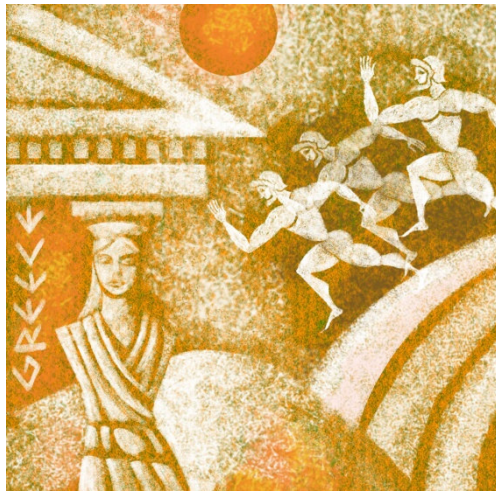


PHILIPPIANS

Φιλιππήσιος



Calvary Bible Church Philippians 3:1-11 One-week Study Guide

Wednesday Night Small Groups

Tim & Melinda Inman

2011-2012

All material can be downloaded from: <http://calvary-bible.org>

The Inductive Method

Observation

What does the text say?

Overview

Establish Context by determining Historical Background

Where does it fit in the Bible timeline?

Ask: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?

Make simple lists of people, places, and events mentioned in the text

Make simple lists of key words that are used throughout large portions of the entire book

Determine Book and Chapter Themes

Mark questions to return to later for future study

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Chapter Studies

Ask: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How?

Make more thorough lists of people, places and events

Make more thorough lists of Key Words in chapter or section

Ignore chapter divisions when the theme is carried forward

Mark Contrasts, Comparisons, Expressions of Time, Terms of Conclusion

Beginning of Interpretation: Tie this all together by examining text verse by verse

Outline or complete Structural Analysis to break down difficult text

Examine meanings of Key Words as you study verse by verse

Meditate on text to determine paragraph themes

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Interpretation

What does the text mean in correct context?

What principles do I see that tie to other sections of scripture?

Complete Cross References of those passages of scripture

Complete examination of Key Words: meaning, tense, voice

Notice and examine meaning of verbs & descriptive adjectives

Note commands and warnings

Consult commentaries after completing your own study

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Application

Based on correct interpretation of the text:

What must I do?

How can I apply this truth to my life?

How does this affect me?

How does this better knowledge of God change me?

Meditate on scripture and Memorize important, applicable passages of scripture

What do I see? What does it *mean*? How does this *change* me?

Digging in: Observing, Interpreting & Applying the Text

Read and study prayerfully each day. “Prayer is really a key to effective Bible study. Learn to pray before, during, and after your reading of the Scriptures. Prayer is especially crucial when you come to a place in your study where you are stuck and confused.”¹

The Text: Everyone studies in their own unique way; therefore, there are several study options for you to choose from to assist you in studying Philippians 3:1-11.

- (1) If you prefer to work from one marked copy, remove the working copy at the end of the Overview material, place it in a three-ring binder, and use it for our entire study of Philippians.
- (2) If you don't like the above option, the text will be printed throughout this material; therefore, you can use this Study Guide alone. The entire book of Philippians is printed at the back to help you keep this section in context within the book.
- (3) Or, use your own bible and simply refer to this material for study suggestions.

This week we will focus in and observe Philippians 3:1-11 carefully and thoroughly.

The importance of careful, thorough Observation continues:

“The more time you spend in **observation**, the less time you will need to spend in interpretation, and the more accurate will be your results. The less time you spend in observation, the more time you will need to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate will be your results.”²

To observe the text thoroughly ask **who, what, when, where, why, and how** of the text. **Always look for the obvious. Slow down to see what is actually there in the text, not what you think is there.** Repeated, significant words and phrases, which are crucial to understanding the text, are always important. A key word or phrase is one that is vital to what the author is attempting to communicate. These essential words unlock the meaning of the text.

What words or phrases are significant in this particular section?

