



COMPLETE STUDY GUIDE · LETTER · 4 CHAPTERS · 4 SESSIONS

The Letter to the Philippians

Joy · Humility · Peace in Christ

“Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, ‘Rejoice!’”

PHILIPPIANS 4:4



Four sessions

Leader's guide

Answer guide

Full text of Philippians (WEB)

SIMPLE. ACCESSIBLE. TRANSFORMATIONAL.



CLEAR PATH BIBLE STUDIES

The Letter to the Philippians

Complete Study Guide

Joy · Humility · Peace in Christ

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- 1** Four sessions with every discussion, reflection, and recall question from the online study, and room to write.
- 2** Reference pages: the five movements, major themes, key passages, key people, and all 4 chapters at a glance.
- 3** Leader's guide with the group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide for every discussion question, and the recall answer key.
- 4** The full text of Philippians in the World English Bible, so nothing else is needed to do the study.

FIRST EDITION · OCTOBER 2026

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The online study, free and with no sign-in: clearpathbiblestudies.com/studies/philippians

THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

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START HERE

How to use this guide

A complete, four-session walk through the Letter to the Philippians — built for small groups, Sunday school, and personal study. Read together, observe, interpret, and leave each session with one clear thing to live out.

EVERY SESSION FOLLOWS ONE RHYTHM

1

Read together

The session's chapters and key passages. The text is in Part Four.

2

Observe

What does the passage say? Who is there, and what happens?

3

Interpret

What does it show about Jesus? What did the author want us to see?

4

Apply this week

What will I do with it this week? One thing, lived out.

On your own

A Participant Guide gives you a daily reading rhythm, reflection questions, a memory verse, and one action step to live out.

- Write your answers. Thinking on paper is slower, and it lasts.
- Finish with the recall page: answer from memory first, then check the text.

In a group

Each session has a 60-minute Facilitator Guide for 5–12 people — read together, discuss, and apply, with leader notes built in.

- The leader uses Part Three: leader notes, an answer guide, and the recall answer key.
- Participants need Parts One, Two, and Four.

Of Part Five, pages 52 and 55–59 are for everyone, and pages 53–54 are for leaders.

PRINTING FOR A GROUP

Participant pages (sessions and reference): pages 8–30. Leader's guide: pages 31–44. The text of Philippians: pages 45–49. Page 50, Four verses to carry, is for everyone. Part Five: pages 51–59.

My progress
☐ 1 To Live Is Christ

☐ 3 Pressing On to Know Christ

☐ 2 Having the Mind of Christ

☐ 4 Rejoice in the Lord Always

WHY PHILIPPIANS

Why read this letter

Paul's letter about joy, humility, and peace he holds to even in chains.

01 The letter of joy

Paul writes "rejoice" again and again, while in chains (1:13). Philippians shows a joy that doesn't depend on circumstances.

02 The mind of Christ

In 2:5–11 Paul sets out Christ's humility as the pattern for how we are to treat one another.

03 Knowing Christ above all

Paul counts everything as loss compared to knowing Jesus. This letter reorders what a life is actually worth.

04 Peace and contentment

"The peace of God" and a learned contentment — Philippians shows Paul learning contentment in plenty and in want (4:11–12).

"Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, 'Rejoice!'"

PHILIPPIANS 4:4 · WEB

ORIENTATION

Before you begin

A quick orientation to Philippians — who wrote it, when, for whom, and the threads to watch for as you read.

AUTHOR	Background Paul, with Timothy named in the greeting (1:1), writing in chains (1:13) to a church he loved deeply.
DATE	When It Was Written The letter does not state its date or place. Paul is in chains (1:13; 4:22); Rome, Ephesus and Caesarea have all been proposed, so dates range from the mid-50s to about AD 62.
AUDIENCE	Who It Was Written For The church at Philippi — saints in Christ Jesus with overseers and servants (1:1), and a generous partner in the gospel (1:5; 4:15–16).
OCCASION	Why Paul Wrote To update the Philippians on his situation, urge unity, humility, and joy in Christ, and write of their gift (4:10–18).
TO NE	How It Feels Warm, affectionate, and joyful. Paul writes of how he longs for them “in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus” (1:8).
KEY WORD	The Word That Recurs “Joy” and “rejoice” appear more than a dozen times — a joy rooted in Christ, not circumstances.
CHRIST	Jesus in Philippians The humble, exalted Lord (2:5–11) who emptied Himself, obeyed to the cross, and is now given the name above every name.
DISCIPLESHIP	What It Calls Us To Live worthy of the gospel, count others better than yourselves, press on toward Christ, rejoice in the Lord always, and be content.

STRUCTURE

Four chapters, four sessions

Ch 1 partnership and to-live-is-Christ; ch 2 the mind of Christ; ch 3 knowing Christ above all; ch 4 rejoice and be content.

Partnership and Joy in the Gospel Philippians 1	The Mind of Christ Philippians 2	Knowing Christ Above All Philippians 3	Rejoice, Pray, and Be Content Philippians 4
1	2	3	4

THE FOUR SESSIONS

Your study plan

EITHER WAY

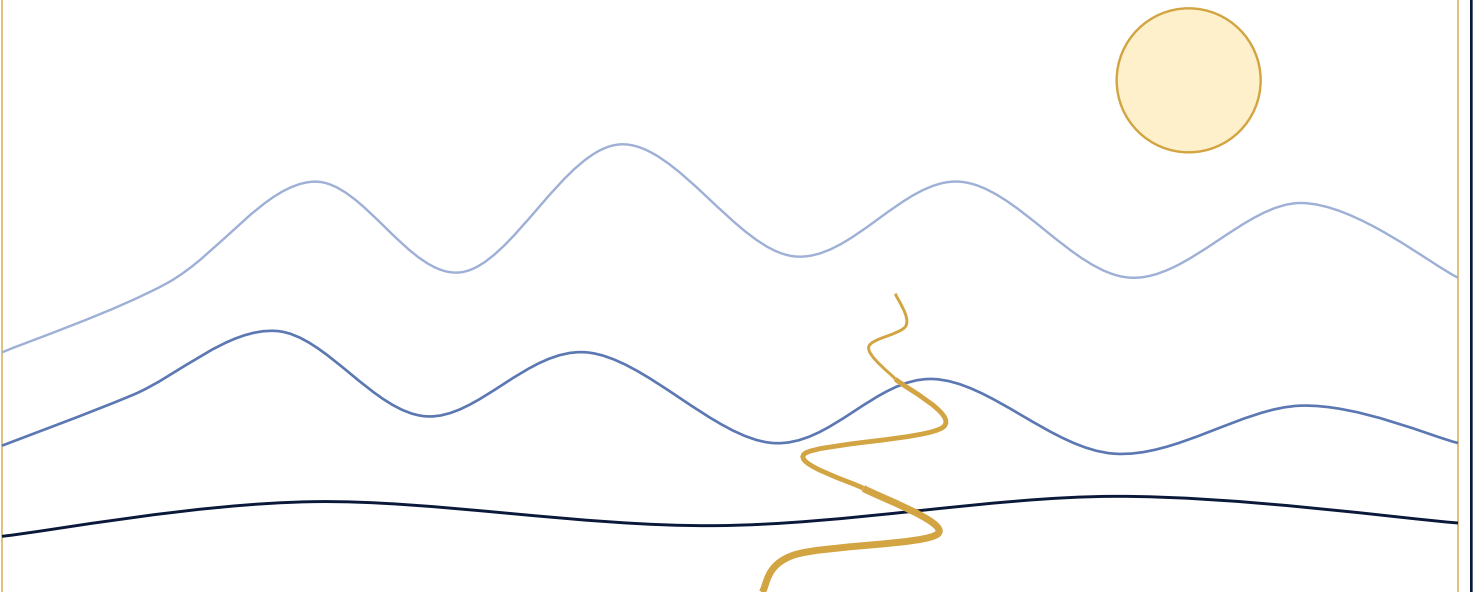
Four sessions carry you through all 4 chapters of Philippians — from joy in chains to the mind of Christ, the prize ahead, and the peace that guards your hearts.

	SESSION	READ	MEMORY VERSE	SESSION PAGE	LEADER PAGE	TEXT PAGE
1	To Live Is Christ In his chains Paul rejoices that what has happened to him advances the gospel — for him, to live is Christ and to die is gain.	Philippians 1	Philippians 1:21	9	33	46
2	Having the Mind of Christ Christ humbled Himself to death on a cross and was exalted; we are called to share His mind and shine as lights.	Philippians 2	Philippians 2:5	13	36	47
3	Pressing On to Know Christ Paul counts every gain as loss to know Christ, pressing on toward the goal and the prize of God's high calling.	Philippians 3	Philippians 3:8	17	39	48
4	Rejoice in the Lord Always Rejoice in the Lord always. In nothing be anxious, but make requests known to God with thanksgiving, and the peace of God will guard hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus. Paul has learned to be content.	Philippians 4	Philippians 4:6–7	21	42	49

PART ONE

The Four Sessions

Read, discuss, reflect, and recall. One session a week carries you through all 4 chapters.



