

GROW

Upward. Inward. Outward.

ADULT CONNECTION



OCTOBER 2016 PHILIPPIANS



The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

A Note From Our Pastor

Dear FBC family and friends,

We are about to embark on the second month of our new curriculum and I am excited about the lessons presented within this book which begins our study of Philippians. This study supplements the sermon series theme on GROW that we have studied throughout this year. We now shift our focus in this last quarter to the letter W which stands for the Word. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." If we will listen and apply what we read in scripture, it will transform our lives. The musical group Mercy Me has a song, that many of you may have heard, that is titled "Word of God Speak" and this I pray is the desire for all of us as we go through the letter to the Philippians.

As a reminder, the layout of this curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to engage each week's study by internalizing and applying it. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own approach for preparing the lesson and we encourage them to teach in the way that makes him or her most effective in presenting God's Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for their own personal study and encouragement.

We are anticipating great things through this new approach and curriculum for the Connection Classes. We invite you to give us feedback as we seek to make this as good or better than any curriculum we could find anywhere. Our primary goal is for all of us to know the Bible and grow in the process.

-Blessings
Pastor Don

Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively

Introduce

Day 1: Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Instruct

Day 2: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

Day 3: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

Inspire

Day 4: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Incorporate

Day 5: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

Day 6: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

Day 7: Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

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October 2, 2016



Participating in the Word Philippians 1:3-11

Focal Verse:

"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Philippians 1:6

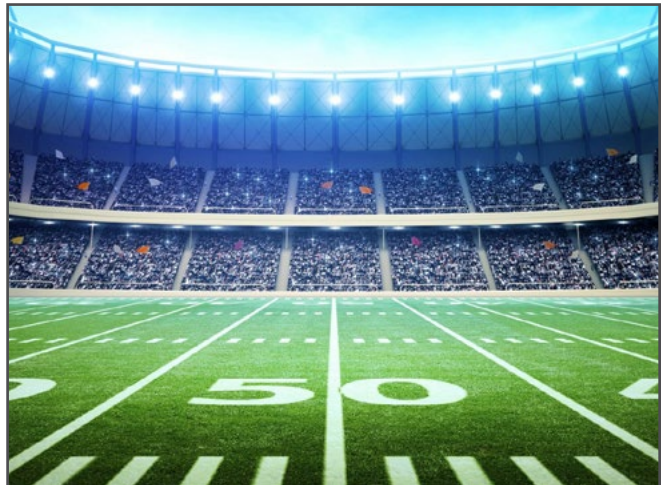
Introduce

We live in a nation obsessed with sports which becomes evident particularly in the Fall when thousands pack stadiums on both the collegiate and professional levels. Fans dress in their favorite team's gear, paint their faces the team's colors, and make signs expressing their support all the while cheering loudly from the stands. Passionate fans sometimes can will their football and baseball teams to victory through their cheers which inspire the adrenaline-induced players to give an extra measure and try even harder. Despite all of the support that they might receive from the stands, however, only a limited number of players have direct control over the outcome of the game. No matter how much support that the most dedicated fans in the stand can muster, they do not participate directly in the outcome of the game.

Key Question

Which best describes you in relation to your service in the church—a spectator or a player? Why?

The church differs drastically from sports because it has no spectators and each member plays a pivotal role in advancing God's kingdom—no one sits on the bench or in the stands watching the action, but all are intimately involved. Ideally, each member knows the gifts



Introduce

that God has given him or her and uses them to glorify the Lord by serving in specific ministries in the church. But like the many other ways that secular culture has infiltrated the church, too many members have become spectators only and have little or no direct involvement in the ministry of the church. Certainly God has commanded us to give our tithes and offerings and He has bid us to be an encouragement for others, but these tasks supplement hands-on ministry in the church. In order to impact the community and see it transformed, the church needs every one of its members actively fulfilling the role to which he or she has been called by God.

How has God called you to participate in the ministry of His church?

Question
1



Philippians 1:3-6

PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL:

After an initial greeting in the first two verses, Paul opens the letter to the Philippians in verse 3 with a warm prayer of thanksgiving to God on behalf of the church. Because the Philippians have a right perspective and mutual concern for the care and spread of the gospel, Paul can **thank God** with great **joy** each time he remembers them in **prayer**. Consequently, this attitude of **joy** pervades the letter because the church has actively partnered with Paul in his ministry to spread the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Probably most of us have someone who comes to mind that has played an active role in the development of our relationship with Christ whether through evangelism, discipleship, mentorship, or partnership in ministry. When we look back at their influence on our walks, we should praise God with great joy for sending them in our lives to help us grow and mature in our faith.

In-Depth Information



The noun **joy** or the verb **rejoice** occur fourteen times in Philippians making it Paul's most joyous letter ([1:4](#), [1:18](#), [1:25](#), [2:2](#), [2:17](#), [2:18](#) [twice], [2:28](#), [2:29](#), [3:1](#), [4:1](#), [4:4](#) [twice] and [4:10](#)).

Who has partnered with you in your walk with Christ? In what ways are you partnering with others to disciple them?

Question
2

Instruct

In verse 5, Paul expresses the reason for joy in his prayer on behalf of the Philippians; he thanks God for their participation **in the gospel from the first day until now**. Although Paul doesn't qualify the exact nature of their participation, we can deduce three primary ways based upon the context of the letter. First, Paul notes that they have participated in the gospel from the **first day**; thus, he refers to their initial salvation in which they responded by accepting the free gift of grace that God offers through His Son's finished work on the cross ([Acts 16:11-40](#)). In order to be an active member that advances God's kingdom, we need to have a relationship with Him first.



In-Depth Information



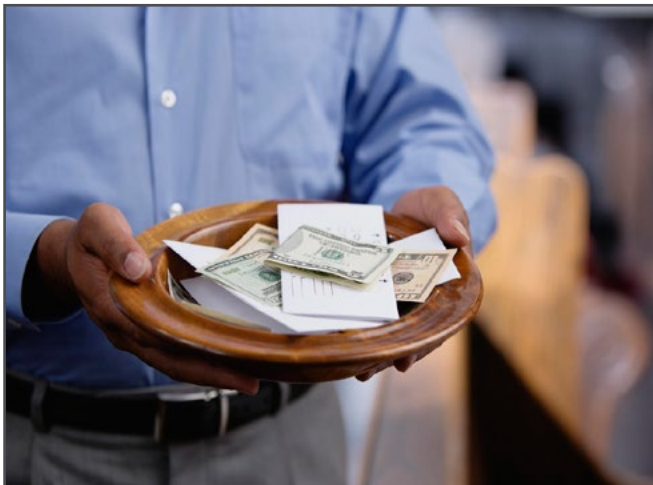
In verse 5, Paul uses the Greek term **koinōnia** (pronounced *coin-oh-knee-a*) which some translations render as **fellowship**. However, in modern English, the term better reflects the meaning of **participation**. In twenty-first century thought, fellowship has become synonymous with social gatherings usually involving food, conversation, and games, but the word that Paul uses here has the connotation of partnering or working together to achieve a common goal—in this case the spread of the gospel.

Second, not only do the Philippians participate by accepting the initial offer of salvation through Jesus, but they also continue to respond **until now**; as a result, they are actively involved in spreading the gospel by serving and ministering in their local community. This becomes evident in verse 7 where Paul states that they participate **in the defense and confirmation of the gospel**. Every one of us has been called by God to evangelize, but each of us has different spiritual gifts which help us to achieve that goal ([Rom 12:4-8](#); [1 Cor 12:4-31](#)); therefore, like the Philippians we need to be involved in the ministry wherever God leads us and in whatever role He places us so that the church as a whole can grow and we can see people come into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

How has God gifted you to serve in His church? In what ways are you faithful in actively serving?

Question
3

Third, the Philippians also participate in Paul's ministry through their financial support and encouragement. One of the primary reasons that Paul writes this letter is to thank the church for their tangible support of his ministry. Twice in the letter he thanks them for their support. While under house arrest in Rome, they dispatch Epaphroditus "who ministers to [Paul's] need" ([2:25](#)) whether through mutual encouragement or via financial support. In addition, the Philippian church



Instruct

is also instrumental in providing finances for Paul's work in Thessalonica ([4:10-20](#)) and a key part of the offering for the famine-stricken Jerusalem church ([2 Cor 8:1-5](#)). Like the Philippian church, we should participate in the spread of the gospel through our initial salvation, through active ministry to the community, and through financial giving and encouragement.

Our participation in the gospel comes not from our own strength and resources, but through God Himself. In verse 6, Paul acknowledges that God makes this participation in the gospel possible because He is the one who has begun the **good work** and He will also see it to completion. God is the one who both saves us and also equips us to do the work to which He has called us. As a result, our confidence is not in ourselves, but rather it is in the Lord; if God has called us to a task, He will equip us supernaturally with what we will need to **complete** it.

In what way has God supernaturally equipped you to participate in His kingdom?

Question
4

Philippians 1:7-8

PARTICIPATE IN GOD'S GRACE:

In order to have an effective ministry in our local congregation, we need to perceive our service as a gift of grace rather than a laborious and cumbersome task. When Paul thinks of the Philippians, he regards them as **partakers** along with him of God's **grace**. Certainly the Philippians have experienced God's grace in salvation ([Eph 2:8-9](#)), but also like Paul

they have experienced God's grace in their ministry. Too often, we regard ministry as a second job that infringes upon the little free time that we have after our secular jobs and responsibilities at home. We simply want to rest and recreate rather than minister to others in our spare time. Although ministry requires hard work, discipline, and sacrifice, we should view it as a gift of grace no matter what the circumstances or outcome may be. For even while Paul was **in chains**, that is in prison, as a result of his **defense and confirmation of the gospel**, he refuses to view the cost of ministry too high, but rather he gladly serves the Lord to the best of his ability.

