

PHILIPPIANS

The joy of the Lord is my strength



Philippians – Lesson 1

Philippians 1:9 “And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.”

What an amazing prayer, that we may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight through love. Philippians is a wellspring of spiritual truths that has brought countless believers new joy and peace in their lives. This book is profitable and contains many principles of life that will transform our attitude toward people and circumstances as we become a doer of the things we are about to learn.

Dear ones get ready as we begin this journey together and see what wonderful nuggets of Truth from His Word we will uncover together. The truths that we will come to understand will bring joy and great power in our lives through Christ. Let us commit ourselves to hunger and thirst after Him. Please discipline yourself in studying daily. It is very hard to do all your studying in one night, and to glean Truth from it when you are working to just get the blanks filled in. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you into gleaning all Truth and application.

Let's begin:

1. Prayer is the foundation of all study of His Word. He is the author and we need to ask Him to lead and guide us into all Truth. Studying His Word is an awe-inspiring opportunity to be like Mary, and sit at His feet and hear what He is saying to us. Always begin with prayer as you study His Word. Don't forget that prayer is simply talking to Him, having open communication with the One who loves you so much.
2. The purpose of this first lesson is to discover the context of the book of Philippians. This will lay the foundation for all the other lessons. Context rules interpretation and Scripture must always be interpreted in light of its context. We will begin with an overview (reading the entire book). This is a

good way to discover the context. Read through the book of Philippians to familiarize yourself with the whole book. This is a letter written to a person or group of people. Look in the text for the author and recipient(s), and note why it was written.

a. Author :

b. Recipients:

c. Reason for the letter:

3. Read the entire book again, and mark any reference(s) to the author. Mark the name and the pronouns (I, me, my). Then answer the following questions:

a. What is he?

b. Is there any clue as to when in his life he wrote this letter?

c. Where is he?

d. Look at the places where you marked *Paul* and *the pronouns*, and make a list of what Philippians says about him. Note that although Philippians 1:1 opens with “Paul and Timothy, bond servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints...” in the rest of the letter there is only one author, Paul. This is evident in Philippians 2:19, as well as the singular pronouns used throughout the rest of the book.

4. Read Philippians again and mark every mention of the recipients. The recipients are the people who received this letter. Mark all the pronouns such as *you*, *your*, *yourselves*, *who*, *whom* and any synonyms, like *brethren* and *beloved*. List the facts given about the recipients below:

5. What did the recipients do that might have prompted Paul to write this letter to them?

6. Read the entire book again and choose a distinctive way to mark the following key words: *Christ*, *rejoice/joy*, *mind/attitude*. Discovering key words is vital to your understanding of the meaning of a text. Observing key words and phrases is important as it helps identify the author's repeated emphasis and purpose. Keep an index card with all your keywords and how you mark each one.
 - a. List what Paul says about *rejoice/joy*.

 - b. List what Paul says about *mind/attitude*.

Have you ever heard someone say, “The joy of the Lord is my strength”? Did you wonder what they were talking about? By the end of this study you will not only know the answer, but I pray you will be saying this phrase yourself.

7. Did you notice any other key words repeated in all four chapters? If so record them here.

8. What does the author talk about the most in Philippians?

9. In Philippians the key words *Christ* and *rejoice* are the main subjects or themes of the book. In your own words, write down the main theme of the book of Philippians. Note – a theme should be based upon an objective evaluation of what the author emphasizes through repetition, and not a subjective evaluation of how the book ministers to you. You do not have to “come up” with the theme; it should always be based on repetition.

10. The beauty of studying line upon line is that you are studying out of only one source, God’s Word. This is a powerful way of studying. The Word is the source of all Truth and helps to interpret itself, line upon line. You have read this book as a whole. Now we are going to evaluate Philippians by

observing each chapter as it relates to the whole letter. We are going to identify chapter themes.

- a. Read Chapter 1, and this time look for the *theme* of the chapter. What is the chapter about? Use words from the text. You will do this for all of the chapters.

- b. Read Chapter 2. What is its theme?

- c. Read Chapter 3. What is its theme?

- d. Read Chapter 4. What is its theme?

