

Steve Whitacre
SESSION 3: PHILIPPIANS

Class Schedule

- Session 1: Galatians
- Session 2: Ephesians
- Session 3: Philippians
- Session 4: Colossians
- Session 5: 1 Thessalonians

Galatians—A defense of the gospel

Ephesians—A celebration of the gospel

Philippians—Thanksgiving for the fruits of the gospel

BACKGROUND

- **Author:**
 - **Recipients:**
 - **Date:**
 - **Occasion:**
“Paul’s purpose is to call the Philippians to strive, stand firm, and rejoice together in gospel partnership as citizens of heaven. In other words, Philippians is a sustained call to unite for and rejoice in the things that matter most.” Jason Meyer, SBTS Exegesis of Philippians Class Notes, December, 2011.
 - **Form:**
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I. Greeting and Prayer (1:1-11)

- A. Salutation from Paul and Timothy (1:1-2)
- B. Paul's thanksgiving and prayer for the Philippians (1:3-11)

II. Paul's Reflections on His Imprisonment (1:12-30)

- A. Paul's imprisonment has meant progress for the gospel (1:12-18)
- B. To live is Christ (1:19-26)
- C. Encouragement to walk worthy of the gospel (1:27-30)

III. Exhortation to Humble Service (2:1-30)

- A. Encouragement to unity in the faith and service to one another (2:1-4)
- B. Christ's example of humble service (2:5-11)
- C. Living as lights in the world (2:12-18)
- D. Timothy as an example of a service-centered life (2:19-24)
- E. Epaphroditus as another example of service (2:25-30)

IV. Opponents of the Gospel: Where Does Righteousness Come From? (3:1-21)

- A. Initial call to rejoice in the Lord (3:1)
 - B. Contrast between the opponents of the gospel and the true people of God (3:2-3)
 - C. Paul's renunciation of spiritual and ethnic privileges for the sake of knowing Christ (3:4-11)
 - D. Paul's progress in the gospel: through Christ, not the law (3:12-16)
 - E. A call to follow Paul's example of commitment to Jesus as Lord (3:17-21)
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V. Concluding Exhortations and Thanksgiving (4:1-23)

- A. Standing together for the gospel (4:1-3)**
- B. Rejoicing in faith (4:4-9)**
- C. Thanksgiving for the Philippians' gift; Paul's contentment in God (4:10-20)**
- D. Greetings (4:21-22)**
- E. Benediction (4:23)**

KEY THEOLOGICAL TERMS & THEMES

- The humility and exaltation of Jesus Christ
- Righteousness from God through faith is the essence of salvation
- The Christian life marked by affectionate obedience
- The joys of Christian community

GOSPEL APPLICATION

- Strive for Christian obedience
 - Walk in humility and gospel unity
 - Imitate gospel examples
 - Rejoice!
 - Trust God's sovereignty in suffering
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1-WEEK STUDY GUIDE TO PHILIPPIANS

DAY 1: Read Philippians in one sitting

- Try to write a one-sentence summary of each paragraph. Presto! You've just created your own outline to the book!
- As you read, make a list of often-repeated words and theologically significant words.
- Look over your outline and your list of words. Can you use these to write a brief summary of the entire book? Try to answer the question, "Why is the book of Philippians in our Bible?"

DAY 2: Read Philippians 1:1–11

- Much of this passage describes Paul's prayers for the Philippians. List the contents of his prayers.
- What is discernment (1:9–11) and why is it important?
- How do Paul's prayers for the Philippians compare with your prayers for Sovereign Grace Church?
- Use Paul's description of his prayers in this passage to pray for a page from the church Membership Directory.

DAY 3: Read Philippians 1:12–30

- In this passage, Paul contemplates the possibilities of both life and death in his near future. He seems genuinely torn between the two. Why are both living and dying attractive to Paul?
- What does it mean to "let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ?" (1:27). Try to answer the question from this passage.
- Paul doesn't define the gospel here. In one sentence, write your own definition answering the question, "What is the gospel?"

DAY 4: Read Philippians 2:1–30

- What is humility? How does this passage promote humility in the Christian life?
 - Meditate on 2:5–11. What does this passage teach about the character of Jesus and the nature of his ministry? Spend time thanking and praising God for his incredible mercy to reveal these great truths to us through his word.
 - Think about 2:12–13. How do these two verses work together (hint: "for" at the beginning of v. 13 is important)?
 - 2:19–30 describe the ministries of Timothy and Epaphroditus and their care for the Philippians. Who are the Christians who have made the biggest difference in your Christian life? Thank God for them. If you have time, send a note of thanks for how they have helped you to grow through their example and influence.
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DAY 5: Read Philippians 3:1–21

- Paul says it is “safe” for the Philippians’ for him to teach the “same things” again (3:1). What are some foundational doctrines of the Christian faith that you need to study again?
- Read carefully 3:2–11. Here is a description of Paul’s spiritual pedigree, which he considers utterly worthless compared to knowing Jesus Christ. Are there spiritual gifts or achievements or forms of service that you are tempted to think give you a better standing as a Christian? How does Paul’s example here challenge that kind of thinking?
- After renouncing his impressive spiritual resume (3:2-7), verses 8–11 describes his highest spiritual aspirations. What does he most value in the Christian life. Pray over this passage, asking God to make these priorities your priorities as well.

DAY 6: Read Philippians 4:1–23

- Read 4:4–7 again. Why is the phrase “The Lord is at hand” so important to this passage?
- Meditate on 4:8–9. Consider your media consumption. Do these verses call you to make any changes to your diet of TV, movies, music, reading, social media, etc.?
- What is Paul’s “secret” to contentment in 4:10–13? In what ways are you tempted to discontentment? How can Paul’s example help you?

DAY 7: Read the entire book in one sitting

- Before you read, ask the Lord to “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Ps. 119:18).
- Answer two questions:
 - What is one truth I saw about God, Jesus, or the gospel that I can take with me into my day?
 - What is one step of obedience I can take today in response to what I’ve read?