

PHILIPPIANS

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

Week 1.....	Pg. 1	- Philippians 1:1-11
Week 2.....	Pg. 9	- Philippians 1:12-18
Week 3.....	Pg. 15	- Philippians 1:19-30
Week 4.....	Pg. 21	- Philippians 2:1-4
Week 5.....	Pg. 27	- Philippians 2:5-11
Week 6.....	Pg. 33	- Philippians 2:12-18
Week 7.....	Pg. 39	- Philippians 2:19-30
Week 8.....	Pg. 45	- Philippians 3:1-11
Week 9.....	Pg. 51	- Philippians 3:12-16
Week 10.....	Pg. 57	- Philippians 3:17-4:1
Week 11.....	Pg. 63	- Philippians 4:2-9
Week 12.....	Pg. 69	- Philippians 4:10-23

P H I L I P P I A N S

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

W E E K 1

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 1:1 - 11

HELPFUL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The book of Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul from a Roman prison cell around the year A.D. 62. The book was written to encourage the Philippian believers to faithfully live their lives as citizens of Christ's heavenly kingdom.
- The church in the city of Philippi was the first church on the continent of Europe founded by Paul (see Acts 16:6-40). The believers there came from many different walks of life, therefore we see a continuing exhortation from Paul to be unified as one body, despite their varying backgrounds.
- A powerful hymn is included in chapter two that points to Christ as the supreme example of christian humility; also showing how God the Father has highly exalted His name above all others.
- This letter is a powerful example of what unity, joy, humility, and faith look like in everyday life.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

- When is the last time you wrote a real, handwritten letter to a friend? What did you include in the letter? What was that experience like for you?
- When you think about your friend group, what words come to mind? What are you thankful for in the lives of your friends?

PHIL. 1:1-11

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

Read the passage quietly to yourself. Now, read it aloud together. As you read, think through the passage with the basic questions: Who are the main characters? What is happening here? What seems to be the “big idea” (obvious point) of the passage?

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

What name/title does Paul give to himself and Timothy in verse 1? What is the significance of such a name/title?

Make a list of the key words in these first 11 verses?
What do they suggest to you?

PHIL. 1:1 - 11

What one word would you say best describes Paul's feelings for the Philippians believers?

What name/title does Paul give to the Philippian Christians?
What is the theological significance of such a name/title?

How would you summarize the main point of vv. 3-11 in one sentence?

PHIL. 1:1 - 11

What stands out to you in Paul's prayer for this church?

What might this section teach us about the work of God in the life of a Christian?

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

Who is/was the "Apostle Paul" in your spiritual life, who introduced you to Christ and cared about your spiritual growth?

P H I L . 1 : 1 - 1 1

Would you say that the title “servant” (v. 1) applies to the way you live as a Christian? If not, what is one way you can serve someone else this week through the help of the Spirit?

How does the name/title of “saint” feel to you? Is it uncomfortable to think of yourself in this light? If so, why?

How are you currently praying for your church?

Share one thing you learned about yourself, your neighbor, or God from this passage? Why was that important for you?

PHIL. 1:1 - 11

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible

"How to study your Bible in 2020," article by Matt Smethurst, from The Gospel Coalition website.

P H I L I P P I A N S

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

W E E K 2

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 1:12-18

THEME: HOW SUFFERING CAN ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM

CATCH UP

In the last section, Paul began his letter to the Philippian church by joyfully expressing his affection for them and their faithful partnership in the gospel ministry. His prayer in vv. 9-11 offer helpful guidance on how we can learn to pray for our Christian brothers and sisters. This week's section finds Paul's focus on the advance of the gospel in spite of his circumstances -- being stuck in prison!

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

When you've had a bad day, what do you like to do?

Are you typically the kind of person that sees the glass as half-empty or half-full? Give a brief example.

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18

Read the passage quietly to yourself. Now, read it aloud together. As you read, think through the passage with the basic questions: Who are the main characters? What is happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage?

PHIL. 1:12 - 18

THEME: HOW SUFFERING CAN ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

What stands out to you in this passage?

Are there any comparisons or contrasts to note?

What does Paul say has happened to him? What is the result of this taking place in his life? Who has been impacted by this situation in his life?