SESSION 1 OF 4

To Live Is Christ

Read **Philippians 1** • text on pages 46–47

1

Paul writes in chains with overflowing joy and affection, thanking God for the Philippians' partnership in the gospel. He is confident God will finish what He began, and declares that for him, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Even in chains, Paul radiates joy and gratitude. He prays for the church's growing love, reframes his chains as advancing the gospel, and models a life so centered on Christ that he can face life or death with Christ magnified (1:20). He calls the Philippians to live worthy of the gospel and stand firm together.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See joy that rises above circumstances
- ☐ Grasp Paul's confidence in God's finishing work
- ☐ Hear the call to live worthy of the gospel

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Philippians 1:21	Memory verse
Philippians 1	Chapter 1

MEMORY VERSE

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

PHILIPPIANS 1:21 • WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Philippians 1 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ **Day 1 Philippians 1:1–11** — Paul's greeting and his joyful, confident prayer for the church he loves.
- ☐ **Day 2 Philippians 1:12–18** — Paul's chains turn out to advance the gospel (1:12–14).
- ☐ **Day 3 Philippians 1:19–26** — "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" — Paul weighs life and death.
- ☐ **Day 4 Philippians 1:27–30** — Live worthy of the gospel, standing firm in one spirit.
- ☐ **Day 5 Philippians 1 (whole)** — Read the chapter again and name the source of Paul's joy.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What strikes you about Paul's attitude toward his chains (1:12–18)?

2 What does 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain' mean for how we measure a life?

3 What would a way of life "worthy of the Good News" look like in your daily setting (1:27)?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

- ① Where do you need joy that doesn't depend on your circumstances?

- ② Has anything hard in your life turned out differently than you feared? You do not have to answer.

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Each day this week, name one thing you're thankful for in your life with Christ — even amid difficulty.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for the good work You have begun in us. Teach me to say 'to live is Christ.' Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1 How does Paul say what has happened to him in his chains has affected the gospel?

(A) It has silenced his witness (C) It has ended his ministry	(B) It has served to advance the gospel (D) It has discouraged the believers
--	---
- 2 What does Paul say he is confident God will do for the Philippians?

(A) Make them wealthy (C) Remove everyone who opposes them	(B) Spare them all suffering (D) Complete the good work He began in them
---	---
- 3 In 1:21 Paul writes:

(A) 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (C) 'For to live is gain, to die is loss'	(B) 'For to live is comfort, to die is rest' (D) 'For to live is duty, to die is reward'
--	---
- 4 What does Paul urge in 1:27, and what does he want to hear about the Philippians?

- 5 Without looking back, write Philippians 1:21.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 35.

SESSION 2 OF 4

Having the Mind of Christ

Read **Philippians 2** · text on pages 47–48

2

Paul pleads for unity and humility, then lifts up the example of Christ, who emptied Himself, took the form of a servant, and obeyed to the cross – and whom God exalted above all. We are to have this same mind.

Paul calls for one mind and one love, then grounds it in Christ's humility and exaltation (2:5–11). Humility here is the mind of Christ (2:5). Paul then tells of Timothy, who truly cares for them, and Epaphroditus, who risked his life for the work of Christ (2:19–30).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Understand humility as the mind of Christ
- ☐ Trace Christ's descent and exaltation (2:5–11)
- ☐ See self-giving love modeled in real people

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Philippians 2:5 | Memory verse |
| Philippians 2 | Chapter 2 |

MEMORY VERSE

“Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:5 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read **Philippians 2** slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ **Day 1 Philippians 2:1–4** — Be united — in humility, count others better than yourselves.
- ☐ **Day 2 Philippians 2:5–11** — Christ humbled Himself, and God exalted Him.
- ☐ **Day 3 Philippians 2:12–18** — “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” for “it is God who works in you” (2:12–13). Shine as lights without complaining.
- ☐ **Day 4 Philippians 2:19–30** — Timothy, who truly cares, and Epaphroditus, who risked his life, are models of selfless service.
- ☐ **Day 5 Philippians 2 (whole)** — Read again and ask where Christ's mind is reshaping yours.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What does Paul mean by counting others better than yourself (2:3)?

2 Walk through Christ's humility and exaltation in 2:5–11 — what stands out?

3 How do Timothy and Epaphroditus illustrate the mind of Christ?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where might you serve someone this week?

② Whose interests could you look to this week, as well as your own?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Do one concrete act of service this week — quietly, expecting nothing in return.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You humbled Yourself for me. Form Your humble mind in me toward others. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 In calling for unity, what attitude does Paul tell the Philippians to have toward one another?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ (A) Keep to yourselves | ☐ (B) Defend your own rights first |
| ☐ (C) Count others better than yourselves | ☐ (D) Compete for honor |

2 According to 2:6–7, what did Christ, existing in the form of God, do?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ (A) He demanded worship | ☐ (B) He avoided suffering |
| ☐ (C) He remained distant | ☐ (D) He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant |

3 Because of Christ's obedience, what has God done, according to 2:9–11?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ (A) Hidden Him away | ☐ (B) Highly exalted Him and given Him the name above every name |
| ☐ (C) Made Him an angel | ☐ (D) Left Him in the grave |

4 In whom was the mind that Paul tells believers to have (2:5)?

5 Without looking back, write Philippians 2:5.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 38.

SESSION 3 OF 4

Pressing On to Know Christ

Read **Philippians 3** · text on page 48

3

Paul lists his impressive credentials — then counts them all as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. Forgetting what lies behind, he presses on toward the goal: the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul reorders the worth of everything. His religious résumé, once his confidence, is refuse next to knowing Jesus. He models a forward-leaning faith, stretching toward the goal (3:13–14). Our citizenship is in heaven, and we await a Savior.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Re-rank what we count as gain beneath knowing Christ
- ☐ Embrace a forward-pressing faith
- ☐ Remember our citizenship is in heaven

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Philippians 3:8 | Memory verse |
| Philippians 3 | Chapter 3 |

MEMORY VERSE

“Yes most certainly, and I count all things to be a loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.”

PHILIPPIANS 3:8 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read **Philippians 3** slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ **Day 1 Philippians 3:1–6** — Paul’s résumé — his reasons for confidence in the flesh.
- ☐ **Day 2 Philippians 3:7–9** — All of it counted as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ.
- ☐ **Day 3 Philippians 3:10–11** — To know Christ, the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.
- ☐ **Day 4 Philippians 3:12–16** — Press on toward the goal; forget what is behind.
- ☐ **Day 5 Philippians 3:17–21** — Our citizenship is in heaven — we await a Savior from there.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1** Why does Paul call his impressive credentials 'a loss' and 'refuse' (3:7–8)?

- 2** What does Paul mean by 'forgetting the things which are behind' as he presses on (3:13–14)?

- 3** How does heavenly citizenship change how we live now (3:20–21)?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

- ① What, if anything, have you leaned on besides Christ, and how does it compare now?

- ② Is there anything behind you that you would like to hand over to God so you can press on? Keep it private if you prefer.

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

If something behind you holds you back, name it privately, and take one concrete step forward toward Christ this week.

PRAYER

*Lord, may I count all things loss to gain You.
Help me press on toward Your call. Amen.*

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 What does Paul now consider his impressive religious credentials to be?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ A His greatest treasure | ☐ B A reason to boast |
| ☐ C Loss, even refuse, compared to knowing Christ | ☐ D Proof of his salvation |

2 What does Paul do with what lies behind as he pursues Christ?

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A Forgets it and strains toward what is ahead | ☐ B Dwells on past failures |
| ☐ C Boasts in past success | ☐ D Gives up the race |

3 Where does Paul say the believer's citizenship is?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ A In Macedonia | ☐ B In Jerusalem |
| ☐ C In heaven | ☐ D In Philippi |

4 What does Paul say he presses on toward (3:14)?

5 Without looking back, write Philippians 3:8.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 41.

SESSION 4 OF 4

Rejoice in the Lord Always

Read **Philippians 4** · text on page 49

4

Paul urges two believers to think the same way in the Lord, then gives the letter's closing calls: rejoice in the Lord always, don't be anxious but pray with thanksgiving, think on what is good, and learn contentment through the One who strengthens us.

