



# Philippians STUDY

**THIS JOY I HAVE**

MID-DAY CO-ED GROWTH GROUP

**WEDNESDAYS @ 12PM**

IN-PERSON AT GREATER LIFE CHURCH  
1012 DERBY ST, SAN DIEGO, CA 92114

**Study Workbook**

# Philippians Study

## This Joy I Have

### STUDY WORKBOOK

Greater Life Church San Diego, CA  
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Greater Life

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## DESCRIPTION

Praying to God and trusting in Him brings “*the peace of God, which passeth all understanding*” (**Philippians 4:7**). This Growth Groups Study Workbook is designed to help you follow along as you begin to study Paul’s messages of encouragement in his epistle to the Philippians. Use the questions and journaling space each week to reflect on how God can help you in your efforts to endure to the end faithfully.

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# Week 1

## Introduction To Philippians

### Why Study This Book?

In his Epistle to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul gave the Saints in Philippi encouragement and exhorted them to stand fast in unity and work together to defend the faith. Perhaps one of the most important principles Paul taught in Philippians is that praying to God and trusting in Him brings *“the peace of God, which passeth all understanding”* (**Philippians 4:7**). Studying Paul’s messages of encouragement in this epistle can help you in your efforts to endure to the end faithfully. As you strive to follow Christ, you too can gain confidence and, like Paul, declare, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (**Philippians 4:13**).

### Who Wrote This Book?

Although Timothy is mentioned along with Paul in the epistle’s greeting (see **Philippians 1:1**), Paul wrote the Epistle to the Philippians. This is supported by the use of the singular pronoun I throughout the letter and the reference to Timothy in **Philippians 2:19**. Timothy may have acted as Paul’s scribe, writing the letter under Paul’s direction.

### When and Where Was It Written?

Paul likely wrote Philippians sometime between A.D. 60 and 62, while he was imprisoned in Rome (see **Philippians 1:7, 13, 16**; see also **Acts 28:16–31**).

### To Whom Was It Written and Why?

Philippi was the first place in Europe where Paul formally preached the gospel and established a branch of the Church (see **Acts 16:11–40**; Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles”). One of Paul’s purposes in writing this letter was to express gratitude for the affection and financial assistance the Saints in Philippi had extended to him during his second missionary journey and his imprisonment in Rome (see **Philippians 1:3–11; 4:10–19**; see also Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles”).

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Paul also praised the members in Philippi for their faith in Jesus Christ and gave them counsel based on information about them that he had received from a Philippian disciple named Epaphroditus (see **Philippians 4:18**). Paul's counsel included encouragement to be humble and united (see **Philippians 2:1–18; 4:2–3**). Paul also warned the Philippians to beware of corrupt Christians, such as those who taught that circumcision was necessary for conversion. Such individuals (often referred to as Judaizers) falsely claimed that new converts had to submit to the former Old Testament law of circumcision before becoming Christian (see **Philippians 3:2–3**).

## Outline

**Philippians 1.** Paul expresses gratitude for the fellowship of the Philippian Saints. He teaches that the opposition he had experienced in serving the Lord, including his imprisonment, had furthered the gospel cause. He encourages Church members to stand fast in unity in defending the faith.

**Philippians 2.** Paul further encourages Church members to be united and points to the example of Jesus Christ, who condescended to come into mortality, as an example of love, obedience, and humility. Everyone will one day acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. Paul instructs Church members to work out their own salvation.

**Philippians 3.** Paul warns of Judaizers. He describes his earlier life as a Pharisee and how he willingly gave up all to follow Jesus Christ. He exhorts the Saints to follow his example in pressing forward toward salvation. Paul explains that Jesus Christ will change our mortal bodies into glorious bodies like His.

**Philippians 4.** Paul encourages the Saints to always rejoice in the Lord. He exhorts them to replace their anxiety with prayer and thanksgiving, promising that they will enjoy the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding. Paul admonishes Church members to think on things that are honest, just, true, pure, lovely, of good report, and virtuous. He acknowledges that he can do all things through Jesus Christ, who strengthens him.



## Week 2

# When You Fear You've Let God Down

## Philippians 1

Feeling the weight of past mistakes or the effects of a failing marriage?

When everything seems to be falling apart, and we are certain we have let God down, grace intervenes and reminds us the story isn't over yet. It's only an intermission.

Paul's life was certainly not going the way he had planned when he found himself alone in a prison cell. Yet, in **Philippians 1:4-6** he wrote, *"I always pray with joy... being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion."*

Your circumstances may not look good today (they certainly weren't for Paul!) Yet we can have joy and confidence knowing if it's not good, God's not done.

