



# Series Overview and Guides

2018-2019 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 5

MARCH-JUNE 2019

## Objective

*what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study*

We live joyfully together in Christ.

### STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

"Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved."

— Philippians 4:1 NRSV

"Though many exhortations and challenges are given, one major... emphasis pervades the book. All the teachings are expressions or ramifications of this one central truth. This theme is 'living the Christian life.'"

— Bob Lightner  
*Philippians (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)*

"In [Philippians] we find ourselves dealing with giving generously, living courageously, maintaining unity, being content, seeking humility, serving sacrificially, rejoicing instead of worrying, making peace instead of grumbling, and trusting in Christ's righteousness rather than seeking...our own."

— J. Daniel Hays  
*The Baker Illustrated Bible Handbook*

## Premise

*why we are studying this*

We sometimes think things are so bad that joyful living is impossible. Nothing could be further from the truth! Ten years before this letter was penned, Paul was beaten and illegally arrested in Philippi just for speaking about Jesus. Yet he sang thanksgiving hymns to the Lord and saw a wonderful, enduring church begun. Now as he writes to Philippi, Nero is on the emperor's throne with Paul in prison in Rome awaiting trial. Nonetheless, this letter is full of joy! Most importantly, it teaches us that by God's grace and through the love of the brethren, we can—in any circumstance—enjoy building to last.

### STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

— Philippians 4:12-13 ESV

"If you master the truths in Philippians, you should be filled with joy as you live the Christian life."

— Warren Wiersbe  
*Be Joyful*

## Theme

*what the study is about*

There are four great ideas that work together in the letter, and they arise from the three most used terms in the book—joy, mind, and Jesus—and a rare construction, *synkoinonos* (συγκοινωνός). The verb and noun form of this construction each appear in Philippians, describing a strong grasp of and commitment to live out Christian fellowship. The Christian can and should have genuine joy in life because his or her mind is trained to dwell on God's truth. That joy is deepened because of the relationships founded on Jesus.

### STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise—dwell on these things. Do what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you."

—Philippians 4:8-9 HCSB

"Paul could suffer with joy all that he endured...because of the fellowship that existed between him and the believers. While we would not minimize for one moment the ministry of Jesus Christ directly to a suffering saint, this fact is observed—the joy of Christ, the comfort of Christ, the strength of Christ were ministered to Paul through the saints. Paul is touching on something vital. Believers are joined into one body, and it is the function of one part of the body to minister to another member of the body."

—J. Dwight Pentecost  
*The Joy of Living*



Frisco Bible Church  
*a redeemed community*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PERMISSION

You are welcome to copy and distribute this study guide for your personal or group study.

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SERIES 5 | SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 1:1-2

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul varies his standard introduction, doing so in a marked manner meant to attract attention. While all the words are important, introducing place and personages, four terms stand out: slaves, saints, overseers, and deacons. Looking into those, we begin to understand the nature of the letter and its purpose—living joyfully together in Jesus.

OBJECTIVE

We live grace and peace as Jesus' slaves.

A WONDERFUL RELATIONSHIP

"Verses 1-2 form a general introduction to the whole letter. The introduction is typically Pauline except for the fact that there is no emphasis on his apostleship. This church and Paul had a wonderful relationship. He did not need to invoke his apostolic authority."

—Bob Utley  
*Paul Bound, The Gospel Unbound*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we each receive grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 1: Saints and Slaves

1. Read the Objective, Premise, and Theme of this series from the first page of this study guide.
  - What are some sources of joy in your life?
  - If you are a Christian, do you have joy in your walk with Christ, and in community with fellow believers? Why, or why not?
2. Read Acts 16:1-40 together. What evidence of abiding joy did Paul and Silas show during this first visit to the city of Philippi?
  - Paul and other biblical authors commonly refer to all believers in Jesus Christ as "saints." What does this word mean? (Refer to a Bible dictionary if needed.)
  - How does one become a saint in Christ Jesus?
  - Paul also calls himself and Timothy servants, or slaves, of Christ Jesus. Discuss the additional importance of this idea, beyond the fact of being a saint.
  - How does one become a servant of Jesus Christ?
3. Now read Paul's greeting from his letter to the Philippians, 1:1-2.

This study of Philippians is going to focus on joy and the delight of being established in Jesus together. If you are currently struggling with this, how can this group pray for you today?



SERIES 5 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 1:3-11

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul exposes the committed affection shared between the brethren. This love is so powerful that it naturally overflows into prayers. This becomes a model for us regarding both how to partner with our brethren and how to pray for each other.

