

# HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

**Philippians**  
Leader's Guide



# Hearing the Word    Philippians    Leader's Guide

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*Nigel Barge, April 2017*

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## Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, published by Inter Varsity Press

The *New Bible Commentary* 21<sup>st</sup> century edition. A one-volume commentary on every book of the Bible. IVP

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

# *Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading*



**LOOK** – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
  - a) What questions does it raise - *Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?*
  - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
  - a) the surrounding text
  - b) the Book of the Bible
  - c) the whole Bible
  - d) the place in the Bible Story



**LEARN** – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



**LISTEN** – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



**LIVE** – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God,  
(Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace\*
  - c) Jesus / his salvation\*\*
- 2) What should I do?

\* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

\*\* The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).



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## Reading 'LETTERS' in the Bible

Whatever we read, we adjust to its style, sometimes without noticing. We don't approach a newspaper, a car manual, a cookery book, a poem, a scientific report, a 'txt msg' and a Shakespeare play in the same way. We take into account the purpose for which it was written and the way in which the writer uses words. Since the Bible also has many styles – law, poetry, history, wisdom, prophecy, letters and visions – we need to allow for the style if we are to discern what God is saying. Philippians is a 'Letter'. To approach it correctly, keep in mind the following principles:

The New Testament contains letters written by the Apostles to various parts of the church of their day. They are part of the Word of God and as such they not only *were* authoritative for the church then, but they *are* authoritative for the church of all time.

Since this part of the Word of God is written *as letters*, in the first instance they must be read as such. We need to take into account that letters are:

a) *Relational*. A letter is addressed to a particular person or group of people and its contents apply to them.

So in the Bible, we must first remember that Paul (or James, Peter, John or Jude) is addressing named individuals or churches in the first century. It is only once we have grasped what they are saying to *them* that we may generalise as to what God might be saying to *us*.

Note well: the two will always be consistent.

b) *Occasional*. Letters are one side of a 'conversation' between two people. They refer to matters in which details of situations and people are assumed to be common knowledge. A third party reading a letter needs to 'read between the lines' to work out the other side of the story.

We have to try and understand the situation to which this Bible letter was written, so as to grasp how the writer was addressing *it*. Only then may we ask how God might apply this Word to our own circumstances.

c) *Dated*. Letters are written at a particular time and place, and within a particular culture. So in the Bible, the letters of the first century are expressed within the habits and traditions of that day. In discerning what God might be saying to us, now, we need to separate any instruction that is 'time-bound' from principles that are *timeless*.

d) *To be read as a whole*. When we open a letter from a friend nowadays, we read the whole thing. We recognise it is a single communication and its contents are thus all related.

So with letters in the Bible; every part must be viewed in the context of the whole letter. Thus, it is best practice to read a Bible letter *right through*, before analysing its parts.

## **The letter to the PHILIPPIANS**

### **The people**

Philippi was in Macedonia (a province in NE Greece, capital: Thessalonica). The town was a Roman colony, full of descendants of Roman soldiers who retired after the Battle of Actium, 31 BC. For them it was like a piece of Italy on Greek soil. The town was rich in Greek culture, drama, literature, architecture and philosophy - but proudly Roman in law, government and trade. See Google Maps: 'Macedonia – Greece', 'Philippi' and 'Via Egnatia', the road that let Roman soldiers march rapidly from the Adriatic Sea on the west to the Aegean Sea and on to Byzantium near the Black Sea on the east. This trade route crossed a north-south one at Philippi.

Acts 16:13 tells us that there was a group of *women* meeting for prayer by the riverside on the *Sabbath*; i.e they offered Jewish prayer but without enough men to constitute a synagogue.

Paul founded the church in Philippi on his 2nd missionary trip (Acts 16:11-40) and visited twice on his third journey (20:1-6). They sent him financial support, and by him, famine relief to Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

### **The Occasion**

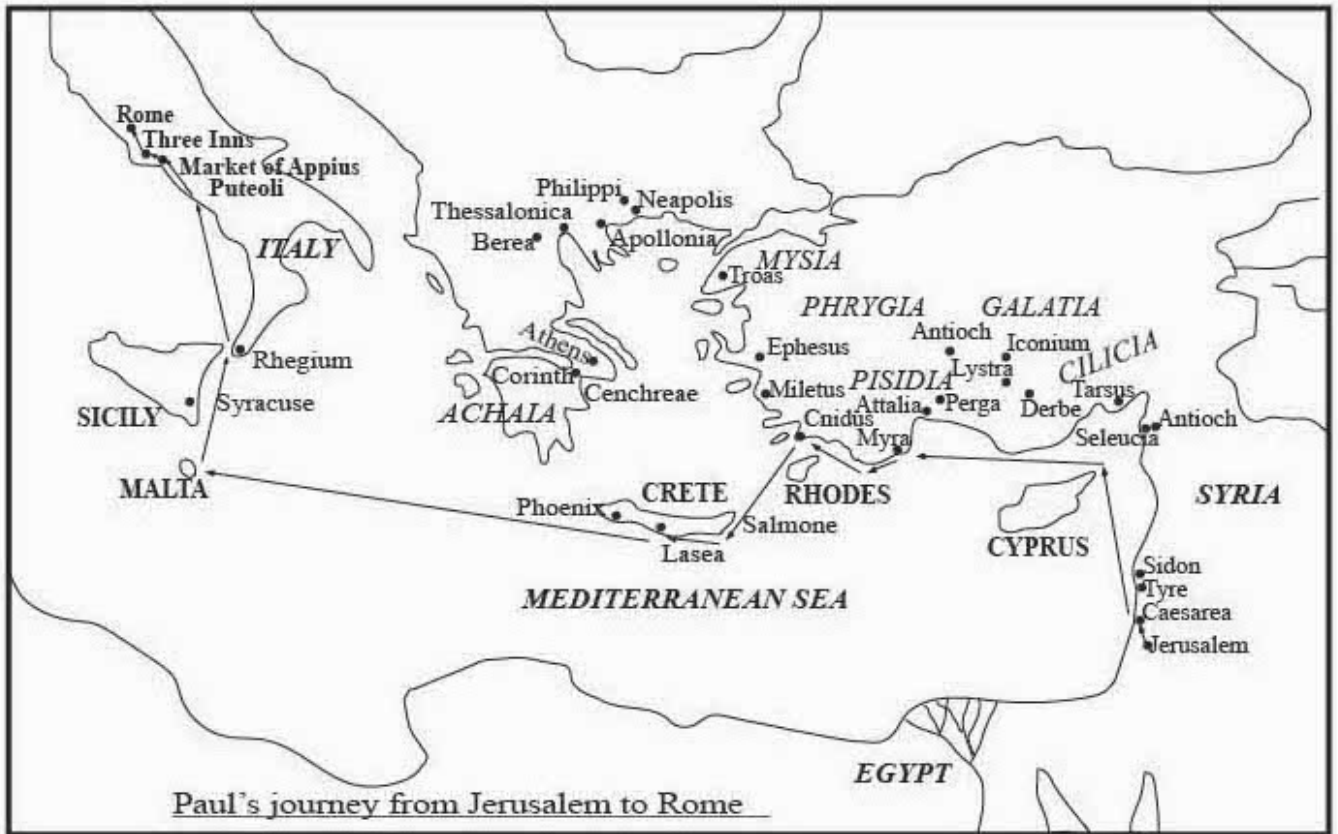
Paul himself is 'in chains' (1:13, probably in Rome, Acts 28:16, under house arrest). Philippians is one of a group of letters written from prison, as are Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon.