Why should you view opportunities to serve as God's grace? How would viewing ministry and service as acts of grace change the way that we serve?

Question
5

In-Depth Information

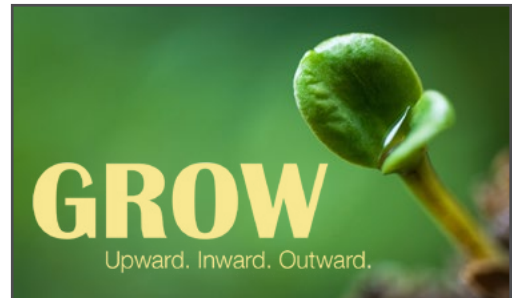


In [Ephesians 3:2-7](#), Paul also describes his ministry of evangelism to the Gentiles in terms of a gift of grace. He writes, "If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the **grace** of God which was given to me for you . . . that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the **grace** of God given to me by the effective working of His power." When we view ministry as a gift of grace in terms of the sacrifice that Jesus performed for us on the cross, we will realize the sacrifices that we make for the spread the gospel pale in comparison to what He has given us.

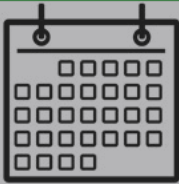
Philippians 1:9-11

PARTICIPATE BY GROWING:

Next, Paul intercedes for the Philippians by praying for their spiritual growth in three key areas. First, he desires that they grow in their **love** toward both God and others ([Matt 26:36-40](#)) as expressed through maturity in their **knowledge** and **discernment**. The word translated **knowledge** means insight gained through personal experience in a close relationship rather than intellectual insight which we would call “book learning”; therefore, it recalls our participation in the gospel through our continued growth after our initial salvation. In order to grow in experiential **knowledge**, we need to know God which comes through actively reading His Word, praying, and serving Him each day ([Phil 3:10](#)). When we grow in **knowledge**, we will also grow in **discernment** which means that we are able to differentiate between that which is morally right or wrong and act befittingly of our testimony in Christ—once again this results from knowing God’s Word and heeding the Holy Spirit’s guidance in our lives, thereby affecting the way that we conduct ourselves ([Phil 1:27](#); [3:20-21](#)).



In Future Sessions



Each of these three areas highlights a key theme that Paul will develop throughout the letter; therefore, we will briefly identify them this week and elaborate on them in subsequent lessons in this series.

Second, the result of their growing in **love** leads Paul to pray that they may **approve the things that are excellent**; thus, we will have the right perspective or thinking according to the principles that God has revealed through His Word ([Phil 2:5](#); [3:15](#); [4:8-9](#)). In order to have the right perspective, we need to look at people and events as Christ sees them—that is to have His mind or attitude; our opinions and preferences take a back seat to God’s will so that we have a perspective centered on love, grace, and forgiveness and we work in unity toward glorifying God with our lives and service.

In-Depth Information



*The word translated as **approve** literally means to test or discern as genuine and directly connects with the idea of **discernment** from verse 9—thus, the Philippians must guard their minds and think about things which are good and righteous rather than fill their minds with carnal knowledge and secular views.*

Third, Paul prays that the Philippians may grow by being **sincere without offense** which he further qualifies as **being filled with the fruits of righteousness**; in other words, he urges the church to live with integrity by exercising holiness in their actions and attitudes which produce a good testimony that honors Christ. In verse 10b, the phrase that they **may be sincere and without offense** literally means that they may be pure and blameless (see [Phil 2:15](#)). Consequently, Paul implores

Instruct

us to avoid sin and follow God's commands by the way that we live with honesty and moral uprightness; we are not to produce rotten fruit by selfish, sinful actions as defined by God's Word, but rather we should produce good fruit which imitates our Savior ([Gal 5:19-26](#)).



In-Depth Information



The Bible has much to say about how we conduct ourselves. God has established boundaries by which we should live not to take away our fun, but rather to protect us and give us an even more abundant life ([John 10:10](#)). In the Old Testament, God bids His people “to be holy” for He Himself is “holy” ([Lev 19:2](#)) which Paul and Peter repeat in the New Testament when they bid us to be “holy and blameless” ([Eph 1:4](#); [Col 1:22](#); [2 Peter 3:14](#)). Paul even goes so far as to say that we ought to avoid even the appearance of evil in our lives ([1 Thess 5:22](#)) because God has called us to imitate Him in His love and holiness ([Eph 5:1-2](#)).

In which area do you see the most need in your own life for spiritual growth?

Question
6

God has actively called each one of us to participate in the gospel by the way that we conduct ourselves and the way that we minister to the community. To reach the community effectively, we need every member to use his or her giftedness in solidarity with the purpose of sharing the gospel so that we can introduce people to a loving relationship with Jesus Christ. Our Community Impact Teams provide opportunities for us to meet the physical needs of our community as well as giving us a chance to share the gospel verbally with those whom we assist. We need to be intentional about sharing the gospel when we meet the physical needs of the community; generally, most people who receive assistance will courteously listen to those who help them, providing the avenue through which we can share the good news with them—some may respond, but others may not; however, we are not called to go only to the ones who respond favorably, but into all the world to share the gospel.

Currently, we have twelve areas in which our members can serve our community through our church: First Touch, Team Visitation, Pastoral Care, Team Mechanics, Team Landscape, Team Fix-It, Team Gather, Team Partner, Team Prison Fellowship, Team Social, Team Adopt-a-School, and Team Advocacy. In order to get a description of what each team does and to be able to indicate your interest, go to cit.fbcfw.org. In order to advance the kingdom of God we are called to go into our community, not sit idly and wait for the world to come to us.

To ensure each Community Impact Team functions the way it should to impact the community, it takes every member of our church to

be involved. To the Philippians, Paul says **I thank my God upon every remembrance of you** because they were faithful in participating in the **gospel from the first day until the now** without slacking off. The challenge is to be faithful and to finish strong because we want our testimony to be as that of the Philippian church whom Paul thanked for their continued and faithful service. Therefore, we must remember that our service is a gift of grace so that we might faithfully reach the community through outreach in our church; it may be through a Community Impact Team, but it may also be through another avenue which God directs you.

In Prayer



Spend time in prayer asking God how you can impact our community with the gospel in a tangible way. Ask Him how you can be involved in our church's outreach, but also how you can personally impact your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and social network.

Incorporate

Pray and ask God to bring to mind the most influential person in your life; this person may be the one who introduced you to salvation in Christ, it may be one who mentored or disciplined you, or it may be someone who encouraged you and helped you to get through a difficult time in life. What characteristics did that person exhibit in his or her own walk that impacted you the most?

What characteristics do you or should you exhibit in your life to impact others in the same way that God used someone to impact you? Pray and ask God to reveal someone whom you can mentor.

Incorporate

As a member of the church based on your profession of faith in Jesus Christ, we have a responsibility to partner together to advance the gospel beginning in Fort Worth and spreading around the world. As we learned this week, we differ from sports because in the church no one sits on the bench or observes inactively as a spectator—we all have an important role to play in ministry. In our church, we have a number of ways we can serve and impact not only other believers but also the community as a whole. Spend time in prayer evaluating your role in ministry at FBC Fort Worth and see where God desires you to either continue serving or begin serving. This week we will focus on impacting the community. Go to cit.fbcfw.org to see how you can be part of a Community Impact Team which seeks to spread the gospel by meeting the needs of the community around us. In what areas do you currently serve? In what areas is God calling you to serve?

If God gives you a ministry or vision not listed on the CI Team page, write it here and then share it with your Connect Class teacher and the Ministerial Staff.

Journal: Document God's Work

October 9, 2016



Proclaiming the Word Philippians 1:12-26

Focal Verse:

*"What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth,
Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice."*

Philippians 1:18

Introduce

From a dark, inhospitable Roman prison in ancient Carthage (modern Tunisia in Northern Africa), a twenty-two-year-old woman named Vibia Perpetua contemplated her choice to follow Christ as her Lord and Savior and to defy the emperor who had forbid promoting Christianity through evangelism and discipleship. This young woman had given up everything to become a follower of Christ, including her family, her freedom, and even later her life; nonetheless, she never lamented that she had surrendered her entire life to Him and, in fact, she even grew bolder in speaking against her opponents even while in prison.

While in prison, her father came to persuade her to renounce the name of Jesus and to repent from bringing shame upon her noble and wealthy family. When that line of reasoning failed, he attempted to appeal to her maternal instincts. As a new mother, the Roman government allowed her to nurse her child while in prison because he had suffered malnutrition; as a result, her father demanded that she think about how her choice had affected her child, but his logic fell on deaf ears. Perpetua steadfastly responded, “Do you see this vessel—water pot or whatever it may be? . . . ‘Can it be called by any other name than what it is?’ ‘No,’ he replied. ‘So also I cannot call myself by any other name than what I am—a Christian.’” Her refusal to renounce Christ incensed her father so he began to beat her, but she still refused to reject her Savior.

After her father failed to convince her, she faced a trial before the Roman proconsul Hilarion who again pleaded on behalf of her family to reject Jesus and to be restored to good favor among Roman citizens, but alas she continued to reject their pleas so she was sentenced to death at the

Introduce

gladiatorial games. She was placed in the arena with wild beasts which mauled her severely; because of her severe wounds, the crowd expressed compassion that the match cease and she be killed so as not to prolong her suffering. Even then, Perpetua remained bold and as she passed by some fellow Christians while on her way to be executed; defiantly, she shouted,



“Stand fast in the faith, and love one another. Do not let our sufferings be a stumbling block to you.”

