



Philippians  
A Study for Two

## Getting Started with a Two Study

**Two** is about you and one other person having four, one hour conversations together. The conversations are between you and the other person and God. How does God get into the conversation? God gets into the conversation as the two of you read and discuss life and scripture together.

There is no assumption that you are an expert in the Bible or have even read the Bible before. There are no wrong answers in this conversation, there are only your responses to the scripture. In fact, the questions are provided only to help stimulate discussion. Your honest response to what scripture says to you is what will make this time real and of value.

**Two** is designed for you to find four meeting times and places for one hour with one other person over the next two months. **Two** is not “match.com”; you are only committing to meet four times with the other person. It is not a life-long match or commitment; that is not the goal. We do believe this time will impact both people participating in the conversation with God for a lifetime. This **Two**, Ephesians, is the second in a series that began with Galatians. The studies are not chronological so if this is your first study and starting place that is fine. We encourage you that when you finish this study you will go to the next one, Philippians, with another person.

For the study, we have provided the scripture reading from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Make notes and write down questions and observations as you read and discuss together. Read the scripture silently or aloud, however the two of you prefer. Talk together about how the scripture speaks to you using the provided questions as you desire to suggest areas of discussion.

A good way to begin each meeting is by sharing one thing from the last week you are thankful for and one concern you have. Before reading the scripture, a brief prayer of gratitude and for your concerns may be part of your time together. Following your discussion of the scripture, you may wish to close your time in prayer.

We hope that you find **Two** to be an enjoyable experience and an effective way to grow in faith and in fellowship no matter where you are in your spiritual journey.

## Two

### Study of Philippians

This book of the Bible is a letter from Paul to the followers of Jesus living in the city of Philippi almost 2,000 years ago. Paul was a man who grew up in what is today Southeastern Turkey. He was educated in Greek and Roman literature and was also taught Jewish law by one of the top Jewish scholars of his day. He was fluent in a number of languages and understood various cultures. He once afflicted great harm to believers in Jesus trying to stop the spread of the telling of the life and impact of Jesus, but, he had a radical conversion to become a believer in Jesus himself as recorded in the Book of Acts, Chapter 9. He became a leader in introducing new cultures to Jesus.

Philippi was a Roman Colony in what is now modern Greece. The city had many retired Roman military officers and those who lived in Philippi had many advantages that the other cities in Greece did not enjoy. Residents of Philippi were treated as if they lived in Italy. Their identity was that they were Romans compared to neighboring cities who identified themselves as Greeks under Roman control. This can be seen in the story of Paul's arrest in Philippi in the Book of Acts, chapter 16. He told the magistrates that he was a Roman citizen and that he had been arrested, beaten, and imprisoned without a trial breaking the laws of Rome. The magistrates of the city reacted quickly, because in Philippi not following Roman law was a very serious offense.

Philippi was located on the major road that connected Europe and Asia. It was a major city with first class shopping with goods from around the world. The ancient city had a shopping district that would have competed with our modern outlet malls. Shops surround a paved city center selling a wide variety of goods ranging from jewelry to fine meats.

The shops had colonnades were designed to attract and impress buyers. Lydia, one of the first to embrace the message of Jesus in Philippi was a trader of fine cloth. She opened her house for others to fellowship and worship, so the house most likely had a number of rooms and a courtyard. A city and her economy can often be judged by her ability to support the arts. Philippi had a theater that sat 1,000s.

Philippians is a letter from Paul to friends who he lived with and who he had worked closely with him for a significant time. When Paul left Philippi they continued to support him financially. They were people who loved him and whom he loved. They were partners in his mission. This is a very positive letter, especially considering Paul is in prison when he writes this letter. He wanted to make sure his friends knew he was OK and that he was being taken care of as far as food and other needs. Paul does not write this letter to correct any great error in the church, although he does encourage two friends to stop fighting and to work out their differences. It seems in any family or church there will be times wonderful people fight or disagree. Paul's words in this letter most likely are his parting words to people he loved. Knowing you might not have another chance to communicate with someone, what would you say? Here is Paul's parting wish for his friends,

*“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.”*  
*Philippians 4:4-9*

## Meeting 1

A good way to begin each meeting is by sharing one “high” and one “low” from the last week.

### Philippians 1

#### Salutation

[1] Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: [2] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Paul's Prayer for the Philippians

[3] I thank my God every time I remember you, [4] constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, [5] because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. [6] I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. [7] It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. [8] For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. [9] And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight [10] to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, [11] having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

#### Paul's Present Circumstances

[12] I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel, [13] so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ; [14] and most of the brothers and sisters,

[15] Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. [16] These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; [17] the others proclaim having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear. Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. [18] What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, [19] for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance. [20] It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. [21] For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. [22] If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. [23] I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; [24] but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. [25] Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, [26] so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again. [27] Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, [28] and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. [29] For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— [30] since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

## Questions to consider...

How does Paul feel about the people who make up the church in Philippi?

Who in your life do you regularly pray for “with thanksgiving”?

What does it take in you and in the other to be truly thankful for someone?

