

THE BOOK OF

PHILIPPIANS

REJOICE ALWAYS

study guide

REJOICE ALWAYS:

A 10-WEEK STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

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BACKGROUND TO PHILIPPIANS

Who?

The apostle Paul penned this letter from a Roman prison cell. He and Silas had visited the city of Philippi just over a decade earlier, and it was under their preaching that the first Christians there heard the gospel and trusted in Jesus as their Savior. Paul now writes to this church he loves. N. T. Wright goes so far as to say, “the people of Philippi were the ones who gave him most joy. To be sure, he loved them all; but this letter breathes a confident trust and enjoyment we don’t always find elsewhere.”¹ They are partners in the gospel, fellow partakers of grace, and both were persecuted for their faith.

When?

Paul most likely wrote this letter around AD 62 while he was imprisoned or under house arrest in Rome. The founding of the church through Paul’s ministry is recorded in Acts 16, which likely occurred sometime between AD 48–52. Paul had visited Philippi twice during the first decade of its existence, and a strong gospel partnership existed from the very beginning.

Where?

Philippi was a Roman province in East Macedonia, modern day Greece. It was named after Alexander the Great’s father, the king of Macedon, Phillip II. Philippi was a diverse city with a wide range of religious beliefs and practices. Similar to Rome, nonconformity to the civic religion was not a private religious choice but was a divisive and disruptive act against the state. “Residents of Philippi expressed their pride in their Roman citizenship by accusing Paul and his associates of ‘advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice’ (Acts 16:21). Paul’s complaint that he and Silas were treated unjustly as Roman citizens (Acts 16:37) also points to the high regard for Roman citizenship in this Roman colony.”²

What? & Why?

Paul wrote this letter as a thank you for the Philippians’ support and generosity. “To a large extent, Paul’s letter to the Philippians is his expression of gratitude for their constant friendship and faithful support.”³ He shares with them the good news that Epaphroditus had recovered (2:27) and that Timothy might soon be on his way (2:19). The church in Philippi was likely the first started by Paul in Europe.

Paul knows firsthand the animosity this city had to the gospel and the sufferings the Philippians endured. In Acts 16:23–24, Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned there. It took a miraculous earthquake and the conversion of a jailer to assure their escape (Acts 16:25–26). Paul mentions (1:30) that the believers in Philippi are now engaged in the same conflict he went through. No doubt there would have been a special bond of unity and empathy among these co-sufferers for Christ. Paul wants them to understand how to live faithfully in this world when they are not necessarily welcomed by this world.

¹ N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 84.

² G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 3.

³ Hansen, *Philippians*, 6.

Another key theme is the possibility of joy in the midst of the mess. Much of the content explicitly or implicitly acknowledges the hardship of being followers of Jesus in a fallen world, and yet joy permeates the letter (with “joy” or “rejoice” mentioned fourteen times). This letter is full of encouragements to persevere in the faith, rejoice in hardship, and realize their suffering is painful but not ultimate. Christ has conquered and as citizens of an everlasting kingdom they will one day be vindicated. Paul urges them to not be shaken but to stand firm. Since joy is found in Jesus and not circumstances, Paul assures them they have reasons to rejoice at all times and in all things.

You might summarize Paul's main themes for the Philippians and for us today with these encouragements:

- Rejoice: Choose joy in Jesus despite sorrow in the world.
- Be united: Pursue unity in Jesus despite division within the world and church.
- Stand firm: Endure in Jesus despite persecution from the enemy.
- Press on: Persevere in Jesus despite temptations to give up.

As you study Philippians, be encouraged with the fullness of life God offers you in Jesus. It's certainly not a trouble-free life, but there's still peace and joy in Christ through it all.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

STUDIES & COMMENTARIES

- [*Basics for Believers: An Exposition of Philippians*](#) by D. A. Carson
- [*To Live is Christ, to Die is Gain*](#) by Matt Chandler
- [*The Letter to the Philippians*](#) by Walter Hansen
- [*Philippians*](#) by George Guthrie
- [*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*](#) by Richard R. Melick
- [*Exalting Jesus in Philippians*](#) by Tony Merida

OTHER RESOURCES

- [TGC Course on Philippians](#) (Background)
- For help on how to study a passage of the Bible, see “[Bible Study Questions](#)” by Dustin Crowe at [indycrowe.com](#)
- The Bible Project [video overview of Philippians](#)
- “[The Gospel in Philippians](#)” by Jon Dennis
- “[Introduction to Philippians](#)” at [esv.org](#)
- [*ESV Scripture Journal: Philippians*](#)

**All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Bible (ESV).*

WEEK 1: PHILIPPIANS 1:1–2

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 1:1–2 (ESV)

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

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

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- See the articles and videos in the “Recommended Resources” section that provide an overview of the book of Philippians.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank God for the gift of His Word and for all the blessings that belong to us in Christ.
- Ask God to teach, instruct, encourage, and transform you through studying Philippians.
- Pray that God would increase your joy, peace, and hope in Christ week by week.

INTRODUCTION & PHILIPPIANS 1:1–2

As you prepare for this study, read through all of Philippians to get an overview of the letter.

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. After reading Philippians, what are some of the main ideas, truths, and themes you notice?
2. Read Acts 16:11–40. What are two different responses Paul and Silas receive at Philippi?
3. How does the mention of the two offices of elders/overseers and deacons in Phil. 1:1 help us see the structure, development, and growth of the church since its inception in Acts 16?
4. Read Phil. 1:1; 4:21; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; Col. 1:2; 1 Peter 2:9. What does it mean that we are “saints” or God’s holy ones in Christ Jesus?
5. How might Paul’s descriptions of believers as both saints (holy ones) and those in Christ remind them of their new life in Jesus?
6. Paul writes to disciples experiencing inner temptation and external hostility. Why might they need to be reminded that grace and peace belong to them and can still be enjoyed?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What truths or themes from Philippians are you most excited to learn more about? Why?
2. Paul describes himself and Timothy as servants of Jesus Christ. How do you think that designation of “servant” fits with the overall letter and how Paul wants us to view ourselves?
3. Read Phil. 1:1, 26; 2:5; 3:14; 4:7, 19. What does it mean that believers are *in Christ*? Why is this phrase so essential to Paul’s understanding of the Christian life and how it’s to be lived?
4. These believers lived in the earthly city of Philippi but were also in Christ and His heavenly kingdom (3:20). How should we think about our “dual citizenship” as Christians and what it means for us to walk in and display Christ’s kingdom in everyday life and relationships?
5. Philippians talks a lot about how joy, peace, strength, and transformation in Christ are not only possible but realistic (despite hard situations, life’s stresses, and indwelling sin). How or why do we sometimes allow our temptations, trials, and troubles to rob us of these things?
6. What are ways this group can walk side by side in understanding and applying Philippians?

PHILIPPIANS 1:1–2 SUMMARY

Philippians is a small letter that packs a lot of gospel-punch. Paul assures them of their new identity in Christ and righteousness in Christ while calling them to walk in Christ. Being in Christ comes with great blessing, such as participating in Christ's joy, but also great responsibility, such as practicing humility.

Right from the outset, Paul reminds the believers in Philippi that their lives are different because of Christ. They are *saints*, meaning they are God's holy people, set apart to God and His purposes (1:1). They are also *in Christ* (1:1), Paul's favorite description of our union with Christ where all that belongs to Jesus by right becomes ours by grace. Those who have turned from their sin and trusted in Jesus alone are no longer condemned and guilty "in Adam" but are forgiven, freed, justified, and granted eternal life with God "in Christ" (Rom. 5:12–21). Because they are *in Christ*, they can walk as citizens of Christ's kingdom (3:20) as they participate as citizens of the Roman Province in Philippi (1:1).

