



PHILIPPIANS

FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

AN INDUCTIVE STUDY ON THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

PHILIPPIANS

FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL



GRACE
BIBLE CHURCH

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BIBLE STUDY METHODS

OBSERVE // *what do I see?*

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, “**What do I see?**” This is the crucial skill of **observation**, which lays the groundwork for the rest of our study. Here are four tasks involved in observation which should be performed in the order below:

OBSERVATION TASK 1: MARK UP THE PASSAGE BY VISUALLY IDENTIFYING THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC ELEMENTS:

- **Underline all verbs.** A verb is a word or group of words used to indicate either that an action takes place (“*I did not run in vain*” in 2:16) or that a state or condition exists (“it is God” in 2:13). Verbs are often the most significant indicators of the author’s flow of thought.
- **Circle key words or phrases.** These are words or short phrases that are important theologically (like “gospel” in 2:22) or thematically set the theme or main idea for the passage (like “*proven worth*” in 2:22).
- **Highlight repeated words or phrases.** Include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates (such as “loss” and “rubbish”). You will want to highlight things repeated in other places (such as “rejoice” found in 1:18; 2:17, 18, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10).
- **Box connecting words.** These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses. Here are eight types of common connecting words to look for:
 1. **COMPARISON:** either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: **and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so** (e.g., “*like a child serving his father*” in 2:22).
 2. **CONTRAST:** points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: **but, rather, yet, however** (e.g., “*e.g., “Not that I have already obtained it ... but I press on”* in 3:13).
 3. **PURPOSE:** indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: **that, so that, in order that** (e.g., “*I press on so that I may lay hold*” in 3:12).
 4. **RESULT:** very similar to “purpose,” but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: **that, so that, as a result, with the result that** (e.g., “*my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment ... has become well known*” in 3:12-13).

5. **CAUSE:** expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include: **because, since,** and sometimes **for** (e.g., “*I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus ... because he was longing for you all*” in 2:25-26).
6. **EXPLANATION:** what follows further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word **for** (e.g., “*Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly*” in 2:28).
7. **INFERENCE:** provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words include: **therefore, for this reason** (e.g., “*Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly*” in 2:28).
8. **CONDITION:** presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e., it could be hypothetical). Key word is **if** (e.g., “*if in anything you have a different attitude*” in 3:15).

OBSERVATION TASK 2: LIST 2-3 PRIMARY THEMES YOU SEE IN THE PASSAGE EACH WEEK.

A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth, or command that the passage focuses on, such as “*humility*” in 2:1-11. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

OBSERVATION TASK 3: WRITE TWO OR MORE OBSERVATIONS PER VERSE.

Our observations might identify people, places, or events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences, or even point out something missing that we expected to see.

OBSERVATION TASK 4: RECORD YOUR OWN INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS.

Here are a few examples:

WHO is ...

- ... Paul talking about?
- ... accomplishing the action?
- ... benefiting from the action?

WHY did Paul ...

- ... choose this word?
- ... include this phrase, statement, or command?
- ... not say _____?

WHAT is the ...

- ... meaning of this word?
- ... significance of this phrase?
- ... implication of this statement?
- ... relationship between these phrases?

HOW ...

- ... was this action accomplished?
- ... will this situation occur?

INTERPRET // *what does it mean?*

Our observation of a passage should stir interesting yet challenging questions, leading us to the second stage of our Bible study: **interpretation**. Fortunately, we do not have to run to a commentary or study Bible for answers (though these are helpful tools to check our conclusions). Use the following six methods, as needed, to tackle a variety of questions. Also, make sure to familiarize yourself with the three “Principles of Interpretation” that appear in the Appendix at the end of this study.

INTERPRETATION METHOD 1: USE THE CONTEXT.

Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow the author’s flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous lesson, so have it handy as a review. You may need to read ahead in Philippians for clues.

INTERPRETATION METHOD 2: STUDY CROSS-REFERENCES (XREFS).

XRefs are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such XRefs can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by visiting the online reference www.biblestudytools.com. Simply type in “Philippians 1” in the box to the left of the “Search” button and then click “Search.” All of Philippians 1 will appear on the screen. Be sure that “New American Standard” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then click the box next to “Cross References” so that numbers appear throughout the passage. Clicking any of these will move your screen to the bottom of the page where you will find a series of XRefs for specific verses within the passage. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

INTERPRETATION METHOD 3: LOOK UP KEY WORDS.

While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek is far better and is surprisingly easy, thanks to the internet. Simply log onto www.biblestudytools.com, and as an example, type in “Philippians 2” in the box to the left of the “Search” button and then click “Search.” All of Philippians 2 will appear on the screen. Be sure that “New American Standard” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then click the box next to “Strong’s Numbers” so that most of the words will be highlighted in blue. Clicking on any of these will bring up a new screen that will tell you the Greek word used here, its possible definitions, and the total number of times it is used in each book of the New Testament (NT). Click on any of the other NT books (under the title “NAS Verse Count”), and get a list of every verse in that book that uses this Greek word. What used to take hours now takes seconds!

INTERPRETATION METHOD 4: LOOK UP BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is *The New Bible Dictionary* by Wood & Marshall. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* by Craig Keener is another excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary.

INTERPRETATION METHOD 5: TACKLE TOUGH QUESTIONS STEP-BY-STEP.

When trying to answer the most challenging questions, follow this four-step process:

- (1) List all the options.** Always start by brainstorming every possible answer to your question.
- (2) List pros and cons for each option.** See all the evidence you can find that either argues for or against a particular option. This evidence comes from your study of key words, the grammar of the sentence, the context of surrounding verses and the book as a whole, cross references to other books, and comparison with your overall understanding of Christian theology.
- (3) Choose the most likely option.** Look at your evidence for each option. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most important, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books of the Bible, or from Christian theology as a whole, does not carry quite as much weight unless the solution contradicts a clear passage elsewhere or a major tenant of Christian doctrine. In that case, since Scripture never lies and God cannot contradict Himself, you must eliminate that option.
- (4) Decide on your certainty level.** Once you have chosen the best solution, step back for a second and humbly gauge how certain you are of its accuracy (90% = I am very sure this is correct ... 60% = This solution is just a bit more likely than the others!). Finally, talk with others and check commentaries or reference books to see what solutions they have chosen and why.

INTERPRETATION METHOD 6: COMPARE MULTIPLE TRANSLATIONS.

This packet uses the New American Standard (NASB) translation. You can often find helpful interpretive clues by comparing this translation with other translations. The New King James Version (NKJV), like the NASB, is a fairly word-for-word translation of the Greek text. The New International Version (NIV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) are excellent phrase-to-phrase translations of the Greek and thus often easier to read. Another excellent phrase-to-phrase Bible, which includes extensive translation notes, is the New English Translation (NET) available online for free at net.bible.org. You can find and compare numerous translations of any Bible passage at www.biblestudytools.com.

APPLY // *how does it work?*

Our Bible study is not over until we apply what we have learned to our everyday lives. And lest we underestimate the value of this last step, remember that in God's eyes it is the person who does not just know His Word, but also obeys His Word that truly loves Him (see John 14:21). So how do we apply a passage to our lives? Application involves the following two tasks:

APPLICATION TASK 1: LIST POTENTIAL PRINCIPLES FROM YOUR PASSAGE.