Are there any words/phrases that you don't understand. Make a note of those.

PHIL. 1:12 - 18

THEME: HOW SUFFERING CAN ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM

Track and list the verbs in this section. What is the rising action that you observe here?

How would you paraphrase this section in your own words?

What powerful theological themes emerge from this section?

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

Are there any examples to follow in this section? Errors to avoid? Sins you need to forsake?

PHIL. 1:12 - 18

THEME: HOW SUFFERING CAN ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM

Are there any examples to follow in this section? Errors to avoid? Sins you need to forsake? Are there any examples to follow in this section? Errors to avoid? Sins you need to forsake?

What difficult circumstances are you facing right now? How is this situation testing your trust in God?

Where have you seen God take a bad/difficult situation in your life and turn it for good and for His glory? What effect does this have on your faith today?

What can this passage teach you about dealing with people whose motives you question?

List (and share if time permits) one big takeaway from this passage.

PHIL. 1:12 - 18

THEME: HOW SUFFERING CAN ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible

"How to study your Bible in 2020," article by Matt Smethurst, from The Gospel Coalition website.

P H I L I P P I A N S

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

W E E K 3

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 1:19-30

THEME: TO LIVE IS CHRIST, TO DIE IS GAIN

CATCH UP

Last week's section dealt with Paul's chains and critics. His response to both is surprising! Instead of allowing his struggles to discourage him, Paul sees these things as opportunities for the advance of the gospel. This week's passage finds Paul struggling between a focus on fruitful ministry on the church's behalf and a strong desire to depart this life and be with Christ. A constant longing for the presence of Christ is central to Paul's letters. Either way, he considers himself the winner -- to live is Christ, to die is gain

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

What is something you would like to accomplish before you die? Why is this important to you?

What are some of the most important instructions you've ever received? Why were they so significant?

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:19-30

Read the passage quietly to yourself. Now, read it aloud together. As you read, think through the passage with the basic questions: Who are the main characters? What is happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage?

PHIL. 1:19 - 30

THEME: TO LIVE IS CHRIST, TO DIE IS GAIN

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

What initially catches your attention in this passage? Why?

Are there any repeated words/phrases you think might be significant in this section?

What options does Paul say are in front of him due to him being in prison? How would you describe his resolve here?

Note the mood of the passage. How would the Philippians feel as they detected Paul's mood in this section?

PHIL. 1:19 - 30

THEME: TO LIVE IS CHRIST, TO DIE IS GAIN

How would you explain this section to a 5th grade Sunday school class if you were the Teacher?

Verses 27-30 are a powerful exhortation toward spiritual unity as a church. List the words/phrases Paul uses to communicate the importance of unity in Kingdom ministry.

What powerful theological themes emerge from this section?

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

“For me, to live is...” -- Given your current priorities and schedule the last seven days, how would you honestly finish that sentence? What would need to change practically speaking, if you were to finish the sentence with ‘Christ’?

PHIL. 1:19 - 30

THEME: TO LIVE IS CHRIST, TO DIE IS GAIN

Paul has such a strong focus on serving Christ and His people in this section. How are you using your natural abilities and spiritual gifts to serve Christ and His church?

Paul also has his attention set on being in the presence of Christ ASAP. How would you describe your level of spiritual affection for Christ and being in His presence? Are there other things that are competing for your spiritual focus and energy?

Why is unity such a vital part of life in the church? What is "on the line" when believers within the church are fighting amongst themselves?

Is there a relationship you need to seek to restore in your life? What will be your first step toward reconciliation with that person?

PHIL. 1:19 - 30

THEME: TO LIVE IS CHRIST, TO DIE IS GAIN

List (and share if time permits) one big takeaway from this passage.

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible "How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, from The Gospel Coalition website.

PHILIPPIANS

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

WEEK 4

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 2:1-4

THEME: UNITY COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

CATCH UP

Paul has previously spoken of his love for the Philippian church and his desire to continue ministering on their behalf. This love gives him concern for their continued striving toward unity. In this week's section, we'll aim to make the connection between unity and attitudes of humble service toward one another.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

Who takes out the trash in your apartment/dorm/home? How did you decide who would take certain responsibilities where you live?

