



Philippians Reading Plan

CHAPTER 1-4

Philippians

Day 1: 1:1-11

Read 1:1-11 slowly. A second reading in another translation would be helpful. Look for repetition and for Paul's overall train of thought.

1. Who is Paul writing this letter to and what is his purpose for writing it?
2. How often do you remember other Christians and thank God for them? How could you act as a partner with other Christians in God's service?
3. What does Paul mean when he says, "God will carry this work on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6)?
4. Gratitude for the Philippians' partnership leads Paul to the prayer of 1:9-11. What does he ask God for?
5. Why are purity and blamelessness crucial Christian traits (see 1:10)?
6. What sort of fruit result from your salvation (see 1:11)?
7. Read back over 1:1-11, try to summarize this passage in a sentence.

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Day 2: 1:12-26

Read imagining the eagerness the Philippians might have felt for news from Paul. Think about how remarkable Paul's attitudes are.

1. What is Paul talking about in this passage?
2. How does Paul feel about his circumstances (see 1:18)?
3. He feels this way because his circumstances are serving to advance the gospel (see 1:12-18). How has his imprisonment affected . . . other Christians in Rome (see 1:14-18)? the pagans in the palace guard, and others (see 1:13)?
4. Why is Paul unconcerned about the selfishness of those who preach Christ to make trouble for Paul (see 1:17-18)?
5. How does Paul show what he means by "to me, to live is Christ" (1:21)?
6. What did you learn in 1:12-26 about God and Jesus?
7. How can these verses be applied to your life today?

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Day 3: 1:27-2:4

1. The Philippians were experiencing opposition from the pagans in their city (see 1:28). What kind of response to this opposition was worthy of their citizenship in Christ's kingdom (see 1:27-30)?
2. What reasons does Paul give for promoting the gospel fearlessly (see 1:27-30)?
3. In 2:1-2, Paul calls the Philippians to reflect on the blessings of their common life in Christ. a. What are these four blessings (see 2:1)? b. In what four ways should we respond because of our common experience as Christians (see 2:2)?
4. How could you increasingly adopt the attitude that suffering for Christ is a privilege that has been "granted to you" (1:29)? How does this attitude apply to your current circumstances?
5. How have you experienced one of the blessings in 2:1? (For instance, what encouragement from Christ have you received? Or, how has God's love comforted you?)
6. In your own words, describe one of the desirable attitudes in 2:2-4 that does not come naturally to you.

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Day 4: 2:5-11

Read 2:5-11 with a fresh sense of wonder at what God has done. Look at several translations

1. What is the connection between 2:5-11 and 1:27-2:4?
2. Though Jesus had the right to be treated as God, what was His mindset toward His rights (see 2:6)?
3. What might Paul mean by saying that Jesus took the form or nature of a servant (see 2:7)?
4. What was Jesus' ultimate humiliation (see 2:8)?
5. Why is it important to understand that Christ is fully human and fully divine? Why was Jesus willing to be thoroughly humiliated? In what specific ways is this an example you can apply to your life?
6. Philippians 2:6-8 tells what Jesus chose to do in obedience to His Father's will. What did the Father do in response (see 2:9-11)?
7. Take some time to meditate on 2:5-11. What aspect of Jesus' mindset or attitude would you like to exercise this week? In what specific ways can you do this?

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Day 5: 2:12-16

1. What does 2:12-13 have to do with 2:1-11? (The word therefore is a clue.)
2. How does 2:14-16 further illuminate your understanding of 2:12-13?
3. What does God empower us to will and to do (see 2:13)?
4. How has God worked in you to will and to act according to His good purpose?
5. Restate 2:13 in your own words.
6. What reasons does Paul give for doing everything without grumbling or arguing (see 2:14-16)?
7. What attributes of God do we fail to acknowledge when we grumble or argue? What should we do instead when we don't like what is happening?
8. How does not having a grumbling attitude help a person become blameless (see 2:14-15)? How can you shine as a light and hold out the word of life during the coming week?