Although this story has been passed down to us through church history apart from the biblical record, it nonetheless demonstrates what type of animosity that early Christians faced; despite this persecution, however, many of them remained stalwart in their conviction to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ boldly. Perhaps the most persecuted follower of Christ in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul always remained bold in his proclamation of the world despite his circumstances and he urged others to follow his example: “And most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear” ([Phil 1:14](#)). (See In-Depth Information on page 33)

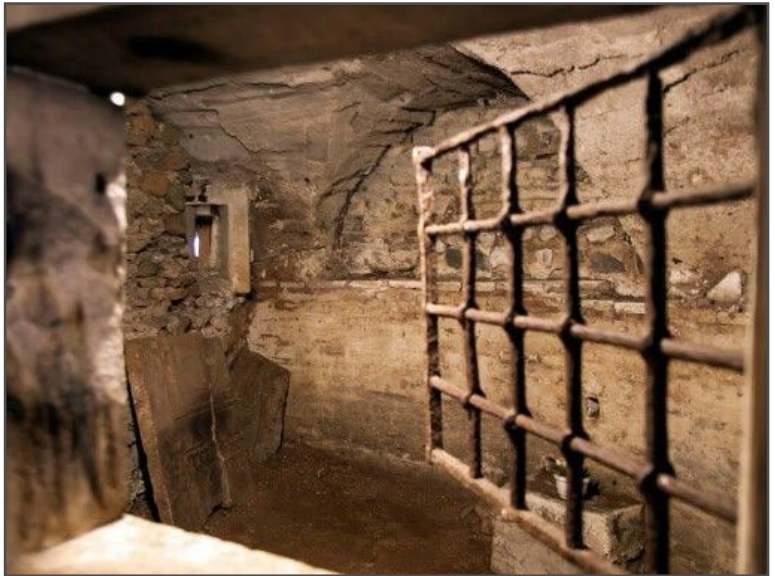
Key Question

How bold are you at sharing the gospel in times of both opposition and relative peace?

Philippians 1:9-11

PROCLAIM THE WORD CONFIDENTLY:

Paul begins this section by explaining to the Philippians that the **things which happened** to him have **actually** served to advance the spread of the gospel rather than hinder it. The events to which Paul refers occur in Jerusalem when a fracas erupts in the temple instigated by the Jewish leaders who claim that he has abandoned the Law and defiled the temple by bringing Gentiles into the premises ([Acts 21:27-40](#)). To avoid being beaten or killed by the angry mob and the temple guard, he appeals to his Roman citizenship and his right to receive a trial ([Acts 22:23-28](#)); however, when he appears before the Roman governor Felix and later Festus, Paul doesn't receive a fair trial so he appeals to the Roman emperor to hear his case—which would be like having our Supreme Court adjudicate a case today ([Acts 25:9-12](#)). After suffering a shipwreck on the way to Rome, he then



How have you seen God work through difficult circumstances to spread the gospel?

Question
1

spends two years in the capital city under house arrest awaiting trial ([Acts 27:27-44](#)); to most, this looks like it would have fettered and stopped the spread of the gospel, but in reality it served to accelerate it.

In-Depth Information



Throughout his ministry, the Apostle Paul perhaps suffered more than anyone. In [2 Cor 11:23b-27](#), he lists all of his many troubles; he has faced beatings—both with rods and whips—being stoned and left for dead, imprisonments, shipwrecks, harassment from both the Jews and Gentiles, and physical exhaustion through arduous journeys, lack of food and clothing, and stressful work. Despite all of these problems, however, Paul never let misfortune and persecution dissuade him from his God-given purpose of spreading the gospel.

Through Paul's personal testimony, we see that he shares the gospel in all circumstances; regardless of the situation, whether imprisoned or free, whether fearing for his life or in living relative peace, or whether facing severe opposition or open-arms, Paul proclaims the Word confidently and without hesitation. Most of us, if we were imprisoned unjustly for our ministry, would probably complain and seek a way to retaliate against our accusers; Paul, on the other hand, uses the opportunity to glorify God and proclaim the Word which **has become evident to the whole palace guard**. Paul doesn't mention this to brag about his unselfish work, but rather he uses it to illustrate how far and how quickly the gospel has spread—even his chains of imprisonment could not impede the spread of the gospel!

As a result, his example has inspired other Christians to speak more boldly and without fear even though they may face the same kind of obstacles.

In-Depth Information



The palace guard, more formally known as the Praetorian Guard, was an elite unit of the Roman army that served and protected the emperor and the civilian government in the city of Rome.

In what way can we advance the spread of the gospel in our own city today?

Question
2

Philippians 1:15-18a

PROCLAIM THE WORD WITH CORRECT MOTIVES:

We live in a society which exudes competitiveness and rivalry even amongst churches to see who can have the most in attendance and the biggest budgets rather than working in a spirit of cooperation to spread the gospel and advance the kingdom of God. In some ways, Paul also faces this spirit in his own day when people preach Christ out of **envy and strife** and **selfish ambition**.

Consequently, in these verses Paul condemns their motives rather than their message because they have a problem of the heart rather than a problem with preaching a false gospel—right message, but wrong motives!



We are not opponents, but brothers with the same goal: proclaiming the gospel.

In verse 16, Paul grieves that these people proclaim the Word in order **to add affliction to his chains**; in other words, they have turned the spread of the gospel into a competition, seeking to make more disciples than Paul, to plant more churches than he, and to win more converts. In their own right, these are noble tasks, but the prideful spirit of competition detracts from the true purpose of glorifying the Lord. By putting Paul down and mocking his imprisonment, they attempt to elevate themselves in the eyes of their followers. People who seek to compete do so without **sincerity** and because of their **selfish ambitions** they take pride in titles of honor and positions of prestige rather than honoring God in their ministries; they have an air of superiority about them because they believe they know more than others, their spiritual gifts are more indispensable to the kingdom than others, and they are more righteous and holy than others.

Conversely, we ought to have a spirit of cooperation in sharing the gospel based on our love for Christ. God's love for us motivates His response toward us; it motivates His Son's sacrifice for us ([John 15:13](#); [Rom 5:8](#)), it motivates His discipline of us ([Heb 12:6](#)), and it motivates His physical care or provision for our needs ([Psalm 136:5](#)). Likewise, our love for God ought to motivate and compel us to act by proclaiming the Word. What greater love could we have for someone other than to warn them of the danger of a life apart from God? What greater love could we have for someone than to share the gospel with them so that they might know how to have eternal life? Often we think that silence and avoiding arguments rather than speaking the truth about Christ demonstrates

more love and tolerance, but in actuality it expresses the opposite because we fail to show them love by keeping the good news of eternal life in Christ to ourselves.

What motivates you to proclaim the Word?

Question
3

Philippians 1:18b-20

PROCLAIM THE WORD TO CELEBRATE CHRIST:

Even though some people preach with the wrong motives in order to exalt themselves, the true focus of our proclamation should be the exaltation and praise of Jesus Christ; instead of focusing on the motives of those who preach out of **envy and strife** according to a spirit of competition, Paul expresses joy that the gospel is still preached. Twice in the latter half of verse 18 he breaks into expressions of joy: **In this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.**

In-Depth Information

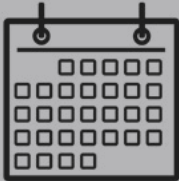


*In the twenty-first century, the term **preach** has become primarily associated with a message that a pastor delivers on Sunday mornings to the church; in this way, most Christians have become complacent with sharing the gospel because they feel that this is the pastoral staff's duty to **preach**. However, the word that Paul uses here means to announce, proclaim, or declare with the broader sense of sharing the gospel in this context—something that both the pastoral staff and laity should do together. Every one of us who has a relationship with Jesus Christ has something to announce and declare to the world!*

Instruct

In verses 19-20, he continues to note that whether he remains in prison or is granted his freedom or even whether he lives or dies he will **magnify Christ**. Paul fully expects to be released from prison soon to continue his mission to spread the gospel to the Gentiles because he expresses confidence that his imprisonment and hearing with the emperor **will turn out for his deliverance** because of the Philippians' **prayers** and the **supply**—that is help from—the Holy Spirit. Because Paul is fulfilling the will of God through his ministry, he has **nothing** of which to be **ashamed** ([Rom 1:16](#)), and, in fact, he has the **boldness** even in the face of imprisonment and persecution to **magnify** the Lord through his **body**. To magnify Christ, Paul both lives righteously—that is he lives with integrity and obedience to the principles in God's Word—and he proclaims the Word of the Lord boldly in all situations regardless of the cost.

In Future Sessions



In next week's lesson, we will learn what it means to live righteously through our attitudes and actions according to God's Word.

How have you exalted or magnified Christ in your life? How have you proclaimed His Word boldly?

Question
4

Philippians 1:21-26

PROCLAIM THE WORD TO CONTINUE DISCIPLESHIP:

As he sits in prison, Paul contemplates the advantages of **living** and **dying**. **To live**, he surmises, means to honor Christ, but **to die** brings even more **gain** because he can spend eternity worshiping the Savior apart from the trials of this world. Paul is torn between the two options because he knows that dying and being with Christ is **far better**, but at the same time God has also called him to a mission to proclaim the Word and disciple others while here on earth.



If he **lives**, Paul asserts, it will mean that he will bear **fruit** in his **labor** which is more profitable for the Philippians as well as the others whom he evangelizes and disciples; therefore, even though Paul longs to spend eternity with Christ in heaven, he recognizes that God still has a task for him to complete here on earth—proclaiming the Word. Paul spells this out in verse 25 when he elucidates his **confidence** that he shall **remain** in the **flesh**—that is remain alive in his physical body—in order to assist the Philippians in their **progress and joy of faith**.