What do you perceive to be "deal breakers" when it comes to unity in a church?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

Read the passage aloud three or four times together (it's short -- you can do it!). As you read, think through the passage with these basic questions: Who are the main characters? What's happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage?

PHIL. 2:1 - 4

THEME: UNITY COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

What stands out to you in this short section? Why did that catch your eye?

Based on Paul's words in verses 1-4, what issues do you suspect were going on in the Philippian church?

Are there any conditional phrases you think might be significant in this section?

What logical progression do you see in vv. 1-4?

PHIL. 2:1-4

THEME: UNITY COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

What is Paul essentially calling for in this section?

Are there other passages of Scripture that agree with Paul's words in vv. 1-4? What are those passages?

How did Christ exemplify the kind of attitude found in this section?

What makes this section uniquely Christian? In other words, if a person from another religion were to try to practice Paul's teaching here, how would they go about it? What might it look like for a Christian to obey this teaching?

PHIL. 2:1 - 4

THEME: UNITY COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

When you think of the humble condescension that it took Jesus to leave heaven and come to earth, what thoughts come to mind?

Where do you see the comfort, encouragement, and love of the Holy Spirit in your friend group? In your church? How can you contribute the growth of those things this week?

What is the “fallen condition” on display in this passage (i.e., what aspect of human sin or brokenness is most evident?)

How does Jesus' life and death shed light on the darkness in our own hearts?

PHIL. 2:1 - 4

THEME: UNITY COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

What does it mean to consider someone as being better than yourself?

How does humility differ from being a doormat?

List (and share if time permits) one big takeaway from this passage.

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible

"How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, from The Gospel Coalition website.

P H I L I P P I A N S

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

W E E K 5

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 2:5-11

THEME: A HYMN OF HUMILITY

CATCH UP

Paul previously highlighted the importance of humble service among christians and how that leads toward unity.

This week's text is a powerful hymn that points to Christ as the supreme example of christian humility, as He set aside His rights and privileges (but not His deity) in order to save His people. The theological themes that emerge here are robust and set the christian gospel apart from any other world religion available to man.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

What is your favorite modern christian worship song? Favorite christian hymn? Why do you like these particular songs?

When you think of someone with a true servant's heart, who comes to mind?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Read the passage aloud together -- very slowly. As you read, think through the passage with these basic questions: Who are the main characters? What's happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage?

PHIL. 2:5-11

THEME: UNITY COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

What about this hymn seems difficult to understand at first?
Why?

Are there any repeated words/phrases you think might be significant in this section?

Track and list the verbs in this hymn. What do they suggest about the action in this passage?

PHIL. 2:5-11

THEME: UNITY COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

What key words/phrases seem to stand out here?

What is the meaning of the phrase 'emptied himself' in 2:7?
Why might this phrase be cause for controversy among biblical interpreters?

2 Corinthians 8:9 says "though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." Describe the kind of spiritual/theological exchange in this verse?

What does Paul want us to learn about humbling ourselves from Christ's example?

How does this teaching on Christ's humble sacrifice compare to other world religions?

PHIL. 2:5-11

THEME: UNITY COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

How does Jesus' way of living challenge the world's model of success? Where does it challenge you?

How does this hymn of Christ's humility lead you to worship Him today? How does it convict you of your own attitude?

How might you use this passage to share the gospel with an unbeliever?

How should we balance meeting the needs of others with meeting our own needs?

PHIL. 2:5-11

THEME: UNITY COMES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

How does this passage illuminate your understanding of the gospel? How can you live out the heart of this hymn in your unique circumstances this week?

How is the exaltation of Jesus related to His humility on earth? How does this help you face situations in which you don't receive the recognition you deserve?

List (and share if time permits) one big takeaway from this passage.

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible

"How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, from The Gospel Coalition website

PHILIPPIANS

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

WEEK 6

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL . 2 : 1 2 - 1 8

THEME: LIVING AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

CATCH UP

Last week's passage included a powerful hymn on the humility of Christ and the exaltation of His name. Believers are told to have the same mind/attitude in themselves as Jesus had in his life and death. In this week's section, Paul shows how that kind of attitude leads to a beautiful christian witness in a lost, dark, and dying world.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

When are you most prone to grumble and complain?

