



UNSTOPPABLE
JOY
in Christ

STUDIES IN PHILIPPIANS
2026 LAUNCH SERIES

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Joy in... Gospel Partnership

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

STUDY ONE

Main idea: *Practically and prayerfully partner with workers in the gospel for their joy, our joy, and God's glory.*

Introduction

Who are the people in your life that bring you joy, that you're thankful for, and why?

HELLO ... WITH A PURPOSE!

Read Philippians 1:1-2

1. Who are the authors and recipients, and how are they described?

2. Why are the descriptions of these people important?

3. When the opening is coupled with Paul's traditional greeting of 'grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ', what does this teach us about the gospel and the church?

PRAYER OF THANKFULNESS FOR PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

Read *Philippians 1:3-8*.

4. Paul says he is always praying with Joy because of partnership. Who is Paul thanking? Did you expect it to be someone different?

5. Why would gospel partnership bring Paul so much joy?

6. What distinguishes 'gospel partnership' from other partnerships one can have?

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7. Reread verse 6. What kind of "good work" is God doing, and what would it look like to be "completed on the day of Christ Jesus"?

8. Reread verse 7-8, How would you describe the relationship between Paul and the Philippians, how might have this developed?

Application:

9. In what practical ways can we excel in being gospel partners with others?

PRAYER OF PETITION FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, FROM THE GOSPEL

Read Philippians 1:9-11.

10. There are two parts of Paul's prayer of petition. What are those two parts and the specific things Paul prays for?

11. Why would Paul pray these things, and how do they connect with the Philippians situation and the opening of his letter so far? Can you see connections to our day and place?
12. Paul uses the phrase “fruits of righteousness” to describe the work he wants God to produce in their life. When God answers this prayer in the Philippians life, what would it practically look like if we could witness their everyday life for week?

Apply Deeper – Our Gospel Partners:

13. Who are our gospel partners?
- a. Our corporate NBC partners?
 - b. Your more intimate and person gospel partners?
14. What specifically makes our gospel partnerships either shallow or deep?
15. How can we pray these kinds of prayers for our gospel partners?

Prayer

It's a good idea to simply pray this prayer, v3-11, for our gospel partners; global (Our missionaries), local (our holy people at NBC) and in the room (your HG).

Joy in... Suffering for Christ

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-30 STUDY TWO

Main idea: Paul's imprisonment has not hindered the advance of the gospel; instead, it serves God's purposes. Believers are called to live boldly and joyfully for Christ, knowing that whether in life or death, our ultimate goal is to honour Him and share the good news. Joy, courage, and unity in Christ are the marks of a faithful witness, even in the face of opposition.

Introduction

The apostle Paul was no stranger to adversity or to prisons. In the book of Acts, we read that he was arrested in Philippi [Acts 16:16-30] and in Jerusalem [Acts 21:27-36]. We also know from Paul's own writings that he was arrested at least a third time. Although he experienced a wide variety of conditions in these Roman prisons, by the time he wrote Philippians he was considered an enemy of the state. It is likely he was placed in an underground prison in Rome. Paul could have become bitter and hardened against God as a result of these imprisonments and harsh conditions, but rather we see him rejoicing that the gospel is advancing. While we cannot control these types of difficult circumstances entering our lives, we can control how we react to them. We can, like Paul, choose to believe that God is working even in the midst of our trials.

Describe a situation when you were in a difficult or painful situation but still rejoiced in Christ. How did your perspective on the situation affect your response?

SECTION 1 – PAUL’S CHAINS ADVANCE THE GOSPEL

Read Philippians 1:12-14

1. Paul was falsely accused of inciting people to oppose Roman law [see Acts 16:20; 17:7; 18:12-17]. It is likely these same charges had been brought against him and led to his arrest. But what does Paul say the Roman guards had come to realise about the real reason for his imprisonment? [v13]? What does this say about Paul’s priorities in life, which means he can rejoice in difficult times?

2. It is likely that the Roman authorities believed that by arresting Paul, they would frighten his fellow Christians into silence. Instead, what impact did Paul’s ‘chains’ have on most of them? [v14]

Application:

Describe a situation where personal rejection or the suffering of fellow Christians has spurred you on to courageous witness.