A "principle" is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is practically relevant to our lives. Legitimate principles are not specific to a particular person (e.g., Philippians 5:23 is just for Timothy) nor a particular time (e.g., "do not leave Jerusalem" in Acts 1:4). An example from Philippians would be, "We should rejoice when Christ is proclaimed." It is often helpful when listing principles to consider the following questions:

- *Is there something to worship or thank God for?*
- *Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?*
- *Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?*
- *Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?*
- *Is there any relationship I need to work on?*

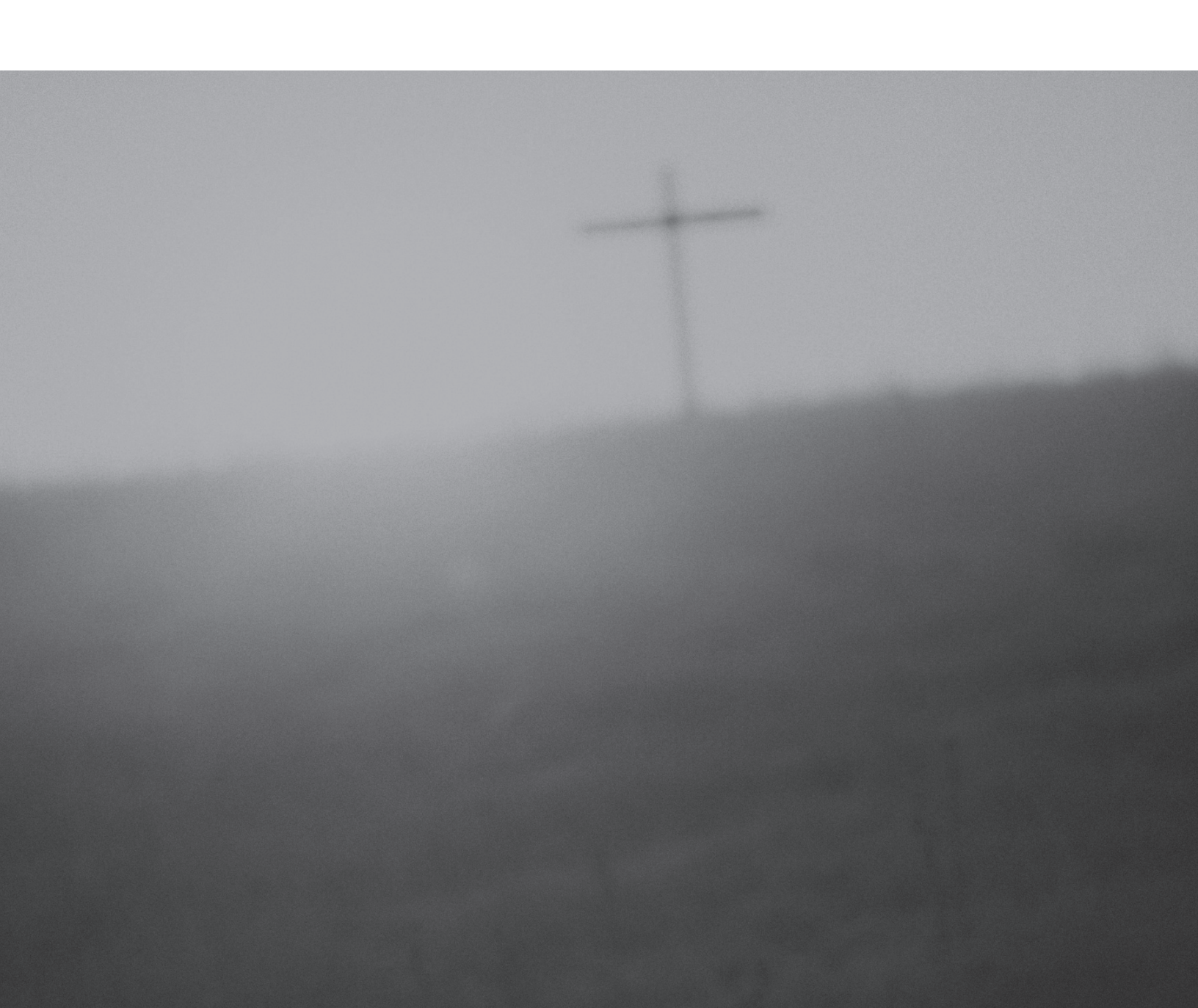
APPLICATION TASK 2: CHOOSE ONE PRINCIPLE, AND CREATE A PLAN TO APPLY IT TO YOUR LIFE THIS WEEK.

Once you complete your principle list, prayerfully choose the one principle you most need to work on (Do not just choose the easiest to apply!). If you felt deeply convicted about one in particular, that is probably the principle God is leading you to apply. Once you have chosen a specific principle, answer these two questions:

What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

MY NOTES



SURVEY: WHAT IS THE BIG IDEA?

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Surveying a book like Philippians allows you to grasp the big picture and the overall story line of the book before getting caught up in the details. This survey provides a helpful road map to guide your study during the coming weeks. Begin this crucial first step by taking the next 30 minutes to read straight through Philippians without stopping. Then, answer the questions on the next page before moving on.

How would you describe Paul's audience? Are they believers or unbelievers? Are they spiritually mature or immature? What issues are they facing?

What are the major themes or big ideas in this book? (Hint: Look for repeated words and ideas.)

Now that you have read through the entire book, what are Paul's purposes in writing it? Be as specific as you can.

BACKGROUND

Read the book of Philippians twice, each time at a single sitting. Then read Acts chapter 16:6-40 and the following background article on Philippians.

INTRO

Somewhere between 49 and 52 AD, during his second missionary journey, Paul crossed into the continent of Europe for the first time and came to the Roman city of Philippi, where he led several people to Christ. Among these were Lydia and her family and the Philippian jailer and his family. It is interesting to note from Acts 16 that 1) God acted in supernatural ways to lead Paul to Philippi and that 2) the city appears to have had very few Jews (only 10 male Jews were needed to start a synagogue, yet there wasn't one). Soon after Paul's visit, a local church was established which in later years significantly aided Paul in his ministry to the Roman world. This epistle was written to thank the church for their faithful support as well as to help them continue to mature. Philippians is personal and practical in its tone and teaching. In it, Paul emphasizes the need for believers to rejoice in Christ and frequently discusses the mind of a child of God, for in his view one's manner of life is a reflection of what occupies his mind.

THE HUMAN AUTHOR AND DATE.

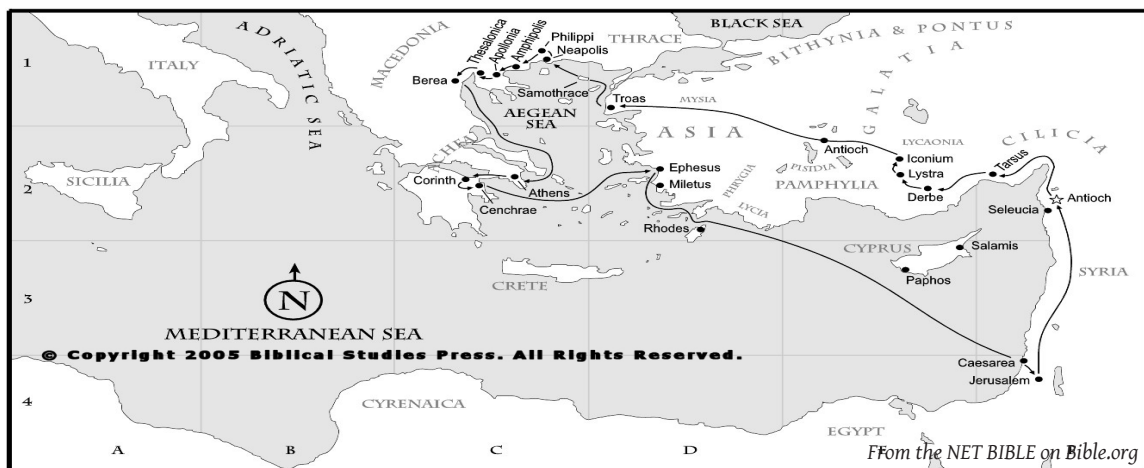
Most scholars agree that the Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Philippians since 1) the work clearly claims to come from him (1:1), 2) reference to Timothy is significant since he was with the apostle when Philippi was evangelized (Acts 16), 3) the information the writer gave about himself (3:4-6) harmonizes perfectly with Paul's life, and 4) the writings of the early church fathers attest to Pauline authorship. Paul was in bondage when he wrote Philippians (see 1:7,13-14). But all do not agree on where this imprisonment occurred, whether Rome, Caesarea, or Ephesus. His reference to the palace guard (1:13) as well as his concern about facing possible imminent death (1:20-26) argues for his writing from Rome. The date of the writing would then be A.D. 61 or 62, approximately 10 years after Paul's first visit to Philippi.



