**PHILIPPIANS**

Lesson 1

Acts 16:6-34, Philippians 4:4-7,12-13

**Acts 16:6-34**

**6**Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. **7**When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. **8**So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. **9**During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” **10**After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

**11**From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. **12**From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2016%3A6-34&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27496a)] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

**13**On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. **14**One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. **15**When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

**16**Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. **17**She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” **18**She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

**19**When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. **20**They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar **21**by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

**22**The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. **23**After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. **24**When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**25**About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. **26**Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. **27**The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. **28**But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

**29**The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. **30**He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

**31**They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” **32**Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. **33**At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. **34**The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

**Philippians 4:4-7**

**4**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5**Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 4:12-13**

**12**I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **13**I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

To get some background about the Philippian church, and to understand Paul’s deep care and concern for them, please read about Paul and his missionary team’s experiences in Philippi, in

Acts 16:6-34.

1. What is especially significant about how Paul got to Philippi, and got involved with the Philippians?

2. Have you ever experienced extremely clear direction from the Lord, like Paul did in his vision? If so, please explain your experience.

3. It was Paul’s custom to start his evangelistic work in any new town by going to the Jewish synagogue and reasoning with the men there. However, Philippi didn’t have a synagogue, so where did he go on the Sabbath, and what did he find there? In your own words, briefly explain what happened.

4. What happened when the demon possessed slave girl kept following Paul and the rest of his team, shouting “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved!”?

5. Have you ever been on a mission of intentionally obeying the Lord’s call and serving Him, when something really bad happened to you? Explain. How did you respond? Why do you think this happened?

6. Are you surprised by the way Paul and Silas reacted to being treated so terribly? What did they do and how do you think they were able to do that? Had you been in their sandals, how do you think you would have reacted?

7. When God sent a mighty earthquake, what happened?

8. How did God work “all things together for good” for Paul and Silas and the jailer and his household? Do you think Paul and Silas’s praise and worship in the middle of their terrible trial, played into the spiritual results – the salvation of the jailer and his household? Explain.

9. If someone asked you “What must I do to be saved?” how would you answer them?

**Philippians 4:4-7**

**4**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5**Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 4:12-13**

**12**I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **13**I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

10. Ten to twelve years after Paul and Silas were in jail in Philippi, Paul wrote to the Philippian believers from another jail in Rome. His letter to the Philippians is what we will be studying over the next several weeks. Explain how the events here could be the basis for what he said in Philippians 4:4-7 and 12-13?

11. Journal one of these passages “SOAP style”.

**PHILIPPIANS**

Lesson 2

Philippians 1:1-11

**Philippians 1:1-11**

1Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201%3A1-11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29363a)]:

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

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

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

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

1. Read Philippians 1:1-11 and explain how Paul felt about the Philippian Christians. How do you know this?

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

2. Why was Paul so confident about their future, according to verse 6? Do you have this confidence regarding your life and the lives of your Christian friends?

3. Give two or three examples of where you see God continuing his good work in your life, or in the lives of your family and friends.

4. List some of the aspects of health that you see in Paul’s relationship with the Philippians, from this passage. Can you get any ideas from these opening verses of his letter, as to how you might improve relationships you have with other believers? Please be specific.

5. Have you experienced “partnership in the Gospel” with any Christian friends? If so, jot down their first names and a phrase or two about how you have partnered together. If not, is there an area where you feel the Holy Spirit may be leading you to begin partnering with others in ministry? Explain.

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

6. In your own words, explain what Paul is praying for his friends in verses 9-11. Why does he pray this? (Hint: see the last phrase of verse 10 – verse 11.)

7. Re-read Paul’s prayer and imagine he was praying this just for you. What, if any, areas that he mentioned, do you think you need to grow in to develop spiritual maturity and not be a stumbling block to others? Explain. Would you like prayer concerning this?

8. Do you have a mentor or an encourager like Paul in your life? Are you mentoring anyone? Would you say you are a good encourager, or do you need to grow in this area? Explain.

