants of Jesus.
- Paul had a wonderful, understanding and faith in God’s love which produced grace and mercy toward sinful man, and caused him a great desire to serve God.

In **2 Corinthians 5:14** we read, “*”The love of Christ constrains [controls, compels, motivates] us.”*”

- In a similar way, as we grow in the grace and knowledge of God, it will progressively result in a deeper relationship with Christ and desire to do His will.
- Paul also clearly states who he is writing to: the believers in Philippi, or the Philippian church.
- Please keep in mind that although this epistle was written to the Philippian church, it is also meant for us today, as we, too, are a part of the body of Christ.
- Notice that Paul specifically mentioned the elders and leaders of the Philippian church.
- It is very important that the leaders of a church be men who are grounded in truth and walk in the Spirit; therefore, Paul wanted to make certain they knew that they were included in the instruction that he would give in this letter.
- As church leaders, we will never reach a point in our lives where we no longer need instruction.



B. Grace and Peace Come From God

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Philippians 2:1

- Every epistle Paul wrote begins with this statement; he wanted to keep before the church the importance of grace and peace as well as the fact that grace and peace come from God, through the finished work of Christ and not from anything that we may do.
- If we are to experience peace from God, it will only come as we grow in our knowledge of Christ and what He has done on our behalf.

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;” Philippians 1:3-5

- It was Paul who God used to evangelize and then establish the Philippian church. Paul was their spiritual father, and loved them very much.
- He thanked God in every remembrance of them. Paul went on to say that it was a joy to pray for the believers in Philippi.
- This reveals two things: First, it shows the obvious love that Paul had for the Philippian believers; second, it reveals the relationship that Paul had with God; it was a joy for him to beseech God on the behalf of those whom he loved.
- If we walk in the flesh, we will do something much different. We’ll be so self-centered that it will be impossible to love others more than ourselves and we’ll often fail to pray for others. Our joy will not be found in God or in others, but in pleasing ourselves.
- The Philippian church was a church that was co-laboring with Paul to see the gospel go forth.
- At times they collected money for more needy churches; at other times, they helped to meet some of the physical needs that Paul and his companions had.

C. Three Important Truths

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” Philippians 1:6

- There are two very important truths to see in this passage, which if grasped, will save years of toil and struggle.
- First, Paul comments that it was God who began this work in the Philippian believers.
- So it is with us; it was God who chose us (**Ephesians 1:4**), who sought after, and brought us to Himself (**John 6:44**). Our salvation did not originate with us.
- Second, Paul writes that as it was God who has begun this work of saving and sanctifying, so it is He who will complete it (**Psalms 138:8; I Thessalonians 5:24**).

D. No Greater Affection

“Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:7-8



- Paul said that he couldn't help but feel great love for the Philippian believers, as not only were they his spiritual children, but they also had become his partners in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

- The Philippians believed and rested in the finished work of Christ not only for salvation, but also for sanctification, and they co-labored together with Paul to see that others also received this message.

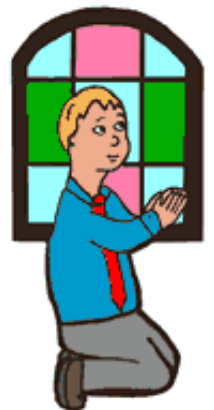
- As Paul was often criticized for the message of grace, it must have been a joy for him to know that this church was standing firm with him in the defense of the

message of grace.

- Therefore, Paul went on to say that he longed for their fellowship with the affection of Christ, for there can be no greater affection than that of Christ for His church.

“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” . Philippians 1:9-11

- Mentions to the Philippians that he is praying for the believers to walk more and more in the Spirit and become more and more filled with the life of Christ, thereby causing them to become more and more sincere and blameless until Christ returns.
- This is the great need of every believer; to continue walking less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, thereby becoming more and more conformed to the image of Christ.



- Those who do not know what is theirs in Christ seek for joy and happiness by praying for better circumstances.
- But, Paul's prayer for the Philippians was not for their physical circumstances, but that they become more and more established in the finished work of Christ.

PHILIPPIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

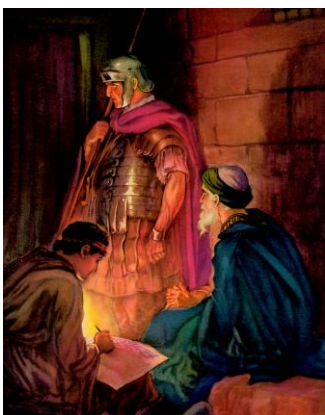
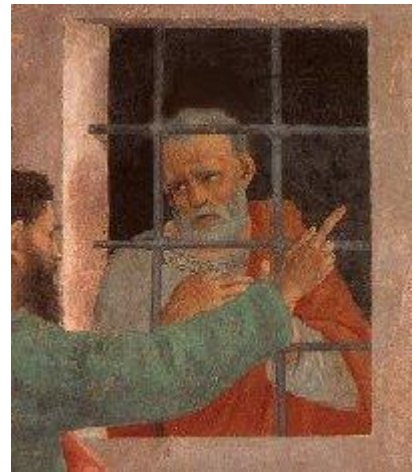
LESSON 2

A. Walking in the Spirit Despite Circumstances

- It's interesting to consider that the following scriptures are a great example of the effect that walking in the Spirit will have on a life in spite of difficult circumstances.

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” Philippians 1:12-14

- Paul was writing to the Philippian believers from prison. His focus was not on himself; he was not looking for pity or asking prayer for his release.
- He commented that the things which had happened were actually being used by the Lord to spread the gospel.
- How could Paul endure such injustice in his own life, and still have a great concern for the salvation of others?
- The answer; Paul was walking in the Spirit. In the Spirit, Christ becomes the object of our heart and not we ourselves. In the Spirit it is possible to count the furtherance of the gospel as being worth any injustice that we must endure.



- However, in the flesh, we will not be willing to endure hardship or injustice for the furtherance of the gospel.
- It pleased Paul that his imprisonment had become a source of encouragement to others, causing them to grow bolder in their proclaiming of the gospel.
- It was not just the fact that Paul was imprisoned that encouraged them, but it was more the way in which he was responding to his imprisonment.
- By example Paul was revealing the importance he placed

on the gospel; it is worth going to prison.

- Paul's comment in verse 13 is rather interesting; that his *"bonds in Christ had been made known throughout the king's palace."*
- Keep in mind that Paul was imprisoned in Rome for two years. During that time, he had a guard chained to him, but each guard was also chained to Paul, and probably heard the gospel shared over and over.
- During this two year period, Paul may have had the opportunity to witness to many of the king's guards; thus the gospel was made known throughout the king's palace.
- Remember God's promise in Romans 8:28? Many times we see in scripture and in life God working all things together for good.
- The life of Joseph was an example of God turning a bad situation into something good.

B. Two Types of Bible Teachers

"Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Philipians 1:15-18

- There will always be two types of Bible teachers: those who are teaching the Word in the Spirit and those who are teaching the Word in the flesh.
- Apparently there were those, who through the flesh, were in competition with Paul, desiring they be recognized among the churches as great teachers of God's Word.
- Paul said that they were preaching and teaching so as to *"add affliction to my bonds."*
- They were taking advantage of Paul being in prison to exalt themselves.
- This is an example of the deceitfulness of the flesh. Instead of desiring Paul's freedom so there would be more preaching of the Word, they were happy that he was in prison so that they could promote themselves.

- The flesh has little or no concern for the salvation of others. Fleshly motives for preaching the gospel is merely to be noticed and exalted, not to show forth a genuine love and concern for others.



- Paul also said that there were those who were preaching the gospel out of love. This would be those who were walking in the Spirit, for love is the fruit of the Spirit.

- There may have been some who, before Paul was imprisoned, loved him and accepted his teaching, but weren't actually involved in the preaching of the gospel to any great extent.

- But once Paul was placed into prison, because of their love and acceptance of him, they decided to pick up the "torch" of the gospel in Paul's stead.

- Paul went on to say that regardless of the motivation, he rejoiced in one thing; that Christ was being preached.
- Remember, in the Spirit, He will always point us to an occupation with Christ. However, the flesh will occupy us with anything other than Christ.
- Though Paul was unjustly judged and badly mistreated, his focus remained on Christ and not himself.