What is one of your biggest pet peeves? Why does this bother you so badly?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

Read the passage quietly to yourself. Now, read it aloud together. As you read, think through the passage with these basic questions: Who are the main characters? What's happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage

PHIL. 2:12-18

THEME: LIVING AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

What comparisons and/or contrasts do you see in this text?
What significance do they have?

What key words/phrases might be significant in this section?

What options does Paul say are in front of him due to him being in prison? How would you describe his resolve here?

Note the mood of the passage. How would the Philippians feel as they detected Paul's mood in this section?

PHIL . 2 : 1 2 - 1 8

THEME: LIVING AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

How would you explain this section to a 5th grade Sunday school class if you were the Teacher?

What powerful theological themes emerge from this section?

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

Paul says to 'work OUT your salvation' (not work FOR it). What might it look like to work out your salvation in your life this week?

Verse 13 reminds us that God is the One who is working in us, both to want to do what is right and to act upon those godly desires. How is God working in your life in these ways right now?

PHIL . 2 : 1 2 - 1 8

THEME: LIVING AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

On a scale of 1-10 (1 being poor and 10 being excellent), how are you doing in relation to v. 14-15? What would you need to do to move one or two numbers in the right direction?

God's desire for His people is that they stand out as pure and blameless in a dark and crooked world. Is there a setting in your life where you have this opportunity?

How did Christ perfectly model vv. 14-16? If time permits, cross-reference these verses with Isaiah 53. How might Jesus' example change/challenge your praying this week?

How does this passage illuminate your understanding of the gospel? What is part of God's purpose for saving us, but not immediately teleporting us to heaven right away?

PHIL. 2:12-18

THEME: LIVING AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible "How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, writing for The Gospel Coalition website.

PHILIPPIANS

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

WEEK 7

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 2:19-30

THEME: FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

CATCH UP

Throughout this letter, Paul perfectly mingles weighty theological themes with practical everyday instructions.

Last time, we saw how the humility of Christ produces a beautiful christian witness for a lost world. This week, Paul spotlights two important leaders in the early church who lived out the kind of humble, others-first attitude we ought to have. Their examples are worth remembering and repeating.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

In Phil. 2:20, Paul says, "I have no one else like him...". Who comes to mind in your life that would fit that sentence? Why is that person such a beloved person in your life?

What is the kindest word of encouragement you've ever received? Why did it mean so much to you?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

Read the passage quietly to yourself. Now, read it aloud together. As you read, think through the passage with these basic questions: Who are the main characters? What's happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage

PHIL. 2:19-30

THEME: FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

Who are the two individuals Paul commends in this section? For what characteristics does he praise them so highly?

What would you say Paul values by the way he praises these two co-workers in ministry?

What are two or three words you would use to describe Timothy based on Paul's commendation in vv. 19-24? What about Epaphroditus -- what are a few words you would use to describe him?

PHIL. 2:19-30

THEME: FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

Context is important in learning to study the Bible. What similar characteristics do you see in 2:5-11 (about Jesus) and in this section concerning Timothy and Epaphroditus?

What key principles can we learn from these men in regard to our own efforts at Kingdom work?

Can you think of any figures in Scripture who would be opposite examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus?

From what you know of the book of Philippians already, how does this week's section fit into the larger context of the book?

PHIL . 2 : 1 9 - 3 0

THEME: FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

If a non-believer read this passage and responded with “So what -- why does this section even matter?” what would you say? (Answer the ‘So what’ question).

What new insight did you gain about Kingdom work/ministry from this passage?

What does this passage teach us about what God values in the lives of His servants?

Where does this passage shine the spotlight in my own life?

PHIL. 2:19 - 30

THEME: FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

Where does this passage shine the spotlight in my own life?

Is there an area of service you feel God has called (or is calling) you to in His Kingdom?

List (and share if time permits) one big takeaway from this passage.

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible "How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, writing for The Gospel Coalition website.

P H I L I P P I A N S

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

W E E K 8

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 3:1-11

THEME: GIVING IT UP TO GAIN IT ALL

CATCH UP

In the previous section, Paul sets forth two examples of christian humility and service in Timothy and Epaphroditus. Both of these men had given their lives in significant ways for the good of the church body. In this week's passage, Paul turns his attention toward the negative example of the Judaizers, who promoted their own selfish religious accomplishments and put their confidence in their own virtue and goodness.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

What skill do you have that you could brag about?