I know this has been a labor intensive week reading the book over and over again, but it lays such a powerful foundation. Studying His Word brings great intimacy with Him as you seek Him and pray. Talk to Him as you read and answer these questions. Remember we need a plumb line in our life, and that is His Word. You will know Him deeper as you continue in the study of Philippians. It has so much to teach us about the relationship believers have with the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have a little more time this week, I would encourage you to read the book as a whole one last time.

Small Group Questions

1. What is your first impression of Philippians?
2. What is one thing you are hoping God will show you through this study?
3. How does it make you feel to be addressed as a *saint*?

Lesson 2

We have done our overview of the entire book to give us a high level look at the book of Philippians. Now we turn to a closer focus on Chapter 1. Observation of the text gives us a correct interpretation and helps us accurately apply it. We need to develop a root system anchored deep in God's Word. We can develop this deep root system by regular, faithful study of God's Word. Roots:

- are unseen – take time for solitude with the Lord to immerse yourself in God;
- help us take things in – alone with your Bible you will feed upon the truths of the Word;
- connect you to a storehouse – as you study and look into God's Word you will find a deep reservoir of divine hope and strength that will help keep you secure in all times;
- support – they help us to stand strong in the Lord, especially against the pressures of life. As we grow and tend our roots through the Word it will grow us into being *grounded in Christ*.

I'm so excited to take this journey with you. Let us pray and begin. Dear Father, guide us and direct us this week as we seek your wisdom through your Word. May the Holy Spirit reveal deep Truths and remove any obstacle that would distract us from hiding your Word in our hearts. In Jesus Name. Amen.

1. Read through Philippians Chapter 1, and mark any new key words you see. Make sure you have marked *Christ, rejoice/joy, mind/attitude, God and Holy Spirit* and their *synonyms*.

2. Make a list of what you learn about Jesus Christ. Just list the facts that are in the scriptures, remembering that we are observing the text, not interpreting it.

3. I am sure one of the first observations you made is that Paul and Timothy are apparently together while writing this letter to the saints living in Philippi. We are going to look at how Paul and Timothy became acquainted with the Philippians, where Philippi was located, what the city was like, and how Christianity first came there. I have included a map for you to look at as you read through Acts Chapter 16.
- a. Read the chapter and locate the various places on the map as they are mentioned in the passage.
 - b. How did Paul meet Timothy?
 - c. How did Paul happen to go to Philippi? Why?
 - d. Was there any record of a synagogue in Philippi? Where did the people worship?
 - e. Record the significant things that you learned about Philippi and the visit there. Include how the gospel came to Philippi.

- f. According to verse 40 where did the new church start in Philippi?
4. We see that Paul preached the gospel at Philippi. He wrote this letter to those who had believed it. From where did he write the letter?
5. What do verses 1 & 2 of Chapter 1 tell us?
- a. Paul referred to himself and Timothy as what?
- b. How did he refer to the recipients?
- c. He then mentions the _____ and _____ (vs. 1).
6. What do overseers and deacons indicate about the church?
- Ok I am going to answer this question for you – it was an established church by the time Paul wrote to them; about 10 years old.*
7. What are verses 3-8 about?
8. How does verse 6 give you hope and encouragement?

9. Read Philippians 1:3-11.

a. How do you think Paul feels about the Philippians?

b. What does he pray for them? Ask God who you should pray for, then stop and pray for them right now. If you feel led, send them an encouraging note that you prayed for them today.

While studying this and writing to you, I am drawn back to verse 3. "I thank my God every time I remember you." I do thank God for each of you, and just love that He is growing deep roots for us through His Word. Keep steadfast even in the midst of trials or distractions; the studying of His Word does not come back void.

Small Group Questions

1. What examples Paul and Silas were! How can their testimony give you encouragement? What one thing about them stood out to you this week?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:58. How does this encourage you?
3. Aren't you so thankful that Paul never gave up? What are you going through right now that you want to give up on, but you know God is calling you to be steadfast and allow Him to walk through it with you?

Let's pray for one another; we sure need each other. May we look to the Lord, look to His faithful servants Paul and Silas, and keep on keeping on!! May we learn these lessons well, for we will then experience the peace we long for, God's peace and His blessings!