Chapter 4 brings the letter to a close. Paul urges like-mindedness and constant joy in the Lord, replaces anxiety with thankful prayer, and promises the guarding peace of God. He has learned contentment in plenty and want, strengthened by Christ, and commends the Philippians for sharing with him in giving and receiving.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Replace anxiety with thankful prayer
- ☐ Learn contentment in plenty and in want
- ☐ Practice dwelling on what is true and good

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Philippians 4:6–7 Memory verse**Philippians 4** Chapter 4

MEMORY VERSE

“In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read **Philippians 4** slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ **Day 1 Philippians 4:1–3** — Stand firm; a plea for two co-workers to think the same way in the Lord.
- ☐ **Day 2 Philippians 4:4–7** — Rejoice in the Lord always; the peace of God guards hearts and thoughts.
- ☐ **Day 3 Philippians 4:8–9** — Think on what is true, honorable, and lovely — and practice it.
- ☐ **Day 4 Philippians 4:10–13** — Contentment in plenty and in want — “I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me” (4:13), said about being content.
- ☐ **Day 5 Philippians 4:14–23** — Partnership in giving; God will supply every need of theirs (4:19) — final greetings.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1** What does Paul say to do with our requests, and what does he say follows (4:6–7)?

- 2** What is the secret of contentment Paul says he has learned (4:11–13)?

- 3** How does dwelling on ‘whatever things are true ... whatever things are lovely’ shape a life (4:8)?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Is there a worry you could turn into thankful prayer this week?

② Where do you most need to learn contentment — in plenty, or in want?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Each day this week, take one anxiety to God in prayer with thanksgiving before carrying it yourself.

PRAYER

*Father, I bring You my anxieties with thanks.
Guard my heart with Your peace, and teach
me contentment in Christ. Amen.*

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1 What does Paul repeatedly command in 4:4?**
 - ☐ (A) Rejoice in the Lord always
 - ☐ (B) Work harder
 - ☐ (C) Stay silent
 - ☐ (D) Wait it out
- 2 Instead of being anxious, what does Paul tell them to do?**
 - ☐ (A) Keep it to yourself
 - ☐ (B) Handle it alone
 - ☐ (C) Ignore the problem
 - ☐ (D) Pray with thanksgiving, making requests known to God
- 3 What has Paul learned, whatever his circumstances (4:11–12)?**
 - ☐ (A) To demand more
 - ☐ (B) To be content
 - ☐ (C) To complain
 - ☐ (D) To give up
- 4 What does Paul say will guard hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (4:7)?**

- 5 Without looking back, write Philippians 4:6–7.**

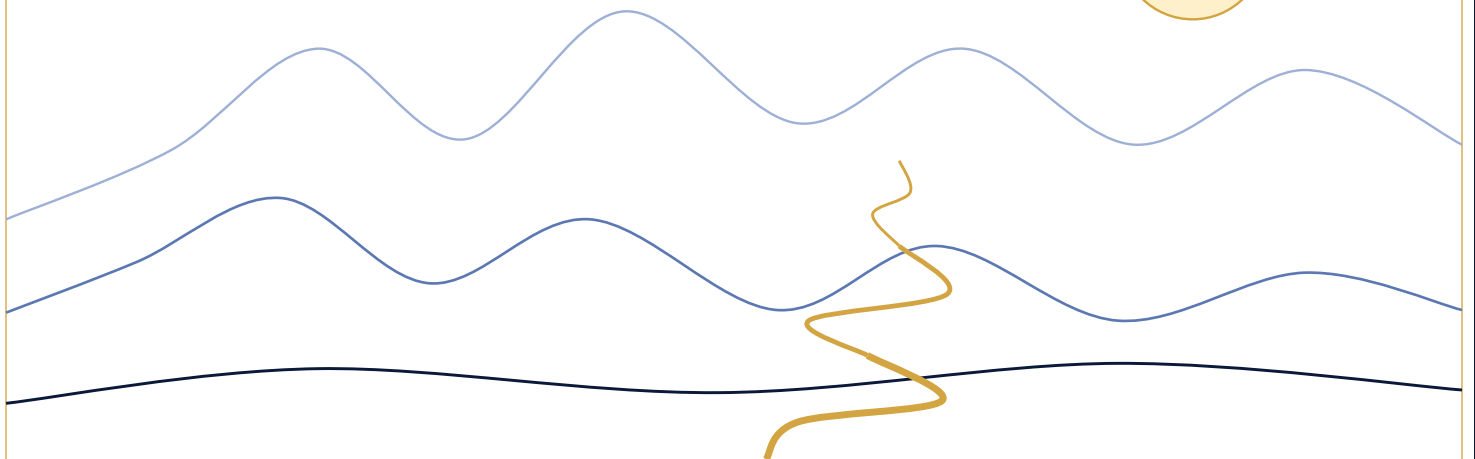
NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 44.

PART TWO

Reference

The movements, the themes, the passages, the people, and every chapter at a glance.



KEY MOVEMENTS · PHILIPPIANS

Five movements of the letter

Philippians is a letter, not a story — so its turning points are movements of Paul's heart and argument: from joy in chains to the mind of Christ to the peace that guards us.

1	To Live Is Christ Philippians 1:21	IN THE LETTER	In his chains, Paul says that to live is Christ and to die is gain.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	Paul expects Christ to be magnified in his body “whether by life or by death” (1:20), because for him to live is Christ and to die is gain (1:21).
		FOR YOU	Ask what your life is really ‘about.’ What would it mean for Christ to be your living?
2	The Mind of Christ Philippians 2:5–11	IN THE LETTER	Paul holds up Christ, who emptied Himself, took the form of a servant, and obeyed even to the cross.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	Christ's path was downward, humbling Himself and becoming obedient to the point of death. God then highly exalted Him (2:8–9).
		FOR YOU	In one relationship this week, look also to the other person's interests (2:4), and do nothing from rivalry or conceit (2:3).
3	Everything as Loss Philippians 3:7–8	IN THE LETTER	Paul counts his impressive résumé as refuse compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	Knowing Jesus is worth more than every achievement, status, or security we could gain.
		FOR YOU	Ask whether any achievement or security has taken the place of Christ for you. Consider what it would mean to count it as loss next to knowing Him.
4	Pressing On Philippians 3:13–14	IN THE LETTER	Forgetting what lies behind, Paul stretches forward, pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	Paul describes his own life as a forward pursuit. He does not regard himself as having already taken hold (3:13), and he presses on toward the goal (3:14).
		FOR YOU	If something from the past holds you back, take one concrete step forward toward Christ this week.
5	The Peace of God Philippians 4:6–7	IN THE LETTER	Instead of anxiety, Paul says pray with thanksgiving, and God's peace will guard your hearts and your thoughts.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	Paul says the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (4:7).
		FOR YOU	Turn one specific worry into a prayer of thanksgiving today, and ask for God's guarding peace.

“He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” — Philippians 1:6

MAJOR THEMES

The threads running through Philippians

The ideas Paul returns to again and again — each one a window on who Jesus is.

01 Joy in the Lord**Philippians 4:4**

Joy runs through Philippians. Paul, in chains, commands the church to rejoice in the Lord always.

02 The humility of Christ**Philippians 2:5–8**

Christ emptied Himself and obeyed to the cross. His downward path is the pattern for our relationships.

03 Knowing Christ above all**Philippians 3:8**

Paul counts every gain as loss next to the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus as Lord.

04 Partnership in the gospel**Philippians 1:5**

Paul thanks God for the Philippians' shared work in the gospel from the first day until now.

05 Unity and humility**Philippians 2:2–3**

Paul pleads for one mind and one love, counting others better than ourselves.

06 Pressing on toward the goal**Philippians 3:14**

Forgetting what lies behind, the believer stretches forward to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

07 Peace through prayer**Philippians 4:6–7**

In place of anxiety, prayer with thanksgiving brings the peace of God that guards hearts and thoughts.

08 Contentment in Christ**Philippians 4:11–13**

Paul has learned to be content in plenty or want, strengthened by the One who empowers him.

09 Living worthy of the gospel**Philippians 1:27**

Paul calls the church to a way of life worthy of the Good News of Christ.

10 God's faithful work in us**Philippians 1:6**

Paul is confident "that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

KEY PASSAGES

Passages worth knowing well

Ten key texts from Philippians. Read them, mark them, return to them.