What is the greatest sacrifice you've ever had to make? Why did you choose to make it?

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

Read the passage aloud together TWICE. As you read, think through the passage with these basic questions: Who are the main characters? What's happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage

PHIL . 3 : 1 - 11

THEME: GIVING IT UP TO GAIN IT ALL

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

What seems to be the meaning of verse 2 at first glance?
What do you think Paul means when he calls his opponents “mutilators of the flesh”?

As a present-day Bible reader, can you think of another New Testament book or passage that would give you context clues to help clarify Paul’s statements in 3:1-3?

Why is Paul so concerned about “those dogs”?

What does “confidence in the flesh” mean?

PHIL. 3 : 1 - 11

THEME: GIVING IT UP TO GAIN IT ALL

The word 'confidence' shows up several times in this passage. How does Paul use it in this context? What is its significance?

Are there any significant comparisons/contrasts you see in this text? What do those suggest?

Based solely on the context of vv. 7-11, how would you define the theological term 'righteousness'? How does a person gain a righteous standing with God (v. 9-10).

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

According to Paul, what is the secret to success? How does your own personal rubric for measuring success compare? Any similarities? Differences?

PHIL. 3 : 1 - 11

THEME: GIVING IT UP TO GAIN IT ALL

What surprised you about Paul's words in vv. 2-8? Why did it surprise you?

What does this passage teach us about prioritizing our lives?

How would you share your testimony with a lost friend? Have you trashed any old "trophies" from your past for the treasure of knowing Christ? If so, what?

Is there anything you're struggling to let go of that is in competition with God in your heart?

List (and share if time permits) one big takeaway from this passage.

PHIL. 3 : 1 - 11

THEME: GIVING IT UP TO GAIN IT ALL

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible

"How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, writing for The Gospel Coalition website.

PHILIPPIANS

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

WEEK 9

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 3:12-16

THEME: PRESSING ON TOWARD THE GOAL

CATCH UP

In the previous passage, Paul warned the Philippian Christians about the dangers of their confidence in themselves and not in Christ. This was a chief characteristic of the false teachers in the 1st century who gloried in their zealous efforts to keep the Jewish Laws. Here in this week's passage, Paul reminds them to keep their eyes fixed on Christ who has called them into a relationship with Him and made them citizens of His heavenly kingdom.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

In terms of your own personality, do you tend to be more like the pioneer or the settler?

Over the next 12 months, how would you like to see yourself grow and make progress?

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:12-16

Read the passage quietly to yourself. Now, read it aloud together. As you read, think through the passage with these basic questions: Who are the main characters? What's happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage?

PHIL. 3 : 1 2 - 1 6

THEME: PRESSING ON TOWARD THE GOAL

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

How would you describe that atmosphere/mood/emotion of this passage? Why?

Do you see any words that show any sense of chronology? What might those words be indicating?

How does Paul offer a balance of faith and works in v. 12?

What about this passage seemed hard to understand? What questions come to mind as you read this??

PHIL. 3:12-16

THEME: PRESSING ON TOWARD THE GOAL

A significant biblical theme of imitating godly examples appears here in 3:17 (see also Eph. 5:1; Heb. 13:7). What kind of attitude do you see in 3:12-17 worth imitating?

The description of the 'enemies of the cross of Christ' is vivid and concrete. They are consumed with worldly things. What contrast does Paul offer to a worldly life?

The passage begins and ends with a reference to heaven (called an *inclusio*). How does Paul's fixed gaze on the future affect his pursuit of Christ and a holy life on earth?

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

How are you encouraged by Paul's own awareness of his faults and flaws?

PHIL. 3:12-16

THEME: PRESSING ON TOWARD THE GOAL

How does this passage help you think through your own process of sanctification (i.e., being shaped into the image of Christ)? How could it help a church body to grow to become more like Christ?

Who is someone in your church that you would want to learn from during your time in college? Share one or two things you would like to learn from them.

In this letter, Paul speaks a lot about unity. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest), how would you rate your pursuit of unity in the church? Why is unity with other believers important to the gospel? To the Kingdom?