As you read through the book and completed the Overview you will have noted that, in addition to the words that are significant in the entire book, there are key, significant words specific to each chapter or section. **On pages 4 and 5 you will find directions to guide you through your initials observations of Philippians 3:1-11, which is given in two different translations.**

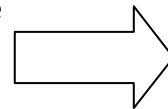
As always, use any study suggestions that help you; skip those that don't.

¹ Howard G. & William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 100.

² *Ibid.*, 43.

Day One, Focus on this: What do I see (Observation)? We'll learn what it *means* later.

1. **Read Philippians 3:1-11 on the facing page. Read it in each translation.** Reading a text in more than one translation helps us to comprehend meaning and reveals new things to us because we see the same thought stated in a new way. **Read thoughtfully. Read contemplatively.** Read like you've never read it before. **Compare the wording.**
2. **Use the margins to write down observations and questions so you can investigate them later. Mark it up.**
3. **Flip to the back of this Study Guide (pg. 19-21) and read the entire book of Philippians in order to set our text within the context of the book. Orient yourself.**
4. **Remember** what you observed about the main themes of the entire letter. **Underline or circle** the components of v. 1-11 that carry these themes forward.
5. **Notice things you want to study in greater detail later and make a note in the margin.**
6. (See the information on outlining, pg. 15, and make an outline if you'd like.)



What do you see? Look at the text. Circle your observations or jot them in the margins.

- **What** does the first word of 3:1 tell us about where Paul is in getting across his main points? **So far in the letter, what** has he said about rejoicing in the Lord? **Why rejoice?**
- **In v. 2, what** three descriptors does Paul use for the Judaizers who had attacked many of his other churches? [Judaizers: people who insisted that Christians had to obey all the Jewish ceremonial law.] **What command does Paul give about Judaizers?**
- **Remember Acts 16: Were** there enough Jews in Philippi to form a synagogue when Paul's ministry team first arrived? **Where** did Lydia and the other women meet? **Why then** does Paul give this warning to "watch out"? **What** actions by Judaizers might he be anticipating?
- **In contrast, in v. 3 what** three descriptions does Paul give of believers and followers of Jesus Christ? Notice the pronoun *we* in this verse. **Whose** camp is Paul in now? **Note** the Trinitarian impact of this verse—all three members of the Godhead are mentioned.
- **If it were possible to earn salvation by our own efforts, could Paul qualify, according to v. 4? What** are his impeccable credentials, given in v. 5-6? **How** do his Jewish credentials add weight to his warnings against Judaizers in v. 2? **Why** can Paul speak to this? **How** has he experienced their attacks in his ministry?
- **But now what,** according to verse 7? **How** does he now view his Jewish credentials, v.7-8?
- **According to v. 8-9, how** does his previous reliance upon his Jewish status compare with knowing & obeying Christ? **What/who** did he gain when he quit relying on his flesh (his Jewish status)? **For whose sake** did Paul lose all that was previously important to him? **Why?**
- **Where** does v. 9 tell us that true righteousness comes from? **Where** are true believers *found*?
- **What three things does Paul want to comprehend, according to verse 10?**
- **In verses 10b how** does Paul say he wants to become like Christ? **Why? What** does he want to attain? Keep the *somehow* in context. Paul isn't uncertain about his salvation. **Read ahead to 3:12-14; remember 2:12b-13.** **What** is he, therefore, referring to? **Does Paul feel like he has "arrived" at perfect maturity as a believer? Should we?**

Contemplate the text in at least two translations. What do you see?

Philippians 3:1-11 (NIV, 1984)

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

2 Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. **3** For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— **4** though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **10** I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:1-11 (ESV):

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

2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. **3** For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—**4** though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. **7** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—**10** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Day Two, Key words: What do I see (Observation)?