Philippians 1:6	A Good Work Completed Paul is confident God will complete the good work He began in the Philippians.
Philippians 1:21	To Live Is Christ Paul's own statement about his life and death: 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'
Philippians 1:27	Worthy of the Gospel A call to live in a way worthy of the Good News.
Philippians 2:3–4	Count Others Better Humility that looks to the interests of others, not just our own.
Philippians 2:5–11	Christ Humbled and Exalted Christ's humility in emptying Himself, and God's exalting Him and giving Him the name above every name.
Philippians 3:8	Surpassing Worth Knowing Christ outweighs every gain Paul once prized.
Philippians 3:13–14	Pressing On Forgetting the past, stretching toward the high calling in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:4	Rejoice Always "Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, 'Rejoice!'"
Philippians 4:6–7	The Peace of God Prayer with thanksgiving in place of anxiety, and peace that guards hearts and thoughts.
Philippians 4:13	Strength in Christ 'I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me' — in the context of contentment.

KEY PEOPLE

The faces of Philippians

The Letter to the Philippians is written among real people — the servant of Christ in chains, the co-workers who stood with him, and the church he loved. Here are the ones worth knowing.

Paul

A servant of Jesus Christ (1:1) who writes from his bonds with joy and deep affection for the Philippians.

Timothy

Paul's companion in the Good News (2:22), whom Paul hopes to send to the Philippians as one who truly cares for them (2:19–23).

Epaphroditus

The Philippians' messenger (WEB: "apostle") and servant of Paul's need (2:25), who was sick nearly to death and risked his life for the work of Christ (2:27, 30). Paul sends him back and asks that he be held in honor (2:28–30).

Euodia and Syntyche

Two women Paul urges to think the same way in the Lord. They labored with him in the Good News (4:2–3).

The Philippian church

Paul's beloved partners in the gospel, whose gifts reached him more than once (1:5; 4:15–16).

Christ Jesus

The humbled and exalted Lord at the center of the letter — the believer's life, gain, and goal.

ALL 4 CHAPTERS · A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER JOURNEY

The Library

Read any chapter in full in the World English Bible. Each session's questions are in Part One.

PARTNERSHIP AND JOY IN THE GOSPEL

1 To Live Is Christ

THE MIND OF CHRIST

2 Having the Mind of Christ

KNOWING CHRIST ABOVE ALL

3 Pressing On to Know Christ

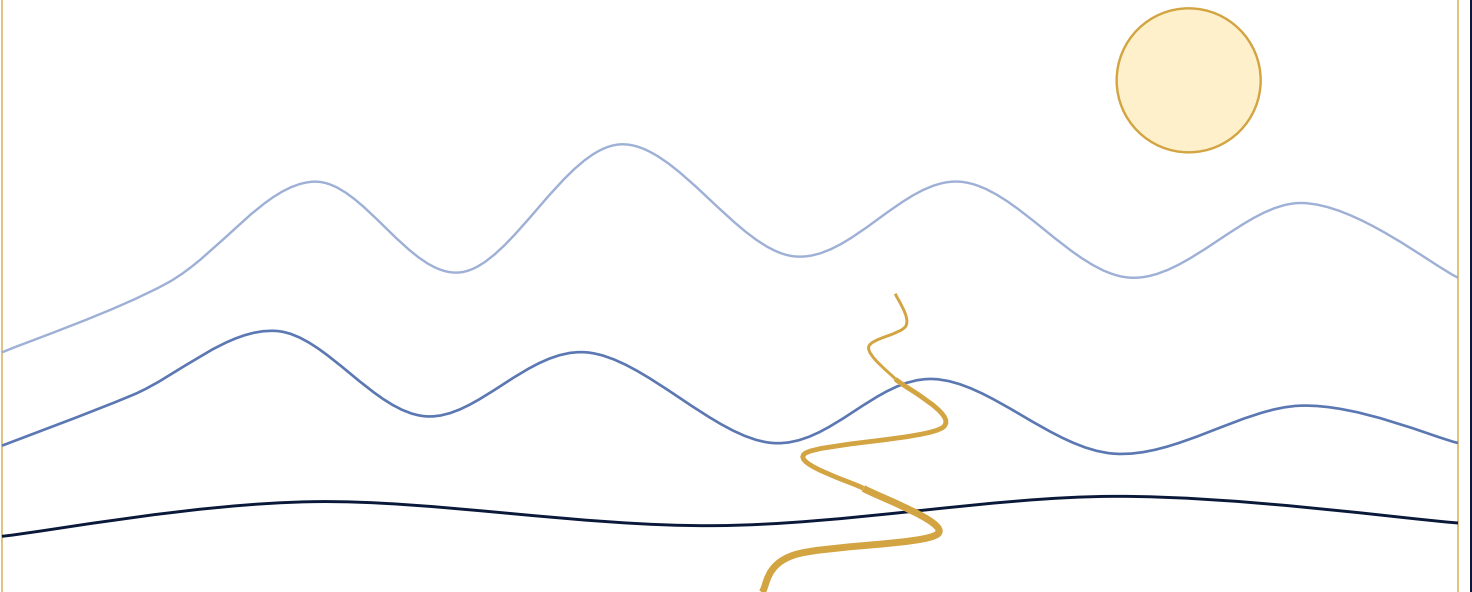
REJOICE, PRAY, AND BE CONTENT

4 Rejoice in the Lord Always

PART THREE

Leader's Guide and Answer Guide

Group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide, and the recall answer key for every session.



LEADER'S GUIDE

Leading this study

You do not need to be a Bible teacher to lead this study. You need to have read the passage, to ask the questions, and to leave room for people to answer them.

Before you meet

- Read the session's chapters twice, once straight through and once slowly.
- Read that session's leader page. Note the things to watch for.
- Decide which questions matter most for your group. You will rarely finish all of them, and that is fine.
- Pray for the people who will be in the room, by name.

In the room

- Read Scripture aloud before discussing it. Let the text speak first.
- Ask the question, then wait. Silence usually means people are thinking.
- When an answer drifts, ask, "Where do you see that in the passage?"
- Keep to the time plan loosely. Protect the closing minutes for reflection and prayer.

How to read a leader page

Group leader notes	How to open, the places where this session commonly goes off course, and where the session should land.
Timed plan	A suggested use of the hour, drawn to scale.
Answer guide	What the passage supports for each discussion question, with verse references, and a follow-up question to use if the group stalls.
Reflection notes	Reflection questions are personal and have no answer to check. Each has a short note on what it is for and how to lead it.
Recall answer key	The recall practice answers.

USING THE ANSWER GUIDE

The answer guide is there so you can lead with confidence. It is not a script to read aloud. Let the group do the finding; use the guide to confirm, to fill a gap, or to bring the conversation back to the text. Questions marked **PERSONAL** have no single right answer. For those, the guide gives what the passage offers and what a good answer tends to include.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 1 OF 4

To Live Is Christ

Philippians 1 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 9–12 · memory verse Philippians 1:21

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “Who has stood with you through a hard season?” Share only what you wish to. Then read how Paul, in chains, sees what has happened to him (1:12).

WATCH FOR

1. Paul's joy being heard as denial. He isn't pretending his chains are fine; he's weighing them against the gospel advancing (1:12). Keep the first discussion question on how he reframes it.
2. “To live is Christ, and to die is gain” being heard as a wish to die. It is first about what a life is measured by. Paul calls being with Christ “far better” (1:23) yet stays for others (1:24). If anyone says they want to die, see page 58.

PUSH TOWARD

The reflection question — where do you need joy that doesn't depend on circumstances — leads to the “one thing”: name one thing you're thankful for in your life with Christ each day this week, even amid difficulty.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 58.

5	15	15	10	15
Open	Chains and the gospel	To live is Christ	Worthy of the gospel	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What strikes you about Paul's attitude toward his chains (1:12–18)? PERSONAL

There is no single right answer. Paul says, “the things which happened to me have turned out rather to the progress of the Good News” (1:12). His chains became known “to the whole palace guard” (1:13), and most of the brothers are “more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear” (1:14). Some preach Christ from envy and some from good will, and Paul says, “Christ is proclaimed. I rejoice in this” (1:18). People can say what strikes them, and no one has to share more than they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:12–14 and 1:18. What does Paul say has happened because of his chains?

2 What does 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain' mean for how we measure a life?

Paul says, "to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (1:21). He expects that "Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death" (1:20). He is "hard pressed between the two" (1:23), with the desire "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." Yet he says, "to remain in the flesh is more needful for your sake" (1:24). In these verses Christ is the measure of a life, and the good of the Philippians weighs in the decision.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:20–24. What does Paul want for Christ, and what holds him between the two choices?

3 What would a way of life "worthy of the Good News" look like in your daily setting (1:27)? PERSONAL

There is no single right answer. Paul says, "let your way of life be worthy of the Good News of Christ" (1:27). He describes the way of life as to "stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the Good News." He adds that they are to be "in nothing frightened by the adversaries" (1:28). People can name a setting such as home or work and say as little as they like.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:27–28. What does Paul say a worthy way of life looks like?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where do you need joy that doesn't depend on your circumstances?