Paul's letter urges them to continue in the faith, making progress as they press on and persevere (1:6, 25; 3:12–16). Their confidence and power aren't found in themselves but in Christ (3:3). They can be confident that despite their sin, suffering, and sorrows, God will finish the good work He started in them (1:6). All that we need is given in Christ, and all that God calls us to do is empowered by Christ. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us in every situation (4:13) and supplies us with every grace needed (4:19).

How can we live humbly in a world centered on self? How do we prioritize unity amidst all the division around us? Only through Christ, who modeled pursuing unity by practicing humility in His incarnation and crucifixion, and who now empowers us as the resurrected Lord (2:1–11).

How can we maintain joy in the face of suffering and even death? Only when you consider that your life belongs to Christ and knowing and glorifying Christ is your supreme desire (1:18–26).

How can we possess hope and stand firm during earthly trials and personal weakness? Only through Christ who is our righteousness (3:1–11), peace (1:2; 4:6–9), and strength (4:10–13).

How can we continue to delight in God despite our sin or walk in freedom despite the burdens in this life? Only through Christ who died so that grace might cover every sin and sustain us in all our troubles (1:2, 6–7).

Philippians aims to persuade us that Christ is our everything. Christ is sufficient. We can rejoice in all circumstances because our life is now *in Christ*. When we gain Him (3:8), nothing of eternal value will be lost and everything of eternal value is gained. In this world we will experience troubles and endure trials, but in Christ we have endless reasons to rejoice. Even in the struggles, joy is possible for us because Christ is present with us. We can choose to rejoice always.

WEEK 2: PHILIPPIANS 1:3–11

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 1:3–11 (ESV)

³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- For prayers similar to Phil. 1:9–11, see Col. 1:9–11 and Eph. 1:15–23.
- Thanksgiving introductions: 1 Cor. 1:4; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3; Phm. 4; Eph. 1:3.
- “[God Will Finish His Work In Us](#)” by David Platt at radical.net.
- “[Preservation and Perseverance](#)” by Luke Stamps at thegospelcoalition.org.
- “[Partnership in Prayer](#)” by Rachel Pereira at gcdiscipleship.com.
- “[What Gospel-Centered Prayer Looks Like](#)” by Don Carson at thegospelcoalition.org.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank God for specific Christians who have loved, served, or influenced you.
- Give thanks to God that your salvation, sanctification (maturity), and ultimate glorification are in His hands. Praise Him for His faithfulness, steadfastness, and for His promises.
- Confess ways you’ve been guilty of grumbling (rather than gratitude) or have lacked love.
- Pray back 1:9–11 in your own words, asking God to grow in you and your church an increasing love for one another.

PHILIPPIANS 1:3–11

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. From 1:3–11, what are some things Paul gives thanks for related to the Philippian church?
2. Where do you see God at work in the past, present, and future for believers in 1:3–11?
3. What similarities do you notice between 1:3–11 and 4:10–20? What do these emphases communicate about Paul's gratitude and love for the Philippians?
4. Read Ps. 57:2; 138:8; Jn. 10:27–29; 1 Cor. 1:8; 1 Thess. 5:23–24. How does God's gracious, sovereign work give us confidence He will continue to work in us and keep us (1:6)?
5. Paul prays for them to grow in love for one another (1:9), but verses 9–11 flesh out what that kind of love looks like. How do verses 9–11 help us understand biblical, fruitful love?
6. If you rewrote 1:9–11 in your own words, how would you pray for yourself or for others?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stands out to you about what Paul prays about in 1:3–11? How is your prayer life similar and different?
2. Paul begins with thankfulness to God for His work in the church (instead of beginning with their problems). How can we be alert to and thankful for how God is at work around us?
3. Paul is confident that God will continue the work He started in the Philippians (1:6) but Paul also prays for God to be at work in them (1:9–11). Why should confidence in God's providence and promises encourage us to pray rather than demotivate prayer?
4. Why should 1:6 be a source of encouragement, God-confidence, and hope, including when our faith is weak or where fruit seems small?
5. Read Eph. 3:14–19; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9–10; 2 Thess. 1:3. What are practical things you can do to grow in loving others or to love others better?
6. Paul prays for a discerning love (1:9–11) for others that leads to what is right, true, and good. Why do you think Paul qualifies his prayer about love with these characteristics?
7. If love, righteousness, and all other spiritual fruit flow from Christ to us (1:11), how can you abide in Christ this week so that your life is "filled" with this kind of fruitfulness?

PHILIPPIANS 1:3–11 SUMMARY

The first words in a letter set the tone for what follows. Paul's opening section is full of gratitude to God for His gracious work in the Philippian church and confidence in God to continue working. They are always in his prayers and on his mind (1:3, 7). Paul rejoices in their contributions and partnership, but he also takes joy in knowing their commitment to the gospel ministry is a sign of their commitment to the gospel.⁴ Paul finds greater encouragement in the good work God is doing in them than he finds discouragement for the work still to be done.

The Bruised Reed by the Puritan Richard Sibbes is a book on the Old Testament verse applied to Jesus: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench" (Matt. 12:20). When Jesus sees a reed or branch barely hanging on, He doesn't snap it off. He mends it so it can grow stronger. When Jesus sees a small flame or wick, He doesn't put it out because it's not big enough. He breathes more oxygen into it. He lit the sparks of grace in the Philippians, and He won't let that fire be put out.

When we look at the small spiritual progress in our lives—or look at other believers—we should not lose heart with how little it feels like we've grown. Instead, we can rejoice in the small growth that would not be there apart from God's supernatural, gracious work. When a little child takes their first steps, the family celebrates those few wobbly footsteps before the child drops to the floor. No one would ridicule the child for falling but would rejoice over the baby steps taken.

Progress, not perfection, should be expected in the Christian life, and progress, not perfection, should be the cause of gratitude to God. Small signs of grace are big reasons to give thanks.

Paul rejoices because his confidence is in God, not them (1:6). Since God started the work (salvation; 1:5–6), He will continue the work (sanctification; 1:9–11) until He finishes the work at the end (glorification; 1:6, 10). While we are guilty of starting many projects that we leave unfinished, God never does this. God never gets distracted or behind schedule. He never runs out of resources. He *always* starts what He finishes, and you are no exception. Even now, in the mess of our lives and in the slowness of our spiritual progress, we have reasons to rejoice.

Just as Paul confidently rests in God's comprehensive care for His church, you can rest in God's care for you. God knows we are not yet what we one day will be, but He doesn't love us less because we're not yet there. It is God's caring, nurturing love in all stages of a Christian's life and a church's life that propels us forward. We only see the cluttered renovation in progress, but God sees the beautiful, finished work in advance.

In the meantime, between the work God started in us and the work God will bring to completion, Paul raises the need to keep growing, specifically in love for one another (1:9–11). It's a love connected to knowledge and discernment about what leads to spiritual fruitfulness. This growth in love is a growth that comes through Christ and glorifies Christ (1:11). We praise God for what He's done and pray for God to do more of it.

Because of Christ's work, we look back with gratitude and look forward in confident hope.

⁴ D.A. Carson, *Basics for Believers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 16.

WEEK 3: PHILIPPIANS 1:12–26

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 1:12–26 (ESV)

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. ¹⁶The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- [“To Live is Christ—What Does that Mean?”](#) interview with John Piper at [desiringgod.org](#).
- [“Scared to Death of Dying”](#) by Lara d’Entremont at [gcdiscipleship.com](#).
- [“Suffering by Grace”](#) by David Prince at [ftc.co](#) (For the Church).
- [“What Happens After We Die?”](#) by Aaron Armstrong at [gospelproject.lifeway.com](#).
- Listen to or sing the song “All I Have is Christ” by Sovereign Grace Music.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Confess any idols that have taken Christ’s place, or areas where you find security, satisfaction, and significance in things other than Christ.
- Thank God that He’s with us in trials and suffering and uses them for our good, His glory, and the Church’s growth. Ask God to use you to spread the gospel and encourage others.
- Pray that you would truly know and experience what it means that Christ is your life.