After we begin a relationship with Jesus, God leaves us here on the earth instead of calling us home for two reasons: 1) to share the gospel with

Instruct

others and 2) to disciple Christians who need to mature in their faith. As important as the initial proclamation of the gospel is, the discipleship of new and young believers is as equally important because they desperately need a solid foundation on which to build lest they become sidetracked in their own pursuit of maturing in Christ. We need to work one-on-one with each other to progress in the faith not just in biblical knowledge, but also in applying it in a practical and tangible way which honors God.

How have you been discipled? Who do you disciple? If you can't think of anyone for either of these two questions, pray and ask God what you can do to rectify that.

Question
5

During this week's lesson, we learned four principles about proclaiming the gospel which can be applied in our lives tangibly in two ways: 1) verbally sharing the gospel with those who have not heard and 2) discipling believers who continue to grow in their faith. First, be intentional about sharing the gospel when the Holy Spirit leads. During the month of October, we have begun a campaign in our church to impact the community with the gospel. Each week we encourage you to invite others to church: family, friends, people in your social network—such as co-workers or members in extracurricular activities in which you participate—and your neighbors. Furthermore, we implore you to go beyond merely giving them a card and inviting them to church—verbally share the gospel with them. Inviting them to church is a noble deed, but how much more effective can we be in getting them to come to church if we present the gospel first and Christ radically transforms them from the inside out? Share the gospel and then invite them to church! Just as the whole palace guard had heard the gospel during Paul's day, may the entire city of Fort Worth hear it in our own.



Second, participate in discipleship—whether this means you are discipling someone or you are being disciplined yourself. In more modern

terms, discipleship means mentoring or teaching someone a set of skills to be utilized in life in a practical way. Many of us may argue that we ourselves need mentoring before we can help others; in fact, every one of us continues to grow in our faith daily and learn new things that the Holy Spirit reveals to us through God's Word, prayer, and other believers. We all need to be discipled! Nonetheless, every one of us can mentor someone based on the life experiences that God has given us; we cannot let a feeling of inadequacy dictate how we use the skills and experiences that God has given us to advance His kingdom and help others grow in their faith. However, we cannot mentor others if our teaching isn't based upon God's Word; therefore, we must participate in Bible studies and small groups that seek to teach the Bible in-depth; Connect Classes on Sunday provide this opportunity, but so also do Tuesday Meeting, Wednesday night Bible Studies for men, women, and children, and Connect Groups. Not only should you attend Bible studies and Connect Groups that the church offers for this purpose, but also find someone with whom you can confide, be accountable, and learn together.

In Prayer



Spend time in prayer asking God to send someone to mentor you or someone whom you can mentor. Generally, men should mentor men and women other women who have similar life experiences. When God reveals that person, go to them and talk about being a mentor—take the initiative. It doesn't have to be something extremely formal, but rather something that will promote growth and accountability.

Incorporate

Several times throughout Philippians, Paul mentions his imprisonment, but that didn't stop him from advancing the gospel. Examine your life and see what areas may impede you from advancing the gospel. For example, it may be the political correctness of an employer—whether government or otherwise that could result in being terminated. After writing them in the space provided, make a reasonable plan to overcome them so that the gospel may continue to expand in the US.

Too often when we evaluate anything in our lives, we tend to focus on the negative—that which needs to be improved; however, we also need to focus on the positive—the things that are going well. In what ways can we celebrate that our church exalts Christ through our ministries? How can you be a more effective part of that exaltation of Christ?

Incorporate

Perhaps other than evangelism, discipleship and the progression in our faith are the most important responsibilities of the church. Evaluate your life and list the areas in which God reveals that you need discipleship, but also think about people in the church based on their fruit in ministry that could serve as an accountability partner and mentor you.

Incorporate to Impact



Share the gospel daily this month and invite others to church.

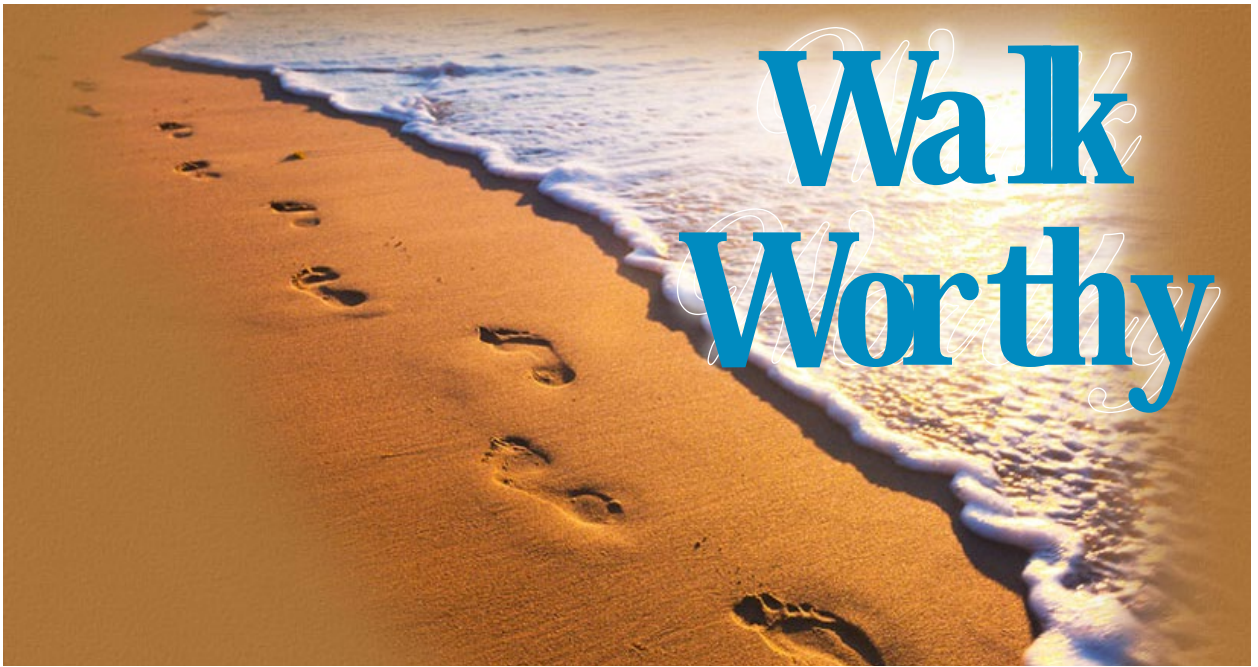
In-Depth Information (from page 21)



*An overview of historical Christian missions, including Perpetua's story, can be found in the book *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* by Ruth A. Tucker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), pages 33-35. In addition, to read Perpetua's first-hand account, see *Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas*.*

Journal: Document God's Work

October 16, 2016



**Walk
Worthy**

Practicing the Word

Philippians 1:27-2:4

Focal Verse:

"Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Philippians 1:27

Introduce

As a citizen of an earthly country, each resident not only has certain rights and privileges, but also certain responsibilities and obligations which to follow. Natural-born citizens of the United States sometimes take for granted or even forget that we have responsibilities to represent our nation well in the way that we conduct ourselves. Naturalized citizens, however, take an oath which serves to remind them of the importance of these obligations which can also reinforce what we as natural-born citizens should already know. After renouncing “all allegiance” to their previous country or any other foreign power, the naturalized citizen is admonished to affirm “that I will support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.” The Constitution and the Bill of Rights, therefore, not only guarantee and protect individual freedoms, but they also outline how our country should work together to achieve the common good for her citizens as a whole.



Because of our twenty-first century individualistic mindset, many people often overlook the spirit of cooperation that we should have as citizens to work together in unity to better our country as a whole—not for mere individual gain, but rather the common good of every citizen. Theodore Roosevelt (pictured above) in his 1913 autobiography astutely writes, “Facing the immense complexity of modern social and industrial

Introduce

conditions, there is need to use freely and unhesitatingly the collective power of us all; and yet no exercise of collective power will ever avail if the average individual does not keep his or her sense of personal duty, initiative, and responsibility." Thus, President Roosevelt knows that success comes from working together, but he also knows that if each person doesn't pull his or her own weight then the ability of the whole to accomplish something tremendous is collectively diminished.

As a follower of Christ, we have taken a new oath whereby we have forsaken our old way of life and surrendered completely to the will of God so that we might live according to His standards and that we might represent Him in holiness to the world around us. Because we are technically foreigners here on earth and truly citizens of heaven, we ought to conduct our lives in a way that honors and glorifies God by imitating the Son whom He sent on our behalf. In the focal verse of this lesson, Paul urges the Philippians to let their conduct be worthy of the gospel. The word Paul uses for conduct literally means "to behave as a citizen." As a citizen of heaven, we should conduct our lives with humility and strive to live in unity, working together to accomplish the will of God. Each one of us, therefore, plays an integral part in advancing the Kingdom of God in the way that we practice the Word in our attitude, in our speech, and in our actions.

Key
Question

What does the conduct of a true citizen of heaven look like?

Philippians 1:26-30

PRACTICE THE WORD THROUGH YOUR CONDUCT:

The Bible is a book that God designed not only to be read, but also to be applied or practiced in our lives. Therefore, Paul begins this section with a command that the Philippians **let their conduct be worthy of the gospel** ([Eph 4:1-6](#)). In other words, he encourages them to live out their faith by practicing it in their attitude and behavior. In the next few verses, Paul spells out in detail what type of conduct a Christian should exhibit by describing four specific characteristics; consequently, he contends that Christians should 1) seek to live in unity ([Phil 1:27](#); [2:2](#)) 2) defend the gospel in both word and deed (Phil 1:27-28), 3) persevere in spite of persecution ([1:29-30](#)), and 4) maintain the right perspective ([2:3-4](#)).