C. Being Encouraged and Rejoicing

"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ," Philippians 1:19

- When Paul wrote, "*it will turn out for my salvation,*" what did he mean by that statement?
- Some say that he was referring to being released from prison; that as the believers continued to pray, it would result in his release.
- It's important to look at the context of the passage in which this is found. Paul had just spoken of being encouraged and rejoicing in the fact that God had used his bonds to further the gospel.
- Therefore, the word "*salvation*" that Paul speaks of is not a deliverance from prison, but a "preservation" of soul.
- Even though Paul was mistreated and experiencing great hardship, he continued to receive the Spirit's ministry in his life. Paul also knew that the Philippians were praying for him, which encouraged him in the midst of the trials.

- His hardship wasn't leading to discouragement and disappointment, but to deeper faith, continued thankfulness, and joy in the Spirit.

D. The Spirit's Ministry in Our Lives

“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:20-21

- Paul knew that God's working in his life, as well as the prayers of the Philippians, and the Spirit's ministry would result in the preservation and encouragement of his soul, because he knew that God's greatest desire for his life was that Christ would be magnified in him.
- Therefore, regardless of the circumstances, Paul's desire was to walk in the Spirit so that he would not become ashamed by the reactions and responses that come from walking in the flesh.
- Paul went on to say that it was unimportant whether he lived on or whether he died, he only desired that his life would glorify Christ.
- If God gave him one time on earth, his desire was to manifest the life of Christ; however to die physically would be gain, as he would enter into the presence of God.
- The Spirit's ministry is to point us to Christ, therefore if we are walking in the Spirit, we, too, will point others to Christ (**2 Corinthians 4:5**).



E. Continued Fruitful Labor

“But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.” Philippians 1:22-26

- Paul writes that if God chose for him to remain here on earth, it would result in fruitful service, which was needful and important for the Philippians; however, to physically die would be to leave this fallen world of sin and death and enter into the Father's presence which would be far greater for Paul's benefit.
- Because Paul desired both, he could not choose which he would prefer, but trusted God with His will for Paul's life.
- Notice the confidence Paul had in God and the expectation that Paul has, "to continue living means fruitful labor!"
- Paul had such a confident view of God and His grace, that he could not imagine his life being lived any other way.
- Sometimes Christians are so unsure of themselves regarding their actions and walk with the Lord: "Lord willing I'll continue to obey;" or "I hope that I never commit sins like that."
- The Spirit is working to occupy our hearts with Christ so that the life of Christ is reproduced in us.
- We should have such a grasp of who we are in Christ that for us to live does not mean to struggle through life, in and out of sin and discouragement, but "to live is Christ!"
- In verse 25, it appears that the Lord may have given Paul a confidence that he would be released. From what we read in other passages, Paul was released, later to be imprisoned again and eventually put to death.

F. An Admonition

“Only let your conversation [manner of life] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.” Philippians 1:27-30

- Paul gives some rather interesting admonitions here for believers: “*Conduct your life in such a way that is fitting for the gospel of truth.*” In the flesh, self is our focus and we will seek to exalt ourselves, rather than Christ.

- But in the Spirit, Christ is our object, and our goal will be to point others to Him. Therefore, our conduct and speech will be that which is fitting for the gospel.



- *“Stand fast in unity.” Have one purpose: working to proclaim the gospel.* Again, in the flesh, we are the focus and will compete with others to be exalted. But in the Spirit, we maintain unity with Christ as our object; we will have one purpose.

- *“Don’t be frightened or intimidated by your opponents or adversaries.”* As we walk in the Spirit, whatever unbelievers do to us, we will not fear or be intimidated, because we are entrusting our lives to God.

- This is a testimony to others that we are trusting in a power that is higher than theirs and will ultimately determine what they can do to us.
- We must accept the fact that we will suffer for Christ (**I Peter 2:21**). In the flesh, we will seek to avoid suffering for Christ’s sake, but in the Spirit, Christ is our object and if following Him means suffering, then it will be worth it; *“For me to live is Christ”* (**Philippians 1:21**).

PHILIPPIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 3

A. Unity With One Another

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” Philippians 2:1-2

- In chapter 1, verse 27, Paul encouraged the Philippians were to “*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel*”. Now in chapter 2, he tells them how.
- These believers had tasted the encouragement of being in Christ; they had been comforted by His love, and they knew what it meant to walk in the Spirit, manifesting His love and compassion.
- Therefore, Paul wrote since these truths rule in your hearts regarding your relationship with Christ, then the same should be true in your relationships with one another, bringing about unity, love, compassion, and fellowship with one another.
- How often we Christians live as if we have received nothing from Christ; as if we have not been comforted by His love? How often do we walk in the flesh, as if there is no Spirit to commune with; as if Christ never came to die for us.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” Philippians 2:3-4

- In the flesh, we are self-centered and self-serving and just naturally inflated with self-importance, with no desire to walk in humility, esteeming others as more important than ourselves.
- But, as we walk in the Spirit, resting in our co-crucifixion with Christ, we are progressively set free from the desires of the flesh, and in its place the fruit of the Spirit becomes that which characterizes our lives.
- Paul encourages the Philippian believers to continue walking in and appropriating all that they have received from Christ which will translate into godly living and love toward one another.