SECTION 2 – CHRIST IS PREACHED DESPITE FALSE MOTIVES

Read Philippians 1:15-18

4. Paul sees his imprisonment as serving to embolden his fellow teachers and advance the gospel. However, Paul is aware that not all of these teachers share his same motives. Sometimes, it is the rejection and slander by other Christians that cause us most pain. What two groups of teachers does Paul identify?
5. Many of Paul's rivals were benefitting from his imprisonment now that he was off the scene. What surprising response does Paul have to their work? What perspective enables him to respond this way? [v18]

Application:

- Why do we struggle to respond as Paul does when we are rejected or judged by other Christians? [v18]
- Have you ever been critical of the motives or methods of certain evangelists or preachers? If so, explain why.
- How do we balance appropriate critique and evaluation with grace and love?

SECTION 3 – TO LIVE IS CHRIST

Read Philippians 1:19-26

6. According to Paul, what two means would God use to secure his deliverance, whether temporal deliverance or eternal salvation? [v19]
Why are these two means so significant?

Application:

In view of these verses, praying for our brothers and sisters in prison or suffering persecution is vital to their deliverance/salvation—either from harm or to remain faithful until the end. Who are you praying for? Explore how your home group prays together for the persecuted (Open Doors newsletter, missionary letters, etc.).

7. What did Paul hope that he would be able to continue to do even while in prison? [v20]

8. What things in the modern world hinder us from finishing well in Christ? How can we help each other to finish unashamed?

9. What conclusions does Paul reach as he compares his options of living or dying? Why does he say he is 'torn between the two'? [v21-26]

10. What does Paul mean when he says, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain"?

Application:

To what extent have you adopted Paul's attitude toward life and death? What changes might you make in your life to live out the expression, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain"?

SECTION 4 – STRIVING AND SUFFERING FOR CHRIST

Read Philippians 1:27-30

The apostle Paul, having reassured the believers that he is standing strong and rejoicing in the midst of persecution, now wants to make sure they are doing the same thing. Why is it important for them to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ? What will this look like? [v. 27-28]

11. Christian believers are granted God’s mercy, grace, and forgiveness at salvation. However, what does Paul say that believers are also “granted on behalf of Christ”? [vv. 29–30]

Application:

- What are the most difficult circumstances you are presently facing?

- How can you develop Paul’s attitude to rejoice in such circumstances?

Prayer

Use the application points to pray that, by the help of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of God’s people, you would rejoice in and live for Christ despite suffering.

Joy in... Christlike Humility

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

STUDY THREE

Main idea: Look to the person and work of Jesus to lead us towards Christlike loving, humble and unified relationships in the church.

Introduction

Apart from the church, what groups have you been a part of where unity has been experienced, even if just in part? What made that unity possible?

OUR UNITY IN CHRIST, MUST REFLECT INTO OUR RELATIONSHIPS.

Read Philippians 2:1-4

1. What is the “therefore”, there for? In other words, what did we learn last week?

2. Paul gives a set of four “if” statements. We need to read them with more certainty, rather than potential, because Paul has no doubt these things are the case (e.g. qualify the if statement with, “as is the case”). Name them and then discuss what Paul’s point is here.

3. In what ways have you experienced these things in your own life?

4. The Roman culture encouraged its citizens to strive for personal honour and glory (much like our own). How does Paul define how Christians should live a life of unity with one another?

Read Philippians 4:2-3

5. Euodia and Syntyche are two women of the Philippian church. They are likely to be of significant social influence within the church, and certainly have been co-workers with Paul. In what ways is this section connected to an application of Philippians 2:1-4?

Application:

6. In what areas are you most susceptible to looking to your own interest and not the interests of other Christians?

7. How practically can you curb your temptation to assert your rights/interests over another? And instead look to the interests of others?

IMITATING THE NATURE AND WAY OF CHRIST.

Read Philippians 2:5-11

8. Paul now turns to Jesus's person and work in order to motivate and inspire them towards unity. Follow and map out the trajectory of Jesus life. What do you see and learn about the person and work of Jesus?

9. Whose interest is Jesus looking out for and what motivate his life?

10. Why is Paul using the Christ Hymn here? What relevance does it have the situation of the Philippians?

11. How would Paul expect the Philippians'- and our- behaviour to one another change as the result of this? How would Paul 'measure it' if he were to return to Philippi or hear another later report?