1. **Read through Philippians 3:1-11 thoughtfully one more time.** Determine what the key words and phrases are for this particular section. [If you're using the working copy from the Overview, you will see the words you already marked in the Overview—those that were crucial to interpreting the entire book.] Focus in on the significant words in *this section*. A key word or phrase is one that is crucial to understanding the meaning of the text.
2. **So what other words are crucial?** Consider the questions you answered and meditated on from pg. 4. What words that helped you answer those questions are crucial to understanding the text? What words, if you removed them from the text, would remove the meaning or intent of the passage? What words tie this passage to Paul's overarching purpose and focus in this letter?
3. **Mark the words you now understand to be crucial—the words that have definitions you must know in order to understand the text.**

HOW: Use **color** or **pencil** or **ink**, whichever you prefer. Mark each key word with a unique mark for that particular word (a different color for each key word, or a different way of circling it, or drawing a box around it, or any other creative mark you want to use for each particular word). **The purpose of marking is to help us see what's there.** (1) If you are using the working copy you used to complete your Overview, you will see that some of these words are marked already—words that are significant for the entire letter. (2) If you're not using the working copy, use the text on the facing page (pg. 7), or (3) complete this exercise in your own bible. Or do any combination of the three; it's entirely up to you.

Mark these words with unique markings for each one:

- God, Christ Jesus, Holy Spirit
- Author (including pronouns [we, I], Paul and Timothy)
- Recipients (words that refer to the Philippians, including pronouns [you, your])
- Other people (*those men*, the Judaizers)
- Key/Significant Words observed and marked during the Overview (refer to the Overview material, if needed)
- Other Significant Words which are crucial for understanding Phil. 3:1-11: words that signify Paul's Jewish credentials, words related to suffering, *loss/lost, gain, profit, know/knowing, righteousness, faith, power, fellowship*, etc.

Mark any words that are crucial for determining the meaning.

4. **Make lists of details you observe about each key word. Are any used elsewhere in the letter? What is written about each? Ask who, what, where, when, who, and how?**
5. **Pay attention to what the text says about the people you marked when you completed the Overview and in this exercise. Make additional notes about them on pg. 7.**
6. **Do you notice anything new that you missed before? What do you observe?**

Philippians 3:1-11 (NIV, 1984)

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

2 Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. **3** For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— **4** though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **10** I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Jot notes here:

Day Three: What do I see (observation)? What does it *mean* (interpretation)?

Mark Grammatical Phrases: This exercise will help you see how the main ideas of this section tie together. Note these with marks in the working copy or in the copy of Phil. 3:1-11 on the next page.

- Mark **words of contrast** (*but, however, nevertheless, or, neither, nor, not only, whether,* etc.) with a lightning bolt mark above the word (or any mark you choose that you feel shows contrast). **In the margin of your working copy, write what is being contrasted. For example:**

v.3,4 –...who put no confidence in the flesh

THOUGH


I myself have reason for such confidence.

- Mark **words of comparison** (*like, likewise, also, in addition, as, in the same way, in regard to, furthermore, just as,* etc.) with an = sign or arrow (or any mark you choose). What things are similar? What is the same? These are often easier to see when recorded in reverse order:

v. 5b, a Pharisee

IN REGARD TO

the law.

-  Draw a little clock face (or another mark you choose) above words showing **expressions of time** (*then, when, after, until, at that time, the day,* etc.). **Why are these important?**
- Mark with an “x” words that show **conclusions or an end result** (*therefore, so that, for this reason, because,* etc.) and **draw arrows** to connect the linked ideas. **What is the author trying to show or prove? What is the conclusion or result that he is emphasizing? For example:**

Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. **For**, it is we who...

- Mark **commands** in a way which draws the eye, such as highlighting, in order to meditate on these: They clarify the purpose of the letter.

- 3:1, “rejoice in the Lord”
- 3:2, “watch out for...”

- The New Testament was written in Koine Greek. Due to Greek word formation and syntax, some things would be obvious in the original Greek that are not obvious in English.