PHILIPPIANS 1:12–26

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In 1:12–26, where do you notice the words “joy” or “rejoice”? What is Paul rejoicing over?
2. In 1:12–18, what are some benefits of Paul’s imprisonment or reasons he can rejoice in it?
3. Read Romans 5:3–5; 2 Cor. 1:3–7; 4:17; 12:7–10; James 1:3–4; 1 Peter 1:6–7. What are ways God uses suffering for good in our life and for good in the lives of others through us?
4. In 1:19, what are two things Paul believes will ensure his ultimate deliverance?
5. Summarize in a couple sentences the dilemma Paul faces over whether he will live or die (1:20–26)? What can you learn and apply from Paul’s priorities and outlook?
6. A big part of Paul’s joy and reason to endure suffering is his fruitful gospel ministry. What are ways you’ve experienced purpose and joy in serving others? How might Paul’s outlook cause us to think more about how we should live to serve and build up others?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why should 1:19 encourage us to pray for one another?
2. Read Phil. 1:21, 23; 3:8–10; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:4; Ps. 16:1–2, 5–6, 11. What does it mean that Christ is your life? How can you practically experience this in everyday life?
3. Paul says, “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (1:21) because it means to “be with Christ” (1:23). He later writes about “the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (3:8). What do Paul’s words tell us about Christ’s central role in his life?
4. How does Paul’s Christ-centered life affect his thoughts about suffering and serving others?
5. Paul sees his trials as a platform to share the gospel and glorify Jesus. Why do trials and suffering often give us a unique chance to bring glory to God? Are there any trials you’re going through right now that might be growth opportunities or gospel opportunities?
6. Paul trusted God, rejoiced in God, and prioritized God’s purposes for his life while in chains. What would it look like to do this, and to follow Paul’s example, in your own trials?
7. What are a couple of specific ways you can apply this passage in your own life this week?

SUMMARY OF PHILIPPIANS 1:12–26

Paul writes this personal correspondence to a church he loves and that loves him. It's clear they were concerned about him in his imprisonment (1:12–26). He writes to comfort them, letting them know his suffering is leading to the gospel's spread (1:12) and Christ's glory (1:18).

Just as Paul prayed for the Philippians (1:9–11), they also prayed for him (1:19). He's confident that through their prayers and the Spirit's power he will be delivered (1:19). To endure suffering with joy (like Paul) and to glorify Christ in our trials, we not only need to be a person who prays but we need to be part of a praying church. We need faithful friends who pray with us, for us, and over us.

Paul's afflictions are part of God's good and wise purposes to grow His people, which Paul later reminds them of in their own suffering (1:27–30). He can rejoice in suffering because the overarching purpose and pleasure of his life is Christ's glory. Christ, not comfortable circumstances, is his source of joy. Paul has this outlook because Christ is his life (1:21).

I rarely approach my life in such a Christ-centered, selfless manner. When things are hard, I'm frustrated because of what I must endure. When people wrong me, at the forefront of my mind isn't usually Christ's glory but my own agenda or reputation. When trials come, my gut-reaction is wanting them to end, not asking how they build up Christ's kingdom. Because my fallen impulses are for self-preservation and self-exaltation, I need Paul's words and example to show me a better way. My comfort-seeking heart needs reminded that my life is not my own but belongs to Jesus.

For those redeemed by Christ, Christ is our life. He is our treasure, joy, strength, hope, Savior, and friend. He gives us purpose in all circumstances and His presence strengthens us in difficult situations. That is why Paul can say things like he's okay living or dying because to live is Christ and to die and be with Christ is gain (1:21–23). Paul rejoices in suffering (1:18) when Jesus is proclaimed—whether with good or bad intentions—even though he's imprisoned. He wants freedom, not for his sake, but for the sake of even more fruitful ministry to other believers (1:22).

Paul isn't so weighed down by the bad news of his situation that he can't celebrate what God is doing. He rejoices because he knows that Christ can be glorified, and Christians can grow, even in suffering. Whether Paul's circumstances improve or worsen, he will glorify Christ and spread the gospel. Whether Paul lives or dies, Jesus will be his peace and joy. Because Christ is his life, he never runs out of reasons to rejoice.

Find comfort in knowing that God is working in your circumstances, even trials and suffering, to bring about His glory, the Church's growth, and your good in everything you endure. And if Christ is your all, then in suffering or in stability, in valleys or on mountaintops, in prison or freedom, and in life or death, Christ can fill your life with hope, peace, and joy because He never leaves you and can't be taken from you.

This week, rehearse this truth: whether in trials or triumph, in pleasure or pain, Christ is my life. When Christ is your life, you have a full life, whatever your circumstances might be. When all you have is Christ, you have everything you need, even if it looks like you have nothing else.

WEEK 4: PHILIPPIANS 1:27–2:11

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 1:27–2:11 (ESV)

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

2 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- [“How to Cultivate Humility”](#) by Katie Davidson at thedailygraceco.com.
- [“Help from Bonhoeffer on Humility and Unity”](#) and [“Pursue Unity by Practicing Humility”](#) by Dustin Crowe at indycrowe.com.
- [“Did Jesus Diminish His Divine Power to Become Human?”](#) by John Piper at desiringgod.org.
- [“The Path to Humility”](#) by Erik Raymond at thegospelcoalition.org.
- [“5 Traits Every Church Must Have to Maintain Unity”](#) by Juan Sanchez at lifeway.com.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Confess any pride, divisiveness, selfishness, or self-exaltation.
- Thank God for the beauty and grace in Christ’s incarnation and for Jesus going low to lift us up out of sin, condemnation, and death.
- Pray for God to reveal any lack of humility or unity and for the strength and grace to “go low” in serving others. Pray that you would be so full of the wonder of Christ’s incarnation and love toward you that it would propel you to graciously love others.

PHILIPPIANS 1:27–2:11

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does Phil. 1:27–30 flow out of 1:12–26 and flow into 2:1–11?
2. Read Phil. 1:27; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12; 1 Peter 2:12; Matt. 5:16. From these verses, what does it mean to walk or live in a manner “worthy” of the gospel?
3. What can the church do to complete Paul’s joy (2:2)? Why would this affect his joy?
4. Read James 4:6–10; 2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 4:1–6; Col. 3:12–13; 1 Pet. 3:8; 5:6. How do humility and selflessness help us reflect Jesus and pursue unity?
5. What does Phil. 2:5 mean and why do you think Paul includes it before 2:6–11?
6. While 2:6–8 focus on Christ’s humility, what does 2:9–11 tell us about Christ’s exaltation?
7. What are ways you personally struggle with pride vs humility, selfishness vs selflessness, entitlement vs servanthood, or division vs unity?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which words or phrases from Phil. 1:27–2:2 highlight the themes of unity and oneness?
2. How are pride, disunity, division, and selfishness all ways of NOT walking in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus (1:27)?
3. Give examples of what it likely would and would not look like for a church to experience unity and oneness? What are things that can cause division, tribalism, or conflict within a church?
4. Read Jn. 17:20–23; Eph. 4:1–6; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Rom. 14:19; Col. 3:13–14. What do these passages teach about the importance and effects of unity?
5. How does Jesus provide the *model* for pursuing unity through humility, and how does Jesus also empower or *motivate* us to live such a counter-cultural and unnatural way of life?
6. What are practical ways you can better go low in humility, put others before yourself, or prioritize unity and oneness with other believers?
7. How do you most need prayer to respond to or live in light of this week’s passage?