This question asks each person to name a place where joy feels hard to hold. Paul writes from chains and still says, I rejoice (1:18). Give a moment of quiet before anyone speaks. A short answer is enough, and nobody has to share more than they choose.

2 Has anything hard in your life turned out differently than you feared? You do not have to answer.

This question asks whether something hard turned out differently than the person feared. Paul reports what he can see in his own case (1:12–14). Some people will not yet see an outcome in theirs, and that is an honest answer. Do not press anyone to find a purpose in their pain.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 How does Paul say what has happened to him in his chains has affected the gospel?</p> <p>B It has served to advance the gospel</p> <p>Paul says what happened to him has turned out to the progress of the Good News (1:12), and it became evident to the whole palace guard that his bonds are in Christ (1:13).</p> | <p>2 What does Paul say he is confident God will do for the Philippians?</p> <p>D Complete the good work He began in them</p> <p>Paul is confident “that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (1:6).</p> |
| <p>3 In 1:21 Paul writes:</p> <p>A ‘For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain’</p> <p>‘For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain’ (1:21). Paul centers both his life and his death on Christ.</p> | <p>4 What does Paul urge in 1:27, and what does he want to hear about the Philippians?</p> <p>Paul urges them to let their way of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. He wants to hear that they stand firm in one spirit, striving together for the faith, whether he comes to see them or only hears about them.</p> |

Memory verse: Philippians 1:21, printed on page 9.

LEADER'S NOTES

Care note · 1:21–24. Do not use 1:23 to comfort someone who is suffering by suggesting that death is better. If anyone says they want to die, stay with them and see page 58.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 2 OF 4

Having the Mind of Christ

Philippians 2 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 13–16 · memory verse Philippians 2:5

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: "Who in your life takes the lower place without making a show of it?"

WATCH FOR

1. "Counting others better than himself" being turned into self-erasure. Paul's model is Christ, who took a servant's form without ceasing to be who He is (2:6–7). Humility is not self-erasure.
2. The passage (2:5–11) being explained instead of read. Read it aloud slowly, twice; then walk through it as the second question asks.
3. "Emptied himself" (2:7) being read as Christ ceasing to be God. Paul begins with "existing in the form of God" (2:6) and ends with every tongue confessing "that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (2:11); the emptying is taking a servant's form, not giving up who He is.

PUSH TOWARD

Timothy and Epaphroditus make it concrete. Humility here looks like caring for others (2:20) and risking oneself for the work of Christ (2:30). The reflection question names whose interests you could look to as well; the "one thing" is one quiet act of service, expecting nothing back.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 58.

5	10	20	10	15
Open	One mind, one love	Christ's humility and exaltation	Timothy and Epaphroditus	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What does Paul mean by counting others better than yourself (2:3)?

Paul says, "doing nothing through rivalry or through conceit" (2:3). He asks for humility, "each counting others better than himself." Verse 4 adds, "each of you not just looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (2:4). The aim in 2:2 is to be "like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:3–4. What does Paul say to avoid, and what does he say to do?

2 Walk through Christ's humility and exaltation in 2:5–11 — what stands out? PERSONAL

There is no single right answer. Christ is described first as “existing in the form of God” (2:6). He “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (2:7) and became “obedient to the point of death, yes, the death of the cross” (2:8). Then “God also highly exalted him” (2:9), so that “every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (2:11). The words echo Isaiah 45:23, where every knee bows to the LORD. This is more than a pattern to copy: God honors this obedience (2:9), and our standing rests on “the righteousness which is from God by faith” (3:9). People can say which part of the path stands out to them.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:6–11. What does Christ do, and what does God do in response?

3 How do Timothy and Epaphroditus illustrate the mind of Christ?

Paul hopes to send Timothy and says, “I have no one else like-minded, who will truly care about you” (2:20). He adds that “as a child serves a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the Good News” (2:22). Epaphroditus is called “my brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier” (2:25), and he “longed for you all” (2:26). For the work of Christ he “came near to death, risking his life” (2:30). Both men look to the things of others, as 2:4 asks.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:19–30. What does Paul say about how Timothy and Epaphroditus act toward others?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where might you serve someone this week?

This question asks for a concrete way to serve someone. Paul grounds humility in the example of Christ (2:5–8). Invite small, specific answers. Humility in this passage means serving others as Christ served. If someone already gives up their place constantly, invite them to name a different act. No one has to share more than they choose.

2 Whose interests could you look to this week, as well as your own?

This question asks for a name or a situation. Paul says to look also to the things of others (2:4), and Timothy and Epaphroditus show what that looks like (2:20–30). Let people think quietly first. They can keep names private and share only the action they have in mind.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- 1** In calling for unity, what attitude does Paul tell the Philippians to have toward one another?
- c** **Count others better than yourselves**
In humility count others better than yourselves, looking also to the things of others (2:3-4).

- 3** Because of Christ's obedience, what has God done, according to 2:9–11?
- B** Highly exalted Him and given Him the name above every name
- God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name above every name, that every knee should bow (2:9–11).

Memory verse: Philippians 2:5, printed on page 13.

- 2** According to 2:6–7, what did Christ, existing in the form of God, do?
- D** He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant
- He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and humbled Himself to death on a cross (2:7–8).

- 4** In whom was the mind that Paul tells believers to have (2:5)?
- Paul says, “Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus,” who “emptied himself” and “humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, yes, the death of the cross” (2:5–8).

LEADER'S NOTES

Care note · 2:25–30. Epaphroditus was sick nearly to death (2:27). Never treat illness as a sign of weak faith or as failure. Anyone who is ill shares only what they choose.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 3 OF 4

Pressing On to Know Christ

Philippians 3 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 17–20 · memory verse Philippians 3:8

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “What’s on your résumé that you’re proudest of?” Let people answer honestly; Paul will do something startling with his.

WATCH FOR

1. “Refuse” being heard as despising everything he was. Paul sets it all beside knowing Christ (3:8). Let the group say what that comparison means. Paul is not dismissing his heritage; he gives up trusting it for righteousness (3:9).
2. “Forgetting the things which are behind” being applied only to failures. Paul listed achievements in 3:4–6 and counted them as loss (3:7). The text does not say what “behind” covers, so let the group say whether it includes achievements too. This is the second question.
3. 3:2–3 is, most likely, Paul’s warning about teachers pressing circumcision on believers, not a verdict on Jewish people; Paul himself is “a Hebrew of Hebrews” (3:5).

PUSH TOWARD

“Our citizenship is in heaven” (3:20) reframes the present. For the “one thing to live out,” invite each person to write one thing behind them to let go of and one step forward toward Christ this week. Writing it privately is enough.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 58.

5	15	15	10	15
Open	The résumé and its worth	Pressing on	Citizenship	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 Why does Paul call his impressive credentials ‘a loss’ and ‘refuse’ (3:7–8)?

Paul lists what he could rely on, among them “circumcised the eighth day” (3:5), “a Hebrew of Hebrews” (3:5) and “found blameless” (3:6). Then he says, “I consider those things that were gain to me as a loss for Christ” (3:7). He measures them against “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord” (3:8). He counts them “nothing but refuse” so that he may “gain Christ.” He wants to “be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith” (3:9).

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:4–8. What does Paul list, and what does he set against it?

2 What does Paul mean by ‘forgetting the things which are behind’ as he presses on (3:13–14)?

Paul begins with a limit, “Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect” (3:12). Then he says, “forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before” (3:13). He describes the aim, “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (3:14). The text does not say what the things which are behind cover, so the group can say what the phrase brings to mind.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:12–14. What does Paul say he does, and what is he pressing toward?

3 How does heavenly citizenship change how we live now (3:20–21)? PERSONAL

There is no single right answer. Paul says, “our citizenship is in heaven” (3:20), and from there “we also wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” He sets this beside people “who think about earthly things” (3:19). He says Christ “will change the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of his glory” (3:21). People can talk about how belonging to heaven shapes their present priorities.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:17–21. Where does Paul say our citizenship is, and what do we wait for?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 What, if anything, have you leaned on besides Christ, and how does it compare now?

This question asks each person to look honestly at what they lean on. Paul’s own list in 3:4–6 shows that good and respectable things can sit in that place. The words if anything leave room for a person to answer that nothing comes to mind. Nobody has to disclose more than they choose.

2 Is there anything behind you that you would like to hand over to God so you can press on? Keep it private if you prefer.

This question asks about the past. In 3:13 Paul says he is forgetting what is behind and stretching forward. People may think of failures or achievements. Accept any answer, keep the time quiet, and do not ask anyone to explain what they name.

Recall practice

- Memory verse:** Philippians 3:8, printed on page 17.

