

5:17 church community group bible studies
May-July 2009

	A.D.	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Death, resurrection of Christ (A.D. 33 [or 30]) [†]		●										
Paul's conversion (33/34*)			●									
Paul's first Jerusalem visit (36/37*)				●								
Paul's second Jerusalem visit (famine relief) (44–47*)					■							
Paul's first missionary journey (46–47)					■							
Paul's third Jerusalem visit (apostolic council) (48–49*)						●						
Paul's second journey (Philippian church planted) (48/49–51*)						■						
Paul's third missionary journey (52–57*)							■					
Paul under house arrest in Rome (62*)									●			
Paul receives gift from and writes to Philippians (62*)									●			
Paul martyred in Rome (64–67*)									■			

* denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or; † see *The Date of Jesus' Crucifixion*, pp. 1809–1810



¹ <http://www.esvstudybible.org/search?q=Philippians+1>

Note: The picture on the front page is a Rembrandt painting entitled "The Apostle Paul in Prison".



Together for the gospel: Philippians 1:1-11

Read Acts 16:11-40

Imagine you are Paul leaving Philippi in Acts 16:40. What do you think his memories of his time in the city would be?

Read Philippians 1:1-8.

Partnership in the gospel means “self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision” (Carson, Basics for Believers, p13-14). What could it have meant for the Philippians to be ‘partners in the gospel’ with Paul (1:5 and 1:7)?

The word “partnership” in v.5 is more commonly translated “fellowship” in the New Testament. What does this tell us about true (biblical) Christian fellowship?

What is Paul confident about in 1:6? How does this affect us today?

Read Philippians 1:9-11

In speaking of prayer, D.A. Carson writes: “one of the most important steps we can take is to recognise where we are. We quietly confess that we are dangerously dry. Our knowledge of God is slight, and we long to pray with a greater sense of reality and a greater sense of fruitfulness. We want to learn how to pray.

Few of Paul’s prayers have greater potential to help us surmount the hurdles of spiritual dryness and lack of faith than the one in Philippians 1:9-11. It can help us overcome our excuses for prayerlessness.”²

Paul writes a list of prayers he has prayed for the Philippian Christians. What are they?

- | | |
|-----------------|-------|
| Prayer point #1 | (v9) |
| Prayer point #2 | (v9) |
| Prayer point #3 | (v10) |
| Prayer point #4 | (v10) |
| Prayer point #5 | (v11) |
| Prayer point #6 | (v11) |

What is the practical connection between each of the prayer points?

Implications for today

What are some ways we at 5:17 and in our CG’s can deepen our fellowship?

How should 1:9-11 shape how you pray and what you pray for?

Read Philippians 1:9-11 again, thank God that He has placed this prayer in His Word, and pray this prayer for each other.

² D.A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* (Grand Rapids; Baker Books, 1992) 123-124



We Preach Christ: Philippians 1:12-26

“Secularization refers to the processes that squeeze religion to the periphery of life. The result is not that we abandon religion or banish the gospel; rather, religion is marginalized and privatized, and the gospel is rendered unimportant” (Carson, Basics for Believers, p10). Discuss.

Read Philippians 1:12-26

According to 1:12-14, what is Paul’s view on the result of his time in jail?

Read Genesis 50:20 and Philippians 1:12-14.

What does this tell us about God’s use of hardship in His people’s lives?

What does it mean to ‘preach Christ’ (1:15)?

What are the motives for the two groups who ‘preach Christ’ (1:15-17)?

1. Group #1
2. Group #2

Why does Paul say “but what does it matter?” (v.18) about preaching the gospel?

What does this tell us about Paul?

Read 1:20-24.

What was Paul's attitude as a Christian to:

- Life

- Death

What were his reasons for choosing one rather than the other?

Implications for today

How should we see hardship, and what should we be seeking to do amidst our hardship?

Pluralism has let people to believe that the belief that one Saviour for all peoples is an arrogant statement. Where does our preaching Christ fit into this picture?

“Life hurts. It hurts emotionally, financially, physically, and spiritually. In the midst of suffering there is nothing worse than a pithy bumper sticker solution to a life wrecking hardship and what suffering people need is real truth for real life in real pain” (Mark Driscoll). How are we going at preaching Christ?

- Individually

- Corporately



Worthy of the Gospel: Philippians 1:27-2:11

How does the world think Christians should act?

Read 1:27-30

Phil 1:28-30 explains how one lives their life worthy of the gospel of Christ. What does Paul say?

Why might suffering for the gospel be a privilege (v.29)?

Read 2:1-11

How does Paul tell the Philippians to make his joy complete? Are there one or two words that sum up these thoughts? How might this practically work for us at 5:17 church?

If we look at 2:6-11 Paul has given us a summary of Jesus' actions and attitudes. What does this tell us about:

- The person of Jesus?

- The work of Jesus?

- What is expected of us?

Implications for today

In light of this passage, can you think of any behaviours you need to change in order to 'conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ'?

Write them down, and spend some time now asking God's help to change these things.

Interesting quote: "Self esteem. Self improvement. Self help. Self love. Self actualization. Self pride. It's all self delusion. Philippians 2:1-11 teaches how Jesus is for us the most happy person who has ever lived because, in part, He was the most humble" (Mark Driscoll).



Living with fear & trembling: Philippians 2:12-30

Read Philippians 2:12-30

Read 2:12-13

A classic old Christian statement is “to let go and let God”. What does 2:12-13 say to this statement?

What does this practically mean for us?