Epaphroditus (2:25) had brought gifts to Paul from the church at Philippi. Paul is sending him back with this thank-you letter, commending him and the church for their help (1:5, 4:10,14-18). He had also heard that there was some damaging disunity at Philippi (2:1, 4:2).

This most personal of Paul's letters simply bursts with joy. Paul uses 'joy/rejoice' 12 times. He is utterly unperturbed by the risks he faces.



# Map



## The journey to Rome for Paul as a prisoner Acts 23 – 28:

Paul's advice to spend the winter in Crete was over-ruled; a fierce, 2-week storm shipwrecked them on Malta; they stayed 3 months when *no-one* could sail, came north via Sicily to Puteoli, and overland to Rome. i.e. *no news* on the mainland *for at least 4 months*. When at last the Philippians heard where he was, they sent a gift, and Paul wrote this *thank-you letter*.

## The shape of the letter

James Philip summed up the *sequence of thought* in the 4 chapters

- |      |                                  |   |
|------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1:21 | <i>"To me to live is Christ"</i> | This involves having:   |
| 2:5  | <i>the mind of Christ</i>        | which, in turn, involves sharing:   |
| 3:10 | <i>the sufferings of Christ</i>  | and this issues in:   |
| 4:13 | <i>the victory of Christ</i>     | in terms of love, joy, peace, contentment,<br>power, grace, fellowship, fullness. |

*Each week's study explains matters that would have already been known to the original hearers but not to readers today. The questions in this Leader's Guide are those that other groups asked; they are **not** for leaders to read out. Get your group to ask their own questions!*

## A pastor's heart

**Background** Read pages 2-3 & Acts 28:16, 30. Paul is under house arrest in Rome, awaiting trial. Timothy and others are present; Paul can preach to visitors and, vitally for us, write letters we can still read today.

**Word List**

- 1 *Paul* A Jew from Tarsus, a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29) who believed in Jesus. God had sent him to preach mainly to non-Jews (Acts 9:15, Galatians 2:7-10; but see Romans 1:16). Previously known by his Hebrew name, Saul.
- Timothy* Trainee church leader from Lystra, became co-worker with Paul in Philippi, Acts 16 etc. Later sent to Corinth, 1 Corinthians 4:17, and Ephesus as pastor, (1 Timothy 1:3)
- Jesus* Greek version of Hebrew name, Joshua = Saviour
- Christ* Greek version of Messiah = Anointed One = King
- Saints* Those 'set apart', i.e. all who believe in Jesus.
- 2 *Philippi* City in Macedonia (see map, page 3)
- overseers* = Bishops, term used interchangeably with *Elders* (see Acts 20:17,25; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)
- deacons* Servants/administrators (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim 3:8-13)
- 3 *grace* God, in love, giving us what we don't deserve; Gk *charis*
- peace* Spiritual well-being, like Hebrew *Shalom*
- 7 *defending/confirming* could be legal terms from his coming trial
- Gospel* the Good News about Jesus

**Bible Connections**

- 1-2 *a standard format for letters* eg Ephesians 1:1-2; Colossians 1:1-2
- 3-6 *Paul's prayers for churches* eg Ephesians 1:15-17; 3:14-21; Col 1:3,9
- 5 *partnership* (Acts 2:42) This single Greek word, *koinonia*, can also be translated *fellowship*, *Communion*, *participation* (1 Corinthians 10:16) *sharing* (Philippians 3:10). Translators tend to use *partnership* where it has a financial or marital connotation. The church at Philippi had sent financial support to Paul before, more than once.
- 6 *God's purposes.* Ps 138:8; Jer 29:11; 1 Cor 1:8; Eph 1:9-10; 1 Tim 2:1-4
- 7 *Paul in chains* v13-14,17; Acts 21:33; 26:29; Ephesians 6:20
- 9-11 *Paul's prayer for them* see note on vv 3-6 above 1 Thessalonians 1:3

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1     *Why not just say 'to everyone'?*
- 2     *What was he doing here – what did Paul mean?*  
*Why does he not mention the Holy Spirit?*
- 5     *What did 'partnership' involve?*
- 6     *What is the good work?*  
*What is the 'day of Christ Jesus'?*
- 7     *What does 'have you in my heart' mean?*  
*What does 'confirming the Gospel' mean?*
- 8     *What is 'the affection of Christ'?*
- 9     *How does love grow in knowledge?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 1:1   *Why from 'Paul and Timothy' but then, 'I, me, my' (3-11)*
- 9     *If he is confident, why does he need to pray?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

a) surrounding passage

- 1:4   *prayer for them (1:2)*

b) individual book

- 1:4   *I always pray with joy. (1:25; 2:29; 4:1)*
- 10   *the day of Christ (2:16)*

c) whole Bible

- 1:1   *Timothy (Acts 16:1ff)*
- 4     *The joy of the Lord is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10)*  
*'... so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'*  
*(1 Corinthians 1:8) .*
- 9     *your love – Christ's love (Ephesians 3:17,18)*
- 10   *the day of Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:8)*
- 11   *the fruit of righteousness*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 *Paul names leaders 'and all the saints' i.e. addressing all equally.*

2 *Paul was imparting blessing.*

*Why does he not mention the Holy Spirit?*

5 *Partnership meant they supported Paul in prayer and with their means and so were participating in the ministry God had given him.*

6 *The day of Christ Jesus is the day of judgment, when Jesus returns as undisputed King. (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; Hebrews 9:27).*

*The 'day of Christ Jesus' is His return for judgement day.*

7 *'Have you in my heart' means he is constantly thinking about them.*

*What does 'confirming the Gospel' mean?*

8 *The affection of Christ is the love of God that is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5:5).*

9 *Love grows in the knowledge of God's love for us. This allows us to discern the best way to act to others.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*It is a royal 'we' – Paul was the Leader and the 'father' in the faith.*

*Confident prayer is when we know we are praying that 'God's will be done'.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Paul writes to every church member expressing his gratitude to God and his love for them. He lets them know of his prayers for their maturity and fruitfulness. He impresses on them that his confidence in their perseverance in the faith is rooted in the faithfulness of Jesus.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Our confidence for those we love in the Lord is rooted in Jesus and expressed in prayer.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

**v 6**

*".. being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus..... and this is my prayer...."*

3) How do you think it does this?