B. Become Like Jesus

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:5-8

- There are many Christians who read Paul’s words here and because they are unaware of God’s enabling power, set out to be like Jesus.
- Along the way, they fail, so they pray harder, asking God to make them more like Christ.
- But, even though this has the appearance of spirituality, it is really walking in unbelief because only through what Christ has done, do we find provision for overcoming the flesh which enables us to walk in the Spirit, and results in becoming more conformed to the image of Christ.
- If we are trying to become Christ-like in any way other than appropriating by faith what He has already completed, then we are walking in unbelief.
- We are not believing what God has already done (**Romans 6:6, 11; 2 Peter 1:3**).
- To have the mind of Christ means to have Christ-like attitudes and thoughts, to become like Christ.
- The more we know, believe, and appropriate our identification with Christ, the more we will walk in the Spirit and less in the flesh; and the more we walk in the Spirit, the more the Spirit will fill us with the life of Christ, thereby giving us those Christ-like thoughts and attitudes; making us more like Him.
- Notice what characterized the life of Christ here: selflessness, humility, and obedience unto death.
- He was the omnipotent and perfectly holy Son of God, who was crucified as if He were a sinful man.



- We, on the other hand, are totally sinful and unworthy of anything good; however in the flesh, we judge and treat others as if we are God.
- But, the more we walk in the Spirit, the more Christ-like our lives will become, giving us the power and desire to die to self for the purpose of meeting the needs of others.

C. All Men Acknowledge Christ

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:9-11

- It is very important that we grasp the contrast that Paul is explaining here.
- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is God from eternity past, became a man. Though He was God, He was rejected by men and humiliated far beyond that which any man has ever been humiliated; even to death on a cross.
- Having fulfilled His Father’s will, God then raised Him from the dead and has given Him a name which is above every name; Savior, God, King of kings, and Lord of lords.
- Even though He was originally rejected, the day is coming when all created beings in heaven, earth and under the earth will bow before Him and confess that He truly is Lord.
- Man may refuse to accept Him as Savior, but in the end, all men will confess that He truly is Lord (**Revelation 19:11-16**).
- Here we see the principle of death and resurrection. Jesus went from glory, down, down, down, into death, and up to greater glory (**John 12:24**).
- As we see from this scripture, the principle of death and resurrection is true for seeds, it also applied to Jesus’ life, and it applies to our lives as well.

PHILIPPIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 4

A. Ultimate Obedience

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling .For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12-13

- In the last lesson, we saw the example of Jesus; because He was confident in His relationship with the Father and trusted Him, He became obedient unto death.
- We also read that God exalted Him and has given Him a name which is above every name.
- Even though He was initially rejected by man, ultimately all men will bow before Him and confess that He is Lord.
- Therefore, Paul now goes on to say that just as Christ’s relationship with the Father produced obedience, we as God’s children and joint heirs with Christ, can expect the same in our lives. *“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”* Paul appears to be saying, “Live out your salvation.” Or “Let it out.” And the next verse tells us how and why; *“Because it is God who works in you to give you both the power and desire to do His good pleasure.”*
- At salvation we were taken out of Adam and placed into Christ; at the same time, we received the indwelling Holy Spirit who began the process of reproducing the life of Christ within us (*no longer I, but Christ*). Therefore, Paul tells the Philippians to live out their salvation, for it is Christ who is effectively working through all their daily circumstances to produce the power and desire to please and live for Him.