"Saint Paul Writing His Epistles" by Valentin de Boulogne (ca. 16th century)

THE CITY OF PHILIPPI

Philippi was the leading city of the Roman province of Macedonia (Acts 16:12) and a significant stopping point on the Via Ignatia. Many of its original settlers were forced to relocate from Rome to Philippi, yet these same residents were given special privileges including the “Italic right.” This meant that the colonists, in return for their displacement, were treated as if their land were part of Italian soil. So the residents were citizens of Rome and enjoyed the full rights of Roman citizenship, including exemption from taxes and legal protection from torture. So Paul’s words (1:27) “conduct yourselves” (lit. “live as citizens”) and “our citizenship is in heaven” (3:20) had special meaning to the Christians at Philippi. The citizens of Philippi spoke Latin and dressed like the people of Rome. They allowed a great diversity of cults and pagan deities in their city and practiced syncretism – the mixture of many religious practices and deities. Yet they held special reverence for the emperor of Rome whom they worshipped as a god.



THE HISTORIC OCCASION

When the Philippian believers heard about Paul’s imprisonment at Rome, they sent Epaphroditus, who may have been their pastor, to minister to him. He personally comforted Paul, expressing to him the affection of the saints in Philippi, and brought Paul a financial contribution from them so that his confinement would be more comfortable (4:18). Three times before (4:15-16; cf. 2 Cor. 11:9) these saints had ministered to his needs. Thus, this letter might be called a thank you note to the saints in Philippi for their generous gifts. Epaphroditus delivered the letter after he had recovered from a near fatal illness (2:27).

Yet even though his initial reason for writing seems to have been to thank the Philippians for their loving gift, Paul also took advantage of this opportunity to address some of the problems in their church. Apparently rivalry and personal ambition were present among some of the saints (2:3-4; 4:2). Furthermore, the Judaizers were also gaining a hearing (3:1-3) which was seriously worrying to Paul (3:18-19).

OUTLINE

Having read the background article on the book, now skim through Philippians one more time and create your own title for each of the major sections below (you can divide these into smaller sections, each with its own title, if you wish). Try not to use the titles in this packet or in your Bible. Create your own titles that capture your understanding of the main idea of each section.

MY PHILIPPIANS OUTLINE ...

1:1-11

1:12-26

1:27-2:11

2:12-18

2:19-30

3:1-11

3:12-4:1

4:2-9

4:10-23

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

MY NOTES



LESSON

1

TRUE COMMUNITY

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

MEMORY VERSE:

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

— PHILIPPIANS 1:6

TRUE COMMUNITY

OBSERVE *what do I see?*

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, “**What do I see?**”. This is the crucial skill of **observation**, which lays the groundwork for the rest of our study. **We will learn a new observation skill each week** to practice with the others we have already learned. This week, simply read the passage below, and then write one or two observations for each verse in the box that follows. Our observations might identify **people, places, or events**, point out **repeated words or key terms**, record important **connections between words and sentences**, or even point out **something missing** that we expected to see. The first few have been done for you.

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

¹Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ⁵in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

THEMES

List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. _____

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

- 1) What do we see about Paul's prayer life within this passage?

- 2) How does Paul describe the Philippians' "participation" with him throughout this book (cf. 1:5, 1:7, 2:1; 3:10, 4:14, 4:15)?

MY OBSERVATIONS

List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

1-2

- Paul and Timothy are "bond-servants"
- Letter is addressed to "all" the saints, not just leaders

3-5

6-7

8-11

Our observation of Philippians each week will stir up some of the most interesting and challenging questions encountered in Bible study. Fortunately, we do not have to run to a commentary or study Bible for the answer (though these are helpful tools to check our conclusions). God desires all of us to become approved workmen, “accurately handling the Word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). To that end, **we will learn a new interpretive skill each week** to practice along with the others we have already learned. This week’s interpretive skill greatly improves our understanding of what a passage meant to its original readers—**USE THE CONTEXT**. Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow Paul’s flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous lesson, so have it handy as a review. You may also need to read ahead in Philippians for clues.

1) What characterizes biblical “participation” or koinonia (cf. Acts 2:42; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 9:13)?

- 2) What is the “good work” which God will complete in verse 6? Specifically, does Paul have in mind either participation in the proclamation of the gospel or one’s personal sanctification (cf. 1:12; Acts 9:36; Romans 13:3; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:17)?

3) According to verse 9, what is the relationship between love and knowledge?
Why do we need both?

4) What is “day of the Christ” (cf 1:6, 10; 2:16; 1 Corinthians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:17-5:2)? What impact does it have in the life of a believer?

MY SUMMARY TITLE _____

Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week's passage.

APPLY

how does it work?

"I do not believe that wonder can ever be retained apart from learning the discipline and delight of prayer. In the closet of our lives lies the fullness of His riches. In the secret place lies unmined treasures."

- Ravi Zacharias

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) What qualities do you see in Paul from this passage that made him such an outstanding leader? Specifically, how does Paul's example challenge you personally?
- 2) What kind of community (or koinonia) do you hope to experience in your group this semester?
- 3) How does this passage motivate your prayer life? What concrete changes can you make this week in your prayer life?

PLAN OF ACTION

- 1) After praying to God for conviction and insight, what concrete changes do you feel you should make this week to live a life of hope and joy regardless of circumstances? What exactly will you do differently this week than last week—get specific and be realistic!
- 2) Who will hold you accountable next week to see if you've followed through?

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the truths you have learned, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

LESSON

2

LIFE AND DEATH

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

OBSERVATION SKILL: ASKING INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS

Like last week, read the passage below and write down your observations in the box on the following page. This week, we will begin to write our own questions as well. Try to write out eight questions next to the relevant verses on the following page. This is probably the simplest skill of all. Just record the questions that naturally come to mind as you try to understand and apply the passage! If you need help getting started, you can use these examples:

WHO is ...

- ... Paul talking about?
- ... accomplishing the action?
- ... benefiting from the action?

WHAT is the ...

- ... meaning of this word?
- ... significance of this phrase?
- ... implication of this statement?
- ... relationship between these phrases?

WHY did Paul...

- ... choose this word?
- ... include this phrase, statement, or command?
- ... not say _____?

HOW ...

- ... was this action accomplished?
- ... will this situation occur?

OBSERVE
what do I see?

MEMORY VERSE:

“What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice...”

— PHILIPPIANS 1:18

LIFE AND DEATH

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26

¹²Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, ¹³so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, ¹⁴and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

¹⁵Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; ¹⁶the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²²But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.

²³But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; ²⁴yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

THEMES

List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. _____

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1) Fill in the chart for verses 12-18. Each row represents a group.

<i>Parties</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Motivations</i>	<i>Results</i>

MY OBSERVATIONS

List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

12-18

19-20

21-22

23-26

Last week we learned to use the context to help us answer our interpretive questions. This week we will add our second interpretive skill — **STUDY CROSS REFERENCES (XRefs)**. XRefs are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such XRefs can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by logging again onto www.biblestudytools.com. Simply type in “Philippians 1” in the box to the left of the “Search” button and then click “Search.” All of Philippians 1 will appear on the screen. Be sure that “New American Standard” is your selected Bible in the drop down box and then click the box next to “Cross References” so that numbers appear throughout the passage. Clicking any of these will move your screen to the bottom of the page where you will find a series of XRefs for specific verses within the passage. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

1) Ask and answer 2 of your own questions:

- 2) How does this passage relate back to 1:1-11? Specifically, why does Paul feel the need to assure the Philippians of the gospel's progress here in this passage?