- In the Greek, these words express continuous, habitual action. Mark like this (~):

3:1, “rejoice,” “to write”

- 3:2, “Watch out...” (This command is to be habitual—always watch out.)
- 3:3, “worship,” “glory”
- 3:4a, “have reasons”
- 3:6, “persecuting”
- 3:8, “surpassing greatness”
- 3:9, “not having”
- 3:11, “becoming like him”

- These words express actions that were completed in the past, but which have an ongoing or continual result. Mark like this (→):

- 3:3, “put no confidence”
- 3:4b, “to put confidence”
- 3:7, “now consider”

As you completed this exercise, what was revealed about the passage? Write down anything you discover that you hadn’t seen in the text before. Continue tomorrow.

Philippians 3:1-11 (NIV, 1984)

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

2 Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. **3** For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— **4** though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **10** I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Day Four: What does it *mean* (interpretation)? How does this *change* me (application)?

Focus now on comprehending the text. Use the following steps. Each person studies differently; but make it a practice to always try new techniques. **If a particular step or idea doesn't help, try something else.** Come at the text from as many angles as possible.

PRAY FIRST! Ask the Holy Spirit to help you comprehend.

1. What words or phrases do you need to investigate in order to comprehend the text? Question the text (**see box below**). Determine the words you *need* to understand, for instance “righteousness,” “faith,” “confidence,” etc.
2. Read the word and its surrounding text in another translation. Sometimes just reading the passage stated in another way helps us to comprehend.
3. If the meaning is still unclear, look up word definitions in the concordance. **How?**
 - **Page 14 details “how to use a concordance,”** or ask your group leader. There are instructions and additional study helps on the concordance how-to page. A list of simple, free online study sites is also given.
 - For additional help, use your concordance to **find other places these same key words are used** (called finding the “cross references”). Look up the words that are assigned the same Greek reference numbers. For example, in v. 6 & 9 (2x) “righteousness” is Strong’s #1343 and GK (NIV) #1677—each has a slightly different shade of meaning according to their context. Look at other verses that include words that have the same numbered definitions. **Page 12 & 13 are a guided investigation of righteousness.** **Consult page 14 for “how to find a cross reference.”**
4. Next, re-examine each sentence or verse and paraphrase it using the definition. Write it out in your own words to be sure you understand. **Three pages are provided.**
5. Then, move on to the next word you want to examine until you have looked up the definitions of each one.
6. Final option: Examine the notes at the bottom of your study bible or in one of the listed commentaries (pg. 17), after you’ve completed the above steps. Try on your own first and experience the joy of discovery; then, find out if you were right in your assessment.

AS YOU’RE DOING THIS: Question the text: ask **who, what, when, where, why,** and **how.**

“If you want to understand a biblical text, you’ve got to bombard it with questions. The Bible is never embarrassed to be asked questions. That doesn’t mean it will answer all of them. But you still need to ask to determine if they can be answered. Obviously, if you’re going to ask questions, you’ve also got to look for the answers. Where will you find them? In the text. Observation will give you the basic building blocks out of which you will construct the meaning of a passage. The answers to your questions will come directly from your observation process.”³

EXAMPLE: Do you understand the references to Judaizers in 3:1-11? **What** is the *flesh*? **Is** Paul talking about the physical body only? **How** do Jews mutilate the flesh? **How** are believers the true circumcision? **What** do believers do regarding their *flesh*? **How** does Paul use his life as an example?

³ Howard G. & William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 43.

Use this page to write down definitions and to put verses into your own words:

Use this page to investigate gaining Christ's righteousness

Consider these scriptures. Write your notes below:

Failure of our own righteousness: Deut. 9:4-49; Daniel 9:4-15; Romans 3:9-12

What God did through Christ: Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Believing, knowing, and being in Christ: Phil. 1:21; 3:8-9; Rom. 1: 16-17; 14:7-9; 16:25-26; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 2:19-20; Col. 1:11-14; 21-23

Assurance of salvation: Col. 1:9-14; 1 Cor. 1:7b-9; 2 Cor. 1:7, 14, 21-22; 2 Tim. 1:12, 4:8

How Paul's life took the righteous shape of Christ's life, death, and resurrection (3:10b-11): 2 Corinthians 2:1-4; 4:7-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-29; Gal. 4:19; Col. 1:24-29

Growing in personal holiness: Because his salvation is assured in Christ, Paul's refusal to relax his efforts as he presses toward the goal and his urging other believers to do likewise: 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Phil. 1:9-11; 3:10-14; Col. 1:21-23; 1 Tim. 6:12-16; 2 Tim. 4:6, 7)

HELP PAGES

How to use a Concordance:

Complete Word Studies: The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew (some Aramaic). The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek. Use an exhaustive concordance for a basic definition, or a lexicon or bible dictionary for expanded definitions.

