



# Sunday School Member's Guide

Winter 2021-2022  
Second Baptist Church



## Lesson Schedule:

December 5, 2021.....	The Recipe for Joy
December 12, 2021.....	Godly Joy
December 19, 2021.....	The Most Important Thing
December 26, 2021.....	Living in Christ
January 2, 2022.....	Rejecting Selfishness
January 9, 2022.....	The Way to Unity
January 16, 2022.....	Growing in Christ
January 23, 2022.....	A True Leader
January 30, 2022.....	What Really Matters
February 6, 2022.....	Joy in Grace
February 13, 2022.....	Who We Follow
February 20, 2022.....	Rejoice in the Lord
February 27, 2022.....	Partnering for God's Glory



# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION ONE: THE RECIPE FOR JOY

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-8

12/5/2021

## MAIN POINT

Regardless of circumstances, joy in Christ is possible.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**When is a time you remember being completely happy? What circumstances surrounded that feeling?**

**When was a time you experienced joy, even though your circumstances weren't difficult? How was this possible?**

Depression, anxiety, and worry are familiar to many today. You would be hard-pressed to find someone who has not battled with these feelings on some level. Often times it is the circumstances of life that cause one to feel defeated and overwhelmed. The writer of Philippians, Paul, found himself in dire circumstances as he penned the words of this book. He was imprisoned in Rome, possibly facing execution. We are able to see a few ingredients Paul used to keep his focus on the joy of Christ.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:1-4.

**How has joy been difficult for you in this season? How is joy difficult when your circumstances are challenging?**

**Is prayer your first instinct when you are in a difficult season? What about thankfulness? What makes these difficult in hard times?**

Looking around at all the darkness, division, and despair in our world, joy can feel like a far-fetched novelty. Everyone has experienced loss and grief to some degree or another in the last year. Many circumstances have been far from ideal. We have seen great suffering and social unrest stay at the forefront of our lives. Is joy even in the cards? Or is it something we have to wait for when "everything settles down"?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:5-6.

**How do the “unfinished” parts of your story make it difficult to have joy?**

**Where can you find joy even in the unknown and unfinished?**

Paul had many reasons to be thankful for what God had done in and through the Philippian believers. Namely, he rejoiced over the ways they had partnered with him in his efforts to spread the gospel. From the very beginning, they had been on board to speak the good news to those in darkness. Even though Paul couldn't see what the future held for them, he had joy because of his confidence in Christ. Only Christ could complete the work that had begun in them and sustain their efforts in the gospel.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:7-8.**

**How did Paul's affection for the Philippian believers demonstrate Christ-like love? How can the church learn from him?**

**Who has God given you special Christian affection for in your life? How might you demonstrate this to that person or people?**

Paul did not withhold his affection for his Philippian brothers and sisters. He loved them dearly. They had partnered with him from the very beginning and had faithfully walked with him since. As he was isolated, alone, and imprisoned, he deeply desired to be back with his first flock. They had never abandoned him or turned aside. Even when he was put in chains, they continued the work of the gospel for which Paul suffered.

Even in the darkest of times and in the mundane of our day-to-day lives, joy is possible in Christ. Paul demonstrated that the ingredients for true joy aren't found in our outward circumstances but in our trust in Christ. With thanksgiving and prayer, Paul could rejoice in his partners in the gospel and his affection for them. Even while he was imprisoned and separated from his fellow believers, Paul had deep, abiding joy. As followers of Jesus, we can take heart that joy is ours, even if our circumstances are not as we want them to be.

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Where are you struggling to experience joy in this season of your life? Where can you begin with thankfulness and prayer?**

**How has the Lord provided fellow believers in your life to partner with you in kingdom work?**

**Where do you need to be reminded of God's faithfulness in the midst of unfinished work? How is this connected to sharing the gospel with others?**

## **PRAYER**

Acknowledge before the Lord the ways you are struggling to experience joy in your life. Ask Him to renew your joy in Christ, even if your circumstances are difficult. Ask Him for eyes to see the things that you can be grateful for. Celebrate the co-laborers in your life whom God has provided alongside you.





# Second Baptist Church

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# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION TWO: GODLY JOY

PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11

12/12/2021

## MAIN POINT

There is great joy found in growing with Christ and walking in righteousness.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What is an area of your life where you are disciplined? Where is an area you are undisciplined?**

**Do you have to work at the area where you are disciplined, or does it come more naturally? Why do you find it worth pursuing discipline in this area?**

As we consider new year resolutions, they most often revolve around weight loss, eliminating bad habits, and readjusting our lives for time management purposes. Yet, if we are to experience biblical joy, we must discipline ourselves to grow in godliness. In this, we are not promoting a works salvation but a salvation that desires to grow closer to Christ. This is the only type of salvation that we see in God's Word. In this section of Philippians, Paul spoke of growing in love, excellence, integrity and good works for the glory of God. The supreme objective and result of the life of godly love, excellence, integrity, and good works is to manifest the glory and praise of God.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:19.