Application:

12. In your relationships with people at NBC, and/or in our home group, in what way does your mindset not reflect the way of Christ? How can you look to the nature and way of Christ to then change our attitude and behaviour towards others at NBC?

13. Is there someone in NBC who you need to seek reconciliation and unity with? What is the next step for you to take in this journey?

APPLY DEEPER:

14. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in his superb book "Life together": "*The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.*" Discuss that statement and specifically how that relates to applying Phil 2:1-11.

15. It is often very difficult to consistently follow and achieve the unity described here. How can following Jesus' example, lived in community, bring joy to you?

Prayer

Praise and Thank Jesus for who he is and what he has done.

Pray we can follow his way in humility and service to others.

Pray we can seek unity and reconciliation in our church community.

Joy in... Obedience and God's Work

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-30 STUDY FOUR

Main idea: *Just as Christ obeyed God (2:5-11), we too are to obey God (2:12-18). Thankfully, we have role models of how to live a life of obedience, faithfulness, and service (2:19-30).*

Introduction

Last week we saw Paul call the believers in Philippi to put aside their differences with one another and look to the example of Christ as their model for how to regard one another (2:5-11). As they consider the depths of Jesus' obedience to the Father, it should compel them to model a similar type of obedience to God (2:12-13). Just as Christ obeyed, they are to obey without grumbling or arguing (2:14). As they do, they will prove themselves to be a light for Jesus in a dark and hurting world (2:15-18). As a further illustration for how he desires believers to act, Paul draws on the example of his co-workers Timothy (2:19-24) and Epaphroditus (2:25-30), whose conduct serves as role models of faithfulness and selflessness.

Think of a Christian who you view as a good role model.

What characteristics do they display that are admirable and worth emulating?

SECTION 1 – FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE LORD JESUS.

Read Philippians 2:12-18

1. Verse 12 begins with “Therefore”. What is the “therefore” there for? In other words, what did we learn last week?

2. What kind of response should believers have when they consider what Jesus has done for them?

3. What might it mean “to work out your salvation” in verse 12? What is the difference between working out your salvation and working for your salvation?

Application:

When Paul uses the phrase “fear and trembling” in verse 12, he means “with utter seriousness.” What would it look like for you to work out your faith with utter seriousness in your family? What about in your online presence?

4. How does verse 13 both reinforce salvation by Grace alone, and encourage you as you work out your salvation?

5. Why do you think Paul stresses the importance of doing everything without grumbling or arguing in verse 14?

Application:

- How will you put this verse into effect in your life this week?

- What are some other actions that would result in you shining more brightly for Christ?

6. Verses 17-18 end on a note of celebration, what gives Paul cause to celebrate?

Application:

Whose faith can you celebrate today? How will you do so?

Application:

How does it challenge or encourage you to watch ordinary people like Timothy and Epaphroditus live extraordinary lives of faith and service?

How will you demonstrate these same characteristics this week?

Prayer

Spend time praying to the God we obey and serve, specifically:

- Praising God for our salvation by Grace alone
- Repenting of the ways we have not obeyed and served God faithfully in the past
- Asking God to use us to reflect Christ's light to the world
- Thanking God generally for partnership in the gospel, and for specific people with whom you serve and have served

Joy in... Knowing Christ Above All

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

STUDY FIVE

Main idea: *To help believers: Rejoice in Christ alone, reject confidence in the flesh, re-evaluate what we count as gain and loss and grow in knowing Christ deeply—His righteousness, power, suffering, and resurrection hope.*

Introduction

Philippians 3:1-11 brings us to the very heart of the Christian life. Writing from prison, Paul warns the church against confidence in religious performance and personal achievement and instead points to a joy-filled life that is grounded in knowing Christ. Paul lays out his impressive religious résumé—only to declare it a loss compared to the surpassing worth of gaining Christ. This passage sets before us a radical reorientation of values: from trusting in ourselves to trusting in Christ alone, from outward success to inward transformation, from righteousness we achieve to righteousness we receive by faith. As we begin this study, we're invited to examine what we truly prize and what it means to know Christ deeply, even through suffering.

What are some things people commonly rely on or take pride in to feel secure, accepted, or “successful”—and how might those compare with what Paul values in this passage?

Application:

What does “confidence in the flesh” look like in a modern church context? Where are you most tempted to trust in your own performance, background, or spirituality?

