

WHATEVER IS...

a study in Philippians

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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.

²² Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord. This is the only way to be saved. ²³ I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind with the Lord. ²⁴ Yes, and I ask you, my true companions, help these women, since they have contended at my side in the service 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.

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 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 I am weak in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you yourselves know, I have many days of your acquaintance with the Lord, yet I have not one church shared with me.

yourself the other

⁵ In your

⁶ Who, be did not co

⁷ rather, he by taking t being made

⁸ And being f he humbled h by becoming t even death

⁹ Therefore God and gave him the

¹⁰ that at the name in heaven and on e

¹¹ and every tongue a to the glory of God

¹² Therefore, my dear presence, but now muc salvation with fear and to act in order to fulfill

¹³ Do everything without blameless and pure, "child generation." Then you will firmly to the word of life. that I did not run or labor in drink offering on the sacrifice and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁵

¹⁶ I hope in the Lord Jesus to s cheered when I receive news a show genuine concern for your intere not those of Jesus Chri him. I use as a son with hi the. I hope, therefore, to am confident in the L

¹⁷ I think it is and who i or he long. Indeed he was him only but

A STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS

In this series, ***Whatever Is...*** we will be confronted with Paul's continued invitation to think and do. Paul never separated discipleship of the mind from discipleship of the body, and he invites us to not just think better thoughts, but to become a different kind of people.

See what is true. Live what is noble. Take on what is right. Become what is pure. Love what is lovely. Practice what is admirable, and the God of Peace will be with you.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This study guide is an opportunity to engage with the book of Philippians in a unique way alongside fellow believers here at Centerpoint Church. We hope that you will write all over this book, highlight, draw, or take notes.

Each Sunday of this series, our pastors will be preaching on some of the highlights and main themes of the book of Philippians using Philippians 4:8, our memory verse for this series, as a guide. This study guide provides space for you to take sermon notes each week.

During each week of this series, we invite you to read the whole book of Philippians, taking time to reflect on the questions in the margins of each chapter and paying special attention to the way you see the characteristic for the week (*i.e. true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable*) displayed throughout the book.

On the next page, we have collected a few rhythms that you can use weekly to engage more deeply with the Scripture. We want to challenge ourselves as a congregation to make Scripture a part of our daily lives and study it in new ways.

PRAY

Ask God to open your heart to whatever He wants to show you in His Word.

READ

Read all four chapters of Philippians at your own pace each week.

ENGAGE

As you read, pay attention to the way you see the characteristic for the week (*i.e. true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable*) displayed. Pick a way to emphasize each characteristic, like highlighting or underlining in different colors, and mark examples of each week's focus as you read.

After reading each chapter, take some time to reflect on these questions.

WHO IS GOD?

- *What does this chapter reveal about God's character?*
- *What do I learn about God's heart and priorities?*

WHO AM I?

- *What attitudes or desires in my heart does this chapter expose?*
- *What does this chapter reveal about my identity in Christ?*

HOW WILL I RESPOND?

- *How can you apply what you have learned to your life?*
- *What is one thing you can share with someone else?*

DISCUSS

Answer the weekly questions throughout the chapter and discuss them with a friend, your small group, or your family.

PRAY

Based on what you have read, ask God to help you apply what you have learned and be more fully transformed by His grace.

*Who is God in Philippians?
What do we learn about God's
character, purposes, or work
in the lives of His people?*



PHILIPPIANS ONE

¹ Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi,
together with the overseers and deacons:

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.

*Paul interprets imprisonment,
opposition, suffering, and
uncertainty through the lens
of Christ. What do you see in
this chapter regarding the
difference between what is
happening to us and what
God may be doing in and
through us?*

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.

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, 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 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. 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, 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.

What seems to matter most to Paul in this chapter, and what does it say about who he is becoming?

What is one faithful step you can take in response to what you’ve read here?

*Who is Jesus in Philippians 2?
Pay particular attention to v.
5–11. What does Jesus reveal
about the character of God?*



PHILIPPIANS TWO

¹ 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 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 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

*Paul repeatedly contrasts
selfish ambition with
humility, service, and concern
for others. Where do you
recognize these competing
movements in yourself?*

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.” 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.

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.

Paul says that God is working in us “to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (v. 13)” How does God’s work in us relate to our responsibility to grow and obey?

If Philippians 2 began to shape the way you approach relationships, conflict, ambition, and service, what might change?

Paul lists the credentials and accomplishments he once trusted and then calls them loss compared with knowing Christ. What does this teach you about where identity and worth are ultimately found?

Paul says, “I want to know Christ. (v. 10)” How is knowing about Christ different from actually knowing Christ?

PHILIPPIANS THREE

¹ 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 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.

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.

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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.

Paul admits that he has not yet arrived (v. 12). What does his posture toward growth teach us about spiritual maturity?

Paul reminds the Philippians that “our citizenship is in heaven. (v. 20)” How should belonging to Christ reshape what you pursue, value, and hope for now?

What commands or invitations appear throughout Philippians 4? What do they reveal about the kind of people Paul believes followers of Jesus can become?

Notice Paul's repeated emphasis on rejoicing, gentleness, prayer, thought, practice, contentment, generosity, and peace. How can we put these things into practice in community?