**How did Paul's hope for the Philippians shape his prayers for them? Why might he connect growing in love with knowledge and discernment?**

**What can we learn from Paul's prayer about God's character?**

Paul knew where true joy came from; therefore, he knew how to pray for his fellow believers to experience it too. He knew that only when they were growing in Christlikeness would they experience the joy that leads to the praise and glory of God.

Paul boldly prayed for an abundance of love through knowledge and discernment. He wasn't asking for just the right amount or enough to get by. His prayer was that the

Philippians' love would be overflowing—more than they had the capacity for themselves. Oftentimes, we operate out of a mentality of scarcity. Because we don't get to dictate the terms of increased love and knowledge, perhaps we fear the "more and more." Yet, we have a God who gives more than enough, more than we can imagine, and more than we can create with our own two hands.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:10.**

**How do we pursue excellence and integrity as Christians?**

**How do we allow the Lord to sanctify us in these areas?**

This growth of godly love, however, isn't just for us. With increased growth in godliness, believers have more opportunities to demonstrate His love to others. In seeing excellence, we can pursue it. With integrity, we can be ever-ready for Christ's return.

According to these verses, being pure and blameless comes as a result of love. Love abounds with knowledge and discernment, giving believers the ability to test and weigh what is best and walk in that. When our actions are a response to Christ's love within us, purity and blamelessness are the result.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:11.**

**How can we grow in godliness and bear good fruit without seeking to earn God's favor through our work?**

**How have you experienced the reality that spiritual growth will inevitably produce good works?**

The end of Paul's prayer reminds us what all of our lives should point toward: the glory of God. We won't experience true, biblical joy if we aren't living for the sake of God's glory and not our own.

Following Jesus means that we are called to live out our salvation in Him. We did not earn this or acquire it, but we live in response to the salvation we have in Him. James also reminded us that faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:17). Our lives should be filled with good works and good fruit that God has grown. This is how we walk in a manner that is pleasing to God (Col. 1:10). But such fruit only grows as we are abiding in Christ. When we remain in Him and walk with Him, responding daily to the movement of His Spirit in our lives, then good fruit will fill our lives, just as Paul prayed for the Philippians.

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Where do you need God's love to abound more and more in you?  
Where do you need the kind of knowledge and discernment that  
only comes from Him?**

**What do spiritual disciplines currently look like for you in your  
walk with God?**

**How might God want to challenge you in a specific area of  
godliness?**

## **PRAYER**

Ask the Lord to search your heart and make known the areas where He wants to grow you in greater Christlikeness. Repent of the ways you have sought righteousness in your own power. Ask for Him to fill you with kingdom fruit that only He can grow.





# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION THREE: THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18

12/19/2021

## MAIN POINT

What matters most is that the kingdom of God continues to expand. This expansion makes joy possible even in the darkest of days.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**When was a time you had to push through difficulty to reach a goal?**

**Was the challenge worth it in the end? How does overcoming obstacles to a goal make reaching the goal more fulfilling?**

Paul suffered quite a bit. He had multiple near-death floggings, a gruesome stoning, frequent shipwrecks, a snake bite, and faced many dangers as he traveled. As he wrote to the Philippians, he found himself imprisoned in a dungeon. Yet, Paul was not intimidated and let the Philippians know that what had happened to him was all to advance the gospel. Talk about perspective! Having the proper perspective in life matters a great deal. For every person that is disgruntled about their food being cold, another is thankful to simply have a morsel to eat. For every person that complains of the rain, a farmer is thankful for God's provision. Paul kept in focus the sovereignty of God and the glorious truth of the gospel. Paul voiced an astonishing perspective: "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice" (v. 18). We should seek to focus on what matters most and that God gives us all a proper perspective surrounding the speed bumps of life. We can have joy, even when our circumstances are tough.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:12-14.**

**How did Paul reassure the Philippians? How was he encouraged about his imprisonment?**

**How does Paul's perspective challenge you in your own struggles?**

Having first prayed for them, Paul wanted to make sure that his beloved Philippian brothers and sisters were well-informed about his status. They were separated in body, but they were connected in spirit. All they knew was that he was imprisoned for

preaching the gospel. Certainly, they were worried about his well-being, wondering if he would return to them at some point.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:15-17.

**What might have led some to preach the truth out of envy and rivalry?**

**How might we also have wrong motives for sharing the gospel?**

Even though some were encouraged in their boldness, not everyone had pure motives in spreading the gospel. Some were true believers and spoke with the best of intentions. They truly wanted to see the gospel go forth and see others choose to follow Christ with their lives. Seeing Paul's commitment encouraged them to continue in obedience, no matter what harm came their way. They understood the bigger picture—Paul's chains weren't punishment, but a catalyst for the gospel.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:18.

**When have you had a difficult experience that God used for a greater good?**

**How have you experienced joy in unlikely circumstances because of Christ?**

It was simple. One thing mattered to Paul: that the gospel was going forward. Whether from wrong motives or a jail cell, the thing that mattered most to him was that people were hearing the message of Jesus. If that was happening, he could be joyful even though his circumstances were tragic, even if he was separated from his spiritual family, and even if things never got better for him.