Lesson 3

In today's society where we hear about being our own person and doing our own thing, we need to know what it means to be a servant of Christ. It isn't about us. It is about Him. It is intriguing to me that Paul and Timothy chose to evaluate and describe themselves as "servants" of Jesus Christ.

Paul brings up some questions for us to ponder: What does it mean to be a servant? How do you pray for others? Could you share Christ even if it meant imprisonment?

1. We have studied bond-servant before, but let's do a quick review. Read Deuteronomy 15:12-18 and answer the following questions:
 - a. How long was a man allowed to keep a slave?
 - b. When he set a slave free, what did he have to do?
 - c. Some slaves did not choose to be set free. Why?
 - d. What was the slave to do if he did not choose to leave his master?
 - e. What would the master do? What was the mark that showed he was a bond-servant?

f. These two verses are cross references for the Deuteronomy passage. Read each, and write any similarities you see that apply to our relationship with God.

i. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

ii. Galatians 1:10

g. Why do you think Paul would call himself a bond-servant of Jesus Christ?

2. At the end of last week's lesson you covered Philippians 1:3-11. Let's look more closely at what Paul says in verse 10. Using a concordance and a dictionary, do word studies on the following words from that verse.

a. Approve

b. Excellent

c. Sincere

3. Now that you have studied these words, what is Paul praying in verse 10, and how does it relate to verse 9?

4. Paul speaks of being “filled with the fruit of righteousness.” What do you think Paul means by this statement? According to his prayer, how is this filling accomplished?

5. Prayerfully read through Philippians 1:12-26.
 - a. What is Paul’s passion in this passage?

 - b. Paul’s imprisonment caused people to preach Christ for two different reasons. List them.

6. Paul said in Philippians 1:21 that to die was gain. According to the text, why did Paul look forward to death?

7. According to Philippians 1:21, 23 and 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, where does a Christian’s soul and spirit go when he dies?

8. Finish reading Philippians 1:27-30. We are going to conclude our study today with what it means to suffer for His sake as Philippians 1:29 teaches. When you suffer, what purpose does it serve? If we see a purpose it helps us endure because we know it is not in vain. Let's look at some passages on suffering that will show us the purpose in suffering. List what you learn.

a. 1 Peter 1:6-9 (watch for the words "joy" and "rejoice")

b. 2 Corinthians 4:11-18

c. Romans 8:16-18

d. John 15:18-21

e. 1 Peter 4:12-16

9. How should we respond to suffering? Read 1 Peter 2:18-25, and list what you learn about how we are to respond to suffering.

Small Group Questions

1. Do you identify yourself as a bond servant of Jesus? Do you remember when you made this decision? How did this change your life?
2. Paul talked about being absent from this body, which meant being home with the Lord. How do you feel about Paul's statement "to live is Christ and to die is gain"? Can you say this, yourself, with confidence?
3. Can you identify a time of suffering that you now see as being used by God?

Lesson 4

This week we are focusing on Chapter 2. This chapter is rich with so many nuggets of Truth. We will be looking at the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the Incarnation teaches that God became man, that Christ was God in the flesh. This always touches me deeply that God would do that us; that He would take on flesh, suffer, die, and be raised from the dead to offer us new life. He did all this because of the deep love He has for us! Let's give Him thanks and praise. *Dear Father, we thank you for so many things, the air we breathe, the beauty of creation that surrounds us, for your tender loving care of each of us and for the ability to study your Word and grow deeper in our faith. We are thankful for the people in our lives and for the Spirit that guides us. We love you, in Jesus name, Amen.*

1. Read through Philippians Chapter 2, and mark any new key words, making sure you have marked *Christ, rejoice/joy, mind/attitude, God and Holy Spirit* and their *synonyms*.
2. Ask God to open your eyes to the Truth of His Word. Read Philippians 1:27-2:4 (remember the original text of scripture was written as a letter and did not have chapters). List the commands of this passage with regard to our behavior toward others.
3. Philippians 2:5-11 is one of the greatest passages in the Word of God about the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. These seven passages are saturated with doctrine; His humility, love and obedience. He has given us an

example, a pattern, a way of life so that we might have this attitude in us which was also in Christ Jesus.