- 3) Why can Paul rejoice even when envious and ambitious people are preaching Christ “whether in pretense or in truth”? Specifically, what did Paul likely believe about God and His Word (cf. Isaiah 55:11; Romans 1:15-16; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Timothy 2:8-10)?
- 4) What kind of “salvation” is Paul referring to in verse 19? Keep in mind, it is translated as “deliverance” here in the NASB, but is usually translated “salvation” elsewhere. What different range of meanings can this word have in the NT (cf. 1:28; 2:12-13; Acts 14:9; 27:20; Romans 5:9-10; Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 11:7)? What does it most likely mean here? And why?
- 5) What is Paul’s perspective on “life” and “death”? Furthermore, how does this differ from our contemporary culture’s view on these same 2 topics?

MY SUMMARY TITLE _____

Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week’s passage.

APPLY

how does it work?

As in the previous lesson, complete the reflection questions. Then, **step back and look at the passage as a whole and list potential principles**. A “principle” is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is practically relevant to our lives. Legitimate principles are not specific to a particular person (e.g. 1 Timothy 5:23 is just for Timothy) nor a particular time (e.g. “do not leave Jerusalem” in Acts 1:4). An example from Philippians would be, “We should rejoice when Christ is proclaimed.” A couple of examples are provided for you on the next page.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Verses 21-26 describe Paul’s personal mission statement of his life. In your own words, write out a mission statement for your life. How would you answer the question, “Why am I here?”

- 2) What circumstances in your life can cause you to believe that God’s purposes are thwarted? What truths about God will you believe this week in those same situations?

LIST PRINCIPLES

List at least five principles from Philippians 1:12-26. Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.

1. *We can rejoice that proclaiming the gospel cannot be thwarted by men*
2. *Christ can be exalted whether His followers live or die*
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLAN OF ACTION

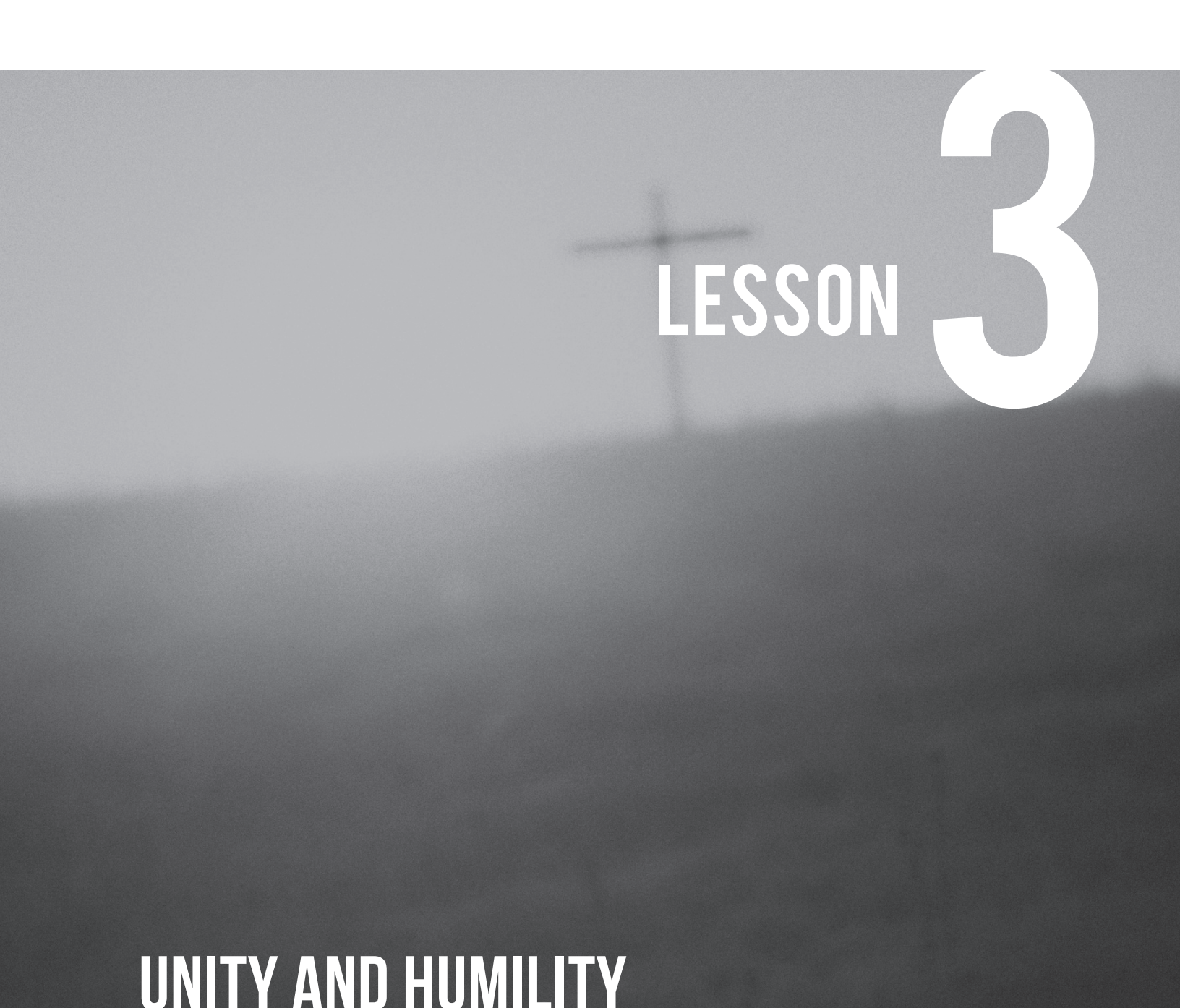
Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

MY NOTES



LESSON

3

UNITY AND HUMILITY

PHILIPPIANS 1:27-2:11

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”

— PHILIPPIANS 2:5-7

OBSERVE

what do I see?

UNITY AND HUMILITY

OBSERVATION SKILL: LIST PRIMARY THEMES

A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth, or command that the passage focuses on, such as “humility” in 2:1-11. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

PHILIPPIANS 1:27-2:11

²⁷ Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; ²⁸ in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. ²⁹ For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, ³⁰ experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

¹ Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. ³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THEMES

List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. _____

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1) In verses 27-30, list out the specific things that the Philippians needed to do in order to live “worthy” lives.

2) Underline all themes that relate to unity within this passage.

MY OBSERVATIONS

List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

27-30

1-4

5-8

9-11

INTERPRET

what does it mean?

INTERPRETATION SKILL: LOOK UP KEY WORDS

As you answer the questions below, continue using your first two interpretive skills (use the context and cross references), and add this third one — **LOOK UP KEY WORDS**. While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek is far better and is surprisingly easy, thanks to the internet. Simply log onto www.biblestudytools.com, and as an example, type in “Philippians 2” in the box to the left of the “Search” button and then click “Search.” All of Philippians 2 will appear on the screen. Be sure that “New American Standard” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then click the box next to “Strong’s Numbers” so that most of the words will be highlighted in blue. Clicking on any of these will bring up a new screen that will tell you the Greek word used here, its possible definitions, and the total number of times it is used in each book of the New Testament (NT). Click on any of the other NT books (under the title “NAS Verse Count”), and get a list of every verse in that book that uses this Greek word. What used to take hours now takes seconds!

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

- 1) Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
- 2) Why does Paul command them in verse 27 to “conduct yourselves” or as could be translated “discharge your obligations as citizens”? Specifically, what is the relationship between their citizenship and their conduct (cf. 3:20; Acts 16:21, 37-38)?
- 3) Trace the author’s flow of thought in this passage. Specifically, how does 2:1-4 relate to 1:27-30? Furthermore, how does 2:5-11 relate to 2:1-4?

- 4) How does Paul define unity in this passage? What is the relationship between unity and humility?
- 5) What does it mean that Christ “emptied Himself”? Specifically, of what did He empty Himself? Was He less than God while on earth (cf. Matthew 24:36; Mark 5:30-31; John 1:1-3, 14; 17:5; Colossians 2:9)?
- 6) According to this passage, what are the results of Christ-like humility?

MY SUMMARY TITLE: _____

Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week's passage.

APPLY

how does it work?

As in the previous lesson, complete the reflection questions and then list a few principles you learned from the passage.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1) What attitudes or situations can cause division in relationships in your life whether at home, in the workplace, or in the church?