Phil. 3:20 and Heb. 13:14 remind us that we are seeking the city that is to come, where our true citizenship belongs. How can you spend your time this coming week in light of your own heavenly citizenship?

PHIL. 3:12-16

THEME: PRESSING ON TOWARD THE GOAL

List (and share if time permits) one big takeaway from this passage.

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible "How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, The Gospel Coalition website.

P H I L I P P I A N S

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

W E E K 10

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 3 : 1 7 - 4 : 1

THEME: A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

CATCH UP

This section links back to the previous one closely, but has a notable contrast between the kingdom of this world and Christ's heavenly kingdom. After hearing of his intense desire to press on toward the goal of an eternity with Jesus, Paul spotlights those who do not live according to this same desire and goal. He calls these ones "enemies of the cross of Christ" and describes their manner of life. As you study this passage, consider how it might look different to live as a citizen of Christ's heavenly kingdom here on earth.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

If you are a christian, what is one significant way God has replaced your old appetite for worldly things with a new appetite for heavenly/spiritual things? Share an example.

Is there a christian in your life that you are seeking to imitate? If so, who are they and what patterns/habits/actions in their life are you seeking to follow?

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:17-4:1

Read the passage quietly to yourself. Now, read it aloud together. As you read, think through the passage with these basic questions: Who are the main characters? What's happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage?

PHIL. 3 : 17 - 4 : 1

THEME: A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

What does Paul call the Philippian church to do in v. 17? Is his command an individual effort? A communal effort? Or both? Explain your answer.

What contrast do you see between v. 17 and v. 18?

What is Paul's mood in this section of his letter? What might this mood communicate to his readers?

What about this passage seemed hard to understand? What questions come to mind as you read this?

PHIL. 3 : 17 - 4 : 1

THEME: A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

The description of the 'enemies of the cross of Christ' is vivid and concrete. What do we learn here about those who oppose the gospel message?

Paul says the christian believer's true citizenship is in heaven (3:20). Citizenship was a big deal in 1st century Rome. According to this verse, why is citizenship in heaven a big deal for a follower of Christ?

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

What stood out to you the most as you studied this passage? Why did it grab your attention?

Following Jesus is both a personal pursuit and a community effort. Why are both necessary for followers of Christ?

PHIL . 3 : 1 7 - 4 : 1

THEME: A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

What stood out to you the most as you studied this passage?
Why did it grab your attention?

Following Jesus is both a personal pursuit and a community effort. Why are both necessary for followers of Christ?

If someone were walking in your footsteps this past week, on a scale 1-10 (10 being highest), how steadily would that person have been living a life committed to personal holiness and purity?

Who can you pray for this week based on this passage? (An unbelieving friend living for the world, a christian neighbor whose example you follow, etc.)

P H I L . 3 : 1 7 - 4 : 1

THEME: A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

How does it change your mindset and focus, knowing that Jesus will one day return and transform our frail, feeble bodies to be like his glorified, eternal body?

What new thoughts or key ideas have you gained that you'd like to meditate on this week? Share those thoughts with the group.

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible

"How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, The Gospel Coalition website.

PHILIPPIANS

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

WEEK 11

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHILIPPIANS 4:2-9

THEME: EXHORTATIONS TOWARD SPIRITUAL GROWTH

CATCH UP

This letter, written by the Apostle Paul, was intended to encourage and exhort the believers in the city of Philippi toward spiritual unity in the body. He continually reminds them to walk in humility, imitating the example of Christ, because they are first, and foremost, citizens of His eternal Kingdom. In this week's passage, Paul provides some practical exhortations (strong words of encouragement and direction) for the church body.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

What is your typical response to conflict in your life? Why is this the case?

Anxiety is certainly on the pandemic level in our world today. Where do you see anxiety present in your life? Your family? Friends? Church family?

READ PHILIPPIANS 4:2-9

Read the passage aloud together with each person taking turns reading one verse. As you read/listen, think through the passage with these basic questions: Who are the main characters? What's happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage?

PHIL. 4 : 2 - 9

THEME: EXHORTATIONS TOWARD SPIRITUAL GROWTH

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

From this passage, how does Paul advise the Philippian church to deal with their disagreements and conflicts?