*It expressed his thankfulness and confidence in God, in his prayers*

## **LIVE**

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*1 God is our identity – we are 'in Him'.*

*2 God is the source of grace and peace.*

*3 God is the author of all blessing – (we thank Him).*

*6 God will completes His work in us.*

b) His grace

*7 God is gracious in all circumstances.*

*11 Fruit that we bear 'comes through Christ Jesus'.*

c) Jesus / His salvation

*1 We are Jesus 'servants' and 'saints in Christ Jesus', waiting for 'the day of Christ Jesus' (6) enjoying the 'affection of Christ Jesus' (8) and expressing 'the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ' (11).*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*1 Impart grace and peace to others*

*4 Pray for other people Know that I am secure in God.*

*6 Be confident of your salvation – it is the work of God.*

*8 Be aware that you share God's affection with other believers.*

*11 Work to grow in 'the fruit of righteousness' to the glory and praise of God.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## To live is Christ

**Background** Paul had been arrested in Jerusalem, accused of bringing a Gentile into the part of the Temple reserved for Jews (which he hadn't), and put in chains (Acts 21:33). After several trials he was obliged to use his Roman citizenship to appeal to have his case heard by Caesar, hence the voyage to Rome, where he was still chained when dictating this letter.

Although the Emperor was notoriously cruel, Paul faced the prospect of a trial confident of Christ's victory over death (if it should come to that). Trusting Jesus' promise in Mark 13:11 that he would go through trial in a God-glorifying way, Paul thought he would be set free.

Tradition says Paul met his death in Rome (though the date is not clear) so maybe he did not 'continue with all of you'(1:25). But his courage helped Christians around him to speak the Word of God more fearlessly.

### Word List

12	<i>what has happened to me</i>	Acts 23-28; <i>see also</i> map on p3
13	<i>Palace Guard</i> = <i>Praetorian Guard</i> - elite soldiers who protected Caesar, and guarded imperial prisoners	
22	<i>fruitful labour</i>	Winning new converts, building them up in faith
23	<i>depart</i>	Die (2 Timothy 4:6)
	<i>be with Christ</i>	Go to heaven (John 12:26; 14:1-3)

### Bible Connections

13-14	<i>Paul's prison ministries</i>	Acts 16:25; 28:30-31
15-18	<i>motives in preaching</i>	2 Corinthians 4:1-6
18	<i>rejoicing</i>	1:26; 2:17, 29; 4:1,4,10; Psalm 13:5; Rev 19:7
19	<i>power of prayer</i>	2 Corinthians 1:10-11, Romans 15:30-33
	<i>confidence in face of trial/ death</i>	Acts 7:54-8:1; 21:10-14
20	<i>not ashamed</i>	Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:8
	<i>body honours God</i>	1 Corinthians 6:20
21	<i>to live is Christ</i>	Galatians 2:20
	<i>to die is gain</i>	2 Timothy 4:6-8

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 12 *What had happened to Paul?*
- 14 *How did his chains 'encourage others to speak the Word of God more courageously'?*
- 15 *How could preaching be out of envy and rivalry?*
- 17 *What is 'preaching Christ'?*
- 19 *What does Paul's 'deliverance' mean?*
- 20 *How is 'Christ exalted' in His body by life or death?*
- 21 *What does 'For to me to live is Christ....' mean?*  
*How is to die 'gain'?*
- 24 *Why is it more necessary for him to 'remain in the body'.*
- 25 *Did he go to them again?*
- 26 *Why would their joy in Christ overflow on account of Him?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Paul expresses great faith that he will return to Philippi, which did not happen?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

a) surrounding passage

- 20 *exalted to the highest place (2:9)*

b) individual book

- 18 *Rejoice in the Lord, always. (4:4)*

c) whole Bible

- 13 *an ambassador in chains (Ephesians 6:20)*
- 14 *Pray that I may declare (the Gospel) fearlessly as I should. (Eph. 6:20b)*
- 15 *We preach Christ crucified. (1 Corinthians 1:23)*
- 23 *far better/ c.f. paradise (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7)*
- 25 *joy (Galatians 5:22)*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

*12 Paul had been imprisoned in Rome.*

*14 They were encouraged by his example - how he faithfully bore suffering.*

*15 They tried to be 'better' preachers than Paul for their own glory*

*17 Preaching Christ = telling what he has done, see 1 Corinthians 15:3,4.*

*19 Deliverance meant release from prison.*

*20 'Christ exalted' when actions are for His praise and glory.*

*21 'To live is Christ' means it is all by and for Him.*

*Death is 'gain' in that being with Christ is 'better by far'. (23)*

*24 He concludes that it is more necessary, in that God has ordained it.*

*25 There is no record of Paul getting back to Philippi.*

*26 Joy at being reunited with Paul.*

*28 'Standing firm' a 'sign' in that it shows confidence in the ultimate judgement of Jesus over all things.*

*29 Suffering 'granted' as it is a gift of God.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*Paul was not perfect / omniscient. He got it wrong. In the end, he did die. But the exact timing did not matter – he would be in Heaven with Jesus; God would complete the good work in them using others.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Paul is standing firm trusting in God about the malice toward him in the church and the threat of death, without. In life, he enjoys serving Jesus. In death, he anticipates much more. He exhorts all in Christ Jesus, to do likewise.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Faith in Jesus brings knowledge of the life to come with him, which enables us to live life on earth with joy and abandon, even under threat of death.*



2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? **v 21**

*For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

3) How do you think it does this?

*It's a win / win situation:*

*Serving Jesus on earth is a joy; and heaven is far better than earth.*

*We may get it wrong, as far as faith in events is concerned, but ultimately it does not matter.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

21 God, Himself is our goal and prize.

20 God is sufficient.

b) His grace

18 God may speak through imperfect preachers.

c) Jesus / His salvation

15 Jesus is the message.

19 Jesus' Spirit enables us.

23 Heaven is being with Jesus.

26 Joy is 'in Christ'.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do

12 Look for good / God in all circumstances.

18 Rejoice whatever the motive if Christ is preached.

19 Expect your prayers to be answered.

21 Look forward to being the other side of death with Jesus.

25 Work for others' progress / joy in the faith.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Study 3

**1:27 - 2:4**

# Unity in Christ

**Background** The first person in Philippi to believe in Jesus (Acts 16) was Lydia, who at once provided hospitality. Then Paul and Silas were falsely accused, ‘tried’, beaten and jailed. That was how the next convert heard the gospel – the jailer, who was so changed he washed their wounds. So the church there knew that ‘struggle’ (v30) was not new to Paul. They were now facing it too. And, as the jailer well knew, God could bring good from it.

v27 can be translated, 'live as citizens' of the gospel. These colonists, proud of their citizenship of Rome, were to live also as citizens of Christ the King; this would be shown by Christ-like behaviour.

## Word list

1:27	<i>contending</i>	Sticking up for the gospel
	<i>as one man</i>	As a united group,
	<i>those who oppose you</i>	critics of Christianity, whether Jewish, pagan or Roman
1:28	<i>frightened</i>	Used of uncontrollable stampede of frantic horses; so 28 means, <i>don't fear even under extreme threat</i>
2:1	<i>tenderness, compassion</i>	true care for one another
	<i>the Spirit</i>	The Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity.