Because we will examine unity in the next section, we will commence with Paul's instruction that the Philippians **strive together for the faith of the gospel**; the word translated **striving together** comes from the



world of sports where it connotes working together as a team to achieve a common goal—in this case to defend the gospel both verbally and through our radically changed lives that reflect Christ to a dark and depraved world

([Phil 2:15](#)). As Christians, we must work together as a team; no one should ever become isolated because each member has an important role to play and the team becomes stronger when all of the parts work together harmoniously rather than individualistically; therefore, we ought to bear one another's burdens, encourage each other, and partner together to advance the gospel ([Phil 1:3](#)). In addition, we also need to draw strength from one another to face a secular culture that opposes Christian values and has rejected the gospel so that we can maintain a good testimony that points others to Christ.

In-Depth Information



The Greek word Paul uses for **striving together** actually is where our word athlete originates. The verb form used in [Phil 1:27](#) literally means to **compete together**.

In what ways can we strive together to impact our community with the gospel?

Question
1

Furthermore, another significant part of defending the gospel means that we must stand strong against our **adversaries** and not retreat in the face of a cultural war on biblical values. Paul warns the Philippians that they must strive together without being **in any way terrified**. Because we have joined the victorious side in Christ, what do we have to fear? Paul explains that the fear and uncertainty of the world is a sign of their **perdition** or destructive behavior that separates them from God

whereas our boldness in striving together to advance the gospel even in the face of opposition is **proof** of our **salvation**.

Today, however, the roles have become reversed with secular culture having a stronger voice in promoting immorality than Christians have in promoting morality and righteousness in Christ. Although the world may exhibit uncertainty about life after death, they act boldly in championing their immoral choices while Christians have tended to shrink back in fear becoming overwhelmed by the culture. Instead, as Paul suggests, it should be the opposite; Christians should proactively battle immoral cultural choices with the proclamation of the gospel. Not only do we need to stand against immorality verbally, but we must also keep ourselves from participating in it lest we be labeled hypocrites; consequently, we need to proclaim boldly the Word of God while at the same time living by its standards.



“You can’t enjoy true freedom without limits. Without rules that define a football game, you can’t play the game, let alone enjoy it. The same thing is true in life. To live a life at its fullness and truly enjoy it, we need to understand and abide by the rules that God spells out in the Bible. God isn’t spoiling our fun. He knows that life without limitations results in anarchy and misery. It’s only when we have absolute limits that we can truly be free.”

Tom Landry

How can we work together as a church to stand against the culture?

Question
2

Instruct

Because the Christian life at many times may involve suffering and persecution, we must persevere; Paul makes it clear that the Philippians could experience suffering because he reveals that **it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake**. In addition, Paul warns them that they will face the **same conflict** which he himself has faced whether this means imprisonment or physical violence. Nonetheless, even today Christians will frequently encounter suffering which may come in the form of ridicule, exclusion from certain social groups, lack of freedom to express Christian views in public, and even beatings, rejection by other family members, or even death. Yet, in the face of persecution, we must remain strong, knowing that our true citizenship is in heaven and that God will reward our faithfulness by bringing countless people to an understanding of salvation and a relationship with His Son so that they might have eternal life.

In what way have you personally seen persecution on the rise in our society? How should we react to such persecution?

Question
3

Philippians 2:1-2

CONDUCT YOURSELF IN UNITY:

Paul actually introduces the concept of unity in [1:27](#) when he encourages the Philippians to **stand fast in one spirit**. The concept of **standing fast** comes from a military background in which an army stands shoulder to shoulder to defend against an attacking army so that the attacker may

not advance and gain ground; therefore, within the context, it signifies the need to remain focused on the task at hand—the advance of the gospel. A military unit knows its objective and spends countless hours training for its mission; each member of the unit knows his or her role and works together to strengthen the whole. In the same way, Christians ought to know the biblical foundation for living according to God’s Word and fulfill their God-given duties within the church to strengthen it as a whole. For Christians not only must we stand fast with integrity in righteousness so that the enemy cannot get a foothold ([Eph 4:20-32](#)), but we must also **strive together** in unity to defend the gospel.



In-Depth Information



*Notice the emphasis Paul places on the concept of unity in this passage; six times he urges them to stand unified by expressing it in different ways: 1) stand fast in **one** spirit, 2) with **one** mind striving **together**, 3) being **like-minded**, 4) having the **same** love 5) being of **one accord**, and 6) of **one** mind.*

Moreover, a functioning military unit also has a single goal or purpose in its mission; because they have the same thought process, even though they may have different jobs they will still work together to accomplish a single goal. In the same way, Paul describes the need for a Christian to be

unified by urging them to act **with one mind** or to be **like-minded** and of **one mind** ([1:27](#); [2:2](#)). In other words, we should have a Christ-like perspective and attitude about the world around us ([Phil 2:5](#)) and we should maintain pure and holy thoughts ([Phil 4:8-9](#)). If we have this Christ-like perspective, then we will display the **same** type of **love** to one another. Our love becomes visible through cooperation and the laying aside of personal preferences to advance the Kingdom of God and glorify Him. In addition, we ought to love others sacrificially which means that we should forgive them when they wrong us and seek to maintain harmony and decorum with those who despise us. Not only should we express love to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, but we also ought to express love to the world around us by introducing them into a loving relationship with Jesus Christ.

In-Depth Information



Although Paul can praise the Philippian church as a whole for their participation in the gospel from the first day, he also acknowledges that they have a problem with disunity in their midst; Paul asks two women, Euodia and Syntyche, “to be of the same mind” ([Phil 4:2](#)). Because Paul doesn’t address any doctrinal issues that could have caused the division, we can assume that the women had a dispute over personal preferences. To achieve a common goal, we must put personal preferences aside and work together in the Lord.

What does true unity in the church look like?

Question
4

CONDUCT YOURSELF WITH HUMILITY:

In order to be unified and working toward a single purpose, we also ought to exercise humility in our lives. For the most part, we live in a selfish world in which people tend to worry only about themselves, but as followers of Christ we should exhibit selflessness. Last week, we saw that some who preached the gospel did so from selfish motives, but here Paul urges us to examine our lives in terms of our service to others not from **selfish ambition or conceit**, but looking to **the needs of others** rather to **our own interests**. In order to follow the example of Christ, we should put others first just as He did during His earthly ministry; while on the cross, Jesus thought not of Himself, but rather He thought of those past, present, and future for whom He was sent to die. His love for us led Him to give the most magnificent sacrifice that the world has ever known so that we, even though His enemies at the time, might have eternal life. What better way could we glorify Him than to share that same sacrificial love to others and meet their needs so that we can minister to them?



*Meeting the Needs of Others:
Members of FBCFW help with clean-up and relief after the Joplin, MO tornado in 2011.*

In-Depth Information

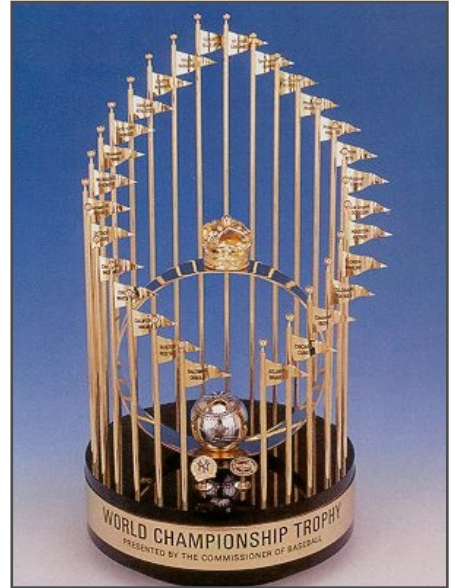


The term in **lowliness of mind** can also be translated as **humility**; humility signifies having the right perspective. We can have “false” humility in which we always put ourselves down or we can be arrogant and elevate our achievements; when Paul refers to humility in this passage, he is not describing either of these concepts, but rather urging us to maintain the right perspective in relation to God and others. He even more clearly explains the concept in [Romans 12:3](#): “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”

In what ways have you forsaken your own interests to help others?
How can we as a church have that mindset as an entire community?

Question
5

Every October the regular season ends and the playoffs begin for Major League Baseball. At the beginning of the season, every team aspires to win the World Series. Each player works hard in the offseason to train, so that he can contribute to the team's effort to be crowned the world champion. From Spring Training through the 162-game season, each team has the same goal and hopefully every player puts asides personal goals and accolades to contribute toward the team's success. One or two individuals alone cannot compete in the World Series, but it requires the entire team: batting, pitching, and defense. As Christians we must have a singular goal which is to glorify God through the way that we live and to participate in the ministry of the church to advance the gospel. Undoubtedly, every one of us has opinions and personal preferences as to the way the church as a whole should minister, but we need to look past our preferences and see the bigger picture; therefore, we need to stand unified in order to defend and advance the gospel through our words and deeds. Having the right perspective means that we look to the needs of others above our own so that we can glorify God in our conduct as heavenly citizens. In two weeks, our church will hold the annual Community Fall Festival to reach people with the gospel. It takes every member of our church family



working together with the understanding that this Fall Festival is designed to reach the community rather than being a fellowship for our members alone. When we see it from that perspective, we all ought to be involved striving together to advance the gospel. In order to make it a success, we need everyone helping from the set-up, cooking, games, cashiers, greeters, security team, clean-up, and much more. Let's not let the enemy advance, but let us stand shoulder to shoulder united as partners **striving for the faith of the gospel** because we **love** Christ which allows us to love one another so that we can see ministry from Christ's perspective rather than from **our own interests**.