2) How does Christ's model of humility uniquely motivate you towards humility?

LIST PRINCIPLES

List at least five principles from Philippians 1:27-2:11. Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLAN OF ACTION

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

MY NOTES



LESSON

4

WORKING WITH GOD

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

MEMORY VERSE:

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

— PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

WORKING WITH GOD

OBSERVE *what do I see?*

OBSERVATION SKILL: UNDERLINE ALL VERBS

As in previous weeks, read the passage below, and write down your observations, questions, and themes on the following page. This week, we will begin to **UNDERLINE ALL OF THE VERBS**. Quick review: A verb is a word or group of words used to indicate either that an action takes place ("I did not run in vain" in 2:16) or that a state or condition exists ("it is God" in 2:13). Verbs are often the most significant indicators of the author's flow of thought.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

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

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵ so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸ You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

THEMES

List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. _____

OBSERVATION QUESTION

1) Underline all verbs in this passage.

MY OBSERVATIONS

List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

12-13

14-15

16

17-18

INTERPRET

what does it mean?

INTERPRETATION SKILL: LOOK UP BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This week's interpretive skill greatly improves our understanding of what a passage meant to its original readers—**LOOK UP BACKGROUND INFORMATION**. You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is *The New Bible Dictionary* by Wood & Marshall. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* by Craig Keener is another excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary.

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

- 1) Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

- 2) How does 2:12-13 relate to the previous passage in 2:1-11?

- 3) During your study of the word “salvation” in 1:19 (see page 24), you listed out the possible uses of this word in the NT. Look back at that list, and use the context of chapter 2 to determine what kind of “salvation” Paul is referring to in verse 12.

- 4) Specifically then, what role do works play in our “salvation” (cf. 2:15-16; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Ephesians 2:10)? In fact, why should “fear and trembling” characterize how we “work out” our own salvation (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11)?
- 5) How exactly does God work in us “both to will and to work” (cf. Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:22-27; Romans 8:2-4; Galatians 5:19-23)?
- 6) Why does Paul move from such profound statements in 2:12-13 about our salvation to such a basic command about grumbling? Try and trace Paul’s flow of thought within this passage.
- 7) The concept of “joy” appears throughout this book. What is the specific source of his joy in this section?

MY SUMMARY TITLE: _____

Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week’s passage.

APPLY

how does it work?

As in the previous lesson, complete the reflection questions and then list a few principles you learned from the passage. This week adds a third application step - **choose one principle and create a plan** to apply it to your life this week. Once you have completed your principle list, *prayerfully choose the one principle you most need to work on* (do not just choose the easiest to apply). If you felt deeply convicted about one in particular, that is probably the one God is leading you to apply! Once you have chosen a specific principle, follow the directions on the next page to develop a realistic and specific plan to apply it to your life.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1) Does grumbling and complaining characterize your life? Why or why not?

2) Paul longed to receive glory in the “day of Christ.” How can you invest your life this week so that you will not “run in vain” now?

LIST PRINCIPLES

List at least five principles from Philippians 2:12-18. A principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLAN OF ACTION

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

MY NOTES



LESSON

5

A FEW GOOD MEN

PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

MEMORY VERSE:

“But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.”

— PHILIPPIANS 2:22

ASPIRE TO LEAD

OBSERVE *what do I see?*

OBSERVATION SKILL: CIRCLE KEY WORDS OR PHRASES

Read the passage below, write down your observations, questions, and themes, and underline all verbs. This week we will begin to **CIRCLE ALL OF THE KEY WORDS OR PHRASES**. These are words or short phrases that are important theologically (like “gospel” in 2:22) or thematically set the theme or main idea for the passage (like “proven worth” in 2:22).

PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

¹⁹ But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. ²⁰ For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. ²¹ For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. ²² But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. ²³ Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; ²⁴ and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly. ²⁵ But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; ²⁶ because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷ For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you. ²⁹ Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; ³⁰ because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

THEMES

List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. _____

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1) Circle all descriptions of both Timothy and Epaphroditus within this passage.

MY OBSERVATIONS

List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

19-22**23-24****25-28****29-30**

INTERPRET
what does it mean?

INTERPRETATION SKILL: TOUGH QUESTIONS

PART 1 - LIST OPTIONS, PROS & CONS

How do we answer difficult interpretive questions when more than one option seems possible? This requires two skills, the first of which is ... **LIST ALL THE OPTIONS WITH PROS AND CONS.** Always start by brainstorming, listing every possible answer to your question. Be open-minded and creative, and do not rush this process. You will often find that your third option proves better than your first. Once you have created a list of possible options, list both pros and cons for each one. You are looking for all the evidence you can find that either argues for or against a particular option. This evidence comes from your study of key words, the grammar of the sentence, the context of surrounding verses and the book as a whole, cross references to other books, and comparison with your overall understanding of Christian theology. Once you have thought about it for a while individually, feel free to talk with others and to check commentaries or references to see if you have missed any options (However, do not just assume that their favorite option is necessarily correct!).

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

1) How does this passage relate to 2:12-18?

2) Why does Paul have such confidence in these men specifically?

	Character	Conduct	Commitment to the Gospel
Paul			
Timothy			
Epaphroditus			

- 3) Why is it significant that Paul has no one else of kindred spirit (cf. 2 Timothy 4:9-11)? What can we learn about spiritual leadership development from this passage?

- 4) What can we learn about caring for other people in this passage? Specifically, what cost did these men pay in their service to others? And what benefits did their service yield?

- 5) How do Timothy and Epaphroditus personify the theme of “unity” throughout chapter 2?

MY SUMMARY TITLE: _____

Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week's passage.

APPLY

how does it work?

This week's application section involves the same three steps as last week's, which we will continue to use throughout our study: reflect on your own life, list principles, and choose one to apply this week. It is often helpful when working through the second and third steps to consider the following list of questions:

- *Is there something to worship or thank God for?*
- *Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?*
- *Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?*
- *Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?*
- *Is there any relationship I need to work on?*

REFLECTION QUESTION

1) Social media today has allowed us to make many relational connections without being present with one another. What have we gained and what have we lost in our experience of community?

2) What would you risk in your life for the gospel? Is there anything that you would hold back?

LIST PRINCIPLES

List at least five principles from Philippians 2:19-30. A principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLAN OF ACTION

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

MY NOTES



LESSON

6

LEGALISM EXPOSED

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

MEMORY VERSE:

“More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ...”

— PHILIPPIANS 3:8

OBSERVE

what do I see?

LEGALISM EXPOSED

OBSERVATION SKILL: HIGHLIGHT REPEATED WORDS OR PHRASES

Read the passage below, write down your observations, questions, and themes, and underline all verbs. This week we will begin to **HIGHLIGHT REPEATED WORDS OR PHRASES**. Include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates (such as "loss" and "rubbish"). You will want to highlight things repeated in other places (such as "rejoice" found in 1:18; 2:17, 18, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10).

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

¹ Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

² Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; ³ for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, ⁴ although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

THEMES

List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. _____

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

- 1) Box all the things that Paul naturally could have put on his spiritual resume.
- 2) Contrast the beliefs and actions of the false circumcision with the true circumcision here.
- 3) Highlight all the accounting terms in verses 7-8 (for example “gain” or “loss.”)

MY OBSERVATIONS

List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

1-3**4-6****7-8****9-11**

INTERPRET

what does it mean?

INTERPRETATION SKILL: TOUGH QUESTIONS

PART 2 - CHOOSE THE MOST LIKELY OPTION AND DECIDE ON CERTAINTY

The second skill needed to answer difficult interpretive questions is CHOOSE THE MOST LIKELY OPTION AND DECIDE ON CERTAINTY. Look back at all of your evidence for each option. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most important, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books, or from Christian theology as a whole, does not carry quite as much weight, unless the solution you are looking at contradicts a clear passage elsewhere or a major tenant of Christian doctrine. In that case, since Scripture never lies and God cannot contradict Himself, you know that option is invalid. Once you have chosen the best solution, step back for a second and humbly gauge how certain you are of its accuracy (90% = I am very sure this is correct ... 60% = This solution is just a bit more likely than the others!). Finally, talk with others and check commentaries or reference books to see what solutions they have chosen and why.