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Day 6: 2:17-30

1. What is the main sacrifice Paul mentions in 2:17? Paul saw his own suffering and death as secondary to the main sacrifice (see 2:17). How is this attitude a model for us?
2. How was it possible for Paul to be joyful while imprisoned and facing possible death (see 2:17)?
3. Compare 2:20-22 to 2:2-4. How does Timothy show the behavior Paul wants the Philippians to have?
4. Does Paul imply in 2:26-30 that a Christian should expect perfect health if he is obeying and believing in Jesus? Why or why not?
5. What do “fellow worker” and “fellow soldier” mean (see 2:25)? Does 2:25,29 suggest any responsibilities you have toward missionaries you or your church support?
6. Do the circumstances in your life right now offer you the opportunity to reflect Epaphroditus’s qualities in any way? If so, how?

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Day 7: 3:1-11

As you read 3:1-11, try to identify the kinds of errors Paul was refuting. Ask God to show you how a Christian might make similar errors today.

1. What seems to be Paul's overall point in 3:1-11?
2. According to 3:1-11, why should a Christian rejoice? What errors can mislead a Christian so that he loses his joy?
3. In 3:4-6, Paul explains what it means to "put confidence in the flesh." According to those verses, what sorts of fleshly things could have made Paul feel worthy of God's approval? In what sorts of fleshly things are you tempted to put your confidence in?
4. Paul says that glories not human things but in Christ (see 3:3). What does it mean to boast in Christ Jesus (see 3:7-11)?
5. Paul says that his secure standing with God comes "from God" and "through faith in Christ" (3:9). What does this mean?
6. What does it mean to know Christ, to gain Christ, and to be found in Christ?
7. How can you tell by looking at a person's life whether Christ is preeminent (see 3:8)?

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Day 8: 3:12-4:1

As you read 3:12–4:1, ask God to show you the goal you are working towards in your life.

1. Paul says that he has not already obtained “all this”. What has Paul not obtained (see 3:8-11)?
2. Paul says he forgets what is behind (see 3:13) as he pursues his prize. What past things might he be forgetting? Why does Paul need to forget these things?
3. Describe one way in which you can forget what lies behind and press on to take hold of the prize God has for you.
4. Verse 15 suggests that some people in Philippi felt they had attained “sinless perfection.” What do you think leads some Christians who have reached a certain level of maturity to act as though they have arrived? How can we avoid falling prey to this attitude?
5. What is Paul’s mind focused on (see 3:20-21)?
6. Think about the fact that you are a citizen of heaven. What differences should this fact make to your outlook, behavior, and priorities?
7. What is the most important insight you found in 3:12–4:1? Write it down with at least one way to apply it to your life.

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Day 9: 4:2-9

1. Does being of the same mind “in the Lord” (4:2) mean that we must come to the same opinions? If so, why? If not, what does it mean?
2. According to 4:2-3, how does Paul want some of the Philippians to put into practice his teachings from 1:27–2:18? Explain what he is saying in your own words.
3. What should a Christian do when he or she has a need (see 4:6)?
4. Why is it important for us to focus our minds on true and excellent things (see 4:8)?
5. Thinking rightly is important (see 4:8). What higher standard does Paul give for Christians (see 4:9)?

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Day 9: 4:2-9

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3. What should a Christian do when he or she has a need (see 4:6)?
4. Why is it important for us to focus our minds on true and excellent things (see 4:8)?
5. Thinking rightly is important (see 4:8). What higher standard does Paul give for Christians (see 4:9)?

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Day 9: 4:2-9

1. Paul says he rejoices in the Philippians' concern, but not because he is in need. Why doesn't physical need worry Paul (see 4:11-13)?
2. How has Paul learned to be content?
3. Think about what Paul has learned (see 4:11-13). What implications does it have for the way you use your thoughts and energy?
4. How does God respond when we make offerings to Him by giving to others (see 4:18-19)?
5. How would you summarize the main message Paul wants to get across in 4:2-20?
6. Paul tells us to practice what he says (see 4:9). How might you put into practice one thing he says in 4:2-20 this week?