- a. From this passage, what do you learn about Jesus Christ before He became a man?
- b. What did He do in order to become (or when He became) man?
- c. What was His station in life as a man? In other words, what position did he hold as a man when He was on earth?
- d. When Jesus became a man, what was His attitude (or mind) toward God and man?
- e. How did God honor Jesus and why did He do so?

Jesus never ceased to be God. He was God in the flesh. Therefore, when Jesus emptied Himself, it did not mean that He ceased to be God. Rather, it meant that

*He laid aside His rights to be honored as God. It is humbling to realize that in no way did Jesus ever use His power or abilities as God to benefit Himself or to meet His needs. Instead, He walked in total **dependence** upon and **submission** to God the Father, seeking only His will. This is the mind of Christ, the example He gives for us to follow. This brings me to my knees in conviction and submission to all that He did for me. Let our prayer be that we can walk dependent upon Him in full submission.*

4. Read Hebrews 2:9, and 14-16. List why Christ became man.

5. Read Hebrews 2:17-18 and list another reason.

6. Read Mark 10:45 and state the two reasons you see for His coming. One of the reasons is the same as one of the reasons found in Hebrews 2:9, and 14-16.

7. Christ came to be born and then die. God gave us the gift of salvation through the precious Child in the manger. Oh Father, thank you for such a gift! In light of what you have studied this week, what do you think God means when He tells us to have the mind or attitude of Christ? Try to think about specifics.

8. The way to exaltation is humility. This is a hard truth and is contrary to the mind of the world. Let us examine some scriptures to help us understand humility and exaltation.
 - a. 1 Peter 5:6
 - b. Proverbs 15:33, 22:4, 25:6-7
 - c. Matthew 11:29, 20:26-27
 - d. James 4:6

I'm praying this week has been filled with new insight and encouragement for you. The Lord of the universe loves you and died for you. What an amazing gift! I pray that as we continue journeying through Philipians we will continue to understand what it means to have the attitude of Christ. May you find some time to just sit at His feet this week and soak in His Truths.

Small Group Questions

This week we will do something different. There are 2 questions, or should I say, application thoughts. This week it is about going deeper with Him and taking in what we learn as we apply those changes to our lives. You won't have to share your personal reflections on both the questions, but just the process and how it has changed you or your attitude.

1. Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12. This is the most descriptive prophecy about the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Read it and then take time to tell Him what it means to you personally. Worship Him for all that He has done and continues to do. Share with the group what knowing this prophecy-- realizing that Christ fulfilled this, took on flesh, suffered, and died for you-- means to you, and how it has changed your life.

2. Philippians 2:5 tells us to "have the attitude in yourselves," basically having the same attitude Christ had. What changes would you have to make in your life if you are obedient to this Scripture? This is a personal reflection for this week and the answer doesn't need to be shared in small group, but maybe the process of understanding this could be shared.

Lesson 5

This week we are going to be looking at two things: what it means in Philippians 2:12 to “work out your salvation,” and what is grumbling. Ask the Lord to give you His wisdom and understanding this week, and that He may open our hearts to all that He has for us.

1. Philippians 2:12-13 is one sentence. Understanding and obeying the truth of these verses is liberating. Let’s look at these verses.
 - a. In verse 12, who is to do the work?
 - b. In verse 13, who is doing the work?
 - c. In verse 12, what word follows “work”?
 - d. In verse 13, list the two words that follow “at work.”

*Now we see that verse 12 shows man’s responsibility in working **out** what God works **in** him in verse 13.*

- e. What is God working in us?
- f. According to whose pleasure? And what is to be our attitude toward our responsibility?

2. Look up the English transliterations of the Greek words and their definitions (you can find these in an expository dictionary, word study tool online or in a concordance). This will help you understand these verses. Write any additional insight you receive:
 - a. Work out

 - b. Fear

 - c. To will

 - d. To work

3. Why would Paul bother to tell them to work out this salvation not only in his presence but also in his absence?

4. According to Philippians 2:14-15, how are all things to be done?

5. What is the difference between “grumbling” and “disputing”? Look up the definition of these words as you did for the words in question 2.
 - a. Grumbling

b. Disputing

6. God addressed the grumbling of the Israelites in Numbers 13:16-14:38 and again Paul addressed the grumbling in Hebrews 3:17-19. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 he tells us 5 things we are not to do. List them.