SUMMARY OF PHILIPPIANS 1:27–2:11

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable (2 Tim. 3:16), but some verses and paragraphs leap off the page. The theology is so beautiful and the application so significant that your heart soars. Philippians 2:1-11 is one of those passages. Paul leverages the wonder of Christ's incarnation and the glory of His cross to astound us with amazing grace. He went low in servant-humility and sacrificial-love to lift us up (2:6–8). Even though He was the Son of God, Jesus so fully embraced servanthood that He put us before Himself, all the way to the cross.

But as we know, the grave did not hold Jesus down. After the cross, He received the crown (2:9–11). Through His resurrection and ascension to the Father's right hand, Jesus was exalted and enthroned with all glory and power forever. Not for a four-year term or a lifetime reign, but forever. Jesus is now "highly exalted" and has "the name that is above every name" (2:9). And one day, every knee will bow and "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (2:10).

Paul points us to Christ's humility, His taking on the form of a servant, His selflessness, and His sacrificial love because he wants Christians to be changed by these things. He points us to Jesus, both as our model and as our motivation.

Jesus modeled the humility Paul wants us embrace, and when we consider how Jesus selflessly put us before Himself, the gospel of Christ motivates us to humbly serve others. In doing so, we walk "worthy of the gospel" (1:27) or faithfully reflect the gospel. What Paul calls disciples to do in 1:27–2:11 isn't possible in our own efforts or strength. It's mission impossible, unless the gospel of Christ propels us and the Spirit of God empowers us. We must dwell on Christ's gracious love and sacrificial humility in serving us if we hope to humbly serve and love others.

While Paul calls us to cultivate Christlike humility, it's for the sake of experiencing unity and oneness as the Church. The oneness that's been purchased and put into place by Jesus (Eph. 2:11–22) must be kept and guarded by our/the Church's words and deeds.

Paul wants the Philippians to stand firm "in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (1:27). He calls on their shared experiences and blessings in Christ (2:1) to urge them to be "of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind" (2:2). Paul later calls out specific individuals who need to "agree in the Lord" (4:2), but here he calls the whole church to solidarity. And he suggests that one of the main ways unity is protected and prioritized is through humility (2:3–5). In other words, pursue Christian unity by practicing Christlike humility.

Imagine how putting others (2:3–4) before yourself would help prevent division and promote unity. Just envision what would take place if we rejected self-focus and self-expression and took on the mind of Christ (2:5) who put others before Himself. Imagine the testimony to the world if we kept the main One the main thing and rallied around Jesus alone as our supreme joy and hope.

Practicing humility and prioritizing unity are hard work. We can only walk worthy of the gospel (1:27–2:5) when we are rooted in and resting in that gospel (2:6–11). We must meditate on Christ's humility in His incarnation and crucifixion. We must remember how low Jesus went to serve us. We must consider how patient, gracious, merciful, and kind God is to us even now.

WEEK 5: PHILIPPIANS 2:12–18

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12–18 (ESV)

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

¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

¹⁷Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- “[Unless God Works, We Work in Vain](#)” by Stephen Witmer at [desiringgod.org](#).
- “[Philippians 2 and the Mind-Blowing Mystery of Christian Obedience](#)” by Justin Dillehay at [thegospelcoalition.org](#).
- “[Paul’s Final Offering](#)” at [Ligonier.org](#).
- “[Grumbling vs Gratitude](#)” by Dustin Crowe at [indycrowe.com](#).
- “[Obedience is Not a Curse Word](#)” Philippians 2 lab by John Piper at [desiringgod.org](#).

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank God for all the ways He’s at work in you, enabling and empowering any good works or maturity in your Christian life.
- Ask God to continue working in you, shaping your desires, thoughts, words, and actions.
- Pray for God to convict you of any grumbling or quarreling and ask for strength and power to fight these things.
- Thank God for those who have poured their life into yours. Ask God to use your life and bring people into your path that you can serve and build up.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12–18

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How might Phil. 2:12–18 connect to or apply 1:27–2:11?
2. Read 1 Cor. 12:6; Rom. 8:11; Heb. 13:21; 2 Pet. 1:3. What are ways God works in and shapes a believer's desires and actions?
3. Read Num. 14:1–4, 26; Deut. 32:5; James 5:9; 1 Cor. 10:6–11. What is grumbling? Why is grumbling so damaging to our Christian walk and to Christian unity?
4. What are things Christians are tempted to quarrel with one another about? How does this hurt our growth and church unity?
5. What did an Old Testament offering symbolize? How does that metaphor fit with Paul's life?
6. Paul rejoices in seeing his life—even to the point of death—poured out to build up the faith of others? Why should we find joy in sacrificially serving, loving, and ministering to others?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why might the Philippians have been tempted to live a certain way when Paul was around (2:12)? How are we tempted by fear of man or acting differently from one group to the next?
2. Read Phil. 1:27; 2 Pet. 1:8–11; Col. 1:9–10; Eph. 4:1; James 1:22–25. How do these verses communicate that a follower of Christ should expect some change or growth in their life?
3. Paul communicates that we must actively be at work growing in our faith, but it can only happen because of and through God at work in us. Why should this protect us from passivity in our Christian life but also protect us from either pride or pressure (as if it's all on us)?
4. Why are grumbling and quarreling incompatible with Paul's admonitions for unity (2:2) and shining like lights (2:15)?
5. How are you specifically tempted with grumbling and quarreling?
6. What role might holding fast to the words of life have in helping us work out our salvation (2:12) and in avoiding grumbling or quarreling (2:14)?
7. How is Paul—selflessly pouring out his life for their unity and growth—a living example of what Jesus models in Phil. 2:5–11? How might we imitate Paul (as he follows Jesus) in humbly and selflessly pouring out our lives to help others grow in Christ?

PHILIPPIANS 2:12–18 SUMMARY

When you read Paul's epistles, it can be easy to get lost in his run-on sentences and subpoints. But throughout Philippians, while digressions are sometimes made, they usually circle back to the two foundational exhortations in 1:27: be like Christ and love one another like Christ. Live out who you now are in Jesus as His united people.

When Paul calls Christians to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (2:12), he's not suggesting they must work *for* their salvation. Paul consistently teaches that we're justified (declared righteous) by God's grace through faith in Christ. Our righteousness is “from God” (by grace), “through faith,” and “in Christ” (3:9). Salvation isn't earned by good works but is expressed by good works (Eph. 2:8–10). Through Christ, God saves and sanctifies (matures) us.

We fight our sin, pursue holiness, and express our new life in Christ, but we do so in God's power. It is God who works in us, both to shape our desires and our deeds. We *can* work because God *is* at work in us. And as we express our new life in Christ, we walk worthy of the gospel (1:27).

When Paul writes, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing” (2:14), it isn't a random instruction. Grumbling and disputing (or quarreling) were sins the Philippians struggled with as they failed to hold up the glory of Christ and which undermined their unity in Christ. The gospel reminds us we are all sinners saved by grace alone and have nothing other than Jesus to boast in. The gospel also unites us to one another as Christ's Body. When we grumble about one another or quarrel with one another, we display pride and undermine oneness.

Jesus wants the world to see the Church's humble love and gracious unity and conclude that only God could do such a work (Jn. 17:20–21). But when the church grumbles, gossips, and gripes about one another or debates, disputes, and divides over non-essential matters, we look like every other man-made institution and fail to shine as lights (2:15).