How to use a Concordance:

1. Look up the word in the alphabetized front section of the concordance. (Remember: If you're using a Strong's concordance, you have to find how the word was translated into English in the KJV. "Becoming like him," vs. 10 in the NIV, is translated "conformable unto" in the KJV, for instance; so you look up "conformable" in the Strong's concordance).
2. Under the word, look for the verse reference where that specific word is used.
3. Look for the number on the right. Each number corresponds to a Greek or Hebrew word.
4. Turn to the appropriate dictionary or lexicon in the back of the concordance (Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament).
5. Look up the number for the definition.
6. The words in italic are the definition. Write down the Greek word's transliteration (in English alphabet); and write the definition down next to your key, essential word.

How to Find a Cross References: Using the concordance, compare references in the Bible which use any word or quoted passage of scripture that you determine needs further study—you won't do this with every word, just the ones you feel need additional investigation.

On the previous two pages, assistance is given for an investigation of righteousness, assurance of salvation, how Paul's life modeled Christ's, and progressive sanctification. How do you investigate more about righteousness? Look in the concordance at the list of all the references given for "righteousness," (3:6, 9). [Or for any other word you choose to investigate more thoroughly] Find the same Greek reference number that is given for the Greek or Hebrew word you are examining here. (For instance, "righteousness" is Strong's #1343 or GK (NIV) #1677 in Greek). Examine several other verses or all the verses that use the same number given here in order to compare the usage of the word. Also look at OT usages—these are Hebrew words, so the numbers will be different and the definitions will be in the Hebrew portion of the concordance dictionary. When the same word is studied in more than one account it is understood more fully.

Try these online sources: www.mystudybible.com (simple & awesome!), www.esvstudybible.org/, www.blueletterbible.org, www.biblegateway.com, and www.crosswalk.com. Find which you like best; they all have online concordances.

Examples: The first website listed has all tools keyed right to the text—just enter the text; using the word study tool on the right, click the word you want to investigate. This is the: *Holman Christian Study Bible*, another new translation to use for comparison. The second site has excellent study notes from the *ESV Study Bible*, a new word-for-word translation. The steps to *Blue Letter Bible's* concordance are clean and simple. On the opening page, enter the passage you want to examine in the Bible/Dictionary Search. Pick the version (translation) and press "search." When the new page opens, click the button for what kind of help you want: C is for "Concordance and Hebrew-Greek Lexicon." Next, click on the concordance number by the word you want to investigate. This opens the concordance with the definition, or *biblical usage*, as well as the cross references. All the verses where this word is used are at the bottom of the concordance entry.

A very thorough Greek lexicon (dictionary) is available at: <http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk/>. Just enter the word or the Strong's number you want to look up in the search box on the right hand of the page. A detailed definition will be given. These are all free.

OPTIONAL: Make an Outline

Consider making an outline of the section or the entire book: Some people find that making an outline opens the text up for them. A simple outline could be made at this point if this is something you find beneficial. The text is provided online in a Word document to help you. **Skip it if this doesn't help you.**

- **Complete a word-for-word outline of each section.** If you are the type of person who benefits from this type of structural work, prepare this initial outline skeleton by filling in the theme of the entire book with a theme for paragraph as Roman numerals under the theme of the entire book. Then you can add the text word-for-word under the Romans numerals, with each new paragraph being categorized by a letter of the alphabet.