4. Paul had an impressive spiritual résumé [v4-6]. Why does Paul list his religious credentials in such detail? Which of Paul’s achievements would have impressed people most in his culture?

Application:

If you were to write your own “spiritual résumé,” what might you be tempted to include? How might your strengths actually become obstacles to depending on Christ? How can the church affirm growth and faithfulness without putting confidence in the flesh or good works for salvation?

SECTION 2 – A RADICAL REVALUATION – ALL FOR CHRIST

Read Philippians 3:7-11

5. Paul once believed that his privileged Jewish status gave him special standing before God. What dramatic shift has taken place in Paul's thinking and why does he describe his former gains so negatively ("loss," "rubbish") [v7-8]?

6. What does this teach us about the incomparable worth of Christ?

Application:

What did you once regard as 'gain' but Christ has now redefined as 'loss' in your life? What is hardest for you to surrender for the sake of knowing Christ?

7. What two kinds of righteousness does Paul contrast in verse 9?

Application:

How does this verse protect us from both pride and despair? How does justification by faith shape humility and assurance?

8. Paul had lost much in following Christ – including his status, his reputation, and even his security. But he is now so Christ-focused he doesn't care. Paul has one overriding passion – to know Christ (vv. 10-11). What does Paul mean by “knowing Christ”? How is it life-changing? How is it more than information?

9. Why does Paul connect knowing Christ with both resurrection power and suffering/death?

10. How does future resurrection shape present discipleship?

Application:

What would it look like for you to pursue a deeper knowledge of Christ this year? What one change might God be calling you to make in response to this passage? How can your small group help one another keep counting Christ as supreme gain?

Closing Question:

How does this passage shape our vision as a church living for Christ together?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we confess our tendency to trust ourselves. Help us to rejoice in you alone, to let go of false confidence, and to grow in knowing you—your grace, your power, your sufferings, and your resurrection hope. Amen.

Joy in... Pressing On

PHILIPPIANS 3:12- 4:1

STUDY SIX

Main idea: *To encourage believers to press on in confident hope—forgetting what lies behind, straining toward what is ahead, standing firm in Christ, and living as citizens of heaven while we await our Saviour.*

Introduction

In Philippians 3:12–4:1, Paul turns from what he has gained in Christ to how he now lives because of Christ. Though mature in faith, Paul refuses complacency. He presses on, strains forward, and keeps his eyes fixed on the heavenly prize—knowing that the Christian life is not about arrival, but direction. In a world pulling believers toward comfort, status, or distraction, this passage calls us to perseverance, humility, and steadfast joy as we stand firm in the Lord together.

Can you think of a time when you thought you had “arrived” in some area of life—only to realise there was still more growth needed?

How might that experience help us understand Paul’s attitude toward the Christian life in this passage?

SECTION 1 – PRESS ON TOWARDS THE GOAL

Read Philippians 3:12–14

1. What does Paul say he has not yet attained?
2. Why is this important to hear from a mature apostle?
3. What images or ideas does Paul use to describe the Christian life in these verses? What do they suggest about effort and direction?
4. What does Paul mean by “forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead”? What might this look like in practice?

Application

- What past failures, sins, or regrets are you tempted to dwell on rather than leaving them with Christ?
- Are there past achievements, roles, or seasons of fruitfulness that could be hindering you from pressing on now?
- What would “pressing on” toward Christ look like for you in this season of life?

SECTION 2 – BE OF THE SAME MIND

Read Philippians 3:15–16

5. Paul has been deliberate in stating that he is still “running the race”. He has not yet arrived. How does Paul define spiritual maturity in these verses?
6. What confidence does Paul express about God’s role in shaping our understanding as we grow? (v15b)

Application

- In what ways are you still growing in your understanding of following Christ?

- How can humility and teachability mark a mature Christian life?

SECTION 3 – FOLLOW GODLY EXAMPLES

Read Philippians 3:17–19

7. Why does Paul encourage believers to imitate him and others who live according to his example? What does this verse teach us about the importance of visible, godly examples in the Christian life?

Application

- Who has been a helpful Christian example to you, and what have you learned from them?

- What practical steps could you take to be a more Christ-like example to younger or newer believers?

7. How does Paul describe those who live as “enemies of the cross of Christ”? What is striking about what they value and where their lives are headed? How does this explain why Paul speaks with such emotion and grief here?