## Bible Connections

1:27	<i>worthy conduct</i>	Ephesians 4:1-4
	<i>stand firm</i>	1 Corinthians 16:13
	<i>contend for the faith</i>	Jude v3
1:29	<i>suffering for Christ</i>	Matthew 5:11,12; 2 Corinthians 11:24-29
1:30	<i>Paul's struggles in Philippi</i>	Acts 16:16-40, 1 Thessalonians 2:2
2:1	<i>unity in Christ</i>	John 17:20-23; Rom 12:5; Ephesians 4:13; Col 3:14
2:1	<i>fellowship in the Spirit</i>	1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 2:18; 4:3
2:2	<i>make joy complete</i>	John 3:27-30; 15:11
2:3	<i>christian humility -</i>	Acts 20:19; Rom 12:10; Gal 5:26; 1 Pet 5:5-6
2:4	<i>well-being of others</i>	1 Corinthians 10:24

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1:27 What is a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ?*
- 28 How is standing firm a sign*
- 29 Why is suffering 'granted'?*
- 30 What is 'his struggle'?*
- 2:1 Why does he make these 'if you have any ...?' statements*
- 2 What would they be 'like-minded' in?*
- 3 What is selfish ambition?*  
*What is 'vain conceit'?*  
*What does it mean to consider others **better** than yourself?*
- 4 What does 'not only' imply?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 3 What is the place of 'self'?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

- a) surrounding passage
  - b) individual book
  - c) whole Bible
- 28 a sign that they will be destroyed (2 Peter 2:12; 3:11)*  
*.. God and Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead. (2 Tim 4:1)*
  - 29 Granted - faith is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8)*  
*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 5:10)*
  - 2:1 When he saw a large crowd...He had compassion on them. (Matt 14:14)*
  - 4 Love your neighbour as yourself. (Luke 10:27)*

The Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

*1:27 A manner worthy of the gospel of Christ is with the fruit of the Spirit.  
(Galatians 5:22)*

28 *Standing firm is a sign of believe in the sovereignty and judgement of God.*

29 *Suffering is 'granted' because with it follows blessing.*

30 *'His struggle' is against the spiritual forces lined against Jesus.*

2:1 *He makes these to show that of course they have some of these things  
– therefore they must display the fruit of being united with Christ too.*

2 *'Like-minded' means general agreement amongst believers.*

3 *Selfish ambition is seeking progress in exalting yourself.  
Vain conceit is pride in yourself.*

*Better means superior in worth and priority.*

4 *It implies that you look after them as you look after yourself.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

3 *The place of self and the care of it, is a measure your care for others.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Paul expresses his confidence in God for the Philippians' and his own salvation.  
In that light, he exhorts them to live a life worthy of the Gospel – firm in  
doctrine and united in love by the Spirit.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Let your actions, stand firm in faith in Jesus and love each other like Jesus, show  
that you are His.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

*Conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the Gospel. (27)*

3) How do you think it does this?

*It gives the command to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the  
Gospel it instructs them to stand firm in faith in Jesus and then to care for  
one another as He did them.*

# LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

b) His grace

*29 Christ gives the ability to believe in Him and the right to suffer for it.*

c) Jesus / His salvation

*1:27 The Gospel belongs to Jesus.*

*2:1 Believers in Jesus are united with Him*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*27 Conduct yourself in a manner worthy of Jesus' Gospel.*

*Stand firm as you present the Gospel*

*Be united as you present the Gospel*

*28 Do not fear opposition to the Gospel in anyway.*

*Note – such perseverance is a sign to those who oppose the Gospel.*

*Note – the sign indicates those in Christ will be saved; those not will be destroyed.*

*29 Note - suffering, as well as faith in Jesus, is a good gift from God.*

*Note - the Christian life is a struggle.*

*2:1 Note - the benefit of being united with Christ: comfort from His love, fellowship of His Spirit, tenderness and compassion.*

*2 Strive for the 'fruit' of unity with Jesus - like minded, loving, one in spirit and purpose.*

*3/4 Consider others before yourself.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Study 4    **Work out, while God works in**                      **2:5-18**

**Background** Verses 6-11 are often called ‘A hymn to Christ’. Whether Paul composed it, or was quoting an existing hymn, these are some of the finest thoughts about Jesus ever written. We still sing this hymn, e.g. *At the name of Jesus*. This depiction of humility in Jesus, the ‘man going down’, perfectly illustrates his own words in Mark 10:41-45.

It was hugely difficult for a Jew to allow anyone to be equal with God (John 5:18) but after Easter, the first believers could not think of Jesus as anything less than God e.g. Thomas (John 20:28). The Name ‘Lord’ had till then been used by Jews as the only reverent way to refer to God.

### **Word List**

12	<i>work out</i>	Put into practice, live out, apply (Rom 6:8-12)
13	<i>as God works in you</i>	By Christ’s Spirit (Romans 8:9-11; 12:1-3)
15	<i>without blemish</i>	Imagery of a sacrificial lamb
16	<i>run/ labour for nothing</i>	Imagery of running full circuit in stadium, and a piece of cloth rejected as badly woven.
17	<i>poured out</i>	Language of sacrifice and ritual.

### **Bible Connections**

5-11	<i>humility of Christ</i>	Isaiah 53; John 13:12-16
6	<i>Christ’s nature</i> <i>not like the first Adam</i>	Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:3 Genesis 3:15; Romans 5:12
7	<i>Christ as servant</i> <i>Christ as man</i>	Matthew 20:24-28; Is 42:1-4; 49:1f 50:4f; 52:13ff John 1:14; Hebrews 2:14-18
8	<i>Christ’s obedience</i> <i>Christ crucified</i>	Matthew 26:39; John 10:18; Rom 5:19; Heb 5:7,8 Deuteronomy 21:23; Gal 3:13; 1 Cor 1:23; 2 Cor 5:21
2:9	<i>Christ’s exaltation</i>	Isaiah 53:11,12; Daniel 7:13,14; Acts 2:32,33; Hebrews 2:9; Rev 1:12-14
10	<i>submission to Christ</i>	Isaiah 45:23; Matt 28:18-20; Rom 14:11
11	<i>Jesus Christ is Lord</i> <i>confessing Christ</i>	Isaiah 45:23 Romans 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3
12	<i>obedience to God</i> <i>obedience to God’s messenger</i>	1 Peter 1:13-16, 22 2 Corinthians 7:15; 10:6
13	<i>God working in us</i>	see above, and Hebrews 4:14-16; 13:21
14-15	<i>corporate witness of the church</i>	John 13:35
16	<i>church as evidence of Paul’s work</i>	1 Thessalonians 2:19

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 6 *Why the change in writing style?*  
*How might Jesus have grasped 'being equal with God'?*
- 7 *What does 'made Himself nothing' mean?*
- 8 *How did he 'find' Himself in appearance?*  
*How did he become obedient? Did he not want to?*
- 9 *What is the highest place'?*
- 11 *Who is under the earth?*
- 12 *Why in fear and trembling?*
- 16 *Is it right for Paul to boast?*
- 17 *What is a drink offering?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 7 *the ignorance of Jesus*
- 8 *the passivity of Jesus*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible, might help you understand this passage?