Paul was imprisoned for his efforts to spread the gospel. Yet the very thing some believed would thwart God's Word going forward was actually serving to spread the gospel more quickly. Paul could endure every hardship (and he had many) if it meant that the kingdom was being advanced. His joy wasn't determined by his circumstances, but on God working at every step. It was the joy set before Jesus that led him to the cross, and it is the joy that awaits us that leads us through suffering. We can face any hardship if we continue to remember what matters most.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How does your life point to something greater as Paul's did? Do your words and your actions—despite painful circumstances—point to Christ in you?**

**Is joy something you seek in your circumstances or the lens through which you see your circumstances? Explain.**

**What do you see as a threat to God's will in your life that might actually serve to fulfill His will?**

## **PRAYER**

Take some time to reflect on your own struggles and difficult seasons. Reflect on the times you may have doubted God because of your circumstances. Thank God for continuing to work in and through you. Ask Him for eyes to see the kingdom more than your own circumstances.



# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION FOUR: LIVING IN CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 1:19-30

12/26/2021

## MAIN POINT

True living is the power of Christ in us, and dying is never defeat for those in Christ Jesus.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What would you say you live for? What drives and motivates you?**

**How does your life give evidence (or lack thereof) for your answer to this question?**

Paul knew that defeat was not defeat to the Christian. For the believer, death is a graduation and a blessing in many respects. However, Paul made clear that to live is to live for the glory of God alone. He said it so simply, yet with profound impact, "To Live is Christ." Paul knew that God wanted him to be fruitful, and living for Christ is to live a life of fruitfulness. If Paul lived it would be a life lived to impact the world around him to the glory of God. This was difficult for Paul because he knew that death would be a step up and a reprieve from life's toils and snares, but he also desired to minister to the Philippian believers. Paul focused on letting his conduct and his encouragement of others be worthy of the gospel of Christ. As we live our lives, may they be lived in a way that is worthy of the gospel of Christ.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:19-21.**

**How could Paul remain hopeful in such dire circumstances?**

**How could he truly believe in life that was more powerful than death?**

**What keeps you from being able to echo Paul's heart in verse 21?**

**What are the things in this life that you want to hold onto the most?**

Paul's circumstances did not scare him. He was imprisoned and far away from his Philippian brothers and sisters. He had no idea what the outcome would be. He had no idea if he would walk out of there alive or spend the rest of his days in chains. Yet, Paul

wasn't worried about death because he knew the power of the resurrection. He knew that death could not have the final say over his life or ministry. He fully anticipated his deliverance, but he knew that whatever the outcome, he would be pointing to Jesus.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:22-26.**

**How do these verses reflect the tension Paul experienced?**

**How have you experienced the tension between a desire to be with Jesus in heaven and to serve Him in your life now?**

Even though Paul knew the greater prize—eternity with Christ—he was torn. His words indicated the tension he felt over whether it was better to live or die. He was hard pressed, feeling the weight on either side. He longed for nothing more than to meet Jesus face to face, and ultimately wanted to be obedient to whatever God's will would be. He wanted to do whatever would bring Christ the most glory. But he was also eager to continue ministering with his brothers and sisters on earth.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30.**

**How do we strive for the same kind of unity that Paul encouraged?**

**How do we live our day-to-day lives worthy of the gospel?**

Regardless of what happened to Paul, his heart remained the same for the Philippians. He wanted them to continue to live their lives worthy of the gospel they believed. He wanted their lives to reflect Jesus. Even if Paul never joined them in person again, he could take joy in their unity and obedience.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What do you need to die to so that you may truly live in Christ?**

**What are the things in this life that you hold too tightly? Is there anything God might be calling you to relinquish in exchange for something more valuable?**

**What areas of your life don't reflect the gospel? What needs to change?**

## PRAYER

Take some time to confess the things outside of Christ on which you have a tight grip—achievements, relationships, possessions, or anything else. Repent of the ways you have held too tightly to the things of this world. Ask the Lord to give you a greater love for Christ, so that you will truly believe that to be with Him is your greatest hope.

# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION FIVE: REJECTING SELFISHNESS

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

1/2/2022

## MAIN POINT

Selfish ambition has no place in the church or the kingdom of God.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Can you think of a time when you participated in a team building exercise? What was that experience like?**

**How did it bring your group together? What challenges did you face?**

Disunity is the greatest danger a church can face, and whatever attacks the unity of the church should be a concern. When the unity of the church is attacked it can disrupt, weaken, and destroy a church by causing discord, disharmony, conflict, and division. Disunity in the church grieves the heart of God. It should be the prayer of every pastor, church leader, and church member that people will not tear apart what God has divinely joined together in the body of Christ. A divided, factious, and bickering church is a spiritually weak church. It is like a bag of marbles. They come in various colors and sizes and are all packed closely together in a container. If that container or bag is ripped open, the marbles spill out in many different directions. Nothing is holding them together. In our text today, Paul gave perhaps the most concise and practical teaching about unity in the New Testament.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-2.**

**What did Paul mean by instructing believers to be “of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord, and of one mind”? Where does this leave room for differences?**

**How have you seen this kind of unity pursued or broken in the church?**

Right from the start of the passage, we are reminded of the communal nature of Paul's message. Paul made very clear what a life truly changed by Christ should look like. In

essence, if we really are living worthy of the gospel (1:27), then unity will be a result among believers.

