



**The Summit**  
Green Campus of Canton Baptist Temple

# **Resources for Your Life**

The Book of Philippians  
13 Sessions

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## Resource Guide

This resource was compiled from the personal Bible study and blog entries created by Tom Hogsed, pastor of the Summit in Green. You can find the original blog entries at [www.tomhogsed.com](http://www.tomhogsed.com).

The **introduction** to this book has been written so the reader has a better understanding of the Biblical author, his purpose in writing, and important points to understand before reading.

Following the introduction, each new page represents a **verse by verse overview** of the Scripture passage. The best way to study is to first read the Scripture verses from your Bible relying on the Holy Spirit to provide understanding and then to support your understanding with the commentary written below.

At the end of each Scripture commentary, there is a short **prayer** written so the reader can personally apply what has been discovered; however, it is suggested that you also pray from your heart in response to God's Word.

Feel free to make your own personal notes in your Bible, on this page, or even in a journal.

If this resource has helped you or you have further questions, please send an e-mail to [tomhogsed@gmail.com](mailto:tomhogsed@gmail.com).

## **Introduction to Philippians**

Written by Paul from a Roman prison around AD 61, the book of Philippians was intended for the church at Philippi, which was the first church he established in Macedonia. Philippi was a Greek city and became famous when Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius making Philippi a Roman colony in 42 BC. This instance in history brought Roman law and citizenship to the residents of Philippi and provided many benefits. The church at Philippi was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:12-40) and probably began in the home of Lydia who became a believer under Paul's preaching. The preaching of the gospel brought trials for this young church when Paul cast a demon out of girl who was also a fortune teller. This angered the girl's bosses because her service in the city was a means of profit for them. Paul and Silas were immediately indicted for this threat to Roman rule and resulted in them being beat and thrown in prison (Acts 16:20-24). The first night in prison brought a miracle from God when He sent an earthquake releasing them from bondage. The next day, Roman officials commanded Paul to leave because they were fearful of the ramifications of the events the previous day. Paul visited Philippi during his third missionary journey and even in his absence they had supported his ministry. So, why did Paul write this letter? Paul wanted to keep them updated on his Roman imprisonment as well as thank them for their generous support. On a spiritual level Paul challenged them to stand for their faith remembering the example of Jesus Christ and to be faithful to Him in their daily walk. Although persecution would come because of their distinctive way of life, Paul encouraged them to look beyond their current circumstances to the life which is awaiting them.

*Dear God, give me understanding of the book of Philippians and expose areas where I need to change.*

## **Philippians 1:1-11**

From the very beginning of this book it is very evident that Paul has a great love for the people to whom he is writing. In verses 1-2 he opens up with a standard greeting of grace and peace to the believers at Philippi, but in the third verse he begins to open up his heart about his feelings for his readers. Paul writes "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now...." The church at Philippi had generously given to Paul so that he could spread the gospel to many other places and he was grateful for their faithful participation. Without their financial help and prayers, Paul would not have been able to accomplish as much as he had done. Paul was also confident that God was greatly using them to fulfill His purposes in getting the gospel to other groups of people; in fact, Paul states that "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." Salvation is granted at the moment a person places their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, but final salvation and glorification is not fully accomplished until the return of Jesus Christ (1:6). Paul wanted them to look forward to the day when their salvation would be complete. Until that time, Paul wanted the church to know he had a great love for them and their efforts to assist in Paul's ministry (1:7-8). Paul also challenged them not to lose their love but that it may "abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ." His ultimate desire for the believers at Philippi was that they would be "filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." Good works are accomplished through Jesus Christ and always point people's attention to God the Father. We must learn from the church at Philippi about supporting those who are spreading the gospel and how our participation points other people to God. When you give money, look at it as an opportunity for someone to hear about the salvation which is freely given through Jesus Christ.