- C. I thank my God every time I remember you,
 - 1. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy
 - a. because of your partnership in the gospel
 - i. from the first day until now,
 - 2. being confident of this,
 - a. that he who began a good work in you will carry it to completion
 - i. until the day of Christ Jesus.

- **Other people find that it helps them to break down the text from the first day they begin to study a book or section of the Bible.** Experiment with outline forms or simply breaking down the text in a way that makes grammatical structure more obvious to see if this helps you comprehend more.

Example: Philippians 1:3-5 (NIV)

I thank my God
 every time I remember you
 In all my prayers
 for all of you,
 I always pray
 with joy
 because of your partnership
 in the gospel
 from the first day
 until now

Day Five: What does it *mean* (interpretation)? How does this *change* me (application)?

After completing your word studies with the concordance, integrate all the information you discovered. Pull it all back together.

Identify themes within this section, then define the entire section:

As we worked through Philippians 3:1-11, we meditated on the meaning of all we discovered by observing and questioning the text, completing the word studies, and examining any cross references that were helpful. Therefore, we should now be able to construct a theme for each smaller paragraph that summarizes the content within this section.

Why do this? Just as paraphrasing helped us to ponder on the text and to see if we really comprehended the verse clearly, so stating the theme allows us to pull together the basic ideas of this section. It also helps us retain what is in each section when we walk away from the text and go about our daily lives.

This step aids our meditation on scripture by organizing in our minds what's here.

See if you can write a concise sentence that summarizes the theme of each paragraph.

Philippians 3:1-11 (NIV, 1984)

Theme of v. 1: _____

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

Theme of v. 2-4a: _____

2 Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. **3** For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— **4** though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

Theme of v. 4b-6: _____

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

Theme of v. 7-11: _____

7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **10** I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Theme of entire section, v. 1-11: _____

Next, check your conclusions:

Save *final* interpretation until you've finished studying the entire book and can contemplate the whole. This takes time and thought. Be patient.

Don't consult a commentary until you are at this point in your study. Use the commentary to verify your own findings and to double-check what you have discovered. If you consult commentaries before beginning they will influence your own study. Now is the time to check your conclusions. You'll gain from someone else's study by doing this; but remember, commentary notes aren't scripture. Commentators aren't infallible. Opinions will vary.

Good commentaries to use (hard copies are available in the church library):

- *The NIV Application Commentary: Philippians*, by Frank Thielman, Zondervan.
- *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Philippians*, by John MacArthur, Moody.
- *The Epistle to the Philippians*, NICNT, by Gordon Fee, Eerdmans.
- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Abridged Edition*, Barker & Kohlenberger III, Zondervan.

Check the online sources to see what commentaries they have and what they say. Usually these are older commentaries because they're beyond copyright law regulation. They're all free. For instance, you'll always find *The Matthew Henry Commentary*, a highly-respected, reformed commentary from the 1700s. It's always worth reading. Check out: **crosswalk.com**, **blueletterbible.org**, and/or **biblegateway.com**. Investigate their commentary section.

Now what? Begin to do it. Begin to implement the specific portions which the Holy Spirit has moved you to observe and notice as areas of growth necessary for your own life. As you studied, periodically we asked you questions to help you consider how the text might relate to you. **Consider the questions on the next page to contemplate even further application.**

Application: How does this work in my life? How can this change me?

Consider these personal questions:

1. In coming to the text, what did I find to be the most significant statements? Why?
2. How can these statements affect my life and change it?
3. What specifically does this section tell me that the Triune God does for me and in me?
4. Is there an example here for me to follow? What model does Paul's life provide? Do I see these things in my life: worshiping by the Spirit of God, glorying in Christ Jesus, putting no confidence in my own flesh, wanting to know and be identified with Christ in every way?
5. What positive motivations do I find in the passage that convince me to lead a righteous life?
6. Do any portions of Philippians 3:1-11 produce a sense of conviction within me?
7. Is there a prayer to repeat or am I drawn into prayer by this passage? Does this motivate me to pray for others?
8. Do any parts of this section cause me to want to live differently? What solid steps am I going to take in that direction?
9. What practical steps am I taking in my life to watch out for legalists who try to rob me of my joy in Christ? What am I doing to know Christ, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings? How am I growing in personal holiness? How am I striving to become more like Christ? Am I growing in personal holiness or do I think I've "arrived"?
10. Is there a verse or verses to memorize?