Incorporate

This week we have learned what it means to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of our heavenly citizenship which reflects the character of our Savior. Spend time in prayer to examine your own life to see how you have been doing. First, list any areas in your conduct in which you have seen God commend you or use you; second, list any areas in your conduct in which God convicts you to improve. (You don't have to share these with others unless God stresses the need for accountability in your life.)

Part of our conduct should include working together to share the gospel with our community. On Sunday, October 30, we will have that chance to share the gospel through the Community Fall Festival. Go to cff.fbcfw.org in order to see in what areas we still need you to volunteer. Pray and consider in what way God wants you involved for us to work together!

Incorporate to Impact



Now that you have signed up, consider who you can invite that does not attend church anywhere to our Community Fall Festival and bring them with you!

Journal: Document God's Work

Journal: Document God's Work

October 23, 2016



*Patterning our Lives
after the Word
Philippians 2:5-11*

Focal Verse:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 2:5

Introduce

Whether we have ever truly thought about it or not, at some point in our lives we probably sought to imitate someone because he or she inspired us in some unique way. Some of us aspired to be like a sports icon or legend; we tried to mimic the way they hit a baseball, dunked a basketball, threw a football, or even drove a golf ball. In fact, we tried to pattern everything in our game around their style. If we have watched many sports interviews, one question frequently asked is who the player idolized growing up and how it affected his development and how he plays the game.



Others of us perhaps wanted to be like someone in our family—either mom, dad, or an older sibling. For our older siblings, we shadowed them and wanted to hang out with their friends or wanted to do the same activities which they did. Sometimes our parents even encouraged us to imitate our siblings, especially if we had that annoyingly “perfect” brother or sister—our parents may have interjected in a moment of frustration after something we did went awry: “Why can’t you be more like your sister?” On the other hand, if our parents were actively involved in our lives, many times we would try to imitate their behavior or repeat what we have heard—which sometimes led to embarrassment from our parents who hadn’t particularly watched what they had said around us. Nonetheless,

Introduce

we sometimes would rummage through our parents' closet to dress like they did; we would pretend to go to work like they did; we may have even unconsciously mimicked their mannerisms and expressions. Moreover, we would want to help our parents in the kitchen, in the yard, in the garage, or on some other project in which they were involved because we wanted to be near them and do the same things that they did. In addition, when we were asked who we wanted to be when we grew up or what we wanted to do, many times we would declare that we wanted to be like our mom or dad. Why did we imitate them and want to be like them—whether consciously or unconsciously? We did these things because we had a close relationship with them and we loved them unconditionally.

Unfortunately, not every one of us had such a close bond with our earthly parents or families, but we can have a close bond with our Savior who has offered to make us part of His Father's family if only we would accept it. No other person in the entire world has lavished love upon us like Jesus who died for us and made us joint-heirs with Him. If we love Him and bear His name as His adopted sons and daughters, then we should seek to imitate Him and bring honor to Him. For this reason, Paul encourages the Philippians to have the same mind or outlook on life as does Christ Jesus. Because we love Him so much, as we mature each day in our lives we ought to become more and more like Him in every way!

Key
Question

In what ways ought we imitate Christ and have His perspective?

Philippians 2:5

IMITATE THE WORD'S ATTITUDE:

Last week, we learned that we should have the same perspective rooted in the thinking of Christ; in [2:2](#), Paul implores the Philippians to be **like-minded** and **of one mind** which we observed meant to have a Christ-like attitude. Now, in [2:5](#), Paul gives the ultimate example of how we ought to think by instructing us to pattern our thoughts after Jesus—which is no easy feat! In [2:5-8](#), he outlines how Jesus thought in terms of attitude, service, and obedience.

In-Depth Information



Patterning ourselves after Jesus' thinking dominates the letter to the Philippians. It first occurs in [1:9-10](#) when Paul prays that the Philippians might continue to grow in real knowledge and discernment. The result of this knowledge will enable them to approve or test the things that are excellent or good. We also see this theme appear again in [4:8](#) where Paul tells them to dwell on the things that are righteous. As a result of holy thinking, the church will be unified having the same mind ([1:27](#); [2:2](#)) and any disunity will be dispelled ([4:2-3](#)).

In [2:5](#), Paul issues a command for us to have the same **mind** in us which **was also in Christ Jesus**; this is not an optional suggestion, but rather a command which is to be implemented and followed as we mature every day. Therefore, we should see the world from Christ's perspective which

influences what we say, what we see, what we do, how we respond, and what we believe. When we view things from Christ's perspective then we act with humility considering the needs of others rather than selfishly existing for our own needs. Having the perspective of Jesus will radically transform our conduct which will exalt God through our service of others around us.

In-Depth Information



The word that Paul uses in v. 5 means **to think**; translations interpret the phrase either as **let this mind be in you** or **have the same attitude** as does Jesus. A better understanding of the word, however, would be to have the same perspective as Jesus—think in the same way that He does!

Based on the Bible, how does Jesus view the world? What is most important to Him as characterized by how He lived, what He did, and what He said?

Question
1

Philippians 2:6-7

IMITATE THE WORD'S SERVICE:

When Jesus took the form of a man and became flesh by being born into this world of a virgin, He came not in the **form** of an earthly king or wealthy aristocrat, but rather He came as a humble **bondservant**; although Jesus came as a human being, never at any point did He cease

to be **God** for indeed He still remained God in the flesh. As both a servant and God, Jesus always maintained the proper perspective because He did not selfishly exploit His position as God, but rather saw the world in need of a Savior who could redeem it; consequently, Jesus did not misuse His position as God to benefit Himself, but rather He used it as a means to benefit others through the work that He did on the cross.

In-Depth Information



*Philippians [2:6-8](#) has some of the most difficult Greek to interpret in all of Paul's letters because the words are rare and can have several different nuances depending upon the context. For example, the phrase in verse 6, particularly the highlighted green part, "did not consider it **robbery** to be equal with God" has many shades of meaning. Other translations interpret it as "did not consider equality with God as ..." 1) **something to cling to** ([NLT](#)), 2) **something to be used to his own advantage** ([NIV](#)), or 3) **a thing to be grasped** ([NASB](#), [ESV](#)). In this case, the NIV is the closest to the way Paul intends it in the context. Jesus, as God, does not use His divine position to take advantage of others or exploit His position as God. For instance, James and John saw Jesus' rejection in Samaria so they asked if He wanted to call down fire upon them and destroy the village. In His prerogative as God, Jesus could have certainly destroyed the city, but instead of desiring to get even He shows restraint in having the right perspective and says this: "But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them'" ([Luke 9:54-56](#)).*

Instruct

Jesus certainly could have condemned others because He knew what was in the heart of man ([John 2:24-25](#)); He could have refused to heal nine of the ten lepers who refused to come back and thank Him ([Luke 17:11-19](#)); He could have refused to feed the crowd of 5000 because He knew that they weren't truly paying attention to His teaching, but they just came in order to have their stomachs filled ([John 6:26](#)); He could have come off of the cross and destroyed those who taunted Him ([Matt 27:42-43](#)); and even more importantly, He could have refused to die on the cross and endure that torture for our sakes. Yet, even though He is God, Jesus remained focused on the goal for which the heavenly Father had sent Him to earth—to redeem His wayward creation through a perfect sacrifice.

Man, on the other hand, from the very beginning attempted to exploit His position with God as the pinnacle of His creation being made in His image and likeness ([Gen 1:27](#)). First, both Adam and Eve ignored the boundaries which God had set forth for them; instead of being God's representative to the earth by caring for the Garden, they subjected it to sin and destruction by eating of the forbidden fruit. Second, when tempted, they expressed their desire to usurp God's authority and become like Him knowing good from evil ([Gen 3:5](#)). Jesus, however, demonstrated the true way that man ought to live by becoming a servant and restoring God's original plan for mankind



to have a relationship with Him and representing Him again to the rest of creation.

Although we ourselves cannot become divine or “gods,” we still need to seek to become like Christ by representing the very essence of God to the world around us; the way that we conduct ourselves, our attitudes, our words, and our actions all bear witness to the radical change that the Lord has begun within us. Since Christ now lives within us, He becomes the stamp or mark on our lives that determines how we live and how we represent Him. Let us, therefore, have a mind or perspective, that sees the world as an opportunity for serving others and pointing them to a relationship with Jesus Christ by how we live and who we represent.

Instead of having a critical or condemning spirit, Jesus focused on His duties as a **bondservant**. After examining Jesus’ life, we can observe three characteristics of a servant that we can apply in our lives: 1) a true servant does tasks that no one else is



willing to do; when no one else is watching, then the servant still goes about his business; 2) a true servant is not concerned with receiving rewards or applause—a true servant is concerned with exalting God; 3) a true servant serves others because of the inward joy he or she receives from being a blessing. Let us keep these characteristics in mind as we serve God through our church by having the same perspective as did Christ.

In what ways did Jesus serve the world?
How can we serve the world like He did?

Question
2

Philippians 2:8

IMITATE THE WORD'S OBEDIENCE:

As a servant, Jesus **humbled Himself** by remaining focused on His primary goal which was obeying God's will even if it meant **His death on the cross**. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus maintained focus on His goal which was to honor the heavenly Father by doing His will. In [John 6:38-40](#), Jesus made His purpose explicit: "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." As a result, Jesus demonstrates the way that we ought to have lived from the very moment of creation in complete obedience and dependence upon God.

In-Depth Information



Last week, we saw that Paul urged the Philippians that **in lowliness of mind** let each esteem others better than himself ([Phil 2:3](#)). We learned that humility means having the right perspective— not thinking too highly of oneself or having false humility. In [2:8](#), Paul uses the verb to signify that Jesus **humbled** Himself which again means that He has the right perspective in terms of His relationship not only with the heavenly Father, but also based on the reason why He came to earth in the first place.