*Dear God, give me a greater ability to give so that the gospel can be spread throughout the world!*

## **Philippians 1:12-26**

Whenever something bad happens to us we oftentimes look for explanations or reasons, but Paul wanted his readers to understand that adverse circumstances do not always have explanations attached. As he began writing this letter to the church at Philippi he wanted them to know "that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel...." Although Paul did not understand all of God's purposes for his being imprisoned, he did know that God could use him to spread the gospel even when he was in prison. Some people allow bad circumstances to silence their witness for Jesus Christ; however, Paul challenged his readers to look past the circumstances to see how good can result from bad. Paul seems to indicate that the people around him (palace guard, all the rest) knew God was using this circumstance as a tool to reach more people with the gospel (1:13-14). His witness actually encouraged others to preach the gospel and become bolder in sharing their faith. Paul mentions two groups of people who were preaching the gospel: those who preach from envy and strife and those who preach from goodwill. There were those people who were jealous of Paul's giftedness and looked at his imprisonment as God's punishment upon some hidden sin in his life, but many others were sincerely preaching Christ crucified (1:15-17). Regardless of who was preaching, Paul was just happy that the gospel was continuing to be proclaimed, even if it were by his accusers (1:18). Paul had confidence that he would be delivered from his current circumstances through the prayers of the church and the power of the Holy Spirit (1:19-20). If he was released from prison one day, Paul would continue to bear fruit for the glory of God; however, if he died in prison he would rejoice in being with the Lord (1:21-26). Paul proclaims "for me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Living would enable him to carry on his earthly ministry, but death would enable him to spend eternity with God!

*Dear God, help me to look at bad circumstances from Your perspective and to make the most of glorifying You while on earth knowing that one day I'll be with You forever!*

## **Philippians 1:27-2:4**

Writing from a Roman prison, Paul continues his words to the church at Philippi by commanding them to "let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel...." Paul did not know whether he would see them again, but he wanted them to conduct their lifestyle according to holiness and righteousness. A major factor in helping them to live worthy and stand for the faith would be unity. When Paul says to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind" he is instructing them to be unified to accomplish the work to which God called them (spreading the gospel). Why should they be unified? Paul knows that adversity will come when standing for the faith and unity will provide strength to continue in the face of obstacles (1:28-30). Part of believing in Jesus Christ is the idea of suffering (1:29). When a person or group of people unifies to live differently than the world around them, there will be opposition. The church of Philippi had witnessed what Paul had experienced because of his faith in Jesus Christ (1:30). Unity stems from like-mindedness. Some churches attempt to force people into the same mold by looking the same, having identical viewpoints on every area of life, and adherence to a list of man-made rules; however, this is not unity but conformity. The type of unity Paul is speaking of stems from the truth of scripture and involves being committed to follow it no matter the cost (2:1-2). If God's word is our focus, we can remain unified because being a Christian is not about being selfish and self-serving but about loving others (2:3-4).

*Dear God, unify Your people so that we can effectively reach others with the gospel.*

## **Philippians 2:5-11**

Practicing unity, which is very important to the body of Christ, is only accomplished when people forget about their agendas and unify around the purposes to which they are called. In the case of Paul, he was calling believers to join together around the truth. God is truth and He has revealed that truth in His word. The church should not create their own plans, but rather submit to the ways of God. Paul has already stated in Philippians 2:3 that nothing can "be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." After commanding this from his readers, Paul looks to the ultimate example of humility - Jesus Christ. Although Jesus is God, He "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." This time is known as Jesus' incarnation, which means that He voluntarily set aside His deity in order to submit to the will of God the Father. Jesus Christ gave up His daily, face-to-face relationship with the Father as well as His authority. Jesus was completely subject to the guidance of His Father and willingly set aside His divine attributes for a time. This is the type of humility Paul is challenging believers to exemplify. How much was Christ willing to humble Himself? "He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." Most importantly, Jesus came to the earth to live as a man for the sole purpose of being the atonement (substitute) for the sin of mankind. Death was the punishment to satisfy the wrath of God on sin and Jesus willingly died in our place taking our punishment upon Him. Jesus Christ endured suffering and persecution in order to fulfill the will of God and provide a way of salvation for the sins of mankind. Paul's message is clear - suffering and persecution will come as a result of submitting to the will of God, but we must humble ourselves before Him recognizing He knows best. In Jesus' case, God "highly exalted Him" and has "given Him the name which is above every name." Permit me to make an application to what Paul is saying. Following God will result in bad circumstances, but He will reward those who have carried out His will. I am not saying that we become gods; however, God will reward us with unmentionable blessings as we spend an eternity in heaven with Him. If you are being persecuted for your faith, endure and look forward to what God is preparing for you. John 14 declares that God is preparing a place for His children and will one day come again to receive them to Himself.