- a) surrounding passage
- b) individual book
- c) whole Bible
- 9 *Believers in Jesus are 'raised with Him' where He is 'seated at the right hand of God'. (Colossians 3:1)*
- 10 *All authority on Heaven and Earth has been given to me (Matt. 28:18)*

The Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

6 *Perhaps quoting a well-known saying*

*He could have stayed in glory*

7 *'Nothing' mean of no consequence – no ability, no power, no human status or influence.*

8 *He laid his glory by, was born a baby and as such then discovered whom He was and what His mission was.*

*He was obedient to His Father as his will was revealed.*

9 *Highest place is God's throne. (Rev 5:6)*

10 *'Under the earth' is the abyss where the devil is. (Revelation 9:1 ff)*

12 *Our God is a consuming fire.*

16 *It is right for him to boast only in the Lord. (1 Cor 1:31)*

17 *an offering of wine poured out on the altar*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

7 *Jesus' ignorance – he really was just like us / not omniscient (Heb 2:17)*

8 *Jesus' passivity – his food was to do the father's will (John 4:34)*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Jesus laid aside his Godly rights and humbled himself doing the will of the father – death on the cross. We should act likewise.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Our goal is to be like Jesus sharing His destiny.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? **v 5**

*Your attitude (KJV – mind) should be the same as Christ Jesus.*

3) How do you think it does this?

*It exhorts us to be like Jesus in our natures sharing in His destiny to be with the Father.*



# LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) In general?

7,8 *God, in Jesus became fully human – part of His own creation.*

9 *The Father has ‘rewarded’ Jesus by giving Him **ALL** authority.*

11 *Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.*

b) His grace

7 *Jesus emptied Himself, before we were able to do anything.*

13 *God works in us to do His will.*

c) Jesus / His salvation

5 *Jesus is God’s example for us.*

8 *Jesus obediently accepted God’s plan - the Cross.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

5 *Aim to be like Jesus.*

7 *Wonder at the humility of Jesus.*

12 *Work out your salvation i.e. God writes it, we ‘fill in the blanks’!*

14 *Don’t be complaining — you’ll shine like stars.*

16 *Hold out Jesus in word and deed.*

17 *Rejoice when your ‘children’ overtake you.*

18 *Rejoice for / with those who have been involved in bringing you to faith in Jesus.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Co-workers

## Background

*Timothy* came from Lystra in modern-day Turkey and was of mixed parentage (Acts 16:1-3). His mother and grandmother are named in 2 Timothy 1:5. They taught him the Scriptures (i.e. Old Testament) from infancy (2 Timothy 3:14). But his father was Gentile; so before Paul took him on as assistant and helper, he had him circumcised, to save trouble from strict Jews later.

The Philippians knew Timothy because he came with Paul and Silas on the first visit and would have visited Philippi again in connection with the offering to relieve famine in Jerusalem (Acts 19:22). His name means 'Honouring God'. Timothy represented Paul in various churches, e.g. Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3. *See also* p4 and below).

*Epaphroditus* was *from* Philippi, and had worked with Paul, presumably during the early days of the founding of the church there. See p2. The name means 'charming' or 'handsome'. He survived serious illness at some time between leaving Philippi and the writing of this letter.

## Word list

- 2:22,25 *my son/ brother* not literally, but in Christ. *Son* implies Paul was the human means God used to bring Timothy to faith in Christ.
- 22 *served with me*; Paul could have said, served *me* as a slave, but amended it because Paul himself was also a slave of Christ.
- 23 *as soon as I see* i.e. once the trial verdict is known.
- 29 *risking his life* is a term from gambling: he staked his life to serve Christ, caring for Paul on behalf of the Philippian community.
- 4:2,3 *Euodia, Syntyche, Clement* members of the church at Philippi; the first two had fallen out. We don't know whom Paul meant by 'loyal yoke-fellow' – someone well-known for working with Paul.

## Bible Connections

- |      |                           |  |
|------|---------------------------|--|
| 2:19 | <i>Timothy</i>            |  |
|      | Began to travel with Paul | Acts 16:1-3  |
|      | Represented Paul          | 1 Thessalonians 3:2; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10;<br>1 Timothy 1:2 |
| 2:25 | <i>Epaphroditus</i>       | Philippians 4:18   |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 19 *What does 'hope in the Lord Jesus' mean?*
- 24 *Did he get there?*
- 25 *Why is he personally endorsing Epaphroditus?*
- 26 *Why was Epaphroditus so careful of them?*
- 27 *Why would Paul have sorrow?*  
*Why did God have 'mercy' in letting him live?.*
- 28 *How would Paul have less anxiety?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*If Paul has extolled the benefit of dying, as being 'far better', why does he want others to remain alive?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

a) surrounding passage

- 21 *Jesus made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant (2:7)*

c) individual book

- 29 *joy (1:3,25,262:17,18; 3:1; 4:1,4,10)*

c) whole Bible

- 22 *c.f. 'I have been slaving for you' (Luke 15:29)*
- 25 *fellow soldier (Philemon 1:2)*
- 28 *no anxiety (Matthew 6:25ff)*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.  
The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.  
This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

# LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

- 19 *'Hope in the Lord Jesus' involves being subject to his will*
- 24 *It would seem so (?)*

- 25 *He endorses E to show respect to him and to the Philippians.*
- 26 *Epaphroditus is so careful of them because he is their pastor.*
- 27 *Paul's sorrow is not for Epaphroditus (death would have meant glory) but for himself (his loss of E.) and for the Philippians'.*
- 27 *Mercy was seen by removing the suffering of the illness?*
- 28 *He was concerned for the Philippians and his responsibility for their 'gift' to him of their pastor.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The person who dies is fine. The issue is for us who are left. We grieve but not as those without hope. Grief is an outlet for our pain and loss; it is not an action for the departed.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Paul is sending Timothy to the Philippians – a man who exemplifies Jesus' attitude. He is grateful for the generosity of the Philippians in sending their pastor(?) Epaphroditus and expresses his love and respect for him. He exhorts the Philippian church to honour such men and such behaviour.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*We should honour church leaders who, like Jesus, and in his name, put the interests of their flock before themselves.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? **v 29**

*Welcome him in the Lord with great joy and honour men like him.*

3) How do you think it does this?

*He is to be received and honoured because his work is 'in the Lord'.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*19 God is sovereign over all our plans.*

*27 God is merciful in healing.*

*29 God's leaders are self-sacrificial and humble.*

b) His grace

*19-21 God gives us our 'Timothy'.*

*27 Mercy, not works, moves God to act.*

c) Jesus / His salvation

*22,30 The work of the Gospel / Christ (22,30) is announcing His saving work on the cross.*

*Salvation from sin/healing is an act of mercy. (c.f. Mark 10:46ff)*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*24 Make your plans reflect confidence in the Lord.*

*28 Be careful of other's needs – not your own.*

*29 Welcome/honour in the Lord Christian leaders who are self-sacrificial and humble.*

*30 Do the work of Christ.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

**Background** *Paul* had been a confirmed Jewish legalist, who had thought the way to get right with God was to try to keep the law. His encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road (Acts 9) showed the only way to be saved was by believing what Jesus had done for him on the Cross. This is central to his preaching and writing (Romans 3:21-30).