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:3.

**Where else in Scripture do we see examples of Christ's humility?**

**Where are you most inclined to try to get ahead—to disregard others while pursuing your own interests?**

This kind of unity that Paul emphasized will never be possible without humility. Of course, it isn't our nature to be humble. We come into this world selfish. We don't naturally like to sacrifice or give away when it costs us something. No one has to teach us to seek our own interests. We all have the particular places and corners of our lives where selfishness is our first stop. For us to live out these words of Scripture, we need something more powerful than our human nature. We need nothing short of the Holy Spirit within us.

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:4.

**How are you most likely to look out for your own interests above others?**

**When was a time you looked to the interests of others first or someone did this for you? How did God use this to bless you?**

All of us have areas in our lives where we are most selfish. Perhaps this is our finances—wanting to use our hard-earned money on what we want. Maybe it is time—with a busy schedule, we don't want to give away what little free time we have. Yet Christ's call to follow Him is also a call to deny ourselves. It isn't a call to follow at our earliest convenience, or a call to follow when it is in our favor. The call is simply to follow. And in order to follow at all times and in all circumstances, there is no room for selfish ambition. It will be a journey that daily requires us to die to ourselves.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Are there any ways that you are actively participating in spreading disunity with other believers? Have you been complicit in gossip, slander, or discord instead of striving for unity? What might healthy conflict look like?**

**In what areas of your life do you work hardest to impress or present yourself in a certain way? What insecurities are beneath your attempts to impress?**



**What are simple ways that you can demonstrate value to those around you? How can you consider other people further and, in humility, speak significance into their lives?**

## **PRAYER**

Take some time to reflect on and confess the ways that you have been prone to discord, pride, and selfishness. Ask the Lord to exchange those patterns of thought and deed for ones that reflect Him.



# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION SIX: THE WAY TO UNITY

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-13

1/9/2022

## MAIN POINT

Christ demonstrated by His ultimate obedience that unity is only possible through sacrifice.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Describe a time when you needed to follow someone else's example to get something done.**

**What did you gain by following someone else rather than trying to accomplish your goal on your own?**

Philippians 2:5-11 was written like a hymn for the early church. Paul poetically penned these words to stir the affections of the believers. He didn't want the beautiful description of the mind of Christ to be something only admired from a distance. Certainly, the believer is to be in awe of who Christ is, but the Christian is also to enter into and imitate the actions of Christ. The phrasing "let this mind" points toward something that we have a choice over. This is something that is granted to us in Christ, and it is something we must choose to walk in. Many in the church today refuse to pursue unity. That choice is based on selfish ambition and does not display the mind of Christ. As His church, we are to take to heart the example of Christ.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8.**

**Why do you think Paul chose a song to communicate his point to the Philippian believers?**

**What did Paul emphasize about Christ in verses 6-8?**

**As Christ emptied Himself for the sake of humanity, what does it look like for us to empty ourselves for His sake and for others? How does this inform our unity among believers?**

Paul knew it wasn't possible for believers to naturally live out the kind of unity he was talking about, certainly not by our own power and means. Paul once again pointed us to

Christ, so that we might see and walk in the manner He did. Most scholars agree verses 5-11 comprise a hymn—either an already known hymn, or one original to Paul.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11.**

**How do these words speak to our own pride and self-interest? How do they shift your perspective? What picture of the future does this paint?**

**How do these verses lead us to worship? Take a moment to pause and worship God now.**

In these words of majesty and power, we are reminded that everything Christ did was for the glory of God. Everything Jesus did in coming to earth, taking on the form of a man, living the life we could not, and dying the death we deserved was to glorify the Father. Every step of Jesus' obedience was to the praise and glory of God.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13.**

**What does it mean to “work out” our salvation? How do we do so with “fear and trembling”?**

**How do we work in light of Christ's work? How do we know if we are working instead to try to earn God's favor?**

**How does walking with Christ and working out our salvation lead to unity?**

It is in the light of Christ's own obedience that we respond. As we look at the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we walk in obedience with the same mind. Paul called us to work out the salvation that we have in Christ with fear and trembling.

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How should the words of this hymn shape how we interact with our fellow believers? How do you see our church demonstrating this same attitude of Christ?**

**In what ways do you struggle to give of yourself for the sake of others? How is Christ challenging you to live differently?**

**How will living humbly lead us to tell others about Jesus?**

## **PRAYER**

Take some time to simply praise God for the sacrifice of Jesus. As He gave Himself fully so that we might be united with God, ask Him to cultivate more deeply that spirit within you.

# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION SEVEN: GROWING IN CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 2:14-18

1/16/2022

## MAIN POINT

In Christ, we have everything we need, so we can reflect the joy and sacrifice that He first showed us.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What are some of your pet peeves? What are the things that get under your skin quicker than anything else?**

**How do you typically respond in these moments?**

All of us have things that frustrate us quickly. Whether our frustrations are big or small, we can be set off before we know it. We might find ourselves ranting and raving in traffic or muttering under our breath in the grocery store. Sadly, that same inclination can show up in our churches. When things don't go our way, we can be quick to complain and question instead of partnering with the Lord to see how He might be working. Paul called believers to walk in a way that looks different from the world. He called us to reflect the joy and sacrifice of Christ, regardless of our own struggles and frustrations.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:14-15.

**What are you quickest to complain and grumble about? Why do those things trigger a negative response in you?**

**How have you seen this play out in the church?**

**What reason did Paul give for not complaining and questioning?**

All of us want to have more joy in our lives, yet we often stand in our own way. Paul would remind believers that Christ has given us all we need, so we have no reason to spend our days griping and complaining.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:16.

**What would it have meant for the early Christians to "hold fast" to God's Word?**

## What does it mean for us today?

Paul knew there was only one way to prevent the Philippians from succumbing to the ways of the world. It was difficult to keep the faith when so many around them were against the gospel. They would have to hold onto God's Word like their lives depended on it--and their lives would depend on it.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:17-18.

**How was Paul's life a drink offering? How was the Philippians' faith a sacrificial offering?**

**Even if you don't find yourself near death or imprisoned, how can you live your life as a drink offering to the Lord on a daily basis?**

Of course, Paul was more than willing to give his life away for the sake of the gospel. That is exactly what he had done. He had given himself as a living sacrifice. Until his death, Paul lived as an act of worship.

If the Philippians' faith was bolstered because of Paul's sacrifice, then that was a sacrifice he was willing to make. Paul wrote these words from a Roman prison, so he was fully aware of the cost. He knew that death was a very real possibility (though he would be released to live a few more years). But if death had come at that time, Paul was willing to offer his very life for the sake of the gospel.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Where do you need to repent of your own inclination to complain and question? How do you question God's character and provision when circumstances get hard?**

**Do you cling to God's Word more than the things of this world? More than the word of other people? What evidence does your life give to support your answer?**

**How will living as one content in Christ give you opportunities to share the gospel with others?**

## PRAYER

Take some time to thank God instead of complaining. Thank Him for who He is and what He has done for you. Thank Him for the specific ways He has provided for you.

# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION EIGHT: A TRUE LEADER

PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

1/23/2022

## MAIN POINT

Even at his most vulnerable, Paul demonstrated the mark of true leadership in the way he raised up other leaders in his place.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Who are the leaders that have been most influential in your life?**

**What are some specific ways these individuals have impacted you?**

Every person is a leader. Leadership is influence, and all people influence someone. Every Christian should seek to be a selfless leader. Part of being a selfless leader is showing that you value those you lead. Paul made clear his value of Timothy and Epaphroditus. How are we communicating value to the people in our lives?

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:19-24.

**How did Paul's affirmation of Timothy demonstrate discipleship for the Philippians back home? For us?**

**Who has caused a profound change in your life?**

**Who has been a "Paul" for you? Have you been faithful to raise up a "Timothy"? Explain.**

While Paul was imprisoned, he was eager to get back to his beloved Philippian brothers and sisters. Despite his circumstances, he wanted to do all he could to continue to care for them, even from afar. If he couldn't go to them in person, he would send someone in his place. Paul desired to send more than a written update; he also wanted to send someone that he loved and trusted. Timothy was like a son to Paul (1 Tim. 1:2), and he trusted Timothy implicitly to carry on the ministry in his stead.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:25-28.

**What role did Epaphroditus serve, both to Paul and to the other Philippian believers?**

**What are some roles in our church that may not get much attention but are vitally important?**

Paul was eager to send Timothy to the Philippians to give an update on Paul's status. He didn't want them to keep waiting in uncertainty and anxiety. But he didn't want to send Timothy until he had news of what was in store for him. So, in the meantime he would send Epaphroditus to the believers in Philippi.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:29-30.

**What keeps us from receiving God's provisions with joy?**

**How did Epaphroditus live out what Paul taught earlier in Philippians 2?**

Because they were human, Paul knew the Philippians might have any number of reactions to Epaphroditus's return. Perhaps they were anxious that he had taken longer than necessary or upset that his sickness had become a burden to others. They might bombard him with questions for which he didn't have answers. Paul reminded them to receive him with joy and to give him the honor due.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Who has been a living and breathing example of Christlikeness in your life? Who has demonstrated the principles of a gospel-worthy life that Paul described?**

**How might God be calling you to step up and step out in the kingdom—maybe in a way that is outside of your comfort zone? Or perhaps in way that serves others, but doesn't feel "significant"?**

**What do you need to receive with joy? Is there any area in which you need God to shift your perspective so you can receive from Him with joy?**

## PRAYER

Take some time to thank God for the good leaders in your life. Thank him for the ways these people showed you more of Jesus. If you don't currently have someone you are investing in, ask the Lord to give you awareness and opportunity.



# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION NINE: WHAT REALLY MATTERS

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

1/30/2022

## MAIN POINT

Nothing compares to the surpassing worth of Christ.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What have you intentionally chosen to give up in your life? What caused you to make this decision?**

**How did giving up this thing change the way you related to it?**

We don't love giving up things that are comfortable and familiar. These are likely things we've come to rely on or that may have even shaped our identity. Yet, by choice or by force, we have all likely had some experience when we had to give up something we had come to depend on. Maybe this was coffee or sweets. Perhaps you gave up social media for a time. Maybe this was something you loved but had to leave behind like a favorite sport or a dream. In these times, we are often given fresh perspective to see the places where we have wrongly placed too much value. When we make a change in these areas, we have the opportunity to see the greater value we have in Christ.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 3:1-3.**

**Who were the dogs to which Paul referred? Why were the Philippians to steer clear of them?**

**Who might these people be in the world today?**

In light of everything Paul had told the Philippians thus far in his letter—regarding what it meant to live a gospel-worthy life that reflects the person and work of Christ—he also wanted to make sure they weren't drawn away by false teachers. Paul acknowledged that what he was about to tell them was not new but served as a reminder. Yet, it was no trouble for him to circle back to an important truth.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 3:4-6.**

**Why did Paul spend time listing all of his “qualifications”?**

**What are the ways that we are tempted to hold up our own religious or moral “resumes” to God?**

**Where are you currently putting confidence in your flesh instead of Christ?**

The false teachers Paul warned the Philippians about were most concerned with outward appearances. This is a clear way for Satan to get a foothold among believers. We believe the lie that as long as we appear religious or put together or moral enough, then God will be pleased with us.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 3:7-11.**

**How do we get to the place that Paul did—willing to consider everything worthless for the sake of Christ?**

**How is what we receive from Christ exponentially better than anything we can bring to God?**

Everything Paul could hold up as a status, accomplishment, or means of earning before God was ultimately worthless. Paul counted those things as loss when Christ took hold of his life. Everything he had accrued as gain in his life became nothing compared to Jesus. He found something of far greater value than all that once defined him.

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What achievements on your religious resume do take the most pride in? Are you more inclined to value the good things you have done or the bad things you have “successfully” avoided?**

**How can you move from boasting in what you have done to boasting in what Christ has done for you?**

**What do you need to give up to receive what God has given as a gift?**

## **PRAYER**

Take time to reflect on and confess the ways you have depended on your own righteousness to earn favor with God. Confess the ways you have put more value in the things of this world than Christ. Ask the Lord to highlight the things you need to surrender, so He might give you something far more valuable.

# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION TEN: JOY IN GRACE

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-16

2/6/2022

## MAIN POINT

Only by grace—not our own striving—will we reach Christ, our true prize and treasure.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What goal have you worked hard to achieve—something you worked toward over many years?**

**What was the result of your efforts? What might you do differently if you were to do this again?**

Maybe your goal was a T-ball trophy or a prize at a carnival game. Perhaps it was something more difficult, like becoming class valedictorian or winning the championship in your sport. Even as adults, we work for years in our careers or areas of interest. Even when we reach our goal, we may look back and see areas where we could have done better; We could have put in a few extra hours or worked a little bit harder. No matter our goal, it seems like perfection continually feels out of reach. Paul reminded us of a similar spiritual reality and the freedom we find in Christ.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 3:12.

**How might the Philippians have been operating as if they were able to be perfect on their own?**

**When do we live the same way? What does the idea of achieving perfection on our own say about our view of God and of ourselves?**

Paul kept eternity on the horizon. At every step, he wanted nothing more than to be with Christ and to experience resurrection in Christ. (See Phil. 1:23.) Yet, as he encouraged the Philippians to also keep an eternal mindset, he didn't want any of them to get the notion that perfection was within their power. Perhaps there was false teaching circulating about such ideas. Regardless, Paul wanted to encourage his brothers and sisters in Christ to partner with the Spirit at work within them—but not for the goal of perfection in the flesh.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14.

**What was the goal and prize that Paul had in focus?**

**Why might Paul have emphasized forgetting what lay behind him?**

**What does that mean for us and how we view our own past?**

In these verses, Paul once again acknowledged his own imperfection. Even as he walked toward Christ, he was still very much "in-process." However, there was a key piece for Paul's ability to press on toward eternity with Christ: his focus. He had to leave the past in the past. He had to stop turning around and simply look forward toward the prize.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 3:15-16.