9. Journal this passage “SOAP style”.

**PHILIPPIANS**

Lesson 3

Philippians 1:12-30

**Philippians 1:12-30**

**12**Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201%3A12-30&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29374a)] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. **13**As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201%3A12-30&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29375b)] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. **14**And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

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

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, **19**for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201%3A12-30&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29381c)] **20**I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **21**For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. **22**If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! **23**I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; **24**but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. **25**Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, **26**so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

**27**Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201%3A12-30&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29389d)] striving together as one for the faith of the gospel **28**without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. **29**For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, **30**since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

**Acts 21-28**

**21**After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. **2**We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. **3**After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. **4**We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. **5**When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. **6**After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

**7**We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. **8**Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. **9**He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

**10**After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. **11**Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’”

**12**When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. **13**Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” **14**When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.”

**15**After this, we started on our way up to Jerusalem. **16**Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

**17**When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. **18**The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. **19**Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

**20**When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. **21**They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. **22**What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, **23**so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. **24**Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. **25**As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.”

**26**The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

**27**When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, **28**shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place.”

1. Read Philippians 1:12-18. Paul had been undergoing a big trial in his life for several years. (See Acts 21-28 for details.) When he wrote his letter to the Philippians, he was living under what most of us would consider awful circumstances. Nevertheless, his letter is joyful and encouraging. Where was Paul and what was going on in his life, as he wrote this letter? How do you explain his joy?

2. Have you been through a heavy trial that made it difficult for you to have hope for the future? What were your emotions at the time, and how did you cope? Did that experience draw you closer to Jesus or push you away from him? Did you see any spiritual good come out of it? Explain. (Reminder: Anything of a personal nature that is shared in your group must be kept strictly confidential. No gossip or sharing others’ stories outside of your group, please!)

3. According to this passage, did Paul’s imprisonment slow down or accelerate the spread of the Gospel? Explain

**18**But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.

4. What does Paul mean by the phrase “What then?” or “What does it matter?” in verse 18? Why wasn’t he concerned about other people’s selfish motives, and what did he choose to do, no matter what?

5. How do you typically react when you realize that other people have impure motives for their ministry, or when you suspect that they want to make you feel bad? What do you do? What can you learn and how might you grow from Paul’s example regarding this?

**19**for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201%3A12-30&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29381c)] **20**I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **21**For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. **22**If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! **23**I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; **24**but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. **25**Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, **26**so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

**27**Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201%3A12-30&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29389d)] striving together as one for the faith of the gospel **28**without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. **29**For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, **30**since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

6. Read verses 19-30. What does Paul’s statement “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain?” mean to you? What does it imply about his life’s purpose? Explain.

7. How did Paul feel his present trials would turn out, and what would that mean for his fellow believers in Philippi?

**27**Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%201%3A12-30&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29389d)] striving together as one for the faith of the gospel **28**without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. **29**For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, **30**since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

8. What did Paul mean in verses 27-30 by the phrase “let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ?” According to these verses, what does conduct worthy of the Gospel entail?

9. Think about your life. Would you say that your conduct is worthy of the gospel of Christ? Is there anything you’d like to change, with the help of the Holy Spirit? Would you like prayer concerning this?

**29**For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him

10. Read verse 29. Does it surprise you that Paul says “for to you it has been granted, on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”? Have you ever suffered for Christ’s sake? How so? What are the most difficult circumstances you are presently facing, and how could Christ be glorified in your circumstances?

11. Journal this passage “SOAP style”.

**PHILIPPIANS**

Lesson 4

Philippians 2:1-18

**Philippians 2:1-18**

**2**Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, **2**then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. **3**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, **4**not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

**5**In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

**6**Who, being in very nature[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=philippians%202%3A1-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29398a)] God,
    did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
**7**rather, he made himself nothing
    by taking the very nature[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=philippians%202%3A1-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29399b)] of a servant,
    being made in human likeness.
**8**And being found in appearance as a man,
    he humbled himself
    by becoming obedient to death—
        even death on a cross!