Paul alludes to this kind of grumbling and quarreling that characterized the wilderness generation (Deut. 32:5). While they had been redeemed out of Egypt to reflect God's rule and reign in their life, they rebelled against His rule and looked like the surrounding nations. This should not be true of Christ's Church, so Paul exhorts us to learn from their example (1 Cor. 10:11) and to shine as lights by holding fast to the words of life (2:15–16) rather than grumbling or quarreling. Paul himself is an example to them of how a Christian finds their joy in humbly and selflessly pouring out his life so others can be built up in Jesus (2:17–18).

All these temptations that the Philippian church experienced remain temptations for churches and Christians today. We are tempted to confess faith with our mouths but not express it in our words, thoughts, and deeds. We are tempted to grumble and to quarrel—in person, over the phone, or online—and can undermine the church's unity and witness through our sin. But because we are in Christ and He's the one at work in us (2:13), we can reflect the glory of the gospel in our lives and relationships. We can choose gratitude over grumbling, and we can pursue peace over quarreling, because God equips us to do what He commands. We can fight pride and disunity because Christ purchased our unity and Christ models selfless humility.

Christians can reflect the gospel of Christ because we've been changed by the gospel of Christ.

WEEK 6: PHILIPPIANS 2:19–30

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 2:19–30 (ESV)

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. ²⁰ For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. ²¹ For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. ²³ I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, ²⁴ and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

²⁵ I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, ²⁶ for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. ²⁹ So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, ³⁰ for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- [“You Are What You Imitate”](#) by Christina Fox at thegospelcoalition.org.
- [“The Twin Marks of Joyful Plurality”](#) by Dave Harvey at gcdiscipleship.com.
- [“8 Important Things About the Young Timothy”](#) by Adam McClendon at ftc.co (For the Church).
- [“Doing Missions When Dying is Gain”](#) message and [“Do We Need Christian Role Models?”](#) interview with John Piper at desiringgod.org.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank God for leaders or influential figures who have poured into your spiritual life.
- Confess ways you've prized personal comfort over sacrificial love, practiced self-focus rather than selflessness, or displayed pride rather than humility.
- Give thanks for Christ's perfect example of humility and love. Pray that you would be so full of gratitude and joy in Christ's grace that it changes you.
- Pray for wisdom about how you can serve or pour into others.
- Pray for those ministering in churches or spreading the gospel locally and globally.

PHILIPPIANS 2:19–30

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 Cor. 4:17 and 1 Thess. 3:2–3. What are ways Timothy ministered to these churches?
2. How do Paul's words demonstrate trust in God for the deliverance desired (see 2:24; 1:25)?
3. What are five ways Paul describes Epaphroditus in 2:25 and three ways Paul describes what Epaphroditus experienced in 2:26–27?
4. Read Phil. 4:9; 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Tim. 3:10; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:9. Why does Paul see human examples (following Jesus) as so helpful for growing as a disciple?
5. Do you have any models or influences whose life and doctrine you learn from? Is there anyone you are discipling or pouring into?
6. Philippians 2:19–30 celebrates the Christlike behaviors of selfless service and sacrificial love. Where is it hard for you to sacrificially serve others or put others before yourself? What are ways you can grow in humbly serving others or sacrificially loving others?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Phil. 2:19–30 communicate the depth of relationships and loving concern the Philippian church, Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus all had for one another?
2. Read Phil. 2:3–4, 20–21. What related words connect these two passages? How is Paul using Timothy as an example of someone who put others before himself (like Jesus)?
3. Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus are put forward as examples of the Christlike humility and selflessness that Paul desires to see from the Philippians. Why is it so helpful to not just have teaching about how to follow Jesus, but also models or examples of what it looks like?
4. Who are people you look to as an imperfect example of what it means to know, love, and follow Jesus? How are you trying to be this kind of example for others around you?
5. Paul often uses joy in the context of relationships within the local church and for Christian leaders pouring into others (1:4, 25; 2:17–18, 29). How might we better experience joy in the way we receive and relate to one another in the local church?
6. What is one way you can respond to, apply, or live differently in light of 2:19–30?

PHILIPPIANS 2:19–30 SUMMARY

In Philippians, the Christ hymn (2:5–11) declaring the wonders of the Son of God taking on the humility of flesh and sacrificing His life for us is so powerful that its aroma lingers throughout the letter. The sinless, glorious Jesus embodied a servant in how He chose to go low in putting others before Himself. He did this all the way to the most humiliating and excruciating place possible, the cross. There He took our death so we might have life in Him. He took our sin so we might have righteousness in Him and redemption through Him.

Like a candle's fragrance filling a room, the gospel in Philippians 2:5–11 is so powerful and sweet that it fills and permeates Paul's letter. It helps make sense of later passages, such as Philippians 2:19–30, where Paul sets forth godly examples of servants who imperfectly yet faithfully imitate the humility, selflessness, and sacrificial love of Jesus. Their joy in Jesus leads them to serve and give of themselves so that others might experience joy in Jesus.

Notice the love that characterizes these early Christians. We see Paul's love for his fellow workers, Epaphroditus and Timothy (2:19–30), but we also see their love for the church at Philippi. Paul mentions their distress because Epaphroditus has been so ill (2:25–26). These believers cared about one another. They prayed for one another (1:19). They poured themselves out (2:17), even at the point of risking their lives (2:30), for Christ's Church. Paul gives us a picture of the bond of love and gift of joy among fellow Christians.

But Paul also puts forward Timothy and Epaphroditus as examples of godly men who modeled the humility, selflessness, and love of Jesus. Paul says that they know Timothy's "proven worth" (2:22), meaning Timothy has a track-record among them for faithfulness, truthfulness, and love. Paul draws on the language of Philippians 2:3–4 when he points out how Timothy puts Christ and His people before himself. He seeks their interest above his own. Timothy reflects the servant lifestyle of Jesus in his humility and love.

The same is true of Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus was sent by the church at Philippi to Paul, with both encouragement and gifts in hand (2:25, 30; 4:18). Paul eventually sends him back, not only to carry Paul's letter to the Philippians, but to encourage and minister to them. Paul commends Epaphroditus because he not only labors for these believers (2:25) but he's willing to risk his life for them (2:30). Paul connects Epaphroditus's selfless service that almost leads to his death (2:30) to his prior words about Jesus humbling Himself for us even to death (2:8). Paul commends Epaphroditus because he walks worthy of the gospel (1:27) by imitating Jesus's sacrificial love.

As followers of Jesus, we not only need biblical teaching about what to believe and how to live, but we need godly examples who help show us what this looks like in action. Paul gives the Philippians living examples of Christlike love and selflessness in himself (2:17; 3:17), Timothy (2:19–24), and Epaphroditus (2:25–30). We need people whose doctrine and example (2 Tim. 3:10; 1 Cor. 11:1) show us in everyday life what it looks like to follow Jesus. If you have those people in your life already, honor them and give thanks for them (2:29). If you don't have them yet, look for them and get to know them. And as you continue to pursue Christ, invite others into your own discipleship of Christ as one way you can help disciple them.

Rejoice in Jesus, and rejoice in God's gifts in the form of people who help point you to Jesus.