Care note · 3:2–3. Never use these verses against Jewish people. See page 39.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 4 OF 4

Rejoice in the Lord Always

Philippians 4 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 21–24 · memory verse Philippians 4:6–7

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “What do you find yourself thinking about on a quiet walk or drive?” Verse 8 gives Paul’s list of what to think about.

WATCH FOR

1. Verses 6–7 being quoted without being practiced. Do it in the room: anyone who wishes can name a worry, or only the area of life, and turn it into thankful prayer. Others may pray silently.
2. “I can do all things” (4:13) pulled out of its setting; Paul writes it about contentment in plenty and want (4:11–12), the second question.
3. 4:4 and 4:6 being used to hush someone who is grieving or struggling with anxiety or low mood. Paul himself speaks of sorrow (2:27) and weeping (3:18). Prayer is not a replacement for a doctor or counselor, and a leader can say so.

PUSH TOWARD

The reflection questions ask whether there is a worry to turn into thankful prayer and where contentment is hardest. The “one thing”: each day, take one anxiety to God with thanksgiving before carrying it yourself. Since this is the last session, close by praying 4:6–7 over the group.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 58.

5	20	10	10	15
Open	Anxiety and peace	Contentment	Think on these things	What we carry from Philippians, and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What does Paul say to do with our requests, and what does he say follows (4:6–7)?

Paul says, “In nothing be anxious.” He adds that requests are made known to God “by prayer and petition with thanksgiving.” The result is stated in verse 7, “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (4:7). Prayer and thanksgiving go together in 4:6.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:6–7. What does Paul say to do with our requests, and what does he say will follow?

2 What is the secret of contentment Paul says he has learned (4:11–13)?

Paul says, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content in it.” He explains, “I know how to be humbled, and I also know how to abound.” He calls this a secret, “I have learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry.” Then he says, “I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me” (4:13). The context in 4:11–12 is contentment in plenty and in need.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:11–13. What has Paul learned, and where does he say his strength comes from?

3 How does dwelling on ‘whatever things are true ... whatever things are lovely’ shape a life (4:8)?

Paul lists what to think about, “whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report” (4:8). He says, “think about these things.” Verse 9 turns thought into practice, “do these things, and the God of peace will be with you” (4:9). A life is shaped by what it dwells on and then by what it does.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:8–9. What does Paul say to think about, and what does he promise in verse 9?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Is there a worry you could turn into thankful prayer this week?

This question asks for a worry that could become a thankful prayer. Paul invites requests with thanksgiving in 4:6. Worries can be heavy, so let people keep them private. They can name only the area of life, or simply decide to pray. Do not try to solve a worry in the room. Feeling anxious is not a failure. The verse invites prayer without grading it.

2 Where do you most need to learn contentment — in plenty, or in want?

This question asks where contentment is harder, in plenty or in want. Paul says he has learned both (4:12). Invite honest answers, and let people say that neither has come easily. Nobody has to explain their circumstances to take part.

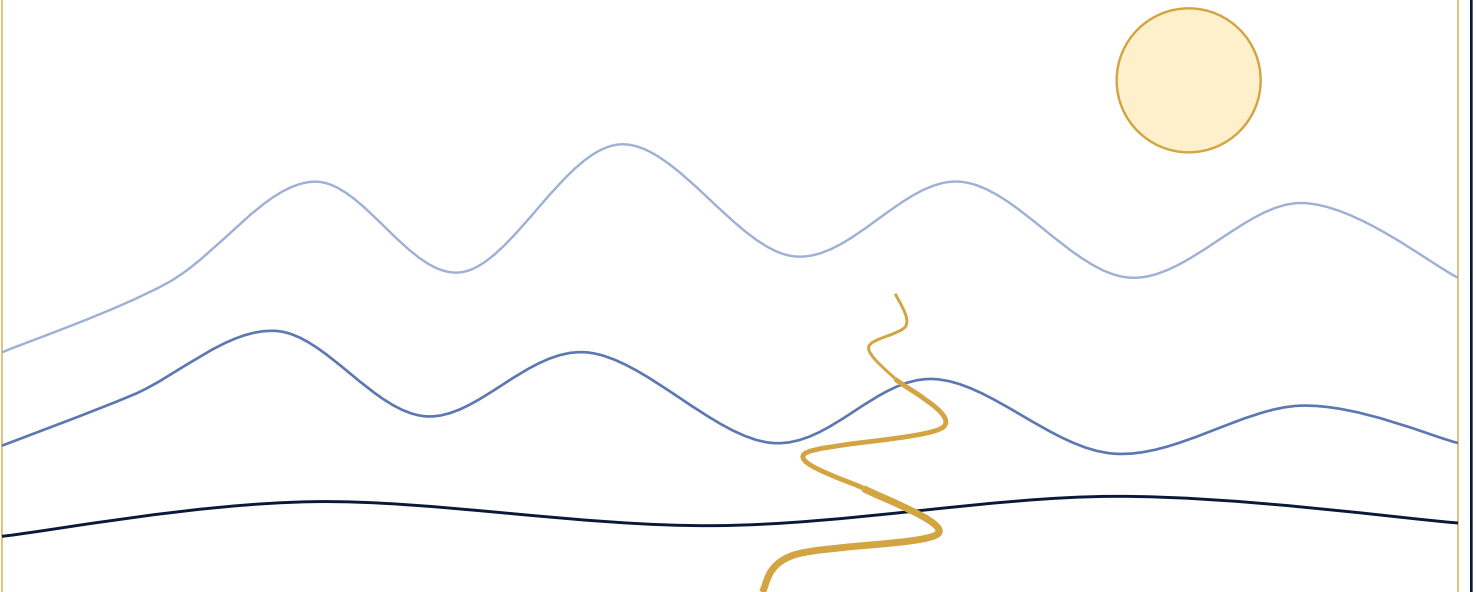
Recall practice

- The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

PART FOUR

The Letter to the Philippians

The complete text in the World English Bible, arranged by
session.



WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

The Letter to the Philippians

The complete text, arranged by session. Verse numbers are small and raised; each session's reading begins with a tinted heading.

SESSION 1 READING

Philippians 1

To Live Is Christ · session on page 9

PHILIPPIANS 1

To Live Is Christ

¹Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ;

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and servants: ²Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³I thank my God whenever I remember you, ⁴always in every request of mine on behalf of you all, making my requests with joy, ⁵for your partnership in furtherance of the Good News from the first day until now; ⁶being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is even right for me to think this way on behalf of all of you, because I have you in my heart, because both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Good News, you all are partakers with me of grace. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long after all of you in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus.

⁹This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense to the day of Christ, ¹¹being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

¹²Now I desire to have you know, brothers, that the things which happened to me have turned out rather to the progress of the Good News, ¹³so that it became evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my bonds are in Christ, ¹⁴and that most

of the brothers in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

In verse 14, some ancient manuscripts read "the word" without "of God."

¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ even out of envy and strife, and some also out of good will. ¹⁶The former insincerely preach Christ from selfish ambition, thinking that they add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the Good News.

¹⁸What does it matter? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. I rejoice in this, yes, and will rejoice. ¹⁹For I know that this will turn out to my salvation, through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will in no way be disappointed, but with all boldness, as always, now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²But if I live on in the flesh, this will bring fruit from my work; yet I don't know what I will choose. ²³But I am hard pressed between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. ²⁴Yet to remain in the flesh is more needful for your sake. ²⁵Having this confidence, I know that I will remain, yes, and remain with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶that your rejoicing may abound in

Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again.

²⁷Only let your way of life be worthy of the Good News of Christ, that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your state, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the Good News; ²⁸and in nothing frightened by

the adversaries, which is for them a proof of destruction, but to you of salvation, and that from God. ²⁹Because it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer on his behalf, ³⁰having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

SESSION 2 READING

Philippians 2

Having the Mind of Christ · session on page 13

PHILIPPIANS 2

Having the Mind of Christ

¹If therefore there is any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassion, ²make my joy full by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; ³doing nothing through rivalry or through conceit, but in humility, each counting others better than himself; ⁴each of you not just looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.

⁵Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, yes, the death of the cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.

¹⁴Do all things without complaining and arguing, ¹⁵that you may become blameless and harmless,

children of God without defect in the middle of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding up the word of life, that I may have something to boast in the day of Christ, that I didn't run in vain nor labor in vain. ¹⁷Yes, and if I am poured out on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸In the same way, you also rejoice, and rejoice with me.

¹⁹But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered up when I know how you are doing. ²⁰For I have no one else like-minded, who will truly care about you. ²¹For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. ²²But you know the proof of him, that as a child serves a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the Good News. ²³Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it will go with me. ²⁴But I trust in the Lord that I myself also will come shortly. ²⁵But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, and your apostle and servant of my need, ²⁶since he longed for you all, and was very troubled because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷For indeed he was sick, nearly to death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow on sorrow. ²⁸I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that when you see him again, you may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. ²⁹Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and hold such people in honor, ³⁰because for the work of

Christ he came near to death, risking his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.