Paul reveals in this section how thoroughly our own human efforts to gain righteousness apart from Christ will only result in failure. He had the perfect Jewish credentials in obedience to the Old Testament law, but could not gain righteousness. To become righteous, he had to realize his own efforts were rubbish—they got him no nearer to the Lord than a pagan Gentile could get through his own efforts. [The same is true of our efforts.] Renouncing his own credentials and human attempts, Paul placed his faith in Christ Jesus. God then credited to him a righteousness that wasn't his own, but was from being *in* Christ. These are the facts of the gospel. The same happens to us when we place our faith in Christ. Paul then pressed on to know Christ as thoroughly as he could, desiring to identify himself with Christ in every possible way, even wanting to become like him in his death. These final statements show that Christ was the passion of Paul's heart. To love Christ like this is to be the striving and goal of every believer. More examples are given in the next section.

In moving forward, don't make these mistakes:

1. Don't substitute interpretation for application and do nothing.
2. Don't substitute superficial obedience for substantive life-change.
3. Don't substitute rationalization for repentance.
4. Don't substitute an emotional experience for a volitional decision to change.
5. Don't substitute communication for transformation and merely talk about what you've learned.⁴

⁴ Some of these application ideas are from *Living By the Book*, Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, Moody Press Publishers, Chicago, 2007.

Philippians (NIV, 1984)

Philippians 1

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers^[a] and deacons:

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

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. **4** In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. **8** God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, **10** so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. **13** As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard^[b] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. **14** Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. **16** The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. **17** The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.^[c] **18** But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, **19** for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.^[d] **20** I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. **22** If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! **23** I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; **24** but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel **28** without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. **29** For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, **30** since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Footnotes:

- a. Philippians 1:1 Traditionally *bishops*
- b. Philippians 1:13 Or *whole palace*
- c. Philippians 1:17 Some late manuscripts have verses 16 and 17 in reverse order.
- d. Philippians 1:19 Or *salvation*

Philippians 2

2:1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, **2** then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. **3** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. **4** Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in very nature[a] God,
 did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
7 but made himself nothing,
 taking the very nature[b] of a servant,
 being made in human likeness.
8 And being found in appearance as a man,
 he humbled himself
 and became obedient to death—
 even death on a cross!
9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
 and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father.
12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my
 absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, **13** for it is God who works in you to will and
 to act according to his good purpose.
14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, **15** so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God
 without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe **16** as you hold
 out[c] the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. **17** But
 even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad
 and rejoice with all of you. **18** So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.
19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.
20 I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. **21** For everyone looks out for his own
 interests, not those of Jesus Christ. **22** But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his
 father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. **23** I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things
 go with me. **24** And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.
25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who
 is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. **26** For he longs for all of you and is distressed
 because you heard he was ill. **27** Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him
 only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. **28** Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that
 when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. **29** Welcome him in the Lord with great joy,
 and honor men like him, **30** because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help
 you could not give me.

Philippians 3

1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a
 safeguard for you.
2 Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. **3** For it is we who are the
 circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the
 flesh— **4** though I myself have reasons for such confidence.
 If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of
 the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as for zeal,
 persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.
7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a
 loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I
 consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that

comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **10** I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. **13** Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

15 All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. **16** Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. **18** For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. **19** Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. **20** But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

4:1 Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

Philippians 4, continued

2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. **3** Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow,[a] help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers, 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. **9** Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. **11** I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. **12** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **13** I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. **15** Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; **16** for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. **17** Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. **18** I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. **19** And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings. **22** All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.[b]

Footnotes:

- a. Philippians 4:3 Or *loyal Syzygus*
- b. Philippians 4:23 Some manuscripts do not have *Amen*.