**9**Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
    and gave him the name that is above every name,
**10**that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
    in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
**11**and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
    to the glory of God the Father.

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

**14**Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15**so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=philippians%202%3A1-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29407c)] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky **16**as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. **17**But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. **18**So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

1. Read Philippians 2:1-4

We know from the end of chapter 1 that the Philippian believers were suffering and had spiritual adversaries in the pagan world in which they lived. What was Paul’s advise to them, in the opening verses of chapter 2, and how did he hope they would treat each other? Be specific.

2. Think about your life and your relationships with other believers. Of all the instructions Paul gave in verses 1-4, which is the easiest for you to follow, and which is the most difficult. Explain.

3. Read verses 5-11 and try to memorize these verses. This is a key passage in Philippians and in the whole Bible. In your own words, summarize Christ’s attitude and what He gave up to be your savior.

4. Write a love note to Jesus, thanking Him for the things Paul mentions in verses 5-11, that resonate with you.

**12**Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, **13**for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. **14**Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15**so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=pHILIPPIANS%202%3A1-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29407c)] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky **16**as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. **17**But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. **18**So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

5. Read verses 12-18. What do you think Paul’s instructions in verses 12-13 mean? How do you work out your own salvation, and who helps you work it out? What does “fear and trembling” imply?

**13**for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose

6. Copy the promise of verse 13, or write it out in your own words. What does this say to you? Does this encourage or comfort you? Explain.

**14**Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15**so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=pHILIPPIANS%202%3A1-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29407c)] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky

7. What are the instructions in verse 14? Why is it so important that we follow these instructions, according to verse 15?

8. Are you a complainer? Do you sometimes find yourself in disputes with others? (If you don’t want to share your answers in your group, no pressure, but please be honest with yourself!) Think about, and jot down ways you could solve problems without complaining or disputing. Would you like prayer about this?

**16**as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

9. What else should we be doing, according to verse 16? What do you think “holding fast the world of life” means? Why was it so important to Paul that the Philippian believers did this? Are you doing this?

10. Journal this passage SOAP style.

**PHILIPPIANS**

Lesson 5

Philippians 2:19-30

**Philippians 2:19-30**

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

**25**But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. **26**For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. **27**Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. **28**Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. **29**So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, **30**because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

1. Read Philippians 2:19-24. What was the main reason Paul wanted to send Timothy to Philippi?

2. What was it about Timothy that Paul appreciated so much, and that made him such a valuable co-worker?

3. How was Timothy different from most other people, according to Paul?

4. If Paul knew you, and you had occasion to work with him in ministry, what do you think he’d say about your attitude and character qualities?

5. Paul was under house arrest in Rome, and the church in Philippi desired to send Paul a “care package.” The Philippian believers gathered supplies and sent them to Rome by the hand of one of their own, a man named Epaphroditus. How does Paul describe Epaphroditus?

6. What happened to Epaphroditus while he was with Paul, and why did Paul send him back to Philippi?

7. How is the attitude of Jesus Christ evident in the relationships among Paul, Epaphroditus and the Philippians? What evidence do you see of this?

**29**So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, **30**because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

8. What did Paul instruct the Christians to do in verses 29-30?

9. Each of us have been influenced by the example of others. Jot down the names of some unforgettable Christians who have positively influenced you in your life. What might you do to honor them?

10. Journal this passage “SOAP style”.

**PHILIPPIANS**

Lesson 6

Philippians 3:1-11

**Philippians 3:1-11**

**3**Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. **2**Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. **3**For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— **4**though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5**circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6**as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

**7**But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8**What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ **9**and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=pHILIPPIANS%203%3A1-11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29431a)] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. **10**I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11**and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

1. Read Philippians 3:1-3. Paul starts verse 1 with the word
“Finally”, indicating that perhaps he was about to end his letter with a final thought, but then the Holy Spirit prompted him to continue writing. What was the important thought he conveyed?