B. Walking in the Spirit in a Fallen World

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

- Paul had just told the Philippians that God is working in their lives to bring about the power and desire to do His will.
- We know that in order for God to work His will in our lives, not only is He using truth, but also the daily circumstances of life: relationship struggles, being falsely accused and mistreated, daily living in a fallen world.
- Therefore, Paul continued on by saying do all things with murmurings and disputing.
- The Philippians had a flesh, as we all do, and if they were walking in the flesh, Paul knew their response would be: *murmurings and disputing*, rather than humility and love.
- We are living in the midst of a lost world in which the more we walk in the Spirit, the more we will shine forth the life of Christ as a light in the world.
- If we walk in the flesh, our responses to the daily circumstances of life will be fleshly and sinful, and rather than shining forth the life of Christ, we will be casting forth more darkness into this already darkened world (**I John 2:8-11**).
- Paul said that we live in the midst of a world that is crooked and perverse.
- What is wrong and sinful, the world considers being right and good; and what is right and pure, it considers to be foolish and wrong.
- In Romans 2:15, we read that deep down in the heart of all men is the understanding of what is right and wrong.
- As God does His work of conforming us more into the image of Christ, we will become more and more people who shine forth the truth that the world continues to reject. **2 Corinthians 2:14-15**

“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all .For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.”
Philippians 2:17-18

- It’s good for us to remember why Paul was imprisoned, and why they were seeking his execution.
- Was it because he had done something wrong? No. It was for publicly proclaiming God’s Word.
- As we have seen in most every epistle that Paul wrote, Paul’s greatest desire was to see the children of God walking in truth, manifesting the life of Christ (**Galatians 4:19**).
- It was so much his desire that he said even if he was put to death for preaching the gospel, he would gladly give his life for it.

- We should all look forward to the day when our hearts are so occupied with Christ that the gospel becomes that important to us.

“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me”. Philippians 2:19-23

- Paul was in prison in Rome, and even though there was a church there in Rome, he mentions that Timothy was the only one who was walking in the Spirit and was free from living for himself and his own self-centered desires and could genuinely care and minister to the needs of others.
- In a similar way as the Holy Spirit conforms us to the image of Christ, we will also walk in the Spirit, seeking the things that are Christ's, rather than the things that are our own.

C. Love For God's Children

“But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly. Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.” Philippians 2:24-30

- Since Paul had been in prison, the Philippian church sent Epaphroditus to Rome as their representative with a gift for Paul, and to minister to him during that time.

- But while Epaphroditus was in Rome, he became very ill and was close to death.



- When the Philippian church heard that he was sick, they became worried and concerned for his life.
- Therefore, after Epaphroditus recovered, he in turn became concerned for his brothers and sisters in Philippi that they were grieving for him.
- So Paul decided it would be best to send both Timothy and Epaphroditus back to the Philippian church.
- Timothy would minister to the spiritual needs, and the Philippians would be encouraged by the presence of Epaphroditus, knowing that he had recovered.

- So, Paul sent them back to Philippi.
- This is a wonderful example of how the body of Christ functions in the Spirit, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.
- We see the love and concern that the Philippian church had for Paul and how that love was manifested in action.
- The love and concern they also had for Epaphroditus once he fell ill, is also very evident.
- And then there is the love and concern that Epaphroditus had for the Philippian church, as well as Paul's love and concern for them. He was willing to send his two companions to minister to them.
- Had they all been walking in the flesh, self would have been the focus and there would have been no ministry in one another's lives.
- In a similar way, if our churches are not manifesting that same love and concern for the needs of God's children, it shows that we're carnal and self-centered and seeking to meet our own needs.

PHILIPPIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 5

A. Rejoice in the Lord

“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.” Philippians 3:1

- It’s rather interesting to consider that these words were written by a man who was enduring terrible circumstances.
- Paul had a tremendous knowledge of God, His grace, and all that was his in Christ; this is what influenced, controlled, and brought stability to his heart.
- Instead of his circumstances rushing in like a flood and washing away his composure and calmness of heart, we see the truths of his identification with Christ acting like an anchor in the midst of a raging sea, stabilizing and keeping his heart/soul (mind, will, emotions) under control.
- We all find ourselves in difficult circumstances from time to time.
- We have sickness in our families, accidents, financial difficulties, as well as relationship struggles.
- On any given day, we may have a number of unpleasant circumstances pressing in on us at the same time.
- However, if we, like Paul, walk in the Spirit, our hearts will be set on Christ, and the worries and the burdens of this life will not move us (**Romans 8:35-39; Ephesians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18**).
- On the other hand, if we walk in the flesh, we will lose sight of Christ and will be occupied with our circumstances, and become emotionally shaken (**Ephesians 4:17-19**).