What motivation does you see in the text that underscores the importance of unity in the church?

From this text, what would you say are 3-5 important characteristics of a healthy church? (What would a church look like if its members were practicing this text?)

PHIL. 4 : 2 - 9

THEME: EXHORTATIONS TOWARD SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This passage includes several strong commands for every believer to follow. List the ones you see. (Hint: track the verbs).

What promise does Paul give and repeat in this passage?
How does that promise connect to the exhortations he's just given?

If you had to teach a lesson on this passage, how might you go about creating an outline for its main points?

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

Is there any part of this passage that grips you personally?
Why?

PHIL. 4 : 2 - 9

THEME: EXHORTATIONS TOWARD SPIRITUAL GROWTH

How might a unified, joyful, thankful praying church look to a lost world? Why is that contrast so distinct?

If you could only use this passage to share the gospel with an unbeliever, how would you do it?

Is there a specific situation in your life right now that needs the medicine of this text applied to it?

What part of this passage might be the most difficult for you personally? Why?

List one key takeaway from this week's text. (An observation, new thought, perplexing question, etc.)

PHIL. 4 : 2 - 9

THEME: EXHORTATIONS TOWARD SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible

"How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, writing for The Gospel Coalition website.

P H I L I P P I A N S

*LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE
BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL*

W E E K 12

COLLEGE CONNECTION • SPRING 2021

PHIL. 4:10-23

THEME: GOSPEL GENEROSITY LEADS TO GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP

CATCH UP

This letter, written by the Apostle Paul, was intended to encourage and exhort the believers in the city of Philippi toward spiritual unity in the body. Paul has dealt with some heavyweight theological concepts in this short letter. Yet, at the same time, it is filled with helpful, practical instructions for living a joyful christian life. This week, Paul wraps up this letter to the Philippian church by giving thanks for how they have supported his ministry efforts.

Remember -- this letter wasn't written from a comfortable office chair with a hot cup of coffee in hand! Prison walls cannot contain Paul's joyful and thankful attitude.

WARM UP

CHOOSE ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

How would you finish this sentence? Contentment is... ?

If you could only choose two or three things to get you through a day, what would you choose? Why those items?

READ PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23

Choose one person to read the passage out loud for the group, as if they were the reader for the gathered Philippian church. As you read/listen, think through the passage with these basic questions: Who are the main characters?

What's happening here? What seems to be the "big idea" (obvious point) of the passage?

PHIL. 4:10 - 23

THEME: GOSPEL GENEROSITY LEADS TO GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP

WORD UP

This is the portion of the study where you will use these questions to help you investigate the passage and glean as many observations as possible. This may be done silently over a period of a few minutes and responses may be shared; or you may collectively discuss these questions and record your observations as a group.

What do you think Paul is talking about in v. 10?

What is the giving track record of the Philippian church?
What might this suggest about them as a church body?

Summarize the main idea of this final section in your own words.

Paul says he “knows” certain things and he has “learned” certain things. From this text, what does he know and what has he learned?

PHIL. 4 : 1 0 - 2 3

THEME: GOSPEL GENEROSITY LEADS TO GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP

What fallen condition of humanity is on display in this text?
What gospel-centered solution(s) do you see offered?

What theological themes emerge from this section that you'd like to explore further?

What questions do you still have about this section?

WRAP UP

Use this time to help students consider how the passage might apply to their lives.

How can a christian remain joyful and hopeful in spite of severely trying circumstances?

PHIL. 4:10 - 23

THEME: GOSPEL GENEROSITY LEADS TO GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP

How are you doing in the area of generosity? What is your attitude like when others try to share generously with you?

Think of a lost family member or friend. How can you be generous this week on their behalf?

The gospel is a complete act of the free grace of God. How does it move you to meditate on the generosity of Christ to give his life in exchange for yours?

What need do you have right now that you God wants you to trust Him to provide for?

PHIL. 4:10 - 23

THEME: GOSPEL GENEROSITY LEADS TO GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP

Ask for a member of the group to close your time in prayer.

Resources consulted:

Tony Merida's Expository Preaching Method

Serendipity Small Group Bible

ESV Study Bible

"How to study your Bible in 2020" -- article by Matt Smethurst, The Gospel Coalition website.