7. In Philippians 2:15-16 Paul used contrasting terms in his instructions to the Philippians. Contrasts help us see differences. He wanted them to *be* different; to shine as lights in a dark world. Write out the characteristics of each of these phrases, noting how they contrast with one another.

a. Children of God

b. Children of the World

8. Paul moves on to speak of his personal suffering. What is his attitude toward suffering (verse 17)?

9. What attitude did he want his friends to have regarding his suffering (verse 18)?
10. Paul uses the phrase “the day of Christ” three times in Philippians (1:6,1:9-10, and 2:16). He also uses it in Corinthians. Look up the following cross references and record what you learn about that day.
- a. 1 Corinthians 1:7-8
 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:12-14
 - c. What is the “the day of Christ”? Or, with whom and what is it connected?
11. Paul now turns in his letter to comments and instruction about Timothy and Epaphroditus. Since Paul has been instructing us about being Christ-minded and to live above reproach, it is only naturally that these two men would come to mind as they listened to and obeyed his teaching. God continues to show us that living like Christ is possible if we pay the price of humility and

obedience by drawing upon the power of the Spirit within. Read Philippians 2:19-30 and list what you learn about these men.

a. Timothy (verses 19-24)

b. Epaphroditus (verses 25-30)

12. Can you see that Timothy and Epaphroditus had the mind of Christ, and an attitude of humility and selflessness? Does this show us how we can have it also?

When I reflect on Timothy, I think of five things about him that we can learn and apply in our own life:

- 1. Submit ourselves to God.*
- 2. Submit ourselves to one another.*
- 3. Grow in maturity in usefulness – strengthen our faith through study and prayer.*
- 4. Be “second” – harmony is produced when everyone seeks to be a servant.*
- 5. Commit to Christ – anything, anywhere, any time, and at any cost.*

Small Group Questions

1. How does your life compare to Timothy's? What are the things God is talking to you about? This is personal application again.
2. Does the world today have the same problems as in Paul's day? Do we have the same pressures as Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus?
3. What one thing stood out this week? How do humility and obedience go hand and hand?

Lesson 6

This week we will be focusing on Philippians 3:1-9. Pray this week as Philippians 1:17 says that the Lord gives you “a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

1. Read through Philippians Chapter 3. Mark each use of the following words or phrases in a distinctive way:
 - a. Beware of
 - b. Confidence in the flesh
 - c. Loss
 - d. Things
 - e. Press on

2. Make a list for each word above. *I have done the first one for you.*
 - a. Beware of - dogs, evil workers, false circumcision.
 - b. Confidence in the flesh because of _____, _____, _____, _____, _____
 - c. Loss of _____
 - d. Things, and count them _____
 - e. Press on so that _____

3. Paul warns his readers to beware of three categories of people; those whose god is their appetite, whose glory is in their shame, and who set their minds on earthly things. At the same time he says that those of the true circumcision worship in the Spirit, glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh. Philippians 3:3-4 refers to confidence in the flesh.
 - a. As you read through verses 1-6, what do you think Paul means when he says he might have “confidence even in the flesh”?

 - b. List what Paul says he could have confidence in according to the flesh.

- c. Now list modern-day parallels to each of the things Paul listed that he could have confidence in. Do you see how things today can cause a churchgoer or religious person to put their confidence in it?

4. In Philippians 3:2-3, Paul makes a play on words. He talks about “false circumcision,” warning the Philippians to beware of them. Then Paul refers to himself as being part of the “true circumcision.” What was circumcision? What was its purpose? To answer these questions, let’s look at some scripture.

- a. Genesis Chapter 17 contains the first mention of circumcision. List everything you learn about circumcision.

Circumcision was the sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham and his seed (descendants). Read Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:3-13 and answer the following questions.

- b. What was Abraham’s relationship with God when circumcision was instituted?

- c. What role or part did circumcision play?