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

- 1) Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions:

- 2) In verse 2, why does Paul describe his opponents with such strong language? Looking through the entire passage, on what grounds does Paul disagree with these people?

- 3) Why does Paul list out his own spiritual background and accomplishments in verses 4-6 (cf. Galatians 1:13-14)? Specifically, what is he trying to prove to his opponents?

- 4) In verses 7-9, why does Paul ultimately consider his prior accomplishments of such little value?

Specifically, what do all these things fail to provide (cf. Romans 3:19-21)?

How did he eventually experience what his accomplishments couldn't provide (cf. Romans 3:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21)?

- 5) In verse 11, what is it about his future resurrection that remains uncertain? Specifically, is he concerned about the certainty of his resurrection or the quality of it (cf. Romans 8:38-39; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 15:20-23; 1 Peter 1:10-11; Hebrews 11:35)?

MY SUMMARY TITLE: _____

Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week's passage.

APPLY

how does it work?

This week's application section involves the same three steps as last week's, which we will continue to use throughout our study: reflect on your own life, list principles, and choose one to apply this week. It is often helpful when working through the second and third steps to consider the following list of questions:

- *Is there something to worship or thank God for?*
- *Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?*
- *Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?*
- *Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?*
- *Is there any relationship I need to work on?*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1) How can legalism diminish the significance of spiritual disciplines in our life?

2) Are there examples in your life that you "put confidence in the flesh?" What about your spiritual heritage, accomplishments, or education?

LIST PRINCIPLES

List at least five principles from Philippians 3:1-11. Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLAN OF ACTION

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

MY NOTES

LESSON

7

WALK THIS WAY

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-4:1

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

OBSERVATION SKILL: BOX CONNECTING WORDS (PART ONE)

As in previous weeks, read the passage below and write down your observations, questions, and themes on the following page. Also, circle all key words and highlight all repeated words or phrases. This week, we will begin to **BOX CONNECTING WORDS**. These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses. We will learn four types of connecting words this week:

COMPARISON: either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so (e.g., "like a child serving his father" in 2:22).

CONTRAST: points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: but, rather, yet, however (e.g., "Not that I have already obtained it ... but I press on" in 3:13).

PURPOSE: indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: that, so that, in order that (e.g., "I press on so that I may lay hold" in 3:12).

RESULT: very similar to "purpose," but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: that, so that, as a result, with the result that (e.g., "my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment ... has become well known" in 3:12-13).

MEMORY VERSE:

"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

— *Philippians 3:13-14*

OBSERVE
what do I see?

WALK THIS WAY

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-4:1

¹²Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; ¹⁶however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

¹⁷Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. ²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

¹Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

THEMES

List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. _____

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

- 1) Box all connecting words.
- 2) As you underline every verb, distinguish the tenses of each verb as past, present, or future.
- 3) What kind of mood does this passage carry?

MY OBSERVATIONS

List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

12-14

15-16

17-19

20-4:1

INTERPRET

what does it mean?

INTERPRETATION SKILL: PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

PRINCIPLE #1 - DISCERN THE AUTHOR'S INTENDED MEANING

For the next few weeks, we will learn three fundamental **PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION** that help us to use our interpretive skills accurately. **Principle #1 - Your goal is to discern the author's intended meaning to the original audience.** Unfortunately, most people begin their Bible study by asking, "What does this passage mean to me?" While there may be multiple possible applications to my life, there is only one meaning, the author's intended meaning; and we must first seek this out. This involves three important steps:

1. Always **start your study with prayer**, asking the same God who composed Scripture through these ancient authors to give you insight to understand His intended meaning.
2. Be very careful to **avoid reading your 21st century circumstances and theological issues** into the text as they will skew your understanding.
3. Work diligently to see the text **from the point of view of the original readers**. To do this: (a) dig into the historical and cultural background using Bible dictionaries and commentaries, and (b) spend a few moments thinking about the original audience's religious understanding by asking, "What books of the Bible did they have access to? What did they know about God? about Jesus? about salvation? etc."

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

1) Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions:

- a)
- b)
- c)

2) How does this passage relate back to the previous section?

- 3) In verses 12-14, what is Paul hoping to attain or laid hold of? In other words, what is the prize of the upward call of God?

- 4) The Greek word for “attitude” is used throughout this book translated elsewhere as “mindset”, “feel”, etc in 1:7; 2:2, 2:5; 3:19; 4:2, 4:10. Specifically in verse 15, what is the “attitude” (or mindset) that Paul wants the Philippians to imitate?

- 5) In addition to “attitude,” what else are the Philippians to imitate according to verses 17-19 (cf. Ephesians 5:1-2)?

- 6) What is the significance of our “citizenship” being in heaven in verses 20-21? Specifically, how does citizenship impact our perspective on life and our behavior today (cf. 1:27)?

MY SUMMARY TITLE: _____

Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week’s passage.

APPLY

how does it work?

This week's application section involves the same three steps as last week's, which we will continue to use throughout our study: reflect on your own life, list principles, and choose one to apply this week. It is often helpful when working through the second and third steps to consider the following list of questions:

- *Is there something to worship or thank God for?*
- *Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?*
- *Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?*
- *Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?*
- *Is there any relationship I need to work on?*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1) What are some goals that you are pursuing? How do they reflect your identity as a citizen of heaven?

2) Do you have people in your life whom you can observe and follow their godly pattern? Furthermore, is your life a worthy pattern to be followed?

LIST PRINCIPLES

List at least five principles from Philippians 3:12–4:1. Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLAN OF ACTION

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

MY NOTES

LESSON

8

KEEPING THE PEACE

PHILIPPIANS 4:2-9

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

OBSERVATION SKILL: BOX CONNECTING WORDS (PART TWO)

Read the passage below, record your observations, questions, and themes on the following page. Also, circle all key words and highlight all repeated words or phrases and continue to **BOX CONNECTING WORDS**. Here are four types to box this week:

CAUSE: expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include: because, since, and sometimes for (e.g., "I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus ... because he was longing for you all" in 2:25-26).

EXPLANATION: what follows further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word for (e.g., "For our citizenship is in heaven" in 2:20).

INFERENCE: provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words include: therefore, for this reason (e.g., "Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly" in 2:28).

CONDITION: presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e., it could be hypothetical). Key word is if (e.g., "if in anything you have a different attitude" in 3:15).

MEMORY VERSE:

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is [a]lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, [b]dwell on these things. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

— PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

OBSERVE
what do I see?

KEEPING THE PEACE

PHILIPPIANS 4:2-9

²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. ³Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, 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 comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. ⁹The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

THEMES

List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. _____

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

- 1) Box all connecting words in this passage.
- 2) Underline each of the commands in verses 4-9.

MY OBSERVATIONS

List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

2-3**4-5****6-7****8-9**

INTERPRET

what does it mean?

INTERPRETATION SKILL: PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

PRINCIPLE #2 - ASSUME A "NORMAL" USE OF LANGUAGE

This week we will learn our second of three **PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION**. **Principle #2 - Assume a "normal" use of language.** The Bible was given to us because God desired to communicate with us, not to hide Himself from us. Therefore, we should not be looking for hidden meanings as we study. Instead, we should use the normal techniques we would use to understand any piece of literature:

1. **Study the grammar.** Yes, most of us hated grammar in junior high, but it really is helpful for understanding Scripture! Pay attention to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Think through any figures of speech. Observe how phrases and clauses are connected into sentences and how sentences are linked together into paragraphs.

2. **Remember that chapters came later.** When Paul wrote Philippians or Luke wrote the book of Acts, they wrote single, unified stories without verse or chapter divisions. These books were meant to be read just like you would read a letter or a novel. Always keep the overall story in mind as you study each passage.