B. Beware of Evil Workers

“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.” Philippians 3:1-2

- Paul was deeply concerned about the possibility of the Philippian believers being led astray from truth.

- He reminded them that the work Christ had done in saving and sanctifying them was a finished work and their joy should be solely on Him and what He had done on their behalf.
- Paul warned them to beware because there were those who would attempt to lead them away from depending on Christ, and would encourage them to trust in their own works for gaining blessing and acceptance with God (**Galatians 1:6-9**).
- It is significant that Paul referred to the false teachers, the Judaizers, as “dogs.” In Paul’s day, the Judaizers referred the Gentiles as “Gentile Dogs.”
- Paul goes on to say, “*Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision, (the religious ones).*” (**Acts 20:28-31; 2 Peter 2:1-3**).

C. In Christ We Have No Confidence in the Flesh

*“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” **Philippians 3:3***

- In the Old Testament, the Israelites practiced circumcision as a sign that they were God’s people.
- Here, Paul states that we believers are the circumcision, or those who have been spiritually circumcised (**Colossians 2:11**).
- The moment that we trust Christ, Romans 6 tells us that the “old man” is crucified with Christ; the power that sin once had to control our lives through our flesh has been circumcised or cut off, and thereby rendered powerless.
- Paul wrote that we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit (**Philippians 3:3**).
- In the Old Testament, the Israelites’ relationship with God was based on law-keeping; today our relationship is based on the grace of God; the finished work of Christ.
- Unlike those in the Old Testament, we have a permanent indwelling Holy Spirit, who has placed us into Christ and is in the process of conforming us more to His image. Therefore, our worship of God originates from within; from the life of Christ that we have received.
- The Israelites’ worship of God was based on law-keeping, and was outward.
- Paul also wrote that we have “no confidence in the flesh”.
- Under the law, man had to depend upon his own strength and desire to keep the law. The law could not help him.

- Therefore, when a man kept parts of the law, it produced self-righteousness, but when he broke it, it produced condemnation. Either way, man's dependence was in himself, for the law provided no help in making a man righteous.
- But in Christ, our salvation and acceptance with God is based on the finished work of Christ; keep in mind that we are helpless and incapable of pleasing God or bringing about salvation for ourselves.
- Therefore, in Christ we have no confidence in the flesh.

“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

***Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”* Philipians 3:4-6**

- Everything that Paul mentions here about himself would have made him to be a person highly respected and revered as a Jew.
- Paul is stating that he had obtained all the things in this world that makes one great in the eyes of man.
- If there was ever a Jew who could have confidence in himself, it was Paul. It's interesting to note what Paul now says about all that he had attained.

***“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,”* Philipians 3:7-8**

- Once the Spirit of God opened Paul's eyes to truth, he realized that none of these things helped him gain acceptance or approval with God, but in fact, they were a hindrance to him.



- Paul had once considered them to be gain, but now counted all to be a detriment in coming to a deeper relationship with Christ.

- Paul went on to say anything that is not of Christ or directly related to knowing Him, is to be considered rubbish.

- As God's children, it is important that we consider our

own lives.

- What is the passion of our hearts? Is it the things of this world; money, possessions, education, power, prestige? Or is the passion of our hearts, simply, Christ?
- If it is not Christ, then we are carnal; seeking to fulfill our own desires.



D. Depending On Christ's Finished Work

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” Philippians 3:9-11

- The false teachers were encouraging people to depend upon their ability to keep the law in order to be considered righteous before God.
- However, Paul said that he wanted to be found in Christ; having been clothed with the righteousness which is of God and is received by faith in Christ, not by the works of man.
- The more we know Christ and become conformed to His death through faith and the appropriation of our co-crucifixion with Him (**Romans 6:4-6, 11**), the more we will experience the power of His resurrection, and be freed from the control and reign of our flesh while becoming more conformed to His image in our daily lives.
- But, to trust in or depend upon anything other than His finished work, will hinder the process and actually prevent us from becoming Christ-like.
- In verse 11, Paul makes the comment that he desired to have a deeper relationship with Christ and become conformed unto His death (to self) so that he might experience the power of His resurrection and while still on this earth, live as though he had already been taken to heaven and given a resurrected body.