*Dear God, help me to look past any persecution I face and humbly submit to the ways of God knowing that He will reward me in the future!*

## **Philippians 2:12-18**

Paul had already challenged his readers to endure persecution with patience (1:27-30), to be characterized with humility (2:1-4), to focus on the example of Jesus Christ (2:5-11), and now Paul urges his readers to be light in a dark world (2:12-18). Paul commends the church at Philippi for demonstrating obedience, even while he was away from them, and encourages them to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." What does Paul mean by working out their salvation? It is not possible for Paul to be advocating a salvation through works, but rather he is reminding them of their personal responsibility to continue in the process of sanctification, which is the progression of becoming more like Christ. Salvation is not complete until Jesus Christ returns for His children. Until then, believers should obey the word of God out of respect and reverence for who He is. Thank God we are not alone in following Him because He "works in you both to will and do for His good pleasure." This is the perfect balance of human responsibility and divine power. God has given us the indwelling Holy Spirit and as we respond to God's word, they both work together to produce good works (Ephesians 2:10). Paul then returns to the theme of persecution and reminds them not to question the plan of God during suffering (2:14) because through it He can make them to "become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation." Furthermore, enduring suffering and living an obedient life will enable them to "shine as lights in the world." When a follower of Christ chooses to live differently from the world, those who are far from God can be brought near. While exemplifying a holy lifestyle, a Christian should also hold "fast the word of life" meaning that they should point others to salvation, which is only found in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins. Paul had invested so much time in the church at Philippi and he did not want them to quit because it would mean that all his work would be wasted (2:16-18). You and I have been given one life and we must choose to use it to point others to Jesus Christ. Sometimes it takes enduring persecution for our faith or encountering scorn for the way we live our life, but these obstacles should point the attention of others to our great God!

*Dear God, life is hard sometimes, but I pray You would provide the strength for me to endure hardship so that I can point others to You and shine as a light in a dark world.*

## **Philippians 2:19-30**

Paul turns his attention to some information about Timothy (his son in the faith) and Epaphroditus (a member of the church at Philippi). In Philippians 2:19-24, Paul informs them that he will "send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state." At the beginning of this letter, Paul had mentioned Timothy because he did much work in and around Philippi and the Philippians were familiar with his ministry. They knew Timothy was a fellow-laborer with Paul in proclaiming the gospel; in fact, Paul says that he was sending Timothy to them because there was "no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state." Furthermore, the Philippians knew Timothy's "proven character" and he had served with Paul in the gospel (2:22). Paul hoped to "send him at once" but he also desperately wanted to visit them (2:24). In Philippians 2:25-30, Paul explains why he is returning Epaphroditus to them. It appears that the church at Philippi had sent Epaphroditus (an apostle in their church) to Paul with a financial gift and to encourage him, but they would certainly question his quick return to them. So, Paul took the time to explain why he was sending Epaphroditus back to them with this letter. He calls Epaphroditus a "brother, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and the one who ministered to my need...." He served Paul well, but it appears that he became deathly sick during his journey to see Paul. The church at Philippi was worried about Epaphroditus and he longed to be back with them (2:26-27a). He must have gained some strength through God's mercy while with Paul which enabled him to return to Philippi (2:27b). Paul asked the Philippians to "receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me." Timothy and Epaphroditus are wonderful examples of men who carried on their work with passion and did not allow obstacles to slow them down. They were not concerned about fame or recognition, but only about the work of Christ. They were men who served with a heart for God and His people. Just because you may not be involved in a visible ministry or feel your ministry is small, God sees your faithfulness and will reward you accordingly. Do your best in what God has given you to do!

*Dear God, use me in whatever way You see fit and help me never to be concerned with being acknowledged by others for my service.*