WEEK 7: PHILIPPIANS 3:1–11

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 3:1–11 (ESV)

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

²Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

³For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:

⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- [“Must We Count All as Loss to Follow Christ?”](#) by Jason Meyer at crossway.org.
- [“How to Count It All as Loss”](#) at desiringgod.org and [“Is Jesus Worth Following at Any Cost?”](#) at crossway.org by John Piper.
- [“No Blank Slate Christianity”](#) by Jared Wilson at ftc.co (For the Church).
- [“A Tale of Two Citizens”](#) and [“Imputation”](#) by Dustin Crowe at indycrowe.com.
- [“Attaining the Resurrection”](#) at Ligonier.org.
- Read Acts 9:1–19 and Gal. 1:6–2:21 for more on Paul’s conversion.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank God that in Christ we’re declared righteous, made alive, and reconciled to God.
- Confess any ways you trust in your morality, knowledge, performance, or religious deeds.
- Ask God for a deeper, more lasting joy through the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus.
- Pray that in your suffering, you would experience Christ’s nearness and power, and that it would lead to conformity to Christ and longing for the resurrection of all things in Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 3:1–11

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Paul see teaching a gospel of works—meaning our deeds contribute to our salvation—as so dangerous that he calls it evil (3:2)?
2. How does Paul describe Christians in Phil. 3:3, and what does each description mean?
3. Read Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25–26; Rom. 2:25–29; Col. 2:11–14; Gal. 5:2–6. What did circumcision symbolize in the Old Testament? How do New Testament writers apply circumcision to the spiritual work God does in the heart of a believer?
4. In Phil. 3:7–9, what are ways Paul talks about the shift in how he viewed all his works, merits, or the things he trusted in before Christ?
5. Paul talks about the surpassing worth of knowing Christ (3:8), as well as knowing Him and the power of His resurrection (3:10). What does it look like to know Christ in these ways?
6. Read 1 Cor. 15:20–23, 54–57; Jn. 11:25–26; Rom. 8:11. In what sense do we experience Christ's resurrection power now and how will we experience it in the future?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Philippians 3:4–6 talks about ways Paul boasted in his flesh because of his own good works, religious deeds, and moral zeal. What are ways today people trust or boast in their own performance, moralism, or religious participation?
2. Read Phil. 3:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:12–21; Eph. 2:8–9; Gal. 2:15–21. How is Christ's righteousness the grounds by which a person is declared righteous (justified)? How does someone receive this free and gracious gift of Christ's righteousness?
3. How does finding his right standing, satisfaction, significance, and strength in Christ alone—and not in morality, knowledge, respect, or religious performance—give Paul true joy?
4. Read Jn. 15:18–21; Rom. 8:17; 1 Peter 2:21; 3:14; Phil. 1:29–30. What are ways we share in Christ's sufferings? How does sharing in Christ's sufferings lead to better knowing Him?
5. If suffering with Christ makes us more like Him, deepens fellowship with Him, and is part of how we get to know His surpassing worth and resurrection power, how should we think of and endure suffering different in light of these “gains”?
6. What do you most need to remember, respond to, or rest in from the passage this week?

PHILIPPIANS 3:1–11 SUMMARY

In *Prodigal God*, Tim Keller writes about how both the prodigal and the self-righteous son need the Father's grace (Lk. 15:11–32). Doing the right things for the wrong reasons—like to gain respect from others or earn something from God—is as sinful as doing the wrong things. Keller writes:

“To truly become Christian we must also repent of the reasons we ever did anything right. Pharisees only repent of their sins, but Christians repent for the very roots of their righteousness, too. We must learn how to repent of the sin *under* all our other sins *and* under all our righteousness—the sin of seeking to be our own Savior and Lord... It is only when you see the desire to be your own Savior and Lord—lying beneath both your sins and your moral goodness—that you are on the verge of understanding the gospel and becoming a Christian indeed.”⁵

In Philippians 3, Paul shows us that we not only need to repent of our selfish deeds, but we also need to repent of trusting in our good works. Paul thought his righteousness was in his religious performance, morality, zeal, or keeping God's law (3:6). But these self-righteous works done in his power were what Paul ended up repenting of. He confessed that they were not a gain or of any value to him, but they were actually a loss, worthless, and an impediment. He stopped trusting in them, and instead, he trusted in Christ alone.

Paul received the righteousness that is a free gift “from God,” found “in Christ,” that we receive “by faith” (3:10). Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Our sin is placed on Christ as He takes our punishment, and Christ's sin is credited (imputed) to us so we are justified in Him. This is known as the great exchange (2 Cor. 5:21). Though we contribute nothing, Christ has contributed everything needed through this gift of righteousness. That's why Christ is our true “gain” (3:8) and everything else is considered rubbish or garbage.

Paul has choice words for the false teachers contradicting this gospel of grace (3:2), and he warns the Philippians to “look out” for anyone undermining Christ's sufficiency by adding human works. Paul highlights circumcision as one of the works of the law some were requiring (3:2–3; see Acts 15:1–11 and Galatians). Circumcision was the sign given to Israel, but the physical act pointed to a deeper spiritual reality. God wanted a people with hearts that were circumcised, meaning hearts set apart to God and that had the old heart of stone cut away (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4). Paul makes it clear that those who are now in Christ, who have experienced regeneration (a heart made alive by the Spirit), are the spiritually circumcised (Col. 2:11–14; Rom. 2:25–29). That's why Paul says those who have trusted in Jesus are “the circumcision” (3:3).

That is not to say that when we gain Jesus, life is full of sunshine and rainbows. Paul endured much suffering on behalf of Christ (3:10). But when he suffers on behalf of Jesus, he suffers with Jesus. It deepens his walk with Christ and makes him more like Christ. Suffering and death cannot steal his joy because it's rooted in the resurrection life experienced in Christ (3:11).

All this amazing gospel news is because of God's grace given to us in Christ alone. Our boast and our joy have nothing to do with ourselves and everything to do with Jesus. Christ is our righteousness, our resurrection power, and our reason we can rejoice in all things.

⁵ Tim Keller, *Prodigal God* (New York, NY: Dutton), 78.

WEEK 8: PHILIPPIANS 3:12–21

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 3:12–21 (ESV)

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

¹⁷Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- “[Redeeming Discipline](#)” by Scott Hubbard at [desiringgod.org](#).
- “[What Leads ‘Christians’ Away from Christ](#)” by Marshall Segal at [desiringgod.org](#).
- “[I press on, because...](#)” by Ray Ortlund at [thegospelcoalition.org](#).
- “[Citizenship in Heaven](#)” sermon by Charles Spurgeon.
- “[Citizens of Heaven](#)” by Keith Mathison at [Ligonier.org](#).
- “Think this way”: Phil. 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:2, 10.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank God for the great hope Christians have in our future bodily resurrection.
- Pray for wisdom to discern false teaching and false teachers.
- Ask God to help you live in light of eternity and as a citizen of heaven on earth.
- Pray for continued progress and growth in knowing and worshipping Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 3:12–21

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are a few ways 3:12–21 relates to 3:1–11, including with specific phrases or themes?
2. Read Phil. 1:9–11, 25, 27; 2:12–13, 16; 3:16–17; 4:1, 9. What do these verses communicate about the needs to hold fast and to make progress?
3. What are some differences between those whose mind is set on earthly things (3:19) and those who are citizens of heaven (3:20–21)?
4. Read Rom. 16:17–18; Gal. 1:8–9; 1 Tim. 6:8–10; Titus 1:9–16. What are some of the warnings Paul gives about divisive people or those who spread false teaching?
5. What does Phil. 3:20–21 tell us about Jesus?
6. Read Jn. 5:28–29; 6:40; 11:24–25; Rom. 6:5; 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:51–56; Rev. 22:1–5. Why is our future bodily resurrection and dwelling with Christ on the New Earth meant to be such a source of hope and joy for believers?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Paul doesn't settle with where he's at in his faith, but he presses on (3:12, 14) and strains forward (3:13) in his pursuit of Christ. What are ways we sometimes settle with where we're at in our walk with God or with the maturity or passion of our faith?
2. How might this call to press on and strain forward relate to Paul's instructions to hold true (3:16) and keep our eyes on those who have modeled a godly life and sound doctrine (3:17)?
3. Paul emphasizes the need to both stand firm in faith and grow in faith (1:9–11, 25, 27; 2:12–13, 16; 3:16–17; 4:1, 9). What things tempt you to not stand firm in your faith? What things might you need to put into practice to help you stand firm and make progress in the faith?
4. Paul warns against those who spread division and false teaching. How do you guard against voices, platforms, and authors or speakers who can subtly sow division or false doctrine?
5. Read Eph. 2:19; Heb. 12:22–23; Matt. 22:15–23. If we are citizens of heaven, what are ways we can faithfully live out our heavenly citizenship while on earth?
6. How should waiting and anticipating Christ's return—and our future resurrection and glorification—help us hold fast to what is true and live faithfully as citizens of heaven?