**Circumcision** Literally: removal of male foreskin. Normally performed when a Jewish boy is one week old, identifying him as a Jew, a member of the Old Covenant (Genesis 17). To a Jew, it was a sign of faith in God's promise to Abraham, committing a man to keep the Mosaic Law. In the NT, Baptism *replaced* it as the sign of the New Covenant (Colossians 2:11,12) thus placing women (Galatians 3:28) and a believer's 'household' (children, slaves) on an equal footing with male believers (Acts 2:39, 16:31). 'Judaisers' said Christian men still had to be circumcised; but Paul's letter to *Galatians* corrected that view and the First Church Council (Acts 15) confirmed he was right.

### Word list

- |     |                          |  |
|-----|--------------------------|--|
| 1   | <i>finally</i>           | Can also be translated: 'to sum up so far'.  |
| 2   | <i>dogs</i>              | 'Judaisers', i.e. Christians who still kept all the Law of Moses.                                    |
| 3-5 | <i>people of Israel</i>  | Covenant name for those chosen by God.   |
|     | <i>tribe of Benjamin</i> | The youngest, best-loved son of Jacob.   |
|     | <i>Hebrew of Hebrews</i> | A Hebrew construction to indicate the superlative; i.e. pure-blooded, could trace his line way back. |
|     | <i>pharisee</i>          | Studied & kept the law meticulously, <i>esp.</i> ethical rules.                                      |
| 9   | <i>righteousness</i>     | Right relationship with God.   |

### Bible Connections

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| 2    | <i>false view of circumcision</i>        | Acts 15:1ff; Galatians 5:2               |
|      | <i>dogs - not allowed in holy city</i>   | Revelation 22:15                         |
|      | <i>- lowest of the low</i>               | 2 Kings 8:1                              |
| 3    | <i>true circumcision</i>                 | Romans 2:25-29; Col 2:11; 1 Pet 2:9-10   |
|      | <i>true worship</i>                      | John 4:24                                |
| 4-14 | <i>Paul's autobiography</i>              | Acts 22; 2 Corinthians 11:22-28          |
| 5    | <i>circumcised on 8<sup>th</sup> day</i> | Leviticus 12:3                           |
| 6    | <i>persecuting the church</i>            | Acts 8:1-3; 9:4-6; 22:4-5; 1 Tim 1:12-13 |
| 7    | <i>gain and loss</i>                     | Mark 8:35-36                             |
| 3:9  | <i>righteousness by faith</i>            | Romans 3:21-26; 4:1-5:1; 9:30            |
| 10   | <i>power of his resurrection</i>         | Ephesians 1:19,20; 2:5                   |
|      | <i>fellowship of his sufferings</i>      | 2 Corinthians 4:10                       |
|      | <i>sharing in his death</i>              | Romans 6: 3-11                           |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1     *Why 'finally'?*  
      *Why 'again' - when was the first time?*  
      *What is it 'a safe-guard' of?*
- 2     *What does he mean by 'dogs'?*
- 3     *What does he mean by 'confidence in the flesh'?*
- 8     *When did he 'lose all things'?*  
      *What did he lose?*  
      *What does 'gain Christ' mean?*
- 10    *How would he know the power of the resurrection?*  
      *What might the fellowship of his sufferings be?*
- 11    *Where is the uncertainty of 'somehow'?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Paul seems here to despise his Jewish heritage which elsewhere he treasures.  
(Romans 9:3-5).*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

- a) surrounding passage
- b) individual book
- 1     *Rejoice in the Lord (4:4)*
- c) whole Bible
- 2     *dogs (Revelation 22:15)*
- 3     *'the circumcision' (Galatians 2:1; Ephesians 2:11; Titus 1:10)*
- 5     *circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21)*
- 10    *c.f. Jesus cup and baptism (Mark 10:39)*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.  
The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.  
This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

*1 Finally means 'for the rest'.*

*'Again' because it was the same as he taught them when he was with them.*

*Safeguard from forgetting or ignoring.*

*2 'Dogs' is a disparaging term.*

*3 'The flesh' are the passing abilities or the power of this world.*

*8 He 'lost' all things when he believed in Jesus: he lost his rights and his separate identity; he gained knowing Jesus and sharing in all the attributes and achievements which would be fully realised in Heaven.*

*10 The fellowship of suffering is being despised and rejected, like Jesus.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*Paul despises his Jewish heritage in comparison to value of being 'in Jesus'*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Rejoice, not in the flesh / things of this world, but in knowing Jesus and sharing in His life, power and sufferings.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Joy is found in Jesus, not the things of this world.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

**v I**

*Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.*

3) How do you think it does this?

*Our source of Joy and well-being is not from our own attributes or achievements but from who we are 'in the Lord'.*



## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

1 God is joyful.

3 *The Spirit enables the worship of God.*

8 *God can be known through Jesus.*

b) His grace

9 *Jesus gives righteousness that comes through faith.*

c) Jesus / His salvation

10 *Knowing Jesus and sharing in His death and resurrection is our salvation and our hope.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 Enjoy the Lord, always.

*Don't be shy about repeating the Lord's instructions / safeguards.*

2 *Don't let legalists rob you of your confidence.*

*Resist the pressures of those who are bound by religious rules.*

7 *Do not be impressed with the 'qualifications' of this world.*

8 *Compare all things to the surpassing greatness of knowing 'Christ Jesus the Lord'.*

*Consider your earthly attributes/ achievements as 'refuse'.*

9 *Make it your life's aim to enjoy the righteousness of Jesus.*

10 *Seek in this life to know Christ – the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering.*

*Anticipate the resurrection of the dead.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Citizens of heaven

**Background** If the false teachers were Judaisers, then *their god is their stomach* refers to their insistence on keeping Jewish food rules; *their glory is their shame* uses OT words to pair their ‘god’ with Ba’al. If they were Gentile Christians who relaxed the moral law (antinomianism) thinking the body was irrelevant because their minds were redeemed, then *god... stomach* refers to unbridled appetite and lusts, *they mind earthly things* means their sensual pursuits. They needed the corrective of Romans 6 & 1 Corinthians 6:9. (Tyndale commentary Ralph P Martin)

*Citizenship* (v20) refers to one’s capital or native city, where one’s name is on the register of citizens. Philippians had been proud to be citizens of Rome. Christians have a new, deeper allegiance – Christ and heaven!

*A Saviour* Paul rarely uses this of Jesus, as Greeks often used it of their gods. In 48 BC, the people of Ephesus decreed Julius Caesar to be the ‘general saviour of mankind’. *Saviour* became a common title for the ruling Caesar. The Romans greeted each other: ‘Caesar is Lord’ – ‘Yes, the Lord is Caesar’; Christians wanted to reply, ‘No, actually, the Lord is Jesus.’