**2**Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. **3**For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—

**Galatians 5:6**

**6**For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

2. Read verses 2-3, and also Galatians 5:6. Paul issued a harsh warning against “Judaizers” who taught that in order for Gentiles to be saved, they first had to be circumcised and conform to Mosaic Law, then receive Christ as their Savior. The Judaizers were constantly trying to sabotage Paul’s Gospel message that salvation is by grace, through faith, and not by any human works. According to Paul, who are those of the true circumcision?

3. Why was Paul so stern in warning the Philippian Christians against the kind of man he used to be?

4. Paul’s warning about the Judaizers apparently led him to think about his past life as a Pharisee and the confidence he used to have in the flesh. In bullet points, jot down Paul’s former “religious credentials”.

5. Before you knew Jesus Christ as your Savior, what “credentials” did you rely on to make you acceptable to God and others?

**8**What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

6. Why did Paul refer to his former credentials (and yours) as “rubbish” in verse 8?

7. Paul had been at the top of the religious and academic world in his early life, before he knew Jesus. Now he was a prisoner in chains and his future was uncertain. If someone asked him “Is your relationship with Jesus worth it?” what would he have said?

8. Have you given up anything to follow Jesus? If so, please specify some of the things. Do you feel that it’s been worth it?

**10**I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11**and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

9. Describe the deep longing of Paul’s heart, according to verses 10-11. Would you say that you have the same longing? Explain.

10. Have you shared in “the fellowship of His sufferings” in your quest to walk with Jesus and know Him more? Explain. How has your longing to know Jesus more changed you?

11. Journal this passage “SOAP style”.

**PHILIPPIANS**

Lesson 7

Philippians 3:12 – 4:1

**Philippians 3:12-4:1**

**12**Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. **13**Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14**I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

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

**17**Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. **18**For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. **19**Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. **20**But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21**who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

**4**Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

1. Read Philippians 3:12-14. Paul likens a Christian’s quest to know Christ, and her walk with the Lord to a marathon. Think: If you were a track coach, giving a pep talk to a runner, what would your advice be? Jot down advice that would apply to a Christian running her life’s race.

2. What is involved in “pressing on toward the goal? What did pressing on entail in Paul’s life? What might it mean in your life?

3. What things behind you do you need to forget in order to focus on pressing on toward the goal to which Christ has called you? Do you need to forgive someone or forgive yourself in order to forget and move on? Explain. (Remember, anything of a personal nature that’s shared in our groups is strictly confidential. No gossip please!)

4. What would it mean in your life to “apprehend that for which Christ apprehended you”? Besides just being His precious daughter, what purpose do you think God had in saving you, and what goals do you think He’s called you to reach?

5. What are you doing to pursue this goal?

**15**All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

6. What is the hallmark of Christian maturity, according to verse 15?

7. What are some things that tend to side-track you, diverting your attention from single-eyed pursuit of God and His calling in your life?

**17**Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. **18**For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. **19**Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. **20**But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21**who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

8. In verses 17-21 Paul contrasts sensual, worldly believers with fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. What are some of the main differences between them?

**17**Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

9. In verse 17 Paul asks the Philippians to follow his example. He holds himself up as a pattern for them to follow. (Paul wasn’t being egotistical. Remember, he was the one who first introduced them to Jesus Christ, and he and his missionary team were probably the first Christians they ever met.) Could you hold up your life as an example for other Christians to follow? Why or why not? Would you like prayer about this?

**4**Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

10. What does Paul say in summary in 4:1? What does this mean? Looking at your life at present, would you say you’re doing this?

11. Journal this passage “SOAP style”.

**PHILIPPIANS**

Lesson 8

Philippians 4:2-9

**Philippians 4:2-9**

**2**I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. **3**Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

**4**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5**Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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

1. Read Philippians 4:2-3. As Paul begins to wrap up his letter to the Philippians, what is he concerned about? What is causing him stress, and causing stress in the church fellowship? What does he want to see? What does he mean by “be of the same mind in the Lord?”