PHILIPPIANS 3:12–21 SUMMARY

In 3:12–21, Paul repeats several emphases from his letter. We need to hear most things more than once. Repetition is a key to both memory and feeling the significance of a truth.

Paul echoes the theme that he has not yet reached perfection, nor is he passive, but he presses on to make progress in his walk with Christ. Because he has not yet been resurrected (3:10–11), he remains imperfect, which is partly why he anticipates his future resurrection so much (3:21). But this doesn't lead to a life of passivity, settling with where he's at, or a loss of passion to know Christ. Paul doesn't look back at the growth and maturity in his life and feel content to stay there, nor does he look back at mistakes or failures of the past and let them hinder him, but he presses on (3:12, 14) and strains forward (3:14) in what is his ultimate passion and goal: knowing Jesus. He wants to know Jesus now—which leads to joy in Jesus, unity in Jesus, and better reflection of Jesus—but he also looks forward to knowing Him fully one day.

But as Paul and the Philippians run this path, there are discouragements, obstacles, and threats along the way. As the Philippians press on, they must remember that the Christian life isn't a sprint, but a marathon. It's about endurance, not speed. They must hold fast until the end (3:16). Paul has urged this steadfastness in the face of suffering, division, or temptation already (1:27; 2:16) and will do so again (4:1). To make progress (3:12–14), they must not shrink back in fear, get sidetracked with temptation, shrivel up under suffering, or split off through division. Instead, they must press on in the firmness of faith as they hold onto the words of life (2:16). They must remain steadfast and make progress. They need to keep going and continue growing.

As citizens of heaven who live on earth (3:20), their path is ultimately leading them toward eternal life with Christ. That's what Paul anticipates and awaits (3:20–21) with great joy. Paul has mentioned the resurrection of our bodies (3:10–11), being with Christ (1:23), or the day of Christ (1:10; 2:16) throughout his letter. This joy must be on Paul's mind as it continues to come up, not only as a source of hope and rejoicing but also as a reality we should live in light of while on earth. As citizens of heaven who will one day dwell with Christ forever in our glorified bodies, these truths should cause us to walk in faithfulness and steadfastness in the present.

But Paul warns them again (3:2) that there are false teachers, ungodly examples, and those who live with their minds set on earth (3:18–19) who have a different agenda. They live not for heaven but for earth. They live not to selflessly serve others but to selfishly use others. There are dangerous and divisive voices who can lead others into sin, both in their teaching and their lifestyle. But there are also men and women with sound doctrine and a Christlike life who will help them press on and stay on the path that leads to Christ. Paul urges them to follow him and to keep their eyes on those who walk in his example (3:17).

We would be wise to walk in the footsteps of those who have their hearts and minds set on Jesus, whose joy and hope is in Jesus, and who follow Jesus's example.

Paul encourages us with the amazing future that awaits us, including our bodily resurrection, sin being removed as we finally experience perfection, and dwelling with Christ forever. But he also encourages us not to sit back and settle with the progress we've made (or not made), but to press on, stand firm, and pursue knowing Christ now and living today in light of His return.

WEEK 9: PHILIPPIANS 4:1–9

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 4:1–9 (ESV)

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

²I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ³Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- ["Our Disagreements are Different from the World's"](#) by David McLemore at [gcdiscipleship.com](#).
- ["Why Does It Matter That Their Names Are in the Book of Life?"](#) by John Piper at [desiringgod.org](#).
- ["How to Rejoice Always"](#) by Kristin Link at [wellwateredwomen.com](#).
- ["Rejoice in the Lord!"](#) by Peter Adam at [au.thegospelcoalition.org](#).
- ["Three Truths About God to Remember When Anxious"](#) by Dustin Crowe at [indycrowe.com](#).
- ["Don't Be Anxious About Anything! Is That All God's Got to Say?"](#) by Paul Grimmond at [au.thegospelcoalition.org](#).

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank God for the peace He gives us in Christ.
- Spend some time praising and thanking God for who He is and what He's done for you.
- Pray your burdens, anxieties, worries, and fears to God and put them in His hands.
- Ask God to help you set your mind on what leads to joy, unity, and growth in Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 4:1–9

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are some actions commanded or things Paul tells these believers to do in Phil. 4:1–9?
2. Read Phil. 2:2; 4:2–3; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Rom. 12:16–18. What is the difference between uniformity in our thinking versus unity in our thinking? How do we seek unity or oneness even when there are areas in which Christians have freedom to think differently?
3. In Phil. 3:2, 18–19, Paul urges the Philippians to look out for those who spread false doctrine, but in 4:2–3 he urges agreement and unity. How might we know when we need to take oppose bad teaching versus when we should avoid quarreling (2:14) and disunity (2:2)?
4. What might it look like to rejoice in all things (4:4)? What can you thank God for today?
5. When you worry, what are you saying about God's trustworthiness, power, and love? How do you then fight anxiety, fear, or worry with the right knowledge of God and the gospel?
6. How might putting into practice Phil. 4:8–9 help the believers at Philippi experience the joy, unity, peace, and progress that Paul has talked about in this letter?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16–18; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17. Why can Christians rejoice or give thanks in *a//* circumstances?
2. Read Matt. 6:25–34; 1 Peter 5:6–7; Jn. 14:27; Heb. 13:6; Is. 41:10; Rom. 8:28. What truths about God or promises from God in these verses give peace when we're anxious or worried?
3. How does prayer help us give our fears and worries over to God? Why does joining thanksgiving to our prayer requests help us rest in God's peace (4:6–7)?
4. Paul says that God's peace guards our minds and hearts (4:7), keeping us from anxiety (4:6). What are ways we experience or walk in that peace?
5. In a day with smartphones, internet, and social media, what are ways we're tempted by distracting, divisive, and destructive things?
6. What should we set our minds on—and avoid setting our minds on—to apply Phil. 4:8?
7. How do you most need to apply this week's passage? Are there specific truths you need to remember, rest in, or do differently this week?

PHILIPPIANS 4:1–9 SUMMARY

As Paul starts to finish his letter, he ends with a flurry of encouragements and exhortations:

- Stand firm (4:1)
- Agree in the Lord (4:2)
- Help believers seek reconciliation (4:3)
- Rejoice always (4:4)
- Let your reasonableness or gentleness be clear (4:5)
- Don't be anxious about anything (4:6)
- Pray about everything (4:7)
- Think about whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and commendable (4:8)
- Put into practice the things you have both heard from us and seen in us (4:9)

Paul returns to the theme of unity when he urges two women, Euodia and Syntyche, to “agree in the Lord” (4:1). Paul calls them to put aside their differences or disagreements so they can be of one mind (2:2). And he asks others in the church to “help” (4:3) them do this by acting as peacemakers. It's another appeal to the Philippians to pursue unity by practicing humility.