Read 2:14-18

What are the negative outcomes of complaining and arguing? Why do we do it then?

What are the positive outcomes of not complaining and arguing? How can we put this into practice?

Read 2:19-30

Why does Paul mention Timothy and Epaphroditus here?

How does your own life match up with theirs? What can we learn from them?

Is there anyone who you think is a good example of a Christian – a good example that you can learn from? Why?

How can you be a good example to other Christians?



Our Greatest Treasure: Philippians 3:1-11

Ask yourself the question: “Who am I?” Share.

Read Philippians 3:1-11

Paul happily repeats himself in 3:1. What is he repeating and why?

What three characteristics of the true people of God are given in verse 3? How far are they true of you?

Read Philippians 3:4-9 again and then fill in this table.

Paul’s confidence in flesh (4-6)	Paul’s confidence in faith (7-11)

Why does Paul consider the impressive feats of column 1 rubbish ('loss')?

Along what two lines in particular did he want a deeper knowledge (v.10) and to what end (v11)?

How might you seek what Paul was seeking after?

“Conflict. Most of us shy away from it, dread it, and lament over it. Yet, the holy rebel Paul discovered joy in the midst of constant conflict that had broken his body, taken his freedom, but not touched his joy” (Mark Driscoll). How can Philippians 3:1-11 help you do the same?



Residents of Earth, Citizens of Heaven: Philippians 3:12-4:1

“Are you tired? Weary? Worn down? Burned out? Are you sick of all the positive thinking naturally organized highly competent cheery high energy types who keep telling you to put on a smile and think happy thoughts when all you want to do is take a nap?” (Mark Driscoll)

Read Philippians 3:12-4:1

What are we never justified in doing?

Philippians 3:12-14 has been called “Olympic Spirituality” (John Piper). Why would he call it this?

What is the result of living the “Olympic Spirituality” life?

In 3:17-21 there are two ways to live. What are the two ways, what do they look like in practice, and where do they take you:

Way of life #1	Way of life #2

There seems to be a bit of a contradiction in this passage. Philippians 3:12 & 14 tells us to *press on*, but Philippians 4:1 tells us to *stand firm*. How does this work?

Implications for today

How can we do the following?

- Press on (3:14)
- Hold true to what we have attained (3:16)
- Imitate Paul (3:17)
- Stand firm (4:1)



Stay on Course: Philippians 4:2-23³

Can your friends tell that you are a Christian by the way you live your life and conduct yourself?

Sometimes, we get into disagreements and “fights” with our fellow believers in Christ. What should our attitudes be towards resolving issues we have against one another? (v2-3)

Paul is in prison when he encourages the Philippian Christians to “rejoice”. How is this possible? How are we to rejoice? (v4)

WHY, HOW and WHEN should we pray? (v6-7)

³ This ‘Staying on Course’ study was written by members of the Cornerstone Youth leadership team at Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Sydney (2005)

“You are What You Think”. What do we fill our minds with? (v8-9)

What is contentment? What is the secret to contentment? (v11-13)

Implications for today

How do you think the media bombards our minds with worldly values and godless thoughts? Discuss practical steps to counter this

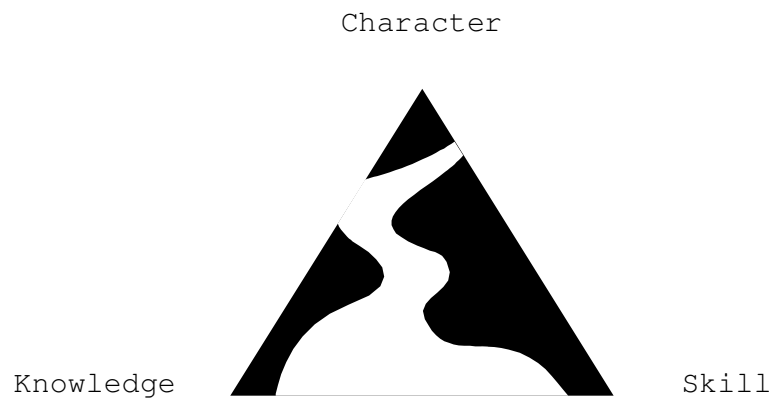
Why is it important that we live godly lives? Spend some time praying together for ways we can live out our faith. Before you pray, take a moment to think of WHY you pray and HOW you pray.



Growing Up in Christ

We at 5:17 church want to commit to each other's growth as men and women who love God and love people by helping them grow in personal godliness. There are three areas we will focus on⁴:

1. **Character** (spiritual formation): developing in personal godliness, and thus reflecting the heart of a Christian character
2. **Knowledge** (theological formation): developing the Christian mind.
3. **Skills** (ministry formation): developing skills for Christ-like service.



⁴ This session has been adapted from the Ministry Apprenticeship Program document

The following is a checklist of areas we can work on. Thoughtfully and prayerfully look through the list. Which specific areas do you feel you need to work on?

a. CHARACTER

- Growing in prayerfulness
- Getting the most out of the Bible
- Growing in personal godliness
- Stewarding God's resources
- Building better relationships
- Becoming more self-aware

b. KNOWLEDGE

- Getting the biblical framework right (from Genesis to Revelation)
- Discovering my Bible book!
- Discovering Doctrine
- Christian ethics
- Knowing culture and society

c. SKILLS

- How to share our faith
- How to help others grow as Christians
- Living compassionately
- Conflict Resolution
- Growing as a Christian leader (at church, home, CG etc)
- Serving in church – what are my options and what should I do?