2. Has not getting along with someone caused stress in your life? Do you think your squabbles have caused stress for others? What do you think the Lord is saying to you through these verses?

**Ephesians 6:12**

**12**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

3. Read Ephesians 6:12. Who is ultimately the real enemy, behind a lot of our fights and misunderstandings? How does knowing this change your attitude toward your adversary? What strategy can you adopt to end the fighting and attain peace and unity?

**4**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5**Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

4. Read verses 4-7 and memorize them. In verses 4-7, Paul instructs the Philippians and us to do several things, and gives one big don’t. What are the dos and what is the don’t? What is the promise in verse 7 if you obey these instructions?

5. How can your gentleness be evident to all? Can you think of a time when gentleness (yours or another person’s) changed the dynamics of a situation and brought peace to everyone involved? Explain.

**8**Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

6. Read verse 8 and memorize it. Who determines your thought life, and what you think about?

7. List in bullet form the things verse 8 tells us to dwell on in our thinking, that bring peace to us and glory to God.

8. Pastor Wayne often says “The devil is a head hunter.” Paul cautions his readers to concentrate on things that will result in right living and peace, because he knew that our actions are affected by the things our thoughts dwell on. Write about a time when you were having bad, negative thoughts, but then changed your mind, and began to think noble, virtuous thoughts instead, which resulted in positive actions that led to peace.

**9**Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

**Acts 16:6-34**

**6**Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. **7**When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. **8**So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. **9**During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” **10**After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

**11**From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. **12**From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2016%3A6-34&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27496a)] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

**13**On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. **14**One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. **15**When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

**16**Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. **17**She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” **18**She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

**19**When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. **20**They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar **21**by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

**22**The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. **23**After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. **24**When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**25**About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. **26**Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. **27**The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. **28**But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

**29**The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. **30**He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

**31**They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” **32**Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. **33**At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. **34**The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

9. Read verse 9. Again, Paul encourages his readers to follow his example as a pattern for life and faith and peace. Think back to Paul’s experiences in Philippi, recorded in Acts 16:6-34. Jot down two or three ways in which Paul exemplified faith, living in a way that glorifies God, and peace. What do you learn from him that you’d like to apply to your own life?

10. Who has been a great example and role model to you, when it comes to godly living? Jot down 2 or 3 things you’ve learned from him/her.

10. Journal this passage “SOAP style”.

**PHILIPPIANS**

Lesson 9

Philippians 4:10-23

**Philippians 4:10-23**

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

**14**Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. **15**Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; **16**for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. **17**Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. **18**I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. **19**And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

**20**To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**21**Greet all God’s people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. **22**All God’s people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar’s household.

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

1. When Epaphroditus visited Paul, who was in chains in Rome, he brought a generous love gift with him - a care package from the Christians in Philippi. How did Paul respond to their gift?

2. Think back on some of the thoughts and conversations you’ve had this week. Would you say that you are a content person? Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10, 1 being not content at all, and 10 being very content. Explain.

3. In last week’s lesson we talked about choosing what we think about. Do you think contentment is a choice? Explain.

4. Write about a time when you were content in a hard, challenging situation. How did you do that? Were you able to rejoice in the Lord? Explain.

5. Where do you see Paul’s shepherd heart clearly evidenced in these last few verses of his letter? Explain.

**19**And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

6. Memorize verse 19. Do you believe this? Really? Write about a time you were in need. What happened?

7. Who were some of the special “saints” who sent their greetings along with Paul in this letter? Think about who they were. What is significant about this?

8. Write about a time you were in difficult, challenging circumstances, yet God used you to bless or encourage someone else.

9. Jot down one or two of the most significant things you have learned from Philippians that have particularly impressed you, and that you will apply to your life.

10. Journal this passage “SOAP style”.