5. Paul said that those who were really of the circumcision, true circumcision were those who put no confidence in the flesh. Many Jews had lost sight of the true purpose of circumcision and had trusted in the ceremony itself, rather than the reason for the ceremony. Read Romans 2:25-29. When was circumcision of true benefit?

6. Can you think of modern day church rituals in which people put their confidence, just as the Jews did in circumcision, and thereby miss the true significance? Why?

7. This next question may seem trivial but is key to helping you know just what your confidence is in. If you died today, and stood before God, and He asked “Why should I let you into heaven?” what would be your answer? (I realize God is not going to do that, it is a rhetorical question.)

8. In Philippians 3:7-8 Paul uses the verb “count” several times. The verb tense in Philippians 3:7 – “have counted” – is perfect tense, meaning past completed action with a result continuing to the present. In Philippians 3:8, “count” is both times in the present tense, meaning continuing action, with the indicative mood occurring at the time of writing. What did Paul say he “counted”? What do you think Paul is saying here using this verb repeatedly?

9. Paul in Philippians 3:9 talks about a “righteousness.....derived from the Law” in contrast to the “righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.” What do you think Paul means? Let’s look at a few other verses in Philippians to help us figure this out.

a. Philippians 1:9-11

b. Philippians 3:4-6

10. What kind of righteousness do you have? How do you know?

Here is a very powerful quote in regard to this section of scripture, by Warren W. Wiersbe – “Like most religious people today, Paul had enough morality to keep him out of trouble, but not enough righteousness to get him into heaven. It was not bad things that kept Paul away from Jesus – it was good things. He had to lose his religion to find salvation.”

Small Group Questions

1. What are some things that may snatch our Christian joy?
2. What is the difference between works righteousness and faith righteousness?
3. Why does the true Christian not put confidence in the flesh? What is the only “good work” that gives sinners eternal life?

Lesson 7

Paul wrote this letter of encouragement, warning, and thanks to a church that was suffering opposition. We, today, in many parts of the world, suffer the same opposition. The main theme of Philippians is to rejoice in the Lord always. In the last lesson Paul talked of his past (Philippians 3:1-11). Now we will finish up Chapter 3 and talk about his present (3:12-16) and his future (3:17-21). When we go through trials and sufferings in the valley it is hard to see or remember what it was like to be on the mountaintops. The mountaintop experience gives us an overall perspective and helps us to realize our citizenship is not here, and that we are to count all things as loss for the sake of the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus. May we hold to the joy of knowing Him, and keep our eyes focused on Him. Let us press on toward the goal to win the prize – Jesus. Pray for God to illuminate your understanding of His Word this week.

1. Read verses 10-11. What is Paul saying about knowing Christ? Let us define two words that will help us better understand what Paul is saying. Look up the definitions of:
 - a. Fellowship

 - b. Conformed

2. Paul wanted to know Christ. This was a personal relationship. He walked with Christ, prayed, obeyed, and sought to glorify His name. There was also the powerful experience of the resurrection, and the fellowship of sharing in His suffering. As we grow in knowledge of Christ and experience His power we sometimes come under the attack of the Enemy. Paul understood all this. Paul lived for Christ because he died to self. Read Romans 6:1-14 and note what we are to count dead and what we are to live for. What are we to offer to God?

3. Paul begins Philippians 3:12 with “not that I have already obtained it...” I love how Paul puts this. He was satisfied with Christ, but not satisfied with his Christian life. He wanted more. Paul didn’t compare himself to others. If so, he would have been tempted to be proud. He compared himself with himself and Jesus. Look up the following words to get a better idea of what Paul meant:

 - a. Perfect

 - b. Press on

4. I remember this statement – “A divine dissatisfaction is essential for spiritual progress.” I had to read that a couple of times but it reminded me of Psalm 42:1-2. Read that scripture, and consider what Paul’s goal was. What was he running towards? Write it out in your own words below. Is this your goal? What are your goals in life?

5. Read Philippians 3:12-16, how does this apply to your life and goals?

6. What pattern is Paul talking about in verse 17? Read 1 Corinthians 4:14-17, 11:1 and 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7 to help you understand this passage. Make sure to explain your answer.