OBJECTIVE

We partner with and pray for God's people.

FOUR IDEAS

Four ideas are replete in Philippians, as revealed in these terms:

- Joy and rejoice – Forms of these words appear 18 times in the letter.
- Mind – The mind is the channel through which joy comes into the experience of the child of God.
- In Christ – The relationship among believers is established on Jesus, whose name or personal pronoun appears 70 times in the letter.
- Partner or fellow-sharer – This unique word shows a strong commitment to live out Christian fellowship.

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we will be steadfast partners with, and faithfully pray for, God's people.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 2: Partners in Grace

1. What makes a bond between Christians different than other friendships? Why is it important to develop and nurture such bonds with brothers and sisters in Christ?
  - Why does Paul feel such deep affection toward the Philippian church? Read 4:14-20 for more insight.
  - The Philippian church partnered with Paul by supporting him multiple times. How did Paul repay their care for him?
2. Read Philippians 1:3-8.
  - Why does knowing what is best (v. 10) require abounding love with discernment (v. 9)?
  - Where does the righteousness come from which allows us to be blameless before God?
  - What is the end result of a life of increasing love, discernment of what is best, and righteousness through Jesus Christ?
3. Read Paul's prayer in 1:9-11.
  - What are some ways to support your brothers and sisters in ministry, as the Philippians supported Paul?
4. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:17: "Brothers, join in imitating me..." Do you regularly pray for those who have cared for you in the faith?
  - If not, start by praying Paul's prayer in 1:9-11 for them.
  - If you do, have you told them that you are thankful for them and are praying for them? If not, consider doing so this week.



SERIES 5 | SESSION 3

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 1:12-30

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul cleverly shows how all three Persons of the Godhead are at work in causing evil to work for good. Jesus spreads His gospel through His people, the Spirit provides deliverance, and the Father God has it all in hand, so enemies are ultimately confounded. Therefore, the Christian can rejoice always; knowing living is Christ and dying is gain. Further, by God's empowerment, the believer can live in a manner worthy of the grace of God.

OBJECTIVE

We walk worthily.

THE MASTER WEAVER

"One of the most potentially frightening aspects of being a Christian is knowing that when you put your trust in Jesus, all of Hell takes arms against you intending evil upon your life. And, yet what trumps that fear and evil is knowing that, no matter what comes, God is the Master Weaver. He takes what was intended for evil and reweaves it for good."

—Max Lucado  
*What Was Meant for Evil,  
God Uses for Good*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we keep our focus on the eternal in the midst of any temporal issues we are facing in our lives.

## Session 3: It's All Good

1. Can you recall a time when you were severely tested by something that Satan was using to pull you down, but God worked it out by His power and grace for your good?
  - What good does Paul see as a result of the harsh things he has endured?
  - In what ways did the preaching of the gospel advance?
  - What was the most important thing to Paul?
2. Read Genesis 50:20 and discuss the ups and downs in Joseph's life. How did his clear conviction affect his behavior throughout his trials?
3. Paul had the same conviction as Joseph. Read Philippians 1:12-18.
  - To Paul, what is worth staying alive for?
  - For Paul, and for the believer, how is dying gain?
  - If dying is gain, why do Christians remain on earth after salvation?
4. Read Philippians 1:19-26.
  - What does Paul ask and expect of the believers in Philippi?
5. Read Philippians 1:27-30.
  - Living a life that reflects well on the gospel will often lead to suffering. Why does Paul say this should not frighten us? (see verse 23 also)



SERIES 5 | SESSION 4

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 2:1-4

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Every Pauline epistle has a context, addressing problems of specific time and place while applying the truth to all times and places. The struggles in Philippi appear to be the run-of-the-mill type that plague every organization this side of heaven. So, it is interesting that one of the most beautiful calls to unity comes in this letter. Obviously, it is not only troubled churches that need reminding that our rich blessings are intended to bless others.

OBJECTIVE

We fulfill true joy.

LIKE MINDED

"Like minded comes from the Greek word *phroneō*. It is used eleven times in Philippians and is the key to interpreting the book. The theme of selflessness through Christ is naturally tied to likemindedness between believers. Part of being of one mind is setting aside one's own agenda."