Not only is God not done with you, He wants to use the very circumstances you are struggling through today. In **Philippians 1:12-14** we are reminded that God can use even the difficult things that happen to us to draw us closer to Him. Not only that, but often because of our chains, people will come to know Christ.

Your mistakes, your failures, and your heartache are part of your story. And when you fear you have let God down, grace trades our shame for courage, knowing our pain is not wasted and God is bigger than the circumstances we feel 'chained' to right now.





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## Week 3

# What's Wrong With Grumbling?

## Philippians 2

Life never seems to go the way we imagine it will in our heads. No matter the effort we put into preparing our day-to-day lives, unforeseen circumstances can leave us feeling frustrated. Many of us have believed the lie that Christians won't have troubles. But Jesus tells us plainly in **John 16:33**, “... *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*”

We will have problems. The question is what we do when we face obstacles. In **Philippians 2**, Paul writes that we are to have the same mindset as Jesus. Jesus' life was full of difficulty. Jesus had every reason to complain but never did. And even though Jesus was divine in nature, He never used His equality with God to His advantage. He humbled himself and took the position of a servant.

**Keeping that in mind, think about the things we complain about:**

- Why is the traffic messing up MY schedule?
- Why can't they ever get MY order right?
- Why didn't they give ME the promotion?

Could pride be at the root of some of our complaints?

Jesus didn't deserve the pain He endured, yet He never once protested. That kind of behavior gets someone's attention. Can you imagine if we all did the same? We would stand out among our peers as “*stars in the sky*” (**Philippians 2:15**). Jesus came to bring people to His Father. When He left, He challenged us to do the same. As we choose to humble ourselves, taking on an attitude of gratitude instead of grumbling, we point people toward our Father.





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## Week 4

# Sick Of Being Good?

### Philippians 3

As we grow older, the need to be good is continually reinforced. We justify ourselves with how good we are, whether it's as an employee, spouse or person. The way we describe each other confirms it.

*"He's such a good person."*

*"She has a good heart."*

At the beginning of **Philippians 3**, Paul points out the flaws in this kind of thinking. If we're chasing goodness, we're chasing a moving target. If anyone reading Paul's letter thought he or she was a good person, Paul was better. He was raised in the right family, went to the right schools, and followed the right path. But he says all of these things were garbage compared to knowing Jesus (**Philippians 3:8**).

That's because knowing Jesus isn't about meeting a standard but following a person. The relationship Paul had with Jesus was more fulfilling than all the religious accomplishments of his past. Paul still did good things, but not because he was trying to be good. Instead, Paul's good deeds were an overflow of the love He experienced from Jesus. The same is true for us. When we put Jesus above everything else in our lives, we end up doing good things not because we have to, but because we want to.

After writing that everything in his life is worthless compared to knowing Jesus, Paul goes on to say he hasn't lived up to Jesus' example yet. Paul wasn't perfect, but *"forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,"* he continued his whole-hearted pursuit of Jesus (**Philippians 3:12-14**). Like Paul, many of us need to give up trying to be good enough and run to the One who is enough.





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## Week 5

# How To Find Moments Of Freedom In Anxious Times

## Philippians 4

In the midst of hard circumstances or anxiety, it can be difficult to see past the problem in front of us, much less present our requests rationally, clearly or with thanksgiving. What is there to be thankful for when you're facing bankruptcy? Shouldn't you be anxious when the relationship you thought would last forever suddenly falls apart? What is there to rejoice about when you keep falling into that sin over and over and over again?

In **Philippians 4:4-6**, Paul isn't telling us to ignore what circumstances we have. He's directing us to get perspective on those circumstances. He writes in **Philippians 4:8**, *"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."* Paul isn't saying difficulties don't matter, but that they are parts of a larger picture, a whole world filled with blessings, too.

If you're in the midst of difficult circumstances, two things are true: First, those circumstances are threatening to consume your every thought and waking moment. Maybe they already have. But the second truth is this: In addition to the problems, your life is filled with wonderful blessings you can't see because your focus is elsewhere. When you're tempted to worry, thank God for something different. Maybe you are facing bankruptcy, but you are alive and healthy. Maybe that relationship did fall apart, but there is a God who loves you more than that person ever could. Maybe you're in a pattern of sin, but there is a Savior who can and will help you through it.

Trouble and anxiety are real, but when we pause to recognize and thank God for His blessings in the midst of them, He gives us peace. Whatever good thing you think about may seem irrelevant, but even if it is only for a moment, it is a moment of freedom.

## **Reflect:**

1. What's one problem that threatens to overwhelm you?

2. What's one thing you can be thankful for today?



## **Week 6**

# **Fellowship Time**