7. Paul refers to a group of people in Philippians 3:18 as “enemies of the cross.” Make a list of their description below.

8. What do you think it means to be “enemies of the cross”? Let us look up some verses to give us insights:
 - a. Matthew 10:34-39

 - b. Luke 14:25-33

 - c. Romans 6:1-14

9. Read Philippians 3:20-21. How encouraging it is to know our citizenship is not here, and that we eagerly await Jesus. Are you eagerly awaiting Him? What does it say in verse 21 will happen upon His return?

Small Group Questions

1. Why did the things around Paul— his past or present situations— not upset him, or rob him of his joy?
2. What happens when Christians compare their “running” the race with that of other Christians?
3. Do you think Christians today put as much dedication into their Christian race as they do their jobs? Vacations? Activities?
4. How does our dual citizenship affect our lives?

Lesson 8

We have arrived at Chapter 4 of Philippians. It is one of the most applicable chapters to many of the common conflicts facing us. Paul had every excuse to worry; there was conflict in the church at Philippi, division among the believers at Rome, and he was in prison. He carried the burden of the possibility of his own death, but still Paul didn't worry. He took the time in this chapter to explain to us the secret of victory over worry.

1. Read through Chapter 4, and then read through it one more time. This chapter is life-giving, and if we can sow it in our hearts it will give us the victory we need in so many areas of our lives. Mark the following words in your Bible:
 - a. God
 - b. Paul
 - c. Have learned
 - d. Circumstances
 - e. Minds, dwell on
 - f. Joy/rejoice

2. Make a list of what you learn about Paul, God, Jesus, and the mind in this Chapter. What do you learn about joy/rejoicing in this chapter?

3. Paul address the Philippians as “whom I love and long for, my joy and crown....dear friend.” Do you understand the love Paul had for them? How does knowing someone loves you help you to listen and obey what they instruct you to do?

4. We will be taking a closer look at verses 4-7 this week. Look up the following key words/phrases in your concordance, expository dictionary, or on line bible tool and write the definitions below.
 - a. Gentle spirit

 - b. Anxious

 - c. Prayer

 - d. Supplication

 - e. Guard

5. Now list the things that God tells us to do in verses 4-7. Ask the Lord to show you any that you need to apply to your life, and reveal to you how you are to work them out. This is a very practical application of which we all need to be reminded.

6. Anxiety is something many people either deal with themselves, or have a loved one that struggles with it. We will be looking at some cross references in regard to anxiety. List any insights you find in the following verses:

a. Psalm 55:22

b. Isaiah 41:10

c. Matthew 6:24-34

d. 1 Peter 5:6-7 (In the original text these are one sentence.)

7. I love how we can tie the New Testament with the Old Testament. We will be looking at 2 Chronicles 20:1-30 to see an illustration of what we have learned. Read these verses and briefly list the chain of events as they occur.

8. Look closely at Jehoshaphat's prayer. How did the prayer begin? Upon what was his request based?

9. Compare 2 Chronicles 20:1-30 to Philippians 4:6?

10. When did the Lord set ambushes upon the enemy?

11. What is the result of Jehoshaphat's obedience? Why? Read 2 Chronicles 20:27, and 29-30.

I love 2 Chronicles 20:15: "the battle is not yours but God's." This should give us such confidence. The word anxious in Philippians 4:6 means "to be pulled in different directions," which means our hopes pull us in one direction and our fears in the opposite. The word "worry" means to strangle. Worry actually can cause physical consequences, like headaches, neck pains, ulcers, etc. Worry can affect all areas of our life. Worry is wrong thinking and wrong feeling about circumstances, people, and stuff. Worry is the greatest robber of joy. We can't just tell ourselves to quit worrying because worry is an inside job! We need to have a secured mind through prayer, petition, and thanksgiving. Write a prayer to Him, telling Him all your anxious thoughts, worries, and petitions knowing that with thanksgiving you will know the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, and will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Here are the 3 things Paul tells will help us handle worry or anxiety:

- 1. Pray – turn your attention to God.*
- 2. Supplicate – tell God specifically what your problem is, and request His help.*
- 3. Give Thanks.*

Small Group Questions

1. What kinds of things do you worry about? Has worry ever accomplished anything profitable?
2. Have you ever used singing praises like Jehoshaphat did? How did that change your thoughts and feelings about anxiety or worry?
3. How does knowing that God wins the battle, give you confidence as you pray and make your requests known?
4. Have you ever tried a gratitude journal? Try for the next week to daily write down one thing you are thankful for. Share what you are thankful for today.