**What does the maturity Paul described in these verses look like for believers?**

**What does it look like you to "hold true to what [you] have attained"?**

The mark of a mature believer is not in our trying to attain perfection but living in light of Christ's perfection. The Judaizers that Paul criticized in 3:1-11 put too much weight in what they could attain in the flesh. But striving for perfection and maturity are not the same things. There has not been nor will there ever be a moment that any of us "arrive." Only by the grace and kindness of God in Christ will we experience growth as we go.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Whose power do you rely on in your pursuit of Christ and the disciplines of the faith? How might God be challenging your perspective in this area?**

**What in your past keeps you from straining toward Christ? When are you tempted to look around or behind you?**

**How will our continual pressing on toward Christ lead us to share our faith with others?**

## PRAYER

Ask the Lord to free you up from striving and straining toward a goal of human perfection. Pray that He would empower you and grow you as you seek Him each and every day.

# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION ELEVEN: WHO WE FOLLOW

PHILIPPIANS 3:17-21

2/13/2022

## MAIN POINT

The leaders we follow shape how we follow Jesus.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Who is someone you looked up to as a kid or a teenager?**

**What made you want to follow or be like this person? How did that shape you as a young person?**

We all look up to someone. As kids, we may look up to a sibling, a coach, or even a famous person. As we grow, it may be that we look up to someone who is only a few steps ahead of us. Regardless, we all have voices we listen to, and those voices influence how we live. Hopefully, we have the gift of a mentor or leader who shows us how to walk with Jesus along the way. That is what Paul offered the Philippians—his own life as a living example of how to follow Jesus.

Who has influence over your life? We live in a time where many use the power of celebrity and platform, seeking to influence others in the world. Whose voice are you listening to? Paul understood the power of others' influence in our Christian walk. For this reason, Paul exhorted believers to follow the right example.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 3:17.**

**Why do you think Paul wanted the Philippians to imitate him? Was this arrogant of him? Explain.**

**Who in your life has been a living example as they follow Jesus? How have you been encouraged or shaped by their example?**

There were many teachers vying for the Philippians' attention. Paul continued to warn the Christians about believing false doctrines and false gospels (3:2-3). Instead, Paul invited them to imitate him—to look at the way that he followed Christ so that they might have a living example.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 3:18-19.

**How did the group that Paul described walk as enemies of the cross?**

**What kind of behavior were they known for?**

**Paul said this group gloried in their shame and set their minds on earthly things. What does Jesus call us to instead?**

One of the reasons Paul offered his own life as an example was to keep the Philippians from following the wrong people. There were some who lived their lives in opposition to the cross of Christ, and Paul wanted to guard believers from falling into their trap.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21.

**Why was it important for Paul to remind these believers of their citizenship?**

**How does our view of eternity inform our daily living here and now?**

The longer our eyes are fixed on the things of this world, the easier it becomes to believe this is our home. Temporary things start to hold more value than they should. But as Paul reminded the Philippians, this world is not the Christians' home; our citizenship is in heaven.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Who in your life follows Jesus in a way you want to imitate? How can you learn from them as they learn from Jesus?**

**How would it change your relationships in the church if you accepted that you don't have to be perfect but that you are called to be faithful and persistent in your pursuit of Jesus?**

**How might living as one who follows Jesus and daily displaying your great need for Him help others to see the truth about Him?**

## PRAYER

Take time to thank God for the people who have pointed you to Jesus with their lives. Thank Him for giving you models to imitate. Ask Him for more of these examples and to show you who you might also invite to follow you.

# Second Baptist Church

REJOICE IN THE LORD

REJOICE IN THE LORD

PHILIPPIANS 4:2-9

2/27/2022

## MAIN POINT

As Christians, we are to rejoice in the Lord in all circumstances and dwell on only the things that honor Him.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What is one instance in the last week when you felt a sense of conflict? What is your gut reaction when conflicts arise? Why?**

Paul exhorted the Philippian believers to maintain their commitment to Christ (Phil. 4:1). Then he turned to what perhaps was a primary concern of his letter: a disagreement between two women in the church that threatened to become divisive. Paul urged them to settle their differences and asked an unidentified church member to help.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:2-3.

**How did Paul advise the Philippians to deal with conflict and disagreement? Why is dealing with it necessary?**

**What are the implications of Paul's advice for us today in our conflict situations?**

**In 4:7 and 4:9, Paul mentioned God's promise of peace for His children. What impact does a relational conflict, like the one mentioned in these verses, have on your pursuit of peace?**

**How does a disagreement between brothers and sisters in Christ affect the church as a whole?**

When we experience conflict with other believers, we need to recall our common bond in the Lord and depend on that relationship to help us find agreement. When disagreements remain unresolved, believers become distracted and divert resources and energy away from honoring God and doing His work. Paul contrasted the issues of

conflict with the encouragement to pursue a series of characteristics that are essential to Christian living, all of which build to his promise of peace.

HAVE ANOTHER VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7.

**What disciplines does Paul challenge the Philippian Christians to pursue in this set of verses? Which do you think you need to pursue the most? The least?**

**What does it mean to “rejoice” in the Lord (v. 4)? What is the distinction between joy and happiness?**

**How do you rejoice in the Lord always?**

Paul’s exhortation that his friends rejoice in the Lord always emphasized that in all their circumstances, they were to celebrate being held securely in God’s grace. Their union with Christ enabled them to rejoice even in difficult and threatening situations.