### Word list

- 13,14 *straining, press on towards goal* Terms from athletics
- 14 *the goal* Athlete sets his eye on a mark
- the prize* Undefined; an upward calling leading us to God
- 15 *mature* Fully developed according to an external standard  
(c.f. 1 Cor 15:20; Ephesians 4:10-16; Heb 5:11-14)
- 18 *enemies of the cross of Christ* c.f. Judaisers (see intro to study 6)

### Bible Connections

- |    |                                 |  |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 14 | <i>winning the prize</i>        | Acts 20:24-25; 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:7-8 |
| 17 | <i>following Paul’s example</i> | 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; 4:12  |
| 18 | <i>false teachers</i>           | Gal 6:12; Rom 6:1; 16:17-18; 1 Cor 6:9     |
| 19 | <i>God is their stomach.</i>    | Romans 6:18                                |
|    | <i>mind on earthly things</i>   | Romans 8:5-6                               |
| 20 | <i>heavenly citizenship</i>     | John 17:13-19; 18:36; Ephesians 2:19       |
| 21 | <i>our resurrection body</i>    | 1 Cor 15:42-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18    |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

12 *What is 'all this'?*

14 *What is the prize?*

16 *What have they already attained?*

17 *What was Paul's example / the pattern?*

18 *Why 'enemies of the cross'?*

*Where are these enemies?*

19 *When will they be destroyed, what does 'stomach' mean and what is their glory?*

20 *What is citizenship?*

21 *What will 'be transformed' mean?*

*When will it happen?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Since God will complete His good work (1:6), why do we still need to work, strive, strain to receive it?*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

a) surrounding passage

b) individual book

c) whole Bible

12 *perfect (Matt 5:48; Col 1:28; Heb 13:21; Jas 1:4; 1 Pet 5:10. Rev 3:2)*

14 *called (Luke 5:27; Rom 8:28)*

16 *'What we have attained' – 'a righteousness by faith from first to last' (Romans 1:17)*

19 *destruction (John 17:12; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Pet 3:12; Rev 17:28)*

The Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

12 *'All this' means Heaven on earth.*

14 *The prize is to know God as fully as God knows us.*

16 *Already attained – partnership in Gospel (1:5) sharing grace (1:7) abounding in love (1:9)- or 'righteousness by faith'.*

17 *The pattern = resolute in doctrine and loving sacrificial service of others.*

18 *Enemies 'of cross' because doctrine of atonement is central and vital. Jesus death achieved everything – total salvation.*

19 *Enemies destroyed in judgement.*

*Stomach means temporal pleasures.*

*'Their glory' was enforcing legalism.*

20 *'Citizenship' signified identity, security, responsibility.*

21 *'Transform' means complete our sanctification / be made like Jesus.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*God sovereignly and graciously gives salvation, but we work it out in our lives.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Paul acknowledges that he has not attained the goal of perfectly knowing Jesus, but he exhorts the Philippians to reject the 'dogs' and their passing earthly goals and, as citizens of Heaven, to press on with Jesus.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*We respond to God's grace in salvation by working for Jesus as citizens of heaven.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

**v 12**

*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*

3) How do you think it does this?

*He took hold of us so we could take hold of Him.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*12 God is sovereign – He takes hold.*

*20 God is the Saviour / He will return.*

b) His grace

*12 Christ took hold of me before I take hold of Him.*

*14 God calls; we respond.*

*15 God speaks and reveals.*

c) Jesus / His salvation

*12/14 Jesus took hold of us to give us the prize/eternal life.*

*18 Enemies of Jesus are enemies of His Cross.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*12-14 Respond to God initiative in your life and press on striving to know Jesus.*

*18/19 Resist the pressure of the legalisers and rue their fate.*

*20 Claim the rights of citizens of heaven.*

*Await the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*21 Trust Him to transform our lowly bodies.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## Prayer, joy, peace in the Lord

### Background

We don't need to know what the two ladies in Philippi disagreed about. They needed to be reconciled. Their dispute was spoiling the unity, joy and peace of the fellowship.

For this or any problem, Paul prescribes a remedy: replacement therapy! Choose to swap the response of *anxiety* with comprehensive, thankful *prayer*, focussing not on the problem but on Christ-like qualities. Paul had lived among them; they knew him; he could say v9 to them, but he was not saying, copy *me*; rather, live out what Christ has already put within you.

### Word list

2	<i>Euodia and Syntyche</i>	Two church members in Philippi
3	<i>loyal Yoke-fellow</i>	An unnamed person who worked with Paul, as closely as two oxen yoked together ploughed the same furrow
	<i>contended</i>	Gk <i>synathleo</i> same word at ' <i>c. as one man</i> ' (1:27)
	<i>Clement</i>	Another church member at Philippi
	<i>Book of Life</i>	Genuine Christians who will go to heaven
5	<i>gentleness</i>	Ethical term for being fair-minded, gracious.
6	<i>being anxious</i>	Same term as used by Jesus in Matthew 6:25-34
	<i>prayer, petition,</i>	Former always addressed to God; the latter could be to God or man, stressing our <i>need</i> eg John 2:3.
	<i>requests</i>	Be explicit and precise in what you ask for.
7	<i>will guard</i>	Army metaphor familiar to Philippians; soldiers protected the safest stronghold, e.g. a castle's 'keep'.

### Bible Connections

1	<i>stand firm</i>	1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:8-10)
2	<i>unity of the fellowship -</i>	Ephesians 4:3; Romans 12:3-21)
4	<i>christian rejoicing</i>	Psalms 100; Luke 15:5-7,10; Galatians 5:22
6	<i>no anxiety</i>	Matthew 6:25-34; John 10:28; 14:1; 2 Peter 1:3-4
	<i>.... instead, prayer and thanks</i>	Acts 4:21-31; 16:23-25; 27:21-25
7+9	<i>God / peace</i>	John 14:27; Rom 5:1; Eph 2:13-18; Col 3:15
8	<i>moral transformation</i>	Romans 12:2; 1 Peter 1:13-15; 2 Cor 10:5b

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What leads up to 'therefore'?*  
*What does 'in the Lord' mean?*
- 2 *Who are Euodia and Syntyche?*
- 3 *How had they contended at his side?*  
*Why does he use the phrase 'in the book of life'?*
- 4 *Why does he 'say it again'?*
- 5 *In what way is the Lord near?*
- 7 *How will 'the peace of God ...guard your hearts...?'*
- 9 *What had they learned, received, heard, seen in Paul?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 1 *There was a repeated instruction to rejoice.*
- 9 *He used himself and not Jesus as an example.*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

a) surrounding passage

b) individual book

- 2 *united with Christ .... being like minded (2:2)*

c) whole Bible

- 1 *my ... crown (1Thessalonians 2:19, 2Timothy 4:8; Revelation 2:10)*
- 3 *Book of life (Revelation 13:8; 21:27)*
- 7 *peace of God through Jesus (Romans 5:1)*  
*Peace be with you (John 20:19,20,26)*
- 8 *Set your hearts on things above. (Col 3:1)*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 *'Therefore' – because Jesus will return and complete our salvation and this will not be done by a religious act of circumcision.*

*'In the Lord' refers to our union with Jesus.*

2 *Euodia and Syntyche are part of the Philippian church.*

3 *Contending by proclaiming Jesus and supporting his church.*

*'Book of life' underlines security – names cannot be removed.*

4 *He 'says it again' as he anticipates 'ah but'.*

5 *'The Lord is near' means close at hand by his spirit, and coming back soon.*

7 *God's peace 'guards', in that it protects from pain of anxiety.*

9 *They had seen to 'live is Christ, to die is gain' .*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

1 *'Rejoice' is repeated because they were down, fearing death of Paul, disintegration of the church.*

9 *He uses himself because he is contrasting himself with the circumcisers – 'I am conforming to Jesus not to them.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Resist the legalists. Express your unity in the Lord. Rejoice always. Be positive.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*In the Lord there is always good cause in which to rejoice .*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

**v 4**

*Rejoice in the Lord always.*

3) How do you think it does this?