Paul then tells them to rejoice *in the Lord*. This letter has emphasized that because our joy is in Jesus, it's not tied to circumstances. Because joy isn't dependent on our circumstances, we can choose to rejoice in all things and at all times. We choose joy by giving thanks in all things (4:6; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17). Instead of grumbling (2:14) or worrying (4:6) about circumstances, we entrust our circumstances to God through prayer and give Him thanks.

Paul instructs us not to be anxious *about anything* but to pray (with thanksgiving) *about everything*. Too often we do the reverse, we're anxious about almost everything and rarely give thanks for anything. Worry is our gut-reaction, not prayer. But Paul is kind to redirect our eyes onto God. The things that cause fear, worry, and anxiety are entirely out of our control, but like all things, they are entirely under God's control (3:21). We can't find peace in getting answers, circumstances improving, or seeking control, but we can find peace in God. There is no rest apart from resting in God.

This is how we “guard” our hearts and minds from disunity (4:2–3) and anxiety (4:6). Paul's mention of our hearts and minds in Phil. 4:7 likely connects to his instructions to think about what is excellent and praiseworthy (4:8) and to walk in the sound doctrine and Christlike lifestyle Paul passed onto them (4:9). As we set our minds on what is true, good, and right—rather than what leads to disunity or causes anxiety—we will walk in the peace (4:7) of the God of peace (4:9). Ultimately, as we give thanks to God for who He is and what He's done, as we rehearse His many precious promises to us, and as we rest in who we now are in Christ, these are the excellent and praiseworthy things that promote joy and peace and protect us from fear and worry.

This is practical truth for us as Paul lays out a path to enjoy and experience God's peace (4:7, 9).

- Meditate on all the glorious truths and promises in Christ rather than letting your thoughts chase down fears and worries.
- Pray over everything and choose to rejoice in all things.
- Give thanks instead of grumbling.
- Resist anxiety by resting in the power, providence, and peace of God.

This is how we enjoy and experience the peace of God.

WEEK 10: PHILIPPIANS 4:10–23

Before getting to the questions, ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read the passage in its entirety. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes of what you see or what stands out to you.

PHILIPPIANS 4:10–23 (ESV)

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

¹⁴Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. ¹⁵And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. ¹⁶Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. ¹⁷Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. ¹⁸I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. ¹⁹And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

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

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

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

- [“The Greatest Promise in the Bible”](#) by H. B. Charles at ftc.co (For the Church).
- [“Will God Provide for Your Needs?”](#) by Garrett Kell at thegospelcoalition.org.
- [“Victory through Suffering”](#) by Benjamin Merkle at thegospelcoalition.org.
- [“The Secret in Every Circumstance”](#) by David Mathis at desiringgod.org.
- [“The Apostle Paul’s Secret to Contentment”](#) by John Piper and [“10 Key Verses on Contentment”](#) at crossway.org.
- [“Can We Really Be Content?”](#) podcast by Erik Raymond at crossway.org.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER PROMPTS

- Confess ways you’ve not trusted God to provide or been content with what He’s given you.
- Thank God that He’s promised to supply your every need and strengthen you in all things.
- Pray for contentment and joy in Jesus through whatever circumstances you’re in.
- Ask God to help you remember and live in light of all you’ve learned in Philippians.

PHILIPPIANS 4:10–23

STUDY & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In Phil. 4:10, 14–18, what are ways the Philippians cared for or partnered with Paul? How does their partnership demonstrate their love for Paul and the fruit of God's work in them?
2. What are some of the circumstances for Paul and the Philippians that might have made contentment and joy difficult?
3. What do you think it means that Paul didn't merely seek their financial gifts, but he also sought "the fruit that increases to your credit" (4:17)?
4. Why are serving others (2:17) and financial gifts to others (Phil. 4:18; Heb. 13:16) called a pleasing offering or sacrifice to God?
5. How can God's promise in Phil. 4:19 lead to contentment in all circumstances (4:11–13)?
6. What do you think it means that God provides through His "riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (4:19)? How does God providing in this way lead to His glory (4:20)?
7. What themes or truths have been most helpful, encouraging, convicting, or personally relevant to you in this season? Why?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some things that make contentment challenging or stir up discontentment?
2. Why can Christians experience contentment (and joy) in any and all circumstances—regardless of what resources, comforts, and pleasures we have or don't have?
3. How can you walk in Christ's strength (4:13)? Where do you most need His strength today?
4. What might be unwise ways to apply Phil. 4:13, and what are ways it can be applied?
5. How might Paul's encouragements to give our anxieties to God in prayer (4:6) and to rejoice and give thanks in all circumstances (4:4, 6) relate to experiencing contentment (4:11–13)?
6. Read Ps. 23:1; 145:15–16; 2 Cor. 9:8; Matt. 6:33–34; 7:7–8; 2 Pet. 1:3. How do you rest in God's promises to provide for you? Where do you most need to believe and apply this?
7. What verses, truths, promises, or instructions from Philippians do you most need to remember or apply to your life in this season? Why?

PHILIPPIANS 4:10–23 SUMMARY

As Paul closes his warm, pastoral letter, he expresses his thanksgiving to God for the partnership and friendship of the Philippians (4:10). An opportunity to demonstrate their concern for Paul and his ministry opened (4:10, 14–18), and they became financial (4:15–16) and prayer (1:19) partners. Their gift will reap spiritual dividends (4:17) and is a pleasing sacrifice to God (4:18). The love between Paul and the Philippians, as well as their shared mission to see the gospel spread and churches flourish, has been evident throughout this friendly epistle.

But Paul's thankfulness for their gift doesn't mean Paul felt dependent on it or discontent without it; Paul explains his contentment and trust in God in all circumstances (4:11–12). Paul has learned contentment in any situation, even when hungry, needy, or humbled in low circumstances. Paul can stand firm, rejoice, and rest in contentment in all things because God provides for him (4:19) and strengthens him (4:13). This famous verse, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (4:13) is situated in this context of contentment. While it might apply to other aspects of faith, Paul specifically refers to how God empowers, sustains, and provides the strength and peace he needs in challenging circumstances.

The same is true for us today. How do we rejoice always? How can we be content in any circumstance? How can we stand firm despite suffering and temptation? How do we entrust our burdens to God rather than being anxious? We can do all these things because God is the One strengthening and satisfying us. Because our joy, contentment, and hope are found in Jesus and not in our circumstances, we can rejoice in all things and experience contentment in all things.

I can do all things through Christ because Christ is with me in all things.

Paul reminds the Philippians of this promise that he experienced firsthand: "my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (4:19). Because God takes care of all of our needs, we can rest in Him in all things. Because we trust God will supply every need (4:19) and strengthen us in every situation (4:13), we can be content, rejoice always, stand firm, press on, and give thanks.

Our confidence in God leads to contentment in God. It's resting in God's promises and provision that enables us to know His peace and praise Him in all things.

In Christ, we have everything we will ever need, whether it's a new status as God's holy people (1:1), adoption as God's children (1:2), the promise we'll be kept until the day of Christ (1:6), the indwelling Spirit (1:19; 3:3), Christ's righteousness (3:9), the hope of resurrection (3:10, 21), unity in the Church (2:1), Christ's empowering example of humility and sacrificial love (2:5–11), a regenerated or new heart (3:3), heavenly citizenship (3:20), God's peace (4:7, 9), Christ's power in all things (4:13), or God's promise of provision (4:19) and grace (4:23) for anything we need.

We have everything in Jesus, which is why our joy is in Jesus and not in circumstances. It's the reason we can rejoice and give thanks no matter what. Because Jesus will never be taken from us and we will never be separated from Him, it's a lasting joy. Consider all that you have in Jesus, and press on to know Him even more, and you will never lack reasons for joy. In fact, the more we set our hearts and minds on Jesus, the more we taste and experience the joy that is ours.