—Gregory P. Sapaugh

*The Grace New Testament Commentary*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we experience the depth of joy our salvation offers.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests

## Session 4: Full Joy!

1. What is the difference between real joy and happiness?
2. Read Philippians 2:1. Paul lists four blessings of our life in Christ.
  - How have you seen examples of these blessings in your life or in others?
  - The English uses an "if-then" construction in this verse. If we are experiencing these blessings, then what should be our response?
3. See how unity among believers is fleshed out by reading verses 2-4.
  - What hallmarks of unity are conveyed here?
  - What is the application of humility according to verse 3?
4. What are some practical ways we can apply being more focused on the needs of others rather than self?



SERIES 5 | SESSION 5

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 2:5-13

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul holds up Jesus for emulation, specifically calling Jesus' followers to live differently. In summary, the best living is to trust Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection; imitate Jesus by building on that salvation; do so by God's power for His good purpose and praise.

OBJECTIVE

We live like Jesus.

THE BEST SUPERHERO

"Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Iron Man, Captain America, Spiderman. All of them, and many others, might have wonderful powers and abilities, but they cannot make us like them. In fact, I wouldn't even want to be like them. Jesus Christ, however, can and wants to make us like Him. He wants us to have His character, His obedience to the Father, and His love for people. And He is totally committed to doing that, far more than what we can ever comprehend."

—J.B. Cachila

*Christian Today: 5 Reasons Why Christ is Better than any Other Superhero*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we imitate Christ's example of humbly living for others.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests

## Session 5: Live Like a Superhero

1. Over the course of a normal day, how hard is it to consistently put the needs of others ahead of your own? Why is that?
  - Why is Paul giving this example of Christ? Read verses 1-4 to review the immediate context of this passage.
  - What is the point Paul is making about Jesus?
  - What is the implication for us as followers of Christ?
3. Read Philippians 2:9-11.
  - How does the position of Christ now compare to His position in the manger, or on the cross?
  - Read 2 Corinthians 5:20. How can we, as ambassadors of the exalted Christ, best represent him to those around us?
  - What can we expect from imitating Christ's example? See, for example, 1 Peter 5:5b-7.
4. Read Philippians 2:12-13.
  - What is particularly hard for you in "working out your salvation," that is, growing in sanctification?
  - How is any growth in sanctification even possible?



SERIES 5 | SESSION 6

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 6:1-8

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul details further what it means to be joyful together. The two imperative verbs are to do (everything without grumbling and arguing) and to hold (firmly to the message of life). Followed, these imperatives light the world and cause mutual joy with Christians. [14-18] The apostle's thoughts then naturally turn to the examples of two men who live these two imperatives: Timothy [19-24] & Epaphroditus [25-30]. From them, we learn fine points of doing and holding.

OBJECTIVE

PRAYER

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 6:

This lesson was not available at the time of publication. Please check for updates.



SERIES 5 | SESSION 7

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 3:1-11

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul continues his masterful combination of skillful writing and interpersonal care. He prepares Christians for the inevitable challenges that come in church life, especially describing false teachers and false righteousness. By heeding God's words, the believer in Jesus can rejoice always, even when under spiritual assault.

OBJECTIVE

We are ready for life among the dogs.

JOY IN JESUS

"Jesus humbled himself even unto death on a cross, the Father highly exalted him, and all will one day pay homage to his universal reign (Philippians 2:6-11). Rejoicing in the Lord means that these truths about Jesus — who he is, what he has done, and what he will do — personally and profoundly affect us.

Rejoicing in the Lord means knowing Jesus Christ as our Lord, Savior, and Treasure. He is the chief object of our joy."

—Brian Tabb  
*DesiringGod.com*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we may know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 7: I Count It All as Loss

1. Read Philippians 3:1. Under what circumstances do you need someone to remind you to rejoice in the Lord?
  - "Dogs" — those actively opposed to Christians for their faith.
  - "Evildoers" — those opposed to healthy growth in sanctification and holiness.
  - "Those who mutilate the flesh," that is, legalists — those who insist that obedience to a set of rules (like, in Paul's day, circumcision) is required for salvation.
3. In verse 3, Paul describes the true family of God using three attributes.
  - Why is each one a hallmark of true faith?
  - Which of these is more of a challenge for you, and how?
4. In verses 4-6, Paul describes his own attempts to be righteous before his faith in Christ. Why is this kind of life a burden?
5. Read Philippians 3:7-11.
  - Why is knowing Christ as Savior and Lord priceless?
  - How is it possible to "rejoice in the Lord" (verse 3) knowing that we "may share his sufferings" (verse 10)?
  - How do your goals as a Christ-follower compare to Paul's goals stated in verse 10?
6. Consider verse 7 as you pray this week. Outside of Christ, is there anything you have gained that you are not willing to lose for the sake of Christ?