Jesus surrendered Himself in complete **obedience** which meant that He had to die a horrendous death upon the **cross**. We cannot choose the areas in which we surrender; just as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" ([Luke 22:42](#)), we also need to surrender completely to the will of God. We must surrender in everything: our relationships, our finances, our possessions, our jobs, our time, and our very lives in accordance with God's plan. Our obedience does not depend upon our circumstances, but rather it depends upon how much we trust God and rely on Him.

In what areas of your life have you not yet surrendered to the Lord in complete obedience?

Question
3

Philippians 2:9-11

EXALT THE WORD IN WORSHIP:

Because of Jesus' right perspective, God **highly exalted** Him by elevating Him to a position of honor because He submitted to His will and was obedient in all things. On the day that Jesus returns to the earth for the second time, everyone on **heaven** and **earth** and in the grave, that is **under the earth**, will **bow** before Him, giving Him the honor and **glory** that He deserves. On that day, even the people who rejected Him here on earth will **bow** before Him along with the countless numbers of people who trusted Him as Lord and Savior. As a believer, we should seek to exalt Jesus now through our lives so that God will be glorified and honored because we live like His Son; thus, we can honor Christ by

Instruct

imitating His attitude, service, and obedience so that we can reflect the character of our Savior to the world around us. As John the Baptist said, “He must increase, but I must decrease” ([John 3:30](#)); consequently, we must let others see Christ in us by humbly surrendering to the will of the Father.

In-Depth Information



Paul declares that **God exalted** Jesus by giving Him **the name which is above every name**. This reflects the earliest Christian confession that “Jesus is Lord”; the name Lord is the divinely unique name of God from the Old Testament, Yahweh ([Exod 3:14](#)). Because of His obedience and through His resurrection Jesus was declared to be the Son of God ([Rom 1:4](#)). Jesus is Lord just as He declared throughout His ministry and was vindicated at His resurrection from the dead.

How are you exalting Christ in your life currently?

Question
4

This week we learned that we should pattern our lives after the Word in three key areas: attitude or perspective, service, and obedience. Paul begins by instructing us to have the same perspective, that is thinking or attitude, as does Jesus. Often our minds become saturated by secular knowledge that conflicts with our biblical worldview so much that in many areas members of the church think no differently than the society around us. Perhaps the greatest influence on our minds is that which we consume through television, movies, and the Internet. Through these mediums, we have been bombarded by impure images; we have become desensitized to violence and death which dominate both real life in the news and fictional events in movies; we have become overtly stimulated by a preponderance of sexual innuendos and images from commercials to sitcoms to graphic portrayals of what God intended for a husband and a wife for a life-time commitment. We may think that watching such movies is harmless and doesn't affect the way that we live, but in reality our minds soak up the language and imagery and influence the way that we behave.

Media isn't the only area that has a profound impact on the way that we think, but so also does the environment in which we place ourselves with our family, friends, work, and social activities. Generally, those with whom we fellowship influence the way that we think. If we hang out with people who gossip, we tend to pick up that habit; if we hang out with people who are overtly negative and critical, we tend to develop that type of spirit; if we hang out with people who despise others and exclude those who aren't on the inside of their group, then they begin

to think in that same manner. On the contrary, let us saturate ourselves with the Word of God so that we can know how Jesus thought and lived and, therefore, we can pattern our lives after His perspective.

Moreover, the way that we think also dictates how we serve and how obedient we are. Jesus didn't view service from a self-serving perspective about what He got out of it, but rather He viewed it in terms of what He could contribute and how He could give to others. We live in a consumerist society in which we expect to be served; when many people look for a church, they look not for a place that they can serve, but they look at it from the perspective of does it meet their needs. Certainly we ought to examine the theology of a church and seek one that confesses the Bible as the source for its authority, but we ought to measure the effectiveness of a church based on whether we can contribute by serving. Let us think, therefore, of ways that we can serve in our local congregation in order to advance the Kingdom.

Finally, we are to obey just as Jesus did—not seeking our own fleshly desires, but rather looking to the will of God so that we can obey completely in every task for which He has equipped us. If we have the mind of Christ and view the world from His perspective, we will undoubtedly know what the will of God is and we will be able to respond and obey immediately. When we obey God, all these other areas will fall into place and we will have a relationship whereby we truly pattern our lives after Christ.

Incorporate

Using the three areas that we discussed this week, pray and ask God to help you rate your growth in each: attitude, service, and obedience. In what areas do you excel and why? In what areas did God reveal to you that you need to improve and how?

The way that we think, that is our perspective, actually governs the other two areas in how we serve and how we obey. Take a moment to examine the things in your life that can have a profound impact upon the way that you think. What is the area that has the most impact upon the way that you think? Why? If it influences you negatively, in what ways should you change the pattern of your thinking to be more like Christ?

Incorporate

Let us not be a church that looks selfishly to our own needs and desires, but let us be one that looks to serve the Lord. Part of Jesus' service led Him to obey the Father's will even if it meant death upon the cross. In the same way, God has asked us to serve Him obediently whatever the cost He may require. Our church has a number of ways that we can serve the Lord on a daily and weekly basis. If you are currently serving, write the areas in which you serve and spend time seeking God's wisdom as you continue your service. If you currently do not serve or want to see other areas in which you can serve, go to mymember.fbcfw.org and look at all the options. Fill out the form and someone will contact you regarding an opportunity to serve. If God has another area in which He has inspired you to serve, respond by clicking the other category and giving us as much information as possible or e-mail one of the staff and share how God has been speaking to you.

Journal: Document God's Work

October 30, 2016



Prescription for Reaching the World Philippians 2:12-18

Focal Verse:

"That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

Philippians 2:15

Introduce

Gazing into the night sky from a ranch in West Texas the scope of God's creation becomes visible as billions of stars shine brightly and our own Milky Way Galaxy appears like a brilliant hazy cluster of light in the midst of vast darkness. As the moon rises and the stars become manifest, the landscape of the plains with its hills and valleys dotted by mesquite

trees, prickly pear cacti, and endless fields of tall grass appears dim, yet visible because the light emanating from these heavenly bodies pierces even the fiercest darkness. Without the moon and stars on a cloudy night, the light



becomes obscured and we have nothing to guide us; we cannot see the world around us and if we try to travel we would most likely stumble and fall not to mention that we could lose our direction and be miles from our destination. Therefore, the light from the stars provides not only a way for us to see the things that could cause us to stumble, but also important navigation tools by which we can navigate our lives.

The night sky in West Texas stands in stark contrast to the one that we view here in North Texas which becomes obscured by light pollution from man-made objects from buildings to cars to streetlights. Instead of seeing billions of stars, we are lucky to see the moon and perhaps at most one or two of the brightest stars on a perfect night. As we gaze into the sky, we

Introduce

see more blinking lights of airplanes landing and taking off from DFW than we see stars. Sadly, the light from man's own invention drowns out the light from God's creation—and this ought not be the case, especially in our lives as believers because as Paul notes in our focal passage we are to shine as lights in the world by how we conduct ourselves so that we might become a testimony to the transforming power of Jesus Christ in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

As believers, God has called us to function as stars which shine in the darkness and give light and direction by pointing others to Him. Unfortunately, however, many times the secular culture overshadows the light that we reflect in the Son and we fail to shine as brilliantly as we could. In many ways based on our conduct which shadows the world oftentimes, we have allowed the secular culture to become more influential than our own relationship with the Lord—generally speaking of the church as a whole; therefore, we need to reverse this trend and live according to our potential to become blameless and harmless without fault so that the world might understand the path to salvation is through the transformative power of Jesus Christ alone—not works, not church membership, not baptism, but through a relationship with Him based on His finished work on the cross.

Key
Question

In what ways do you see the church as a whole functioning as lights in the darkened world? In what areas does the church need improvement?

Philippians 2:12-13

RECOGNIZE THE NATURE OF OUR SALVATION:

The title for this lesson is “Prescription for Reaching the World,” but what information is needed for writing a prescription? Before a doctor writes a prescription, he examines us and gathers information about our symptoms in order to assess our current condition. In order to reach the world, we also need to assess our spiritual condition so that we might better understand the nature of our own salvation and how our lives ought to reflect the transforming power of Christ so that we can point others to a relationship with Him. In [Phil 2:12-13](#), Paul describes two areas which characterize our salvation: 1) Salvation requires complete surrender and obedience to God and 2) salvation is a work of God, but is expressed through life-change which produces good works in us.

First, Paul instructs the Philippians to continue to **obey** the Lord in their daily walk. Last week, we learned that we should imitate Jesus’ obedience to the Father ([2:8](#)) and in verse 12 Paul emphasizes that our salvation necessitates that same type of



obedience and complete surrender; therefore, he encourages them to continue to **obey** whether he is present with them or not. He doesn’t mean that the Philippians ought to obey a set of rules that he has given them nor does he establish himself as a legalistic enforcer of rules as indeed he

once was in his misguided journey as a Pharisee. Rather he merely describes the human tendency in most of us to conduct ourselves righteously only when we think others are watching. To drive safely on the freeway, for example, we have the rules of the road which we must follow—whether the speed limit, changing lanes, or driving at a safe distance. When motorists spot a police officer, they make sure they follow the rules and almost instinctively we all hit our brakes and check our speed; but if no police officer is present, driving becomes a free-for-all with people making their own set of rules because they no longer fear receiving a ticket.

Instead, we should act with integrity all the time—whether we perceive someone is watching or not because in reality God always sees and knows. Therefore, when we are in the privacy of our own homes, we should talk and act the same as we do as church; when we are at work, we should act with integrity just as much as we would around other Christians; when we are in social gatherings with our friends, we should refrain from listening to dirty jokes or describing improper situations or gossiping just as much as we do when we surround ourselves with Christian friends. Obeying God means that we live with integrity and we represent the character of His Son to those around us whether they can see us or



*Ron T. Ennis (Photographer)
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not so that we can have a tremendous impact upon the world.