APPLICATION

- What dangers exist today of drifting into a worldly mindset while still appearing religious?

- Where are you most tempted to live for comfort, pleasure, or earthly security rather than the cross?

SECTION 4 – LIVE AS CITIZENS OF HEAVEN, WAITING FOR CHRIST

Read Philippians 3:20–21

8. What does it mean to say that our “citizenship is in heaven”? How would this have encouraged the Philippian believers?

9. What hope does Paul hold out regarding our future and our bodies? How might this truth have compelled them to press on?

Application

- In what areas of life do you most need to remember that this world is not your true home?
- How does the promise of Christ's return encourage perseverance and holiness today?

SECTION 5 – STAND FIRM IN THE LORD

Read Philippians 4:1

10. What words does Paul use to express his affection for the Philippians? What does this reveal about Christian relationships?

11. How does “standing firm in the Lord” connect with everything Paul has said in the previous verses?

Application

- What helps you personally to stand firm in your faith when pressure or discouragement comes?

- How can our church better support one another to keep going in the Christian race?

- What is one specific way you can encourage another believer this week to press on in Christ?

Prayer

- Thank God that He has made us His own and pray that we would keep pressing on toward the goal in faithful perseverance.
- Pray that our hope as citizens of heaven would shape how we live now, with Christ as our focus.
- Thank God for one another and ask that we would stand firm in the Lord, united and encouraged as we follow Christ.

Joy in... Contentment and Generosity

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-23

STUDY SEVEN

Main idea: *We can experience peace, contentment and generosity through the work of God in our life. Together this brings us supernatural unstoppable joy.*

Introduction

In your life as a Christian, what situations, events, or people have unsettled or threatened your faith in Christ?

JOY IN PEACE

Read Philippians 4:4-9

1. In v4-5, what is the relationship between joy and the presence of God?

2. What are the ways that Christians can experience the “peace of God?”

3. How is it that prayer and thankfulness could bring the “peace of God that transcends understanding” in anxious and stressful situations in our life?

4. Brainstorm a bunch of things in life from the categories in verse 8. After doing that, see how each and every one can be connected to God

Application

5. Every person gets anxious. What are the situations that make you anxious?

6. When you get anxious situations, what will enable you to take the steps towards prayer and thankfulness to God, to then be prayerful and thankful (also consider how you can help and lean on each other to come to God)?

JOY IN CONTENTMENT

Read Philippians 2:10-13

7. Paul says he can be content in every circumstance. What could contentment look like when you (1) “are in need”, have nothing, and then (2) when you “have plenty”?

8. What is the “secret to contentment”?

9. How does Christian contentment compare to other philosophies you might hear (e.g. “don’t worry be happy”, “everything happens for a reason”, “it’s all work out in the end” etc.)?

Application

10. What is a situation or an area or time in your life/day that you feel discontent? How can embrace Christ’s strength in this area?

JOY IN GENEROSITY

Read Philippians 4:14-20

11. How were the Philippians generous to Paul?

12. 'Generosity' requires a level of sacrifice on behalf of the giver, otherwise it is simply 'giving.' How might the Philippians have been sacrificial?

Application

13. To be generous and sacrificial in our giving is always relative because we each have different incomes, situations and capacities. With that in mind, are you being generous and sacrificial in your giving to God, local church and gospel workers?

14. Prayerfully consider who or what person or organisation you could start giving to? If you are giving to your local church (in our case, NBC) and maybe to others also, how can verses 18-20 give you joy?

APPLY DEEPER: MEMORY VERSES GALORE

Throughout these verses are some of the most common memory verses that we like to hold dear and apply (unsurprisingly so, they are so theologically rich and directly applicable to life).

15. If you don't have one of these as a memory verse, consider picking one to memorise. Most common: Philippians 4:4, 4:6-7, 4:8, 4:13

16. How can reading your chosen verse in context here affirm, change or strengthen your understanding and the application of the verse?

Prayer

The direct exhortation to prayer in v6-7 can be prayed together.

Also thank God for the ways he has been generous to you through others and Thank God that you can be a blessing to others through your own generosity through the resources and faith he has given you.

Most of all thank God we can be content, generous, and joyful because God lavished us with his grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

MY ADDITIONAL NOTES



NARWEE BAPTIST
— CHURCH —