PHILIPPIANS FOUR

¹ 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!

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.

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.

Paul says he has “learned the secret of being content. (v. 12)” What does this chapter teach about the source of our contentment and strength?

What is God inviting you to put into practice from Philippians 4?

WRAP-UP QUESTIONS

As you finish Philippians, return to Paul's invitation in Philippians 4:8–9.

What have you begun to see differently?

What has God revealed about who He is?

What has God revealed about who you are becoming?

What truth do you need to continue thinking about?

What practice do you need to continue living out?

Where is there currently a gap between what you know and what you are actually putting into practice?

The goal is not simply to finish Philippians.

The invitation is to allow the Spirit to use Philippians to continue forming us into the likeness of Christ.



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.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

SERMON NOTES

October 18 | Whatever is True | Philippians 1:12-26

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What enables Paul to tell the truth about his circumstances without allowing his circumstances to define the whole truth?

When Paul says, “For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain, (*Phil. 1:21*)” what is revealed to you about who Jesus has become to Paul? And perhaps more importantly, what competes with Christ for that central place in your own life?

Paul seems remarkably free from the need to control outcomes, reputation, or even his future. What has Paul come to believe that makes this kind of freedom possible?

What would it look like this week for you to practice seeing one difficult circumstance through the larger truth of what Christ may be doing in you or through you?

SERMON NOTES

October 25 / Whatever is Noble / Philippians 1:27-30

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Paul says, “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. (*Phil. 1:27*)” What qualities would make a life “worthy of the gospel”?

Notice how quickly Paul moves from individual conduct to standing firm “in the one Spirit” and striving “together. (*Phil. 1:27*)” What does this suggest about the communal nature of following Jesus?

What do people learn about Jesus from the way you respond to disagreement, pressure, opposition, or fear?

Paul connects faithful Christian living with courage in the face of opposition. Where might your behavior be shaped more by your fear than by your identity in Christ?

What is one way you can make the character of Christ more visible through the way you live among others this week?

SERMON NOTES

November 1 | Whatever is Right | Philippians 2:1-11

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before Paul tells the Philippians what to do, he reminds them of what they have already received in Christ: encouragement, love, fellowship, tenderness, and compassion (*Phil. 2:1*). Why do you think identity and grace come before instruction?

Paul identifies “selfish ambition” and “vain conceit” as threats to Christian community (*Phil. 2:3*). Where are you most tempted to protect your position, prove your importance, or put your interests ahead of someone else’s?

Read verses 5–8 slowly. What does the humility of Jesus actually look like? How is biblical humility different from thinking less of yourself?

Jesus does not cling to status, privilege, or power. What are you tempted to cling to that makes self-giving love difficult?

What relationship or situation is currently inviting you to practice the mind of Christ?

SERMON NOTES

November 8 / Whatever is Pure / Philippians 3:1-14

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Paul once found identity and confidence in ancestry, achievement, religious performance, and reputation. What, other than Christ, are you most tempted to build your identity on?

Paul calls everything else “loss” compared with the surpassing worth of knowing Christ (*Phil. 3:7-8*). What does this reveal about the purity of his desire?

Paul wants to know Christ in resurrection power and in suffering (*Phil. 3:10-11*). What does this reveal about the kind of relationship with Jesus Paul desires?

What competes most strongly for your affection, attention, or allegiance right now? How might those competing loves shape the person you are becoming?

Paul speaks of “forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. (*Phil. 3:13*)” What might need to be released, reordered, or left behind so that you can pursue Christ with greater freedom and focus?

SERMON NOTES

November 15 | Whatever is Lovely | Philippians 2:12-18

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Paul says, “Continue to work out your salvation, (*Phil 2:12*)” and then reminds us that “it is God who works in you. (*Phil. 2:13*)” What does this relationship between God’s work and our response teach us about spiritual formation?

Paul specifically warns against “grumbling or arguing. (*Phil 2:14*)” Why do you think the way we speak and respond to one another matters so much to the beauty of our witness?

Paul describes followers of Jesus as people who “shine among them like stars in the sky. (*Phil. 2:15*)” What makes a Christ-shaped life beautiful or compelling in the world around us?

Where might your reactions, attitudes, or habits currently obscure the beauty of Christ rather than reveal it?

What is one way you could practice a more lovely, Christ-shaped presence this week—in your home, workplace, church, or relationships?

SERMON NOTES

November 22 | Whatever is Admirable | Philippians 4:2-9, 3:15-21

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Philippians 4 begins with a real disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche. Why do you think Paul connects reconciliation, rejoicing, gentleness, prayer, thought, and practice so closely?

Paul does not simply say, “Stop worrying.” He redirects anxiety toward prayer, gratitude, and trust (*Phil. 4:6*). What does this teach us about how transformation actually happens?

Read the list in Philippians 4:8 slowly. Which quality—true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy—most challenges the way you are currently thinking? And why?

Paul says, “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. (*Phil. 4:9*)” Where is there currently a gap between what you know and what you are actually putting into practice?

Philippians 3:17 invites believers to pay attention to people whose lives demonstrate the way of Jesus. Who has shown you what practiced faith looks like? What could you begin practicing that someone else might eventually see in you?