In what ways do we need to exercise integrity so that we can be a righteous representative of God?

Question
1

Second, Paul explains that salvation is a work of God, but is expressed through life-change which produces good works. In the second part of verse 12, he writes **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**. Some have wrongly understood this as the need to do good works in order to attain salvation; they also argue that we will never have assurance since we can't really know whether our good works outweigh our bad. Notice, however, that Paul qualifies this as **God who works in you** (v. 13). God alone is the source of our salvation, not our good works ([Eph 2:8-9](#)); Paul has already alluded to this in [Phil 1:6](#) when he asserts, "He who has begun a good work [salvation] in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." Because God, not us, began the good work and will also complete it, we can have the utmost confidence and security in our salvation.

So what does it mean to **work out our salvation with fear and trembling**? Our initial salvation at the point of accepting the gift of the finished work of Christ on the cross has been fully completed—nothing else need be added to it. After we have accepted that gift of salvation, however, we begin a journey to become more like Christ every day by transforming the "old" person who we once were into a new creation. Therefore, to **work out our salvation** means that we should live obediently to follow the path that Jesus Himself has set for us—hence, the reason for Paul's stressing the need to obey in verse 12. Because

Instruct

there is a conflict between our “old,” self-centered life and our “new” life in Christ, we must strive or work to live a holy and God-honoring life that pleases Him. We cannot earn our salvation nor can we lose it, but we still must work to grow in Christ every day.

*Working out our salvation is
“how saved people live
out their salvation in the
context of the believing
community and world.”*



F. F. Bruce, Philippians, New International Commentary on the New Testament, page 235

In-Depth Information



The phrase **fear and trembling** in association with the working out of our salvation may seem to give the connotation of uncertainty, but in reality it means to revere and honor God by living our lives in a way that pleases Him. Consequently, we are to respect God by obeying His commands and conducting our lives worthy of the gospel ([John 14:15](#); [Phil 1:27](#)).

In what specific ways do we need to work out our salvation according the Bible and your own personal experience?

Question
2

REPRESENT THE WORD TO THE WORLD:

After understanding the nature of our salvation, then we need to follow God's prescription for reaching the world. How many of us would spend time going to a doctor and allowing him to analyze our condition only to ignore his advice and not fill the prescription he has written us?

Most of us probably have never done this and if we did we learned an unfortunate, but valuable lesson. God has written us a prescription for reaching the world: "I will work through your character and life so that you might draw people unto Me." If God has given us this clear prescription, then why do we have difficulty following it at times?

Paul begins with a picture of the children of Israel in the Old Testament who became so consumed with their own circumstances as they wandered in the wilderness that they forgot their main purpose—to point people to God. As a result, Paul



advises the Philippians to do everything **without complaining and disputing**. This phrase recalls what Israel did after God freed them from bondage in Egypt—they complained constantly; they lamented that God had brought them into the wilderness to die for they lacked food and water and it would have been better had they stayed enslaved in Egypt ([Num 11:1-6](#)). As a believer, we should never display a negative or critical spirit either about other people or ministries, rather we should

work together setting aside our personal preferences without grumbling or **complaining**. We certainly should evaluate things in our lives to see if we are headed the right direction, but we can do so with a positive attitude seeking the Lord not self-satisfaction.

In what ways can we be positive in the church rather than complaining and disputing?

Question
3

Because of their **complaining and disputing**, many times in Israel's history they forgot their covenant with God and dishonored Him by serving idols and worshiping the false gods of the people around them. In [Deut 32:5](#), Moses points out, "They have corrupted themselves; they are not His children, because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation." The pronoun they refers to the children of Israel who had forsaken the Lord and become like the nations around them worshiping their gods. Along those same lines, Paul urges the Philippians not to forsake God, but rather **shine as lights** by being **blameless and harmless**; in other words, they should have a distinct character from **the world** around them that shows to Whom they belong. As light, we want to attract people to Christ not repel them because of our sinful, hypocritical lifestyle; we should want **the world** to see Jesus in our actions and in our speech.

What are some ways that we can be light in a dark and depraved world?

Question
4

In-Depth Information



The word translated as **harmless** actually means pure or innocent. The idea that Paul stresses here is that the world cannot accuse or blame believers of wrong because they have remained pure—in other words not hypocritical.

Philippians 2:14-16

So how can we demonstrate this life-change and how can we point others to Christ? In verse 16, Paul explicitly tells us that we should strive to **hold fast the word of life**. Through Scripture, we can understand God's plan for our lives which was demonstrated visibly through His living Word—that is Jesus Christ. Although being a follower of Christ is not primarily about what we do, our character and our conduct directly reflect upon whose we are; therefore, we must not only cognitively know Scripture, but we must also internalize it and apply it in our lives so that it affects the way that we live. What good would it do to have all the knowledge contained in every book in the Library of Congress without being able to apply that knowledge which we have learned? In order to **shine as lights**, we need to live by the standards God has outlined in His Word and we need to pattern ourselves after His Son ([Phil 2:5-8](#)) standing as a stark contrast to the **crooked and perverse** generation around us who is lost in its way and headed for eternal destruction.

In what ways do we need to hold fast to the word of life?

Question
5

Philippians 2:17-18

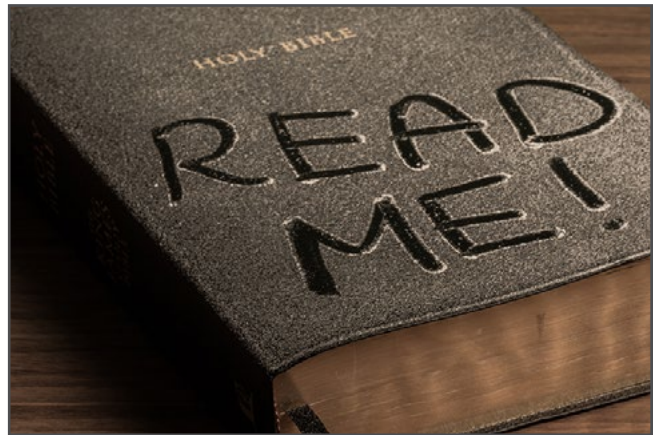
REJOICE IN OUR SALVATION:

As God's representatives in the world, we can rejoice in our salvation along with the others with whom we are serving. Paul acknowledges that he has given himself in sacrificial **service** along with the Philippians for which reason he is moved to **rejoice** (v. 17). It has brought him great joy to learn about how they have served the Lord by spreading the gospel from the city of Philippi to the surrounding plains; therefore, because of their testimony and witness Paul notes that they have **the same reason to be glad and rejoice** along with him (v. 18). God has created us for relationships in the church—none of us can live isolated from the rest of the body for we need each other. In [1 Cor 12](#), Paul reminds us that we should not only bear one another's burdens, but we should also rejoice with one another. If we become so wrapped up in thinking that we can do things by ourselves, we miss the joy of working with others who have come along side of us to encourage and strengthen us.

When you think of our church as a whole, what makes you rejoice?

Question
6

Looking at the church overall in modern America, not particularly FBCFW, we see symptoms of complacency and apathy highlighted by the dim light that radiates in the culture around us. Today the church has become filled with people who have walked the aisle to make a public commitment to Christ, but who have not really surrendered their lives. Many continue to follow their old path in life and continue to live a barren life in Christ without any signs of fruitful production. Many times they go through the motions; they attend church semi-regularly, they sing in the service, they pray when called upon, but their participation stops after they leave the gathering on Sunday. As we learned this week, Paul decries this as unacceptable.



We must express our salvation in terms of our transformed lives that point people to Christ on a daily basis; we need to impact the world by being ambassadors for Christ!

Having taught at The College of Southwestern for eight years, I am amazed at the number of students who desire to go into the ministry who say that they don't have time for ministry or relationships within the church because they are called to study. They isolate themselves from the church and claim that they are too busy to volunteer for ministry. Yet, these same people make time for watching television, playing video games, and hanging out with their friends. God did not call them to get

a diploma before they start ministering, but rather He has called every one of us to impact the world immediately by shining as bright lights in a crooked and perverse generation. Education is important and God does call us to study continually, but He has also called us as laborers in the fields which are white and ready for harvest—and the harvest starts when we understand the prescription for reaching the world.

So what is the prescription that God has given us to reach this world?

First, He has saved us and begun a good work within us whereby we should represent Him to the world. God is the one who works within us to accomplish **His will** and **good pleasure**. God has called us to exercise obedience to His Word so that we may know and pattern ourselves after His righteousness so that we may be pure and **blameless** in the world. Second, God has called us to work together in the church—not as isolated individuals, but as a collective whole. When we work together, we can accomplish so much more because we allow God to equip us to serve and we allow others to strengthen and encourage us to be more emboldened in our impact. Therefore, the question that we must ask is this: Are we following the prescription that God has given us for reaching the world or are we letting it sit on a shelf collecting dust?

Incorporate

This lesson has focused on what we can do both individually and collectively to impact the world. Take time to pray and ask God to help you evaluate how effective you've been. Write down the areas where you've been the most effective and also the areas where you've been least effective.

In what way can we collectively as FBCFW shine as lights in Fort Worth and Tarrant County? How can you be personally involved to help our church make a greater impact?

Incorporate to Impact



Remember the [Community Fall Festival](#) is this Sunday from 4:00 – 7:00 pm. We have a great opportunity to be a light to the world around us. Please invite others and join us so that we can work together as the body to glorify the Lord.

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