

Philippians: The Worthy Life

THE BLESSINGS OF BIBLE STUDY:

- 1) You will become a stronger Christian – Peter says the WORD is like milk that enables a baby to grow (1Pe. 2:2)
- 2) You will be cleansed of sin – David said, thy WORD have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee (Ps 119:11)
- 3) You will learn to pray – Jesus said if you abide in me and my WORDS abides in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you (John 15:7)
- 4) You will know God's will – (Psalms 119:105) Thy WORD is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

The History:

- 1) Philippi was a Roman colony that was filled with national patriotism.
- 2) The church at Philippi was the first church planted in eastern Europe.
- 3) The story of its beginning is told in Acts 16.
 - a) Paul was led into that region by a vision of man begging him to come help them.
 - b) When he arrives in Philippi he meets Lydia, a business woman who loved God and he introduces Lydia and her family to Christ and baptizes them in Jesus name.
 - c) On his way to her house a demonized slave girl who was a fortune teller follows them for days announcing to all that these guys are servants of the Most High God (Acts 16:17).
 - i) When Paul gets exasperated with the demon insider her he commanded it out.
 - ii) The owners were furious and brought them before the city authorities pointing out that these Jews are teaching things that are illegal and contrary to roman laws.
 - d) Paul and his partner Silas were beaten publically and thrown in prison.
 - i) While in chains they worshiped God at midnight and God caused an earthquake and all the chains fell off. Acts 16:26b (NIV) At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.
 - ii) Instead of running in fear to escape they all stayed to see what God would do.
- 4) The next day Paul was released from Prison and he went straight to Lydia's house encouraged them all and then he left.

The Purpose of the Letter: Paul is once again in prison and the Philippians sent a financial offering with Epaphroditus. Paul sent back this letter with Epaphroditus to say thank you and to do a lot more.

Key Verse: 1:27,28 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, **28** and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

The Worthy Life

We are going to explore Chapter One today:

Read 1:1-6 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons. **2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3** I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

1) Is a Work in Progress.

1:6 I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

a) As we study the excellence of a worthy life in Jesus I want you to be encouraged. Let the Bible speak to you.

There are two ways to get into the word: Reading and Studying.

(1) Read it like a narrative (a story). Read it to get information.

(2) Read it like it's instructive (listening for God). Study it to get understanding.

(a) Understanding God's work for humanity is general information.

(b) Understand God's progressive work in your life is personal understanding.

If we read or listen to the scriptures as a narrative only, we will never apply the word personally. "be doers of the word and not merely hearers." (James 1.22)

b) Five Key Questions to Ask When Reading the Bible. SLIDE

- i) Is there a Truth to learn?
- ii) Is there an Example to follow?
- iii) Is there a Promise to claim?
- iv) Is there a Sin to avoid?
- v) Is there a Command to obey?

c) Three Applications of some truths found in the first 6 verses.

- i) When life gets tough, search for the Joy of what God is doing or what has done: v. **3** I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy **5** because of your partnership.

Perhaps he remembers the last time he was in prison in Philippi God shook about his chains, the jailer's family is saved and a Jesus community was birthed in Philippi!

- ii) When life gets tough, rely on your partnerships. Don't go it alone.
- iii) When life gets tough, look for the progressive work of God in your attitude and devotion to Jesus. 1:6 "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion"

2) Is a Work of Love

1:9-11 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, **10** so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Note: here we see some commands to obey.

The church in Philippi was experiencing several problems in its fellowship, such as pride and faultfinding (see 2:3,4 and 4:2-3).

- It seems there were people striving for titles and personal recognition - pride
- Then, there was a conflict between 2 prominent women in their fellowship (Euodia and Syntyche).

So often churches are controlled by the someone's emotions and not the love of the Spirit.

THE WORTHY LIFE is a life that is committed to the ongoing work of love. Love is WORK!

Here are some commands to obey from scripture:

- a) The Worthy Life will refuse to let trying circumstance pull one's self backwards into a posture of resentment and offense. Rather, let it catapult you into a higher level of love. "it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more" (v.9)
 - i) The word "Abound" is from a Greek word which means "to exceed a fixed number or measure". It was sometimes used in regards to a flood, river overflowing its banks.
 - ii) Paul is praying that their love would flood over the levy, would burst through the dam...
- b) The Worthy Life is life of love that operates with spiritual knowledge and keen discernment.
- c) The Worthy Life is a Blameless Life.

(v.10,11) so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ...

- i) Be a Peacemaker not a Strife-maker!
- ii) The Greek word used here also means "not causing others to stumble."

Question: if people mimicked my behavior, would it cause them to stumble into the sin of bitterness or resentment?

3) Works to advance the Gospel.

1:12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.

Note: here is an example to follow.

- a) Like Paul, we must work hard to make our life all about Jesus. 1:21 to live is Christ, to die is gain.
- b) Like Paul, we must be willing to work with others for the Kingdom even when everything doesn't line up perfectly.

The church divides and set barriers over so many things:

Look at what Paul says about his imprisonment:

1:14-18 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. **15** Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. **16** The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. **17** The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not

sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. **18** What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Rivalry is so wrong, and we don't have to get sucked into it!

In v. 17,18 (NLT) Paul said some "don't have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. **18** But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice."

c) Like Paul, we must not let our opponents hinder the advancement the gospel.

vv.27-30 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, **28** and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. **29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, **30** engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

- i) You have lots of partners, strive side by side with them for the good purposes of Jesus.
- ii) You have a few opponents, don't give in to the fear opposition, let God deal with them. Only realize that even Paul recognized the words of Jesus "... in the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Conclusion: Living a Life that Is Worthy of the Gospel takes Work. But haven't we learned that good honest work that is discerning and knowledgeable pays off!

A result of Paul's Personal Work is found in Acts 16

Paul was in prison, but he saw it as a chance to advance the gospel. As a result, the jailer who was about to kill himself ask, (Acts 16:30-34) "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" **31** And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." **32** And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. **33** And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. **34** Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

Families are saved and life-giving church is established!

1:27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ...