

**Philippians**  
**Lesson #3**

1. Review of Lesson #1 (background) and Lesson #2 (Chapter 1)
2. Read Chapter 2 and take note of the following points:
  - A. Who wrote the text? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Who were the recipients/readers? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. When was the text written? \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Where was the text written? \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. Why was the text written? \_\_\_\_\_
  - F. Key Verse(s): \_\_\_\_\_
  - G. Application/Insights:
    1. What does the text mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_
    2. How will you apply it to your life? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Chapter 2 Outline
  - A. Imitating Christ's Humility and a Call to Unity (2:1-11).
    1. Most commentators believe that these verses are part of Paul's attempt to deal with growing friction among the Philippians. Perhaps Epaphroditus had brought Paul hints that there were seeds of factions rooted in the pride of certain Philippian leaders such as Euodia and Syntyche. (See Philippians 4:2.) Paul's response is a call to humility and unity. Notice the word "encouragement" in verse 1. In Greek, it is the word "paraklesis" which is a form of the word "parakleitos" used by Jesus in John 14:16 to refer to the Holy Spirit as our comforter. In this context, the noun means "to draw alongside of, to comfort." In Christ, God's people have an incentive to come alongside on another for help and comfort. Notice also the call to the "like-minded" in verse 2. To live in unity (be like-minded) believers must practice harmony, humility, and helpfulness. Attitudes are the foundation upon which actions are built, and these young believers needed an attitude of submission and servanthood to produce harmony. To be of one mind means to agree in doctrine and creed. This isn't a call to unity at the cost of truth, however. To be one in spirit means literally "united" or "harmonious." Spiritual unity does not occur without doctrinal oneness. Unity is a matter of personal responsibility, with each believer taking ownership of his or her own disposition. "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." (St. Augustine.)
    2. According to Dr. David Jeremiah, verses 5-11 are very likely a hymn or poem that Paul wrote or borrowed as an illustration. They offer Jesus as the perfect role model for Christian unity. While the story of the cross is recorded in the Gospels and explained in the NT letters, only this passage views the crucifixion through the eyes of the Lord Himself. It presents a glimpse of His perspective so that His followers might see the price of unity; His death. Jesus' servanthood was authentic in substance and reality. He made a deliberate decision to renounce the privileges of deity, limit Himself to a human body, and relinquish His position in heaven in order to become a servant on earth, even to the point of death. If the one person in history who ever had the right to assert His rights waived them, then Christians should do the same. To have the same mindset as Christ is a command. God's people make this happen. Unless they take definite action to consider Christ's example, they will fail to walk in humility with one another. Also, notice the phrases "being in very nature God" (verse 6) and "being found in appearance as a man" (verse 8). Jesus was fully divine and fully human.

- B. Work Out Your Salvation and Do Everything Without Grumbling (2:12-18)
1. Paul does not say, “Work for your salvation”; God has already worked to make salvation possible. The Christian’s role is to “work out” what God has worked in by cultivating the characteristics of a godly life. Such faithfulness will allow believers to shine...like stars in the sky. (Read “Tough Questions” from the Jeremiah Study Bible, page 1654.)
  2. We should avoid self-centered living and self-serving attitudes. Those who follow Christ must follow Him in selfless service to others. Paul was concerned that the Philippians demonstrate the reality of their Christian profession in action. Neither the grumbling so characteristic of Israel in the wilderness or the perversity of a world that does not know God should characterize the church. His desire for them and for himself was that he be able to rejoice that his labor on their behalf was not in vain.
  3. Verse 17 requires some explanation. After offering a sacrificial animal on the altar, a Jewish worshipper would often make an additional drink offering, pouring wine over the offered sacrifice. Because the altar was white-hot, the liquid created a puff of smoke that quickly disappeared. Paul compares his life to this less significant puff of smoke, while the faith of the Philippians is like the more important animal offering. (See similar passage in II Timothy 4:6.)
- C. Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul’s Desire to Return to Philippi (2:19-30)
1. In this section, Paul presents three human role models for believers to follow - not as a matter of ego but as these men pattern themselves after Christ. He sites himself as a model of selflessness (2:17-18), Timothy as a model of service (2:19-24), and Epaphroditus as a model of suffering (2:25-30).
  2. Paul mentions Timothy 24 times in his letters. No one was as dear to Paul as Timothy. Paul’s humility is seen as he describes his relationship with Timothy as a son working with him, not for him. With the use of this single word (with), Paul places their positions on equal level.
  3. Dr. David Jeremiah says, “Every Christian lives either in 1:21 or 2:21. Philippians 1:21 says, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Philippians 2:21 says, “For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. Paul lived as a 1:21 Christian.
  4. Notice Paul’s desire to return to Philippi in verse 24. It seems as if Paul expected his trial to come to a speedy end. There is no hint here of going on to Spain, as he had originally planned. (See Romans 15:23-24.) His long imprisonment seems to have changed his plans. The commonly held view is that he was acquitted, and then revisited Philippi and other churches in the East. (See I Timothy 1:3). He was later rearrested, brought back to Rome, and executed, some five years later.
  5. Philippians 2:25-30 explained to the church why Epaphroditus was returning to Philippi. The church had sent him to take a gift to Paul and minister to him in his imprisonment. Epaphroditus was a layman in the church at Philippi. Yet Paul refers to him as a fellow soldier, not just a brother and co-worker – for good cause since Epaphroditus had risked his life to minister to Paul. It is never enough to be a worker in the ministry; one must also learn to be a warrior. Christians should honor the unsung brothers and sisters in their midst who faithfully serve in the church. They are worthy of the hero’s welcome that Paul commends for Epaphroditus. The phrase “risked his life” in verse 30 translates a Greek word that means “to gamble or bet.” Epaphroditus, a sick man, gambles his very life to fulfill his service to God.

Sources:

1. The Jeremiah Study Bible” by Dr. David Jeremiah
2. “Halley’s Bible Handbook” by H.H. Halley
3. “Ultimate Bible Guide: A Complete Walk-Through of All 66 Books of the Bible” from Holman Reference