SESSION 3 READING

Philippians 3

Pressing On to Know Christ · session on page 17

PHILIPPIANS 3

Pressing On to Know Christ

¹Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not tiresome, but for you it is safe. ²Beware of the dogs; beware of the evil workers; beware of the false circumcision.

³For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh; ⁴though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I yet more:

⁵circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶concerning zeal, persecuting the assembly; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.

⁷However, I consider those things that were gain to me as a loss for Christ. ⁸Yes most certainly, and I count all things to be a loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them nothing but refuse, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith, ¹⁰that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings,

becoming conformed to his death, ¹¹if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, that I may take hold of that for which also I was taken hold of by Christ Jesus.

¹³Brothers, I don't regard myself as yet having taken hold, but one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, think this way. If in anything you think otherwise, God will also reveal that to you. ¹⁶Nevertheless, to the extent that we have already attained, let's walk by the same rule. Let's be of the same mind.

¹⁷Brothers, be imitators together of me, and note those who walk this way, even as you have us for an example. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, as the enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who think about earthly things. ²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will change the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working by which he is able even to subject all things to himself.

SESSION 4 READING

Philippians 4 Rejoice in the Lord Always · session on page 21**PHILIPPIANS 4**
Rejoice in the Lord Always

¹Therefore, my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

²I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same way in the Lord. ³Yes, I beg you also, true partner, help these women, for they labored with me in the Good News with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, “Rejoice!” ⁵Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report: if there is any virtue and if there is any praise, think about these things. ⁹The things which you learned, received, heard, and saw in me: do these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your thought for me; in

which you did indeed take thought, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹Not that I speak because of lack, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content in it. ¹²I know how to be humbled, and I also know how to abound. In everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

¹⁴However you did well that you shared in my affliction. ¹⁵You yourselves also know, you Philippians, that in the beginning of the Good News, when I departed from Macedonia, no assembly shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you only. ¹⁶For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again to my need. ¹⁷Not that I seek for the gift, but I seek for the fruit that increases to your account. ¹⁸But I have all things and abound. I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, a sweet-smelling fragrance, an acceptable and well-pleasing sacrifice to God. ¹⁹My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

²¹Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. ²²All the saints greet you, especially those who are of Caesar’s household.

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

AFTER THE LAST SESSION

Four verses to carry

One verse from each session. Read them aloud once a week and they will stay with you.

1 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
PHILIPPIANS 1:21

2 “Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus.”
PHILIPPIANS 2:5

3 “Yes most certainly, and I count all things to be a loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.”
PHILIPPIANS 3:8

4 “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.”
PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7

WHAT COMES NEXT

Philippians is step 4 of 6 on the **Disciple** path.

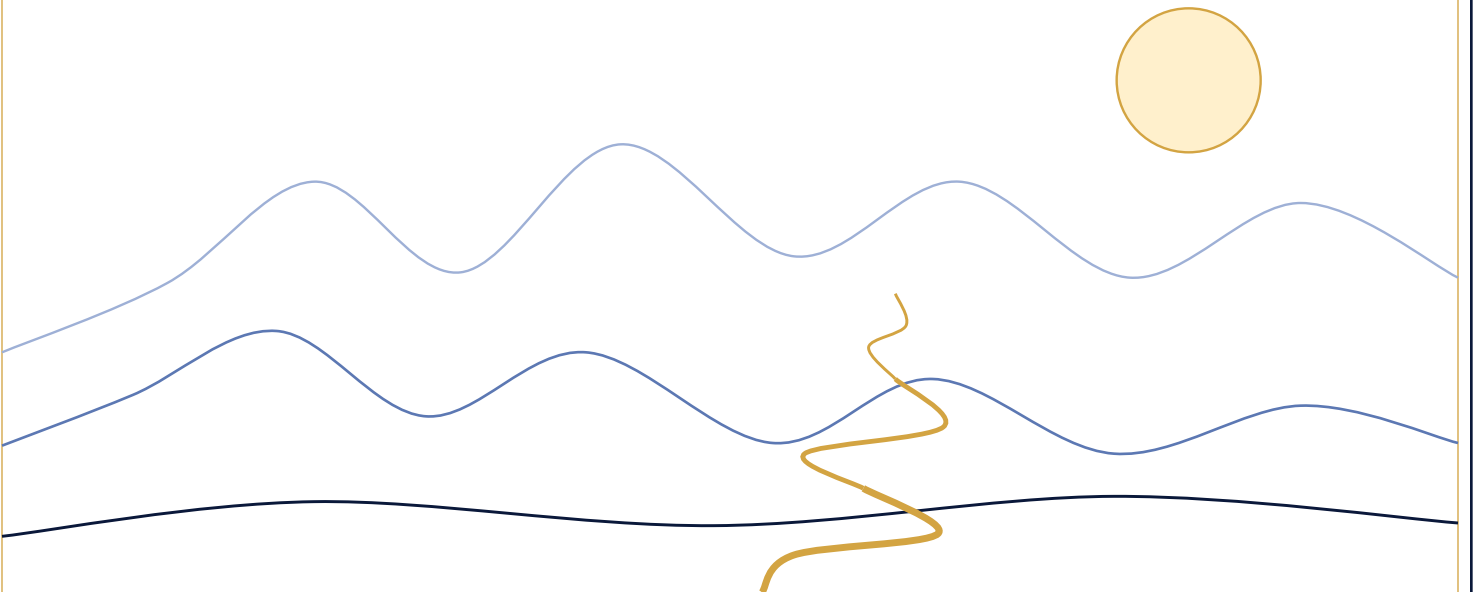


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PART FIVE

Take it with you

A worked example, a harder question for each session, a glossary, a Scripture index, and the pages that connect you to the people behind this study.



PART FIVE · BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What a good answer looks like

Most discussion questions do not have one right answer, but they do have good ones. Here is the second question of Session 1, a sample answer written the way a participant might write it, and the note a leader has beside it. Read all three once. That is what “doing the study” looks like.

2 What does ‘to live is Christ, and to die is gain’ mean for how we measure a life?

A SAMPLE ANSWER · WRITTEN IN THE MARGIN

Paul says “to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (1:21). I read that as Christ being what he measures his life by. In 1:20 he hopes Christ “will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death,” so even dying is judged by what it does for Christ. What caught me is 1:23–24. He desires to “depart and be with Christ,” but he says “to remain in the flesh is more needful for your sake.” So Christ is the measure, and the Philippians are part of it. I tend to measure my life by how much is left undone. Paul measures his by whom it serves.

WHY IT IS A GOOD ANSWER

It stays in the passage. It quotes the words on the page (“to me to live is Christ,” “whether by life or by death,” “more needful for your sake”) instead of general church language.

It says something in the writer’s own words. “Paul measures his by whom it serves” is not in the Bible; it is what the writer understood from 1:23–24.

It ends with the writer, not with a summary. The last two sentences turn from Paul to the writer’s own life. That is what makes it an answer and not a summary.

THE LEADER’S NOTE FOR THE SAME QUESTION · PAGE 34

Paul says, “to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (1:21). He expects that “Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death” (1:20). He is “hard pressed between the two” (1:23), with the desire “to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.” Yet he says, “to remain in the flesh is more needful for your sake” (1:24). In these verses Christ is the measure of a life, and the good of the Philippians weighs in the decision.

Getting the most from this guide

- **Write before you talk.** In a group, two minutes of silent writing before the first question gives quieter people time to find their words.
- **Watch “joy” and “rejoice.”** They run through the whole letter, and Paul writes it from chains (1:13). Underline each one and note what is happening around it.
- **Do the recall page from memory first.** Guessing and then checking is how the passage stays with you.
- **Keep the one thing small.** The “One thing to live out” is meant to be done, not admired.

PART FIVE · FOR GROUPS THAT WANT MORE

Go deeper

One extra question for each session, for groups that have walked with Philippians before. Each comes with a leader's note. Leaders can use one in the discussion minutes of the timed plan if the room has the energy. This section is for leaders.

Session 1 · Philippians 1:15–18

- Some preach Christ “even out of envy and strife” (1:15), yet Paul says, “Christ is proclaimed. I rejoice in this” (1:18). What does he rejoice in?

LEADER'S NOTE

Paul names the motives without excusing them (1:16), and rejoices that “Christ is proclaimed” (1:18). Nothing here asks anyone to be glad about being harmed or to stay quiet about it.

Session 2 · Philippians 2:12–13

- Paul writes “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (2:12) and then “it is God who works in you” (2:13). How does the second sentence shape the first?

LEADER'S NOTE

The “for” of 2:13 gives the ground: God is at work, so the church can act. This is not earning salvation (3:9). Traditions differ on how the two fit.

Session 3 · Philippians 3:12–15

- Paul says, “Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect” (3:12), and later, “as many as are perfect, think this way” (3:15). How can both stand?

LEADER'S NOTE

Paul includes himself (“Let us therefore,” 3:15). In 3:12 he denies final completion; most readers hear the 3:15 “perfect” as “mature.” Traditions differ on how complete holiness can be in this life.

Session 4 · Philippians 4:2–3

- Paul urges Euodia and Syntyche “to think the same way in the Lord” (4:2). What does he say about them, and what does he leave unsaid?

LEADER'S NOTE

He says they “labored with me in the Good News” (4:3) and does not say who was right, so do not guess at a story. Nothing here asks anyone to be reconciled with a person who is unsafe.

PART FIVE · FOR LEADERS

Objectives and questions, aligned

Every session names what it is for. This table shows which discussion (D) and reflection (R) questions carry each objective, so a leader who is short on time can cut a question without cutting an aim.

D = discussion questions on the session's second page; R = reflection questions on its third page. A dash means no question asks that directly. A star means a partial fit: the question touches the objective without asking it outright. A leader who wants a dashed objective covered can raise it from the passage or the leader page. The recall practice on each fourth page serves most objectives by retrieval. Session 1's second objective, God's finishing work (1:6), has no discussion question of its own. The recall practice asks it, and the leader can raise it from the passage.

	LEARNING OBJECTIVE	DISCUSSION	REFLECTION
1	See joy that rises above circumstances	D1	R1
	Grasp Paul's confidence in God's finishing work	—	R2*
	Hear the call to live worthy of the gospel	D3	—
2	Understand humility as the mind of Christ	D1, D2	R1, R2
	Trace Christ's descent and exaltation (2:5–11)	D2	—
	See self-giving love modeled in real people	D3	R1*
3	Re-rank what we count as gain beneath knowing Christ	D1	R1
	Embrace a forward-pressing faith	D2	R2
	Remember our citizenship is in heaven	D3	—
4	Replace anxiety with thankful prayer	D1	R1
	Learn contentment in plenty and in want	D2	R2
	Practice dwelling on what is true and good	D3	—

PART FIVE · WORDS PHILIPPIANS USES

Glossary

Short definitions of the words a first-time reader of Philippians is most likely to stumble on. Chapter and verse point to where Paul uses them.

Circumcision

The sign of belonging to God's covenant with Israel. Paul was circumcised the eighth day (3:5). In 3:2–3 he most likely writes about those who press it on believers.

Citizenship

Belonging to a commonwealth, with its rights and loyalties. Paul says "our citizenship is in heaven" (3:20).

Conformed

Shaped to match a pattern. Paul wants to become "conformed to his death" (3:10), and says Christ will make the body "conformed to the body of his glory" (3:21).

Contentment

Being satisfied in whatever state you are in. Paul says he has learned it in plenty and in need (4:11–12).

Day of Christ

The day Christ returns, when God completes His work. Paul is confident God will complete the good work "until the day of Jesus Christ" (1:6, 10; 2:16).

Emptied

Paul says Christ "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (2:7), after "existing in the form of God" (2:6). Christians read the details differently.

Fellowship

Shared life and shared work. Paul speaks of "fellowship of the Spirit" (2:1) and of "the fellowship of his sufferings" (3:10); see also "partnership" in 1:5.

Good News

The WEB's phrase for the gospel: God's saving news in Christ (1:5, 7, 12, 27; 4:3, 15).

Grace

God's undeserved favor, given freely and not earned (1:2, 7; 4:23).

Humility

Putting others first without pretending to be less than you are. Paul asks for it "in humility, each counting others better than himself" (2:3), and says Christ "humbled himself" (2:8).

Overseers and servants

Two groups of church leaders Paul greets (1:1). "Overseers" is the word many translations render "bishops." "Servants" here is a different word, usually "deacons," not the word for "servants" (slaves) used of Paul and Timothy.

Peace of God

God's own peace, given in Christ Jesus, that guards hearts and thoughts and goes beyond what people can understand (4:7). Paul also speaks of "the God of peace" (4:9).

Refuse

The WEB's word for what Paul counts his credentials once he has set them beside knowing Christ (3:8). The Greek word means something thrown away as worthless.

Righteousness

Being right with God. Paul says he does not have "a righteousness of my own, that which is of the law," but one "through faith in Christ" (3:9; some translations: "the faithfulness of Christ").

Salvation

God's rescue from sin and death, received by faith (3:9). Paul tells the readers to "work out your own salvation," and adds that God is working in them (2:12–13). In 1:19 the word may mean Paul's own deliverance.

Servant

In 1:1 (Paul and Timothy) and 2:7 the WEB says "servant" where the Greek word means a slave. Paul uses it of belonging to Christ; the passage does not endorse slavery, and this guide does not use it to defend slavery or any oppression.

PART FIVE · WHERE EACH PASSAGE IS USED

Scripture index

Every passage cited by chapter and verse in the sessions, the reference pages, the leader's guide, and this Part Five, with the pages where it appears. The full text of Philippians is in Part Four, pages 46–49.

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PART FIVE · YOUR TURN

Tell me what helped.

You've just spent some hours in this study. Before you put it on the shelf, I'd like to know how it went: the part that landed, the part that lost you, and the part you'd fix if it were yours.

Three questions. No account needed. Name and email only if you want me to write back.

1 What helped? A session, a question, a line you underlined.

2 What confused you, or slowed you down? Be blunt. If a question didn't make sense, that's my writing, not your reading.

3 What would you add, cut, or change?

What you write helps shape the next edition of this study.

— Ron Givens

Founder — Executive Director, Clear Path Bible Studies



SCAN TO ANSWER

clearpathbiblestudies.com/s/philippians/feedback

Opens the three questions with this study already selected.

Jotted your answers above? Type them into the form when you're ready. Nothing on this page is sent anywhere until you do. Hand it to your group leader, too, if you'd rather say it out loud.

PART FIVE · FOR EVERYONE WHO LEADS, AND EVERYONE WHO SHARES

Care in the room

People say real things in a Bible study, and that's the point. These four agreements keep the room safe. The lines at the bottom are for the moments that are bigger than a study.

Four agreements

What's said here stays here. Names, stories, and struggles don't leave the room, not even as prayer requests somewhere else. The one exception is safety: if someone is in danger, or a child is being hurt, you get help.

No one has to speak. Silence is fine. A person who listens for four sessions has still done the study.

The text comes first. The leader isn't the last word. When we disagree, we go back to the page together.

Disagree, but don't scorn. A question is never a threat. No mocking, no interrupting, no fixing people.

Philippians has passages that land hard on real people in the room: 1:21–24, where Paul says dying is gain; 2:25–30 (illness is never a sign of weak faith); 3:2–3, misused against Jewish people; 4:2–3, where two women are urged to agree; and 4:6 and 4:13, sometimes used to hush anxiety or grief. The notes are on leader pages 33–35, 38–39, and 41–44. Read each ahead of time.

If someone shares something heavy

Thank them. Don't rush to a verse. Say, "That took courage. Can we talk after?" and then do. If what they shared involves danger to them or to someone else, now or at home, the help lines below come first, and, if they want it and it is safe, you stay with them while they call.

If a child is being hurt, call Childhelp, below, any hour, and report to child protective services or the police as your state requires. Reporting laws vary by state, and in some states every adult is required to report. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

If someone says they want to die, ask them plainly, stay with them, and call or text 988 together. If they have a plan or are in immediate danger, call 911.

A study isn't counseling. Before you ever need it, know the name of one counselor, one pastor, and one help line, so you can hand them over without scrambling.

Help lines · United States

Emergency — call 911.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text 988, any hour. For anyone thinking about ending their life, in a mental-health crisis, or worried about someone who is. Veterans and service members: call 988 and press 1, or text 838255.

National Domestic Violence Hotline — 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788. Danger or fear at home.

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline — 1-800-422-4453. A child who is being hurt, or an adult who suspects it.

National Human Trafficking Hotline — 1-888-373-7888, or text 233733. Forced labor or forced sex.

RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline — 1-800-656-4673. Free and confidential.

SAMHSA National Helpline — 1-800-662-4357. A treatment referral and information line for substance use and mental health; it is not a crisis line.

Verified October 2026. The current list, with lines for other situations, is kept at clearpathbiblestudies.com/help. These pages are not a substitute for a doctor, a counselor, or a pastor who knows you.



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