

A study in
PHILIPPIANS



HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This 7-week study in Philippians is designed to be used by groups of any size, in any setting - anything from two friends reading the Bible together in their lunch break, to an entire Connect group meeting after dinner on a weeknight. All you need is a Bible and this booklet.

Before you begin, it might also be helpful to watch through the Bible Project's introductory video on Philippians (only 9 mins long), available on their website:

<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-philippians/>

Each study in this booklet has **three** components:

- 1) looking at the passage using the questions provided,
- 2) discussing the application questions that go with it, and
- 3) finishing with personal reflections.

For a 60-minute bible study we recommend you structure your time in the following way:

1. Reading the passage (5 mins)
2. Explaining what the passage is about (10 mins)
3. Discussing what the passage means (10 mins)
4. Discussing the application questions (25 mins)
5. Sharing your response to the passage (10 mins)

Week ONE

Philippians 1:1-11

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

In Acts 16, Paul and Silas are arrested, publicly beaten and imprisoned in Philippi. Yet this doesn't stop them singing hymns to God (verse 25). Why do you think it is that Christians can be so joyful in the midst of unpleasant circumstances? See also Romans 5:3-5 and James 1:2-4.

As Paul begins his letter to the Philippians, how does he describe his relationship with them? What is the basis for his joy?

Look again at verse 9-11. How do these verses encourage your own spiritual growth?

What does it mean for love to "abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight"?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

What is God saying to me?

What does this mean for how I live?

Does this change what I think or believe?

Is there anything I should do or stop doing?

Is there something I want to be held accountable for?

Week TWO

Philippians 1:12-26

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Paul candidly shares with the Philippians what life is like in prison while awaiting his trial before Caesar. When you face difficult or unexpected circumstances in life, how are you tempted to respond? What thoughts, feelings, or behaviours do you naturally gravitate towards?

Paul gives us an example of witnessing to Christ even in our weakest moments (verse 20). Can you share any examples you've witnessed of people rejoicing in Christ even amidst hard life circumstances? How has their witness shaped your faith?

Paul declares that "to live is Christ and to die is gain" (verse 21). Pause and think about your current situation; think about the moment that God has you in. How can you be participating in the life of Christ where you are right now? How could Jesus' life be shown through you?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

What is God saying to me?

What does this mean for how I live?

Does this change what I think or believe?

Is there anything I should do or stop doing?

Is there something I want to be held accountable for?

Week THREE

Philippians 1:27-2:11

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Do you think you conduct yourself “in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”? Why or why not?

In verses 3-4 we are encouraged to “in humility value others above yourselves”. What makes this so hard?

What attitudes or situations can cause division in relationships in your life? At home, in the workplace, in the church?

How does Christ’s model of humility in verses 6-11 motivate you towards humility?

Do you think having this same attitude Christ had is a realistic goal? Why or why not?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

What is God saying to me?

What does this mean for how I live?

Does this change what I think or believe?

Is there anything I should do or stop doing?

Is there something I want to be held accountable for?

Week FOUR

Philippians 2:12-30

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

In verses 12-13 Paul encourages us to “*work out* your salvation... For it is God who *works in* you”. Have you seen this ‘working partnership’ in your own life over the years? In what ways is our salvation an ‘every-day’ thing?

Do you think Christians today “shine among them like stars in the sky” (verse 15)? In what ways could followers of Jesus be shining brighter in Canberra, today?

Look again at the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus in verses 19-30. In what ways are they shining examples of Christians who “work out their salvation with fear and trembling”? How might their examples encourage you in your service of Jesus?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

What is God saying to me?

What does this mean for how I live?

Does this change what I think or believe?

Is there anything I should do or stop doing?

Is there something I want to be held accountable for?

Week FIVE

Philippians 3:1-21

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

In verse 7 the apostle Paul talks about counting his past achievements as loss for the sake of Christ. What are some things in your life that you've had to "count as loss" to follow Jesus?

How are you practically pursuing knowing Christ more deeply in your daily life?

What does it mean to "know" Christ? (Verse 10)

Look again at verse 13. What are some past experiences or mistakes that you struggle to let go of? How might holding onto these hinder your spiritual growth?

How does having a heavenly mindset change the way we live our lives on earth? (Verses 20-21)

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Is there something I want to be held accountable for?

Week SIX

Philippians 4:1-9

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

In verse 2, Paul pleads for two women in the Philippian church to “be of the same mind in the Lord”. Look back at Philippians 2:1-5. What might this mean for how you relate to people at church whom you find it hard to get along with? (Whether due to personality, differing opinions, or betrayed trust etc.)

The word translated as “gentleness” in verse 5 can also mean “not insisting on every right letter of law or custom; yielding; tolerant; forbearing; gracious”. What do you think it means to be ‘gentle’ today? In our workplaces, our families, our friendships?

Look again at verse 6. What things most commonly worry you? Why would presenting these things to God in prayer bring you peace?

Look at the list of things in verse 8 we are called to dwell on regularly. What might that look like in practice for you this week and into the future?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week SEVEN

Philippians 4:10-23

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Paul rejoices in the help he received from the Philippian believers (verse 10). Why was this such a source of joy to him?

Think about times when you have struggled to be content. Can you identify anything which might have led you to feel this way? (e.g. thoughts, attitudes, circumstances, events...)

Look at verses 11-13 again. What is Paul's "secret" to contentment and strength (verse 12)? How might that look for us today?

Why is it important to be reminded that God will supply our needs (verse 19)? Do you need to be reminded of this?

How does God get glory when we are generous? (Verses 17-18).

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

What is God saying to me?

What does this mean for how I live?

Does this change what I think or believe?

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Is there something I want to be held accountable for?