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things

which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:12-14

- Paul writes that although he desired nothing but Christ and becoming more conformed to His image, he was not claiming to have already attained that goal.
- He had cast off and no longer was depending upon all that he had valued upon before; now he was resting solely on the finished work of Christ.
- He continued, by faith, to press toward the goal of becoming more Christ-like, which is ultimately the highest calling of God.

PHILIPPIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 6

A. Pressing Toward the Goal

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” Philippians 3:13-16



Philippians 3:14

- Paul said that he didn't claim to be living a life of sinless perfection.
- He was no longer focusing on his former life in the flesh, but was pressing toward the goal of becoming more Christ-like.
- We, too, have that same liberty. The Spirit is working to teach us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit. As we progress along the path toward maturity, our focus will also be moved from focusing on what we were, to who His is.
- Paul went on to say all of us that are “perfect,” or spiritually mature, should have the same attitude and focus, as we appropriate our identification with Christ.
- Not all people are at the same place in their understanding of truth. Therefore, Paul said if we are not at a place spiritually where we can understand these things, God will reveal them.
- Only God can open the heart to understand the truths of our identification with Christ.
- Paul went on to say that whatever amount of truth has been revealed to us, our part is to merely walk in that truth.
- We can trust the Spirit to lead us into the truth for which our hearts have been prepared and not be disappointed that we're not like someone else.
- Also, as disciplers and teachers of God's Word, it is important that we not force our hearers into walking in truth for which they have not been prepared.

We must trust the Spirit to do that same work in their lives according to His timing and will. William Kelley once wrote these words: *“May we hold fast trust in subjection to His Spirit desiring the good of all believers, let them be where they may, and not anxious to take them out, or bring them in one moment sooner than God gives them to know his mind.”*

B. Focusing on the Cross

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)” Philipians 3:17-19

- It was the finished work of the cross and his identification with Christ upon which Paul trusted and rested.
- Therefore, Paul encouraged the Philippians to walk with that same attitude and focus.
- For he said that there were many teaching the Word who were enemies of the cross of Christ because they did not depend upon the finished work of the cross.
- He said that their end would be destruction (**2 Peter 2:1**).
- Walking in heresy and false teaching will always lead to destruction. It destroys faith.
- Biblical faith must be anchored in truth. To not walk in truth is to walk in unbelief and to walk in unbelief is to despise the finished work of Christ.
- Paul also said that there are those whose god is their appetite. They walk in the flesh, totally controlled by the desires of the flesh.
- Their god, or that which they seek to please, is their own fleshly, self-centered desires.
- Paul went on to say that their glory is in their shame.
- This reveals the deceitfulness of the flesh. In the flesh, that which is shameful is called glorious, and that which is truly glorious is considered shameful.
- Finally, Paul wrote that their minds were set on those things that man seeks to obtain in this world such as the praises of men, and not on Christ.

C. A Heavenly Citizenship

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Philippians 3:20-21

- Paul gives more reasons why we should be of the same attitude as he; resting solely on the finished work of Christ.
- It was Christ that saved and sanctified us, and it is also He who will bring about our glorification.
- Our salvation came not from any will or work of our own; our sanctification will come in a similar manner (**Colossians 2:6**); and the transformation and glorification of our bodies into heavenly bodies will again be the will and work of God by the power that He has to subject all things to Himself.
- As children of God who have been placed into Christ, our eternal citizenship is in heaven, seated with Christ at the right hand of God. (**John 14:1-3; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Philippians 3:20**)

“Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” Philippians 4:1

- Paul is encouraging the Philippian believers to rest in their position in Christ and to continue on in the truth of their identification with Christ.
- Since it is only the finished work of Christ that saves, sanctifies, and glorifies, therefore, our part is to stand firm in it by faith, not being deceived into following that which casts aside the work of Christ.

“beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life.” Philippians 4:2-3

- Based on the finished work of Christ and the hope that we have in Him, Paul urges these two women to live in harmony and asks others in the church to help them.