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

1) Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions:

a)

b)

c)

2) Why does Paul address this conflict between these 2 named individuals? Why does the situation have such importance to him? In other words, what can conflict jeopardize within the Body of Christ (cf. Acts 15:36-39)?

- 3) Earlier you underlined a series of commands in verses 4-9. For each of these commands, what is its relationship to the nature of the conflict and its resolution?

- 4) Verses 6-7 are some of the most quoted and memorized verses of this book. How does the context of this passage clarify the exact promise being made to believers here through prayer?

- 5) How does 4:8-9 relate to 4:2-7? Furthermore, how might 4:8-9 relate to the whole book so far?

MY SUMMARY TITLE: _____

Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week's passage.

APPLY

how does it work?

This week's application section involves the same three steps as last week's, which we will continue to use throughout our study: reflect on your own life, list principles, and choose one to apply this week. It is often helpful when working through the second and third steps to consider the following list of questions:

- *Is there something to worship or thank God for?*
- *Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?*
- *Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?*
- *Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?*
- *Is there any relationship I need to work on?*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) How do you typically handle conflict? Do you avoid it? Do you embrace it? Why?
- 2) Is there someone right now in your life that you find yourself in an unresolved conflict with? Based on what you learned from this passage, how can you take beginning steps toward resolving this conflict?

LIST PRINCIPLES

List at least five principles from Philippians 4:2-9. Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLAN OF ACTION

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

MY NOTES



LESSON

9

THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

MEMORY VERSE:

“But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus..”

— PHILIPPIANS 4:18-19

OBSERVE
what do I see?

THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

As in previous weeks, write down your observations, questions, and themes on the following page. Also, circle all key words, highlight all repeated words or phrases, and box connecting words. A new observation skill will be introduced after you have finished.

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.

¹¹ Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

¹⁵ You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; ¹⁶ for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. ¹⁸ But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

²⁰ Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

²¹ Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.

²² All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

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

THEMES

List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. _____

OBSERVATION TASKS

1) Highlight descriptions of contentment in this passage.

MY OBSERVATIONS

List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

10-12

13-16

17-18

19-23

OBSERVE

what do I see?

OBSERVATION SKILL: MAP THE PASSAGE

This week we will begin to **MAP THE PASSAGE**. This skill is a fantastic way to discover the author's intended meaning and flow of thought. It also will help you answer many of your interpretive questions. The first rule of mapping a passage is: **There is not one "right" way!** However you create your map, you should be to discover the author's flow of thought by graphically laying out the passage. Before you complete the passage map on the next page, here are some rules to follow with examples from Ephesians 1:3-5 ...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence (These form the main clause of your sentence). Write the main clause at the top left of your paper. Think of your map as an outline: This would be your Roman number I.

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

This is the main clause of Eph. 1:3

2. Continue writing the first sentence, placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify. A modifying phrase describes something in the main clause—how, why, when, to whom, etc. In an outline, this would be your first subheading.

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

↑ *who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing*

"who" modifies, or is talking about, God in this sentence

3. If there are multiple modifiers (several phrases or words all talking about the same thing), line them up underneath each other, under the word or phrase they are modifying.

1:3 ... who has blessed us ...

4 just as He chose us ...

5 ... He predestined us ...

Both of the phrases in vv4-5 will have modifiers in your final map, but the phrases themselves should be lined up since they both modify God's act of blessing. This is like the a., b., c. in your outline.

4. Continue writing out the phrases in your sentence, each under whatever word(s) they modify, until you reach the end of the sentence or idea being discussed.

5. Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. At that point, you would put the next main clause back to the far left of your paper and begin at step one again. Ideally, you should be able to glance down to the left side of your paper and see the main ideas of the passage you are mapping.

6. As you work, box all connecting words, and note how they are being used.

1:4 just as He chose us ... (AS implies comparison)

MAP THE PASSAGE

INTERPRET

what does it mean?

INTERPRETATION SKILL: PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

PRINCIPLE #3 - LET SCRIPTURE INTERPRET SCRIPTURE

This week we will learn our last of three **PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION**. **Principle #3 - Let Scripture interpret Scripture.** Since God is unchangingly truthful and always consistent (John 17:17; Hebrews 3:6; James 1:17), we can, and should, expect the same of His Word. This has two practical applications:

1. ***Check your conclusions.*** Always compare your conclusions with the teachings of Scripture as a whole. If you find your interpretation of a passage contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture elsewhere, you probably need to revise your conclusions.
2. ***Allow clear passages to illuminate ambiguous passages.*** Whenever you encounter a passage that is confusing or open to multiple possible interpretations, use clearer passages of Scripture to guide you to the correct interpretation.

One last caution: remember that God revealed Scripture progressively, not all at once. Therefore, we should not be surprised by differences between how people related to and understood God at different times in the history of Scripture. For example, while Abraham needed only believe that God was faithful in order to be justified (Genesis 15:6), in the New Testament era, we must believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-7).

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

- 1) Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions:

- 2) How does this passage relate to the previous one? Specifically, how does Paul transition from interpersonal conflict to corporate giving?

- 3) Why does Paul conclude this book on the topic of giving? Why is it of such importance to him (cf. 4:18b; Matthew 6:21, 24; Romans 12:1)?
- 4) How does contentment impact our perspective and use of money (cf. 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-18)? Furthermore, what was the “secret” that Paul had learned no matter his circumstances?
- 5) Similar to 4:6-7, verse 13 is one of the most frequently quoted verses in the whole Bible. Considering the context, what exactly is the promise to lay hold of here?
- 6) In verse 17, what is the “profit which increases” for one’s faithful giving financially (cf. 4:19; 1 Timothy 6:19; Luke 14:13-14; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9, 11)? Specifically, does this reward come now or later?

MY SUMMARY TITLE: _____

Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week’s passage.

APPLY

how does it work?

This week's application section involves the same three steps as last week's, which we will continue to use throughout our study: reflect on your own life, list principles, and choose one to apply this week. It is often helpful when working through the second and third steps to consider the following list of questions:

- *Is there something to worship or thank God for?*
- *Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?*
- *Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?*
- *Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?*
- *Is there any relationship I need to work on?*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) What are some areas in your life that you struggle to be content with God's provision? If so, what aspects of God's character will you choose to meditate upon this week?
- 2) In this passage, Paul thanks the Philippians for their gift toward his ministry. In the same manner, who can you thank this week for their support of you whether financial or otherwise?

LIST PRINCIPLES

List at least five principles from Philippians 4:10-23. Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLAN OF ACTION

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

MY NOTES

PUT IT BACK TOGETHER

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

MEMORIZE

Review your memory verses for each of the previous lessons.

- | | | |
|---------|-----------|-----------|
| • 1:6 | • 2:12-13 | • 3:13-14 |
| • 1:18 | • 2:22 | • 4:8-9 |
| • 2:5-7 | • 3:8 | • 4:10-23 |

Before we get to the synthesis, one word of encouragement ... please realize how much you have grown as a student of God's Word through your study of Philippians! Each week, you've learned how to better observe, interpret, and apply the stories of Scripture. Those same three steps will serve you well as you continue to study God's story throughout the Bible. Continue to practice and refine these skills so that you become, "a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Now that you have studied the book of Philippians in detail, answer the following questions:

- 1) What challenges faced this early church in Philippi?
- 2) What solutions did Paul present to handle each of these challenges?

SYNTHESIS

how does it all fit together?

During the past nine lessons, we have observed, interpreted, and applied the entire book of Philippians . That is no small task! Now it is time to draw our detailed study to a useful conclusion, a process known as **synthesis**. Our goal is to create an overall summary of the book of Philippians that we can quickly review any time in the future to remind us of the flow and content of the book.

OUTLINE THE BOOK

The first step of this synthesis is to **CREATE YOUR OWN OUTLINE OF THE BOOK**. Review the work you completed each week, especially the summary titles you created for each passage in the “My Summary Titles” section. Then, create your own brief outline on the next page. Feel free to use any outlining style, but here is an example of how you might start.