What does Paul mean when he says in verse 6, “I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”? How would you put that verse in your own words? Is there anyone you feel confident about in that way? If so, why?

If a friend was unjustly in prison and wrote to you the words of verse 12, how would you respond? What would you want her to know?

What did Paul mean when he wrote, “For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.”? What would need to change in your own life for you to say that and mean it?

**What is one “take away” from what you read in this section that you want to stay with you and impact your life and thinking?**

A good way to end each gathering is to pray. Consider praying for the people you give thanks for to God.

## Meeting 2

A good way to begin each meeting is by sharing one “high” and one “low” from the last week.

### Philippians 2

#### **Imitating Christ's Humility**

[2:1] If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, [2] make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. [3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. [5] Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

[6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, [7] but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, [8] he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. [9] Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### **Shining as Lights in the World**

[12] Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; [13] for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

[14] Do all things without murmuring and arguing, [15] so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. [16] It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. [17] But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you— [18] and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

### **Timothy and Epaphroditus**

[19] I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. [20] I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. [21] All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. [22] But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. [23] I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me; [24] and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon.

[25] Still, I think it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus—my brother and co-worker and fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need; [26] for he has been longing for all of you, and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. [27] He was indeed so ill that he nearly died. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, so that I would not have one sorrow after another. [28] I am the more eager to send him, therefore, in order that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. [29] Welcome him then in the Lord with all joy, and honor such people, [30] because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for those services that you could not give me.

## Questions to consider...

Why is it hard for most people, maybe all of us, to truly put the interest of others before our own interests? Is it harder for you to put “others” interest before you in the “others” is your family, those you work with, or those in your community?

How does it benefit you to regard others as better than yourself?

Why is this a hard concept for our culture?

What can you say about Christ Jesus from your reading of verses 6-11?

What is the difference between murmuring and arguing? Which is easier for you to do? How does murmuring and arguing impact your life?

Knowing your friend is in prison awaiting trial, how would you react to verse 17?

How do you think Epaphroditus felt going to Paul to help but in the end getting so sick he almost dies? Can you name a time you failed or the action you set out to do ended up having the opposite results then what you intended?

How does Paul feel about Epaphroditus?

**What is one “take away” from what you read in this section that you want to stay with you and impact your life and thinking?**

A good way to end each gathering is to pray. Consider praying for the interest of others, not your interests.

## Meeting 3

A good way to begin each meeting is by sharing one “high” and one “low” from the last week.

### Philippians 3

[3:1] Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard.

[2] Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! [3] For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh— [4] even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: [5] circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. [7] Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. [8] More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9] and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. [10] I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, [11] if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

## Pressing toward the Goal

[12] Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. [13] Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. [15] Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. [16] Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

[17] Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. [18] For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. [19] Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. [20] But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. [21] He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

## Questions to consider...

How is rejoicing in the Lord a “safe guard” for someone? What does it guard against?

What does it mean to have confidence in the flesh as compared to confidence in the Spirit? Why did Paul have reason to put confidence in the flesh?

Which is easier for you, to put confidence in the flesh or in the Spirit? Why?

What did Paul treasure? What do you treasure?

Read verses 13 and 14 again. Why can Paul forget the past, both successes and failures? Why is it important to forget both successes and failures? Which is easier for you to let go of, past failures or past success?

What would you want people to imitate about your life and what would you hope they would not imitate?

**What is one “take away” from what you read in this section that you want to stay with you and impact your life and thinking?**

A good way to end each gathering is to pray. Consider praying for the ability to let go of things in the past that hold you back and for strength to press forward.

## Meeting 4

A good way to begin each meeting is by sharing one “high” and one “low” from the last week.

### Philippians 4

[4:1] Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. [2] I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. [3] Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. [4] Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. [5] Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. [6] Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [8] Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. [9] Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

### Acknowledgment of the Philippians' Gift

[10] I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. [11] Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. [12] I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. [13] I can do all things through him who strengthens me. [14] In any case, it was kind of you to share my distress. [15] You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. [16] For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once. [17] Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account. [18] I have been paid in full and have more than enough; I am fully satisfied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. [19] And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20] To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

### Final Greetings and Benediction

[21] Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The friends who are with me greet you. [22] All the saints greet you, especially those of the emperor's household. [23] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

## Questions to consider...

Describe a time you struggled with a co-worker? What would you do differently if you could go back in time and deal with that co-worker knowing what you know now?

Re-read verses 4-7. What are some of the things Paul suggests we add to our lives that will give us peace?

If you could keep verses 8-9 fresh in your mind, how would it change your relationships? Is there someone you struggle to see the good, the commendable, anything excellent in right now? What would change in your life if you looked for those things in that person?

What factors make you content and what keeps you from being content?

How does it profit someone who gives? What things in your life make it hard to give? Is there anyone or anything it is easy to give to or support?

Paul wrote this letter to people who loved him and he was writing from a prison with a good chance this is where his life would end.

Considering this, what did Paul want his friends, co-workers, his beloveds to know?

If you had one last letter to write to people you love, what would you want to make sure you said?

**What is one “take away” from what you read in this section that you want to stay with you and impact your life and thinking?**

A good way to end each gathering is to pray. Consider praying the all the things that worry you.