- Paul said that they had helped him in the ministering of the gospel, but now they were apparently struggling in their relationship.
- Apparently, they had lost sight of all that they had in Christ and the privilege that they had to be His co-workers and focused on very minor and petty issues that arose between them (**Ephesians 4:17-19**).
- As these kinds of issues arise in our churches, we must point people to the cross and the truth of their co-crucifixion with Christ in order to see them restored to walking in the Spirit. (**Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 2:12-13; Galatians 6:1**)

D. Rejoice

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.” Philippians 4:4-5

- Paul urges the believers in Philippi to always rejoice in the Lord. Joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit, and as we walk in the Spirit, joy will be manifested in our lives regardless of the circumstances.
- In the flesh, our focus will be on circumstances rather than what we have in Christ, therefore, if our circumstances are good, we’ll feel happy, but if they are bad, then we will become discouraged.
- Paul also said to let our gentle spirit be known to all men, for the Lord is near.
- A gentle spirit is part of the fruit of the Spirit and will not be manifested if walking in the flesh.
- Paul is reminding the Philippians that it won’t be long and the Lord will return and totally remove all sin and corruption.
- Therefore, we must not become distracted by the flesh, focusing on petty “earthly” issues that arise in our lives; rather walk in the Spirit and remain focused on our hope in Christ, and be found blameless in Him, for His return is imminent.



E. Be Anxious For Nothing

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

- In the flesh we become anxious about many things. We fail to rest in the love and grace of God; therefore we are not confident of His provision for our lives. So we become anxious, striving and scheming in order to bring about that which we desire to do or to obtain.
- But, as we walk in the Spirit, our hearts will be confident in God’s love and mercy, and we will be able to rest in His will for our lives rather than striving for our own will.
- Only in the Spirit will we walk in true dependence upon God. And here Paul is making clear that true dependence will be manifested in two ways: first, it will result in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to God; secondly, the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds and we won’t worry or become anxious about our circumstances.

PHILIPPIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 7

A. Our Minds and Our Walk

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”
Philippians 4:8-9

- In the last lesson, Paul told the Philippians that the finished work of the cross and their identification with Christ would result in the fruit of the Spirit.
- Paul now tells them to think and dwell upon those things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, good, excellent and worthy of praise.
- Basically, Paul is describing the characteristics of Jesus Christ. The more we walk in the Spirit, the more Jesus becomes the object of our hearts, and as He is our focus, we will be like Him..
- Paul goes on to encourage the Philippians to walk in and practice the things that they had heard and from Paul and seen in him.
- As Christians by faith, appropriate our identification with Christ, our new position begins to become experiential in our lives, affecting what we think, say and do, and the more we walk in the Spirit, the more the Christ-life will be manifested in our thoughts, words, and actions.

B. Giving To Those In Need

“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I

departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:10-19

- In approaching the conclusion of Paul’s letter to the Philippians, he thanks them for their loving concern for him.
- Paul also mentions that he had learned to be content in whatever circumstance he found himself in; he knew how to live in prosperity, as well as to live while in need.
- These verses tie into what Paul had already written in verses 6-7; as we rest in the finished work of the cross and Christ becomes the object of our heart, it will result in a peaceful restful mind, for our confidence will be in God and His love, mercy, and grace.
- Therefore, Paul clearly stated that regardless of his circumstance, whether he had plenty or little, he remained in the Spirit, thereby enabling him to be sure and steadfast rather than tossed to and fro by circumstantial change.
- Paul went on to say that it was a great blessing to him for the Philippians to share with him in his need; at times, the Philippian church was the only church that helped him and ministered to him in this way.
- He also said that it was not the gifts that encouraged him, but rather what this communicated regarding the Philippian believers.
- People who are in the flesh don’t care about the needs of others; they only care about themselves.
- However, the care and generosity that the Philippians showed toward Paul by their willingness to give, revealed they were walking more in the Spirit and less in the flesh, and as that growth continued in their lives, the Philippians would be blessed by the obvious benefit that such growth brings.
- It’s interesting to note Paul’s comment in verse 19: *“My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory.”*

- This isn't a promise that as you give, then God will give back to you. It's a statement of the faithfulness of God; that because He is our heavenly Father and we are His children, He will faithfully supply all of our needs.
- Therefore, we can freely give to those to whom the Spirit reveals are in need, trusting in the fact that God is faithful and will always provide for our needs.

C. Conclusion

“Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” Philipians 4:20-23

- Paul ends this letter just like he began; by pointing the Philippians to God.
- He reminds them that all things are for the glory of God. The Philippians' salvation, sanctification, and glorification were all accomplished by God through the sending of His son. It was all His will and work, and there is absolutely nothing that man can glory in, except in receiving the undeserved grace of God.



- In verse 23, Paul ends by saying, *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”*

- Paul is making clear that our walk in Christ be such that we are always experiencing or sensing the grace that we have been freely given in Christ.

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