1) *Greeting (1:1-2)*

2) *Introduction (1:3-26)*

a. *Praise for the Philippians (1:3-8)*

b. *Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)*

c. *Progress Report (1:12-26)*

MY PHILIPPIANS OUTLINE

SYNTHESIS

how does it all fit together?

The second step of this synthesis is to **RECORD WHAT YOU LEARNED OR WERE REMINDED OF**. This is more personal than your outline. Create a list of the theological truths and life lessons you have either learned for the first time or been reminded of from your study of Philippians.

As an example of a theological truth, you might write:

I was taught that all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Jesus.

An example of a life lesson would be:

This book reminded me that the church's goal is to present every man complete in Christ through a process that comes with great cost & struggle.

List at least ten theological truths and ten life lessons on this page that you learned from your study of Philippians, and record the verses where each is addressed.

THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS I'VE LEARNED

LIFE LESSONS I'VE LEARNED

The final step of this synthesis is to PRAYERFULLY CHOOSE TWO APPLICATIONS TO PRACTICE. These can be applications that you developed and began to practice during previous lessons, or you can create entirely new applications. Whatever your choice, two things must be true about them:

1. Both applications should touch on **areas of your life where you are currently in need of growth**. Do not choose “*be kind to others*” if this is already something you do very well.
2. Both should **be specific** with a clear plan for growth and the name of someone who will hold you accountable. “*Study the Word more*” is not sufficiently detailed. Instead, develop a specific plan such “*I will read through Romans this next month and write down my observations, interpretive questions, and applications in a journal. Steve will hold me accountable weekly.*”

APPLICATION #1

• Principle from Philippians:

• Verses where it’s discussed:

• Plan of Action: *I will ...*

APPLICATION #2

• Principle from Philippians:

• Verses where it’s discussed:

• Plan of Action: *I will ...*

SYNTHESIS
how does it all fit together?

MY NOTES

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

APPENDIX

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

PRINCIPLE#1: YOUR GOAL IS TO DISCERN THE AUTHOR'S INTENDED MEANING TO THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE. Unfortunately, most people begin their Bible study by asking, “What does this passage mean to me?” While there may be multiple possible applications to my life, there is only one meaning—the author’s intended meaning; and we must first seek this out. This involves three important steps.

1. Always **start your study with prayer**, asking the same God who composed Scripture through these ancient authors to give you insight to understand His intended meaning.
2. Be very careful to **avoid reading your 21st century circumstances and theological issues** into the text as they will skew your understanding.
3. Work diligently to see the text **from the point of view of the original readers**. To do this: [a] dig into the historical and cultural background using Bible dictionaries and commentaries, and [b] spend a few moments thinking about the original audience’s religious understanding by asking, “What books of the Bible did they have access to? What did they know about God? About Jesus? About salvation? Etc.”

PRINCIPLE #2 - ASSUME A “NORMAL” USE OF LANGUAGE. The Bible was given to us because God desired to communicate with us, not to hide Himself from us. Therefore, we should not be looking for “hidden” meanings as we study. Instead, we should use the “normal” techniques we would use to understand any piece of literature:

1. **Study the grammar.** Yes, most of us hated grammar in junior high, but it really is helpful for understanding Scripture! Pay attention to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Think through any figures of speech. Observe how phrases and clauses are connected into sentences and how sentences are linked together into paragraphs.
2. **Remember that chapter divisions came later.** When Paul wrote Corinthians or Luke wrote the book of Acts, they wrote single, unified stories without verse or chapter divisions. These books were meant to be read just like you would read a letter or a novel. Always keep the overall story in mind as you study each passage.

PRINCIPLE #3 - LET SCRIPTURE INTERPRET SCRIPTURE. Since God is unchangingly truthful and always consistent (John 17:17; Hebrews 3:6; James 1:17), we can, and should, expect the same of His Word. This has two practical applications:

1. **Check your conclusions.** Always compare your conclusions with the teachings of Scripture as a whole. If you find that your interpretation of a passage contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture elsewhere, you probably need to revise your conclusions.
2. **Allow clear passages to illuminate ambiguous passages.** Whenever you encounter a passage that is confusing or open to multiple possible interpretations, use clearer passages of Scripture to guide you to the correct interpretation.

One last caution - remember that God revealed Scripture progressively, not all at once. Therefore, we should not be surprised by differences between how people related to and understood God at different times in the history of Scripture. For example, while Abraham needed only believe that God was faithful in order to be justified (Genesis 15:6), in the NT era, we must believe in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-7).

BONUS SKILL: CREATING LISTS

This skill involves identifying a key word, subject, person, place, or event in the passage and then listing every fact given about that word. For example, if you made a list on “God” from 2 Timothy 1, it might look like this:

GOD...

- 1. MADE PAUL AN APOSTLE BY HIS WILL (V1).**
- 2. GIVES GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE (V2).**
- 3. IS THE FATHER (V2).**
- 4. IS THANKED AND SERVED (V3).**
- 5. GIVES GIFTS (V6).**
- 6. DOESN'T GIVE SPIRIT OF TIMIDITY (V7).**
- 7. GIVES SPIRIT OF POWER, LOVE, AND SOUND MIND (V7).**
- 8. GIVES POWER FOR SUFFERING (V9).**
- 9. SAVED US (V9).**
- 10. CALLED US (V9).**

As you read this list, what jumps out at you? Perhaps you see that “God gives” is mentioned five times in this list. What a gracious and loving God we serve! You have discovered one of the characteristics of God: His generous grace toward men. By creating these lists, you will begin to see patterns of truth that you will want to study further. For example, this list about God may lead you to do a word study on give or find all the other references in Paul’s epistles to God’s giving nature. Furthermore, this list can now be used for meditation, to praise and worship God, to encourage others, and to proclaim the character of God to the lost.

One word of caution about lists, however. Just because you are able to create a list centered on a key word, such as “God” in 2 Timothy 1, does not mean that Paul’s main point in the passage is to talk about that key word. Paul’s emphasis in 2 Timothy 1, in fact, is not to discuss attributes about God; it is to encourage Timothy to press on in the ministry of the gospel. Make sure that before you create any lists, you complete the initial processes of observation: list themes, mark up the text, and record your most significant observations. However, after these initial tasks, creating lists is a great way to deepen your study of a passage!

DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES

One of the predominant themes throughout the book of 1 Corinthians is Paul's desire to present every man complete in Christ. It is important that we know the truth of the Bible and that our lives more and more begin to reflect Jesus Christ. Spiritual growth clearly involves study of God's word, but it also involves transformation of our character and life. This process is often called "discipleship" and refers to an intentional relationship between a mature believer and a younger believer, where the former trains the latter towards the goal of spiritual maturity. Paul's discipleship of Timothy (and Titus as well) is one of the greatest examples we have of this process in all of Scripture. And like Paul, we too can make a lasting impact for God's kingdom by spiritually reproducing ourselves in the lives of others.

Going through this Bible study was one of the best steps you could take to prepare you to disciple someone else because now you know how to explain and defend key biblical truths like the gospel, spiritual leadership, grace, and salvation. Just as important, you have now learned and practiced the basic method of Bible study - survey, observe, interpret, apply, synthesize. These are key steps towards spiritual maturity that you can now pass on to others! Where can you go from here to learn more about spiritual multiplication? Here are a few helpful resources:

THE MASTER PLAN OF EVANGELISM by Robert Coleman

This is a highly motivational analysis of Jesus' own principles of evangelism and discipleship.

THE LOST ART OF DISCIPLE MAKING by Leroy Eims

This very practical resource will give you a detailed structure to follow and great content to cover as you begin to disciple a new believer.

A SURVEY OF BIBLE DOCTRINE by Charles Ryrie

This is not a book about discipleship. It is, instead, an easy-to-read, relatively short systematic theology primer that you can walk a new believer through to ground them in the faith.

ESSENTIALS OF THE FAITH by Grace Bible Church, College Station, TX

This small group Bible study packet walks a new believer through the fundamental truths and practices of the Christian faith in ten self-paced lessons.

PHILIPPIANS: FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