**On what are we focusing when we are grumbling or anxious? What does Paul say to do to relieve worry or stress?**

**How can praising God and choosing to be thankful help with worry?**

Worry is a major part of every person’s life. Whether a problem is big or small, it’s easy to dwell on it until it begins to control us. Paul urges us to stop worrying. We should not worry about anything, but instead pray to the Lord with thankful hearts. We are to give Him our worry and allow the powerful peace of Christ to guard our hearts and minds.

HAVE A FINAL VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9.

**Why does it matter what we think about? How does what you think about affect how you feel? How does it affect your relationship with God?**

**According to verse 8, what kinds of things are we supposed to dwell on or think about?**

**How do you react to reading the eight virtues Paul urges us to practice? Which virtue(s) do you think would be most beneficial for you to dwell on? Why?**

Verse 8 describes the kind of thoughts a believer in Christ should have. As Christians, we should be filling our minds with what is pleasing to the Lord. The world bombards us with ungodly messages. We must be willing and able to filter these messages and keep them from our thoughts. To dwell means to meditate or chew on something. It’s important to keep the broken ideas of the world from becoming what we dwell on. The things we think most about easily translate into our words and actions.

**What was the assurance Paul provided for the Philippian believers when they did what they learned (v. 9)?**



As the believers at Philippi lifted their needs to God in thanksgiving, dwelt on everything that was noble and good, and acted on what they had received from Paul and seen in his example, the God of peace was with them. Earlier Paul said God's peace would guard them (v. 7). Now he said the God of peace Himself would be with them.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Which of these challenges do you find it most difficult to actually live out: living at peace with others, rejoicing in the Lord always, not worrying, or thinking most about what honors God? Why is that one the most difficult for you?**

**How have you experienced the peace that comes with loving God and living your life as an act of worship? What difference does God's peace make in your daily life?**

**From this study, what is one area of spiritual growth in which you want to see significant progress? What is your next step in that area?**

**How can you adjust your focus or schedule this week so that you can more consistently dwell on God?**

## PRAYER

Use Philippians 4:6 as a guide to close with prayer. Lead a time of reflective, silent prayer, divided up into the categories of prayer Paul mentioned—praise, petition, and thanksgiving.



# Second Baptist Church

PHILIPPIANS

SESSION THIRTEEN: PARTNERING FOR GOD'S GLORY

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23

2/27/2022

## MAIN POINT

Partnering with God means stewarding His resources well.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What are some ways you have received help or provision from someone else?**

**How do you feel when receiving help from others? Would you rather help or be helped? Why?**

The effect of poor financial stewardship is immediately apparent in church ministries. Though we know the Lord is not dependent on us and can accomplish His goals without us, He has chosen to use us. Financial support of ministry is a delicate topic. Scripture says much about money, including the duty of pastors to teach their people to manage it well. But how does a pastor talk about stewardship without leaving the wrong impression? This text gives us a helpful perspective for pastors, members, and money.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:10-13.

**When are you most likely to base your joy on your circumstances?  
Where might the Lord be offering you His joy in the midst of struggle?**

**What would have to shift in your perspective and priorities to be able to echo Paul's attitude?**

Paul was full of joy because of how his Philippian brothers and sisters continued to express their concern for him. Even from far away, they wanted to help Paul. Even though joy wasn't found in what they had to give him, he loved their concern for him. He had joy, even while he sat in prison far away from the people he loved. Paul reminds us of the kind of joy that comes regardless of our outward circumstances.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:14-20.

**How had the Philippians demonstrated their love and faithfulness by their actions?**

**How did the Philippians' generosity serve Paul and the kingdom?**

**What can we learn from the Philippians about stewardship in the church?**

Paul found further contentment in suffering because he knew he wasn't alone. The Philippian congregation shared in the fellowship of his suffering. More than once, they had provided for Paul's needs, helping to financially support him. Epaphroditus had brought some kind of resources when he made the journey to Paul.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:21-23.**

**What are some ways you've recognized unexpected blessings that have come out of times of hardship?**

**What are some ways your giving has contributed to an unexpected blessing?**

Paul greeted the Philippians as saints, as he always did. Even by his greeting, he reminded them of their identity in Christ. A saint is literally a "holy one." The Philippians—like all followers of Christ—were set apart as holy ones of God because of Christ. He reminded them that they were family—brothers and sisters in the faith. Even the prison guards of Caesar's house sent their greetings because many had come to follow Christ while Paul was imprisoned there (Phil. 1:12-13).

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Where do you need the Lord's help to be content, despite current circumstances? Where do you need the joy that only He can give?**

**What do you think that contentment looks like in your own life?**

**Where do you currently have opportunity to share the burdens of the body of Christ? How will you respond?**

## **PRAYER**

Ask the Lord to lift your eyes above your circumstances. Ask Him for eyes that seek and find joy in Him, even when your conditions aren't as you'd wish. Take some time to acknowledge and praise the Lord for His provision in different seasons.