*If we always rejoice in the Lord, then everything else is in a right perspective*



# LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

4 God is our cause for rejoicing.

5 *God is near.*

7 *God brings peace.*

b) His grace

4 *All that we need is to be found 'in the Lord'.*

9 *Peace comes from presenting petitions to God (not your works).*

c) Jesus / His salvation

9 *Peace with God is gained only through the cross of the Lord Jesus.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

4 Rejoice always, - not just when you feel good.

5 *Let gentleness be your 'hall mark' – the Lord will guard you.*

6 *Don't be anxious – be prayerful and thankful as you seek God.*

7 *Let peace be your total aim.*

8 *Discipline our mind to think about good things, in the Lord.*

9 *Follow Paul's example and the God of peace will keep you.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## True contentment

### Background

Hospitality was evident in Philippi from the outset: Lydia, the first convert persuaded Paul and his group to stay with her (Acts 16:15). Support to Paul continued even after he moved on.

Paul and the soldiers wintered in Malta; it was too dangerous for *anyone* to sail, so there was no news if Paul was even alive. Once they were back on the mainland of Italy and in contact with Christians, (Acts 28:14) news travelled fast and the Philippians could resume their support.

11 *learned to be content* is in stark contrast with the unlearned instinct to anxiety of verse 6. Paul had faced incredible hardships (2 Cor 11:16-31).

### Word list

23 *Caesar's household* People related to the Emperor? Or (more likely) people who worked directly for him.

### Bible connections

10-18 *support for ministry* 1 Corinthians 9:3-18; 1 Timothy 5:17-18.

11 *Christian contentment* 1 Timothy 6:6; Hebrews 13:5.

15-16 *you sent me aid again and again.* E.g. when Silas and Timothy, who had stayed behind in Macedonia (Acts 17:14) caught up with Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:1-5) Paul's use of time changed. How?

19 *God will meet your needs* e.g.: When Abraham sacrificed the ram in place of his son, he called the location, 'The Lord Will Provide' Gen 22:14.

*life of Joseph* Genesis 45:4-11;

*manna* Exodus 16 and 17;

*the Lord is my shepherd ... feeds me, keeps me safe* Psalm 23;

*Giving and receiving* 2 Corinthians 8:9; 9:7-11

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 10 *How did they renew their concern?*
- 12 *What is the secret?*
- 14 *How did they share?*
- 15 *What is the 'matter of giving and receiving?'*
- 16 *What may be credited to their account?*
- 19 *Why 'my God'?*  
*What are 'the glorious riches in Christ'?*
- 21 *Why did he say 'all the saints'?*  
*Why should Caesar's household get a special mention?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Paul's 'back-peddling' (11,17)*

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

a) surrounding passage

- 10 *Rejoice in the Lord. (4:4)*

b) individual book

- 18 *Epaphroditus (2:25)*

c) whole Bible

- 13 *Your strength will equal your days. (Deuteronomy 33:25)*
- 18 *Christ ... a fragrant offering (Ephesians 5:2)*  
*your bodies as a living sacrifice a pleasing sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1)*  
*glorious riches (Ephesians 1:18; 3:16)*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*  
*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*  
*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

*10 they renewed concern by sending Epaphroditus with a gift.*

*12 The secret is relying on His strength.*

*14 They shared by giving and praying.*

*15 Both giver and receiver are blessed by the act of giving.*

*16 He wanted them to give so that they would be blessed in it.*

*19 'My God' – i.e. What you have seen Him do for me He'll do for you.*

*'Glorious riches' are knowing Jesus (c.f. 3:8).*

*21 'All the saints' - underlines unity in Jesus.*

*Caesar's household underlines progress of Gospel .*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*Back-peddling? – though he appreciates and wants to thank them for their gifts etc, he wants them to concentrate on the spiritual, not material, issues.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Paul expresses his gratitude for the Philippians' gift but in doing so underlines his dependency on and sufficiency in Jesus and his priority of the welfare of the Philippians.*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*For those 'living in Christ', physical, temporal needs while important, are secondary to spiritual ones.*

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message?

**v 12b**

*I have learned to be content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty in in want.*

3) How do you think it does this?

*Paul would have been content whether he received the gift or not*

# LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*12 God is our sufficiency*

*18 God can be pleased with our gifts /offerings behaviour*

*19 Pauls God is committed to meet all our needs through his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

*20 God receives eternal glory*

b) His grace

*19 God gives us all we need (without payment)*

c) Jesus / His salvation

*19 The glorious riches are ours through the cross of Jesus.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

2) What should I do?

*10 Rejoice in the concern of brothers for you.*

*12 Learn to be content whatever the circumstance - need or plenty, while appreciating the contribution of others to your needs.*

*13 Depend on God's strength above all.*

*17 Note - An account is kept by God of our good deeds.*

*23 Note - Grace from Jesus may be imparted to our spirit by a person.*

*Now underline the application of the Main Point.*

## *Sharing the Word*

### **Use**

'Hearing the Word' can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

### **Preparing for a group**

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers \*

### **A format**

If you have 45 mins together, you might like to try dividing it up like this.

(If longer or in a large group, you can extend the times)

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1) Drink, bite to eat, chat  | (10 mins) |
| 2) A Bible reading   | ( 2 mins) |
| 3) A Bible study   |           |
| a. Any questions? (Whether answer is known or not!)<br>(Don't answer any, till all questions noted!) | ( 2 mins) |
| b. Any relevant cross references?  | ( 2 mins) |
| c. Discussion of answers   | (13 mins) |
| d. Conclusion  | (10 mins) |
| i. A Key verse and Main Point?   |           |
| ii. What does it show about God / Jesus?   |           |
| iii. What should I do?   |           |
| 4) Sharing (Trials and joys – family, work, self)  | ( 5 mins) |
| 5) Prayer  | ( 1 min)  |

### **Remember!**

As we gather round God's Word

- a) Listen to the views of others
- b) Make room for the novice. They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others' especially, 'seekers' in your sharing together.

\* The **process** is explained and practised in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**'. Email: [office@tpc.org](mailto:office@tpc.org)

## ***“I can read the Bible for myself!”***

To show that the Bible is accessible to all,  
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The Manual explains the basic principles of Bible reading,  
teaches them by means of an interactive course,  
and practices them on a single passage, Mark 10:35-45,  
Participants follow in a Workbook: *Hearing the Word - Introduction*,  
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so they may follow on for themselves.

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