SERIES 5 | SESSION 8

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 3:12-4:1

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul spends time on glorification. He discusses more than just the future (as in Corinthians' bema passages), exposing how knowledge of glory should change our lives here and now. Thinking on that, he calls for accountability and for choosing guides according to this insightful, simple breakdown:

- Lost leader – live like enemies of the cross; end is destruction; concerned with personal appetites; glory in shamefulness; materialist
- Wise leader – eager for Jesus; end is transformation; concerned with others; glory in becoming like Jesus; focused on heaven.

OBJECTIVE

We press on toward glory.

A WISE LEADER'S FOCUS

"Aim at Heaven and you will get Earth 'thrown in': aim at Earth and you will get neither."

—C.S. Lewis  
*The Joyful Christian*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we strain forward, press on, hold true, and stand firm in the Lord.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 8: Pursue Glory

1. What does it mean to "have a short memory"? Describe some contexts in life where that is encouraged.
  - In light of the previous section (vv. 4-11), why is it important not to rest on past accomplishments?
  - Why is it important not to dwell on past failures? See Psalm 103:11-12.
  - What are some practical ways to keep our focus on the future, "straining forward to what lies ahead" (v. 13)?
  - What does it mean to "hold true to what we have attained" (v. 16)?
2. Read Philippians 3:12-16.
  - Describe the contrasts between the two examples.
  - Paul encourages the church to follow his example (v. 17). Could you do the same? Why or why not?
  - What is the present effect of imitating Paul and others who walk according to his example? See verse 4:1.
3. Read Philippians 3:17—4:1. Paul describes two types of people we can choose to follow.
  - Describe the contrasts between the two examples.
  - Paul encourages the church to follow his example (v. 17). Could you do the same? Why or why not?
  - What is the present effect of imitating Paul and others who walk according to his example? See verse 4:1.



SERIES 5 | SESSION 9

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 4:1-5

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul brings all four of the major themes of his letter to pointed application. Joy and unity are interconnected, depending upon minds that are set on Christ. Because the Lord is near, God's people can think rightly – valuing gracious unity and rejoicing always.

OBJECTIVE

We rejoice always.

PHRONEŌ

The Greek word *phroneo* (verse 2) means to set the mind on, implying moral interest and reflection that leads to virtuous action.

It is more literally translated 'continually be of the same mind,' something that is only possible in the Lord. If the Lord is in control, there cannot (assuming the parts of the body are in submission to the Head, Christ Jesus) be division.

—Precept Austin

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we rejoice in the Lord always, knowing that He is near.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 9: Rejoice!

1. Describe some times in your life in which you rejoiced. Was the cause a present circumstance, or a future expectation, or both?
  
2. Read Philippians 4:1-3.
  - How does Paul express his affection for the church at Philippi?
  
  - Agreement is sometimes a mindset choice. Why is "in the Lord" a critical part of Christian agreement?
  
  - What two things (one past and one future) does Paul remind them that they have in common?
  
3. Read Philippians 4:4-5.
  - As believers, what knowledge do we have that enables us to rejoice always, even when we face trials and tribulations like Paul was experiencing when he wrote this letter?
  
  - Why should this knowledge empower us to be gracious, gentle, and reasonable toward all?
  
4. Read the Theme of this session in the sidebar. In which area are you weakest, or struggle the most? How can this group pray for you in that area?





ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 4:6-9

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul relates the ultimate primer on handling worry. It should be no part of our lives whatsoever because:

- We can pray about everything.
- We ask in an environment of thanksgiving.
- God's peace guards the eternal aspects of us because we are sealed in Jesus.
- We can focus on what is truly positive.
- We can learn from our forebears in Christ, knowing God is with us as well.

PRAYER

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 10:

This lesson was not available at the time of publication. Please check for updates.





ANNUAL THEME 2018-2019

BUILD TO LAST

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 4:10-23

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul deals with contentment, displaying how his personal experience shows the completeness of life in Jesus. Because life in Jesus is complete:

- We can be content in any situation.
- We can give for good motives to good ends.
- We can receive, excited for the blessings to the giver.
- We can rest in God's provision.
- We can enjoy the deep and wide fellowship of the saints.

PRAYER

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 11:

This lesson was not available at the time of publication. Please check for updates.