Lesson 9

We are down to the last lesson. Thank you for persevering and being diligent in studying His Word for the last 8 weeks. We will be looking at Philippians 4:8-19 as we conclude our time together. Paul talks about contentment. He steadily did his work of serving and working for Christ, and didn't let the circumstances of life affect his inner peace and relationship with Christ. May this be our heart's cry for our lives in Christ. Now as we look to Him as our definer of Truth, knowing that no matter what our circumstances are we can be content with Him because He is there with us guiding us through all circumstances. This part usually revolves around our mind, so that is where we will begin. Read Philippians 4:8-9.

1. Let's do some close observation of Philippians 4:8. We are only permitted to have our mind dwell on a thought if it meets the qualifications found in this verse. List the things our mind is to dwell upon.

2. "Dwell on" is in present tense imperative, which means to do the action now in the present. It is a command. Why do you think Paul gives Christians this command?

3. Paul uses the word “practice” in verse 9, which is in the present tense imperative also, meaning we need to practice these things. The “heart” and “mind” are often interchanged. Look up the following verses and list what you learn about the heart and mind.
 - a. Proverbs 4:23

 - b. Isaiah 26:3

 - c. Matthew 15:18-20

4. Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Satan wants us to think contrary to the truth of God’s Word. List how these verses relate to your mind and how to handle your thought life.

I want to explain that contentment is not complacency or false peace based upon ignorance. The complacent believer is not concerned about others, while the contented Christian wants to share His blessings with others. Contentment is not avoiding the battle, but abiding in peace and confidence in the midst of the battle. Phil 4:11 says “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”

5. Contentment in all circumstances of life. Read Philippians 4:10-13, and ask God for all Truth to be revealed. Remember Paul lived what he believed and practiced what he preached. Do we? There are two facts that seem to surface in being content in all circumstances. First, God controls all circumstances of life, and second God loves us and promises that everything will result in good to conform us to the image of His Son. Read Romans 8:28-29 and write out how these verses can relate to your contentment.

6. How does the promise found in 1 Corinthians 10:13 compare to Philippians 4:10-13?

7. Comparing scripture with scripture, how does Philippians 2:14 relate to Philippians 4:10-13?

8. Read Hebrews 13:5-6 and see how it relates to all we have learned.

9. We now turn to “giving.” Read Philippians 4:14-19. List what you learn about giving.

10. Who is our example of giving found in 2 Corinthians 8:9 and 2 Corinthians 9:15? If you want to study further about giving, read all of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9:6-15.

11. Here are some scriptures with promises and commands. List what you learn:

a. Proverbs 3:27

b. Proverbs 11:25

c. Proverbs 25:21-22

d. Luke 3:11

e. 1 John 3:17

12. Looking at the promise in Philippians 4:19, do you think it is conditional upon the Philippians' generosity, as seen in Philippians 4:14-18?

You have completed the course and run the race with endurance. What an amazing study of His Word. May we remember some key ways we can keep joy in our lives:

- 1. Surrender your mind to the Lord always.*
- 2. Have the Holy Spirit renew your mind through the Word.*
- 3. Pray, and ask God to check your thoughts, and do inventory of your mind and thoughts daily.*
- 4. Guard your mind – be careful what you watch, hear, and do.*
- 5. JOY – Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last, along with Just Obey and Yield to HIM!*

Beloved I have truly loved studying with you. You all bring joy to my life as He transforms us daily by the renewing of our minds through His Word. Love and blessings to you all.

Small Group Questions

1. How can beginning the day with prayer and Bible reading prepare us for our day to be joy-filled in the Lord?
2. What should we do if we find we don't have peace?
3. What have you learned in studying Philippians that you feel will make a transforming difference in your Christian walk?