### **Philippians 3:1-11**

Paul has written much about the adversity a believer faces because of his or her faith in Jesus Christ. He was a living example of someone who stood for his faith, but was now imprisoned because of his stance. For several chapters, Paul has been asking his readers to look past circumstances and endure whatever obstacles come their way, but now he begins to warn the church at Philippi about false teachers. He seems to single out Jews who were depending on their circumcision for salvation (3:2-3). When a person looks to any external works in order to gain a relationship with God, it compromises the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins. Paul challenges his readers to "have no confidence in the flesh." If anyone could be confident in his flesh, it was Paul. After all, he was "circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Paul had followed the system of Judaism to the extreme, but his righteousness was only external. Paul knew that his works could not earn him favor with God, so he admitted "what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ." False teachers would have the Philippians believe that righteousness is found in what they do, but Paul wanted them to know righteousness is only found in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross (3:7-9). Jesus paid the penalty for our sin by dying in our place. He now offers salvation to anyone who will put their faith in Him and reject their own attempts at righteousness (3:9). Paul's goal in life was that he would "know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...." Paul desired an intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Jesus' resurrection displayed God's power over life and death and enables us to endure earthly struggles. Jesus suffered and so will the genuine believer, but God provides comfort to the weak and broken-hearted. Believers in Jesus Christ can look past the obstacles of this world with the knowledge that we will be resurrected from the dead and forever be with Christ (3:11).

*Dear God, may I look beyond the struggles of this life and see the glories that await me in heaven. But while I am here on earth, please use me to do Your will.*

### **Philippians 3:12-16**

Paul declared in Philippians 3:10 his desire to know God and "the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." He knew that living his life for the sake of Christ may result in him losing it, but he was convinced that a life lived for God would not be wasted. Lest anyone thought Paul had already attained Christlikeness or had fully accomplished that which God had called him to do, he informed them that he had not attained and was not perfect (3:12). Instead of being satisfied with his life, Paul pressed on to "lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me." God's desire was to use Paul in spreading the gospel and he was committed to fulfilling that purpose to which he had been called. It was possible for Paul to look back and see everything that he had already attained and feel as though he had served his time (3:13a); however, Paul chose to forget "those things which are behind" and reach "forward to those things which are ahead." We cannot be satisfied with the past, nor can we be consumed by our past. As a person reflects on their life, there may be many accomplishments as well as many regrets. The past can never change so we must live for today and the future. Each day we must strive to be pure in our thoughts and actions and be consumed with doing God's will on earth. Recognize that Christlikeness is a progression and don't become frustrated by your failure or satisfied with your success. Humble yourself before God and allow Him to live through you. Believers can be the "hands and feet" of God and allow the lost world to see God, whom no one has ever seen, through our actions and attitudes (1 John 4:12).

*Dear God, I realize You've allowed me to see good and bad things in my past, but may I not be consumed by what is behind me. Provide the strength for me to press forward and accomplish Your will in my life.*

### **Philippians 3:17-4:1**

The Christian life was not meant to be lived alone; in fact, the book of Ecclesiastes tells us that "two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up." Thank God believers can look to others for examples of how to live life. Paul encourages the Philippians to "join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern." He was not being arrogant, but simply setting himself and others as examples of imperfect people progressing in Christlikeness. Paul does warn his readers that there are those who set themselves up examples, but are not sincere (3:18). They are actually "enemies of the cross" and their "end is destruction." The people Paul is referring to were probably associated with the church, but their works did not reflect a genuine faith. Some characteristics of these people include adherence to certain dietary laws for salvation (*whose god is their belly*) and an apathetic view of their sin before a holy God (*whose glory is their shame*). Paul also mentions that they "set their mind on earthly things." Immediately following this statement, Paul reminds his readers that their "citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body, that it may be conformed to His glorious body...." Those whose faith was not genuine focused on earthly things while those whose faith is real reject what the world offers in exchange for the glories of heaven (3:20). Although we struggle with sickness, sin, and weakness here on earth, the believer's body will be changed to be like the resurrected body of Jesus Christ. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, "The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Because our future is in heaven and not on earth, Paul urges the Philippians to "stand fast in the Lord." Yes, this life is hard, but the believer in Jesus Christ can endure the struggles because there is hope beyond this life. In the meantime, we should be progressing in Christlikeness and be faithful to God's will.

*Dear God, make visible those who are following You so I can follow after their example. Help me to also set an example for those who look to me for guidance. Remind me often of the life that awaits me beyond this one!*

### **Philippians 4:2-3**

In Philippians 2:1-4, Paul had already challenged the church at Philippi to be clothed with humility, even pointing to the example of Jesus Christ humbling Himself to do the will of God. Now, Paul cites a specific incident which seems to be happening in the church at Philippi. There were two ladies named Euodia and Syntyche who were apparently involved in some type of conflict causing division within the church. Paul writes "I implore Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord." Both women were very involved in the church because Paul mentions that "these women labored with me in the gospel...whose names are in the Book of Life." Since Paul writes that their names are in the Book of Life, these women were followers in Jesus Christ and would both inherit eternal life; however, this conflict existed between them. The advice Paul gives is very simple..."be of the same mind in the Lord." Although we do not know the details of their conflict, Paul urges them to be unified in the things which they agreed upon. Conflict is inevitable within the church, but there does not need to be ongoing division as a result of it. These women's disagreement does not seem to be over false teaching or sin, but some form of differing opinion. God asks us to agree on those things which are clearly stated in His word, but leaves room for differing viewpoints on secondary issues. Paul writes in Romans 14:17 that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Some modern day churches put a lot of emphasis on external conformity and non-essentials so the things which are not necessarily mentioned in God's Word become more important than that which is very clear. We need to be united in the Lord in those things which God clearly emphasizes in His word, but leave room for disagreement in those things which are not close to God's heart. Personal conflict can be set aside when we practice humility instead of selfishness.

*Dear God, unite me together with Your people and may I set aside any secondary differences or personal conflict which may cause harm to the body of Christ.*

## **Philippians 4:4-9**

As he nears the end of his writing, Paul leaves his readers with some important things to practice in their daily walk. He has already talked much about enduring persecution and hardship while at the same time challenging the Philippians to actively demonstrate their faith with humility. Paul mentions four pointed areas which can provide stability in times of hardship. First, Paul urges them to "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say rejoice." Through personal experience, Paul knew life was hard, especially when a person is committed to following Jesus Christ. Preaching the gospel had landed Paul in a Roman prison, but his joy was not connected to his circumstances, but to his relationship with God. Circumstances will change, so our joy should never be dependent on them. Secondly, Paul wants his readers to "let your gentleness be known to all men...." The Philippians should treat others with respect and be patient with the shortcomings of others. Next, Paul advises them to pray (4:6-7). Worry is our natural response to that which we cannot control; however, prayer should be our first reaction. Prayer evidences our complete dependence on God. When we pray about worrisome circumstances, God does not promise to remove them, but He will provide the peace in our heart to cope (4:7). Lastly, Paul wants their minds to think about the right things (4:8-9). He specifically lists six things our minds should concentrate on - things that are true (God and His word), noble (that which is good), just (that which is right), pure (that which is moral), lovely (that which is kind or pleasurable), and things of good report (that which is respected). Paul tried to set an example of all the things which he had just mentioned and he wanted them to also follow him (4:9). As you closely examine your daily walk, are you rejoicing in adverse circumstances (4:4), demonstrating gentleness toward others (4:5), praying for God's peace (4:6-7), and meditating on the right things (4:8-9).

*Dear God, build within me all the characteristics Paul mentioned in this passage.*

## **Philippians 4:10-23**

Ending his letter on a very personal note, Paul takes the time to express his thankfulness for the generosity of the Philippian believers. They had sent him financial gifts when he was in Thessalonica and even desired to send him more but "lacked opportunity." Verses 15-16 make us aware that the Philippians were the only church supporting Paul's ministry "once and again for my necessities." They truly believed in the gospel message Paul was preaching and used whatever means necessary to assist him in his endeavor. Paul makes it clear that he never begged them to give, but they did it out of a heart of love. Whether they gave or not, Paul was content. Paul states "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, to be content. He goes on to say that he can live if he has a little or a lot (4:12). He was able to be content because His dependence was on Christ. Because of this attitude, Paul could say "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." I believe this is a critical attitude which all followers of Christ must develop. Circumstances will provide good times and bad times, but our focus should be on gaining strength from God. In Philippians 4:19 Paul helps his readers understand that "my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Paul knew what it meant to experience all the good life has to offer, but he also knew what it meant to be disappointed with life. Contentment is the key to experiencing joy in the good times and the bad times. As we finish reading this wonderful letter, may we commit ourselves to being content with our life knowing that God will provide the strength to make it. God will supply everything we need in order to manage. The thing that kept Paul going was the hope he had in Jesus Christ and eternal life with God. Remain content during times of hardship remembering that you have hope beyond circumstances!

*Dear God, I desire to be content in good times and bad times. May I experience Your strength so that I can do all things!*