

Home Group Leader's notes

Philippians 2:1-11

Some thoughts about studying Philippians

What a privilege it is to study God's Word. Unlike any generation before us, we have a plethora of resources to help us understand God's Word. Here are a few that help me to pause and marvel at God's revelation.

- I use Bible study software. There are many good ones. Mine is years old, but it still works very well to help me search, understand words, and cross referencing. (Mine is called "Bible Works" but "Logos" is better known.)
- Commentaries on books of the Bible. For this series, my favorite is a "Pillar New Testament Commentary" called *The letter to the Philippians* by C. Walter Hansen. I often read a commentary when I'm on vacation because it helps me take in the riches of a book of the Bible.
- Online tools. These would include "Soniclight.com," a commentary on every book of the Bible, "Biblegateway.com," an online Bible search tool.

Tips for this weeks look at Philippians 2:1-11

It is easy to slip into a law-driven burden rather than living "in Christ." Our human tendency is to see a 'to-do' list rather than keeping Jesus and His grace the focus of our lives. Here's what I mean.

- There is a central command in 1:27 concerning our conduct. Then chapter specifies what aspect of our conduct, specifically living out a united, humble, and valuing attitude toward one another.
- Paul is calling us to live a new selfless life, looking to the interests of others.
- We have a choice. We can make this a law, trying to fulfill it in our power.
- OR, we can marvel at the person of Christ who perfectly embodied love, sacrifice, humility, and saw God glorified in every way. We can walk through life with the beauty of Jesus in our hearts and minds, seeking to trust in Him to continue His legacy of loving and serving others to the glory of God.

If you do nothing else this week, spend time together, delighting in Christ Jesus. These 111 words are precious. Perhaps read it together, praising God in whatever

form works in your group. (For example, pray, listen to a song or hymn, sing together, meditate, etc.)

My thoughts on this week's questions:

Learn from the Bible

Read Philippians 1:27 then 2:1-11.

This letter was written to people suffering from persecution. What "conduct" is Paul addressing? How is this essential to life in God's family? (1:27-2:4)

- Paul is calling them to a Christ-like attitude that results in oneness in the face of suffering.
- Suffering and opposition can fracture our fellowship and disable us from being able to "stand firm" in times of trial.
- Paul repeatedly addresses our attitude, mindset, way of thinking to be like Christ who humbled Himself and sacrificed for us.

List the directives Paul gives them (and us). Knowing that the "if" statements (v.1) are really "since" or "because," how do these factor into the directives? What is the big idea of these commands? (1-5)

- The "if" statements are grammatically "since" or "because." So Paul when wrote, "If you have . . .," this means, 'and you have' or 'since you have.'
- This would mean that the encouragement, comfort, Spirit, compassion that we have received is our inspiration and motivation for shaping our mindset to then value and care for one another.

To Christ-followers, 2:5-11 is precious and powerful. It summarizes the selfless character and actions of God. Write a brief summary of this grand passage.

- This is about Christ Jesus (i.e. Messiah Jesus, the anointed one of God)
- "He did not empty himself of his divinity, . . . but he did empty himself of his divine rights and cloaked his divine glory by becoming a human in the form of a slave." (above, Hansen, p. 151)
- He humbled Himself and was obedient to death
- God, the Father, exalted Him to the highest place
- All will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord of all
- All of this will glorify God the Father

Remember that the key command is, "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus."

Discuss Together

In this passage, "mindset" is repeatedly addressed. What mindset are we to hold? Why is this so essential to life in God's family? How does this get expressed?

- Throughout the book of Philippians is a motif of the mindset / attitude of Christ Jesus that should grow into as our own.
- This mindset is that of a humble servant filled with compassion and love.
- This gets expressed by looking to the concerns and / or good examples of others.

Agree or disagree: Without “humility” we cannot follow Jesus. Why is “humility” so hard for us? (3)

- Throughout the Bible, humility is the most necessary character quality.
- This is true in our relationship with God and one another.
- “Hard for us” is an understatement. Pride is the root of sin. Pride elevates oneself above God and others.
- Humility recognizes God as God.
- Our sin nature operates in direct opposition to humility.
- Our identity and worth/significance is threatened by humility.
- The key is to recognize our identity in Christ. He has made us his own, His family, our identity. The Holy Spirit lives in us, we are His forever.

What does it look like to put the well being of others ahead of your own? What helps you do this? What hinders?

- This question is difficult because no one wants to say, ‘this is how I am humble’!
- Perhaps it is easier to say, ‘How have you seen others put your well-being ahead of their own.’

May our Father help your love abound more in knowledge of insight to the glory and praise of God.

Steve