



LET'S READ THE BIBLE

*Bible Reading
& Study Guide*

FOR
PHILIPPIANS

Written by
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Introduction

Dear Bible Study Companion,

First, I want to introduce myself. I'm Sarah. I am a wife and a mother to five children. I spend my days answering silly and serious questions, making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and reheating my coffee thirty times a day. Life with five children makes for a lot of messes, but also a lot of memories. Let me start out with this: **It is ok to be new at this.**

It is ok to not know what to pray or where to start reading the Bible. Just know you are not behind! I want to walk alongside you, offer a cup of coffee, and cheer you on! My control-freak planner girl inside would like to say I'm super organized and have the house, homeschool, and husband all neatly organized. But, I don't. I live one day at a time.

Thirteen years ago I left my full-time teaching job to care for my children at home. Those early days were spent reheating my coffee and playing with cars, but I was full of shame. I felt guilty for never reading my Bible. I was stuck because I didn't know if God even heard my prayers. The hardest part? I felt like I couldn't ask anyone at church how to move forward. I was too embarrassed to ask for help.

I want to take the mystery out of Bible reading. What is the point of reading your Bible if you don't understand it? Not many of us (me included) have time in our regular days to research the background or history of each of the books of the Bible.

This guide is designed to save you time and allow you do more than just read the Bible - but understand and apply it to your life! I've spent hours researching, reading commentaries, and yes, looking over the entire book of Philippians to be able to help you understand this amazing book of the Bible. Paul's letter to the Philippians is incredibly practical for everyday living. We will discover the beginnings of the church at Philippi, what the city was like, and how much good truth is packed in these four short chapters.

As you dive into the book of Philippians, you have two choices.

1. Simply Read

You can study it on your own. After reading the **Background** information, use the **30 Day Reading Guide** and reflection page to simply read God's Word and write your own thoughts and ideas down.

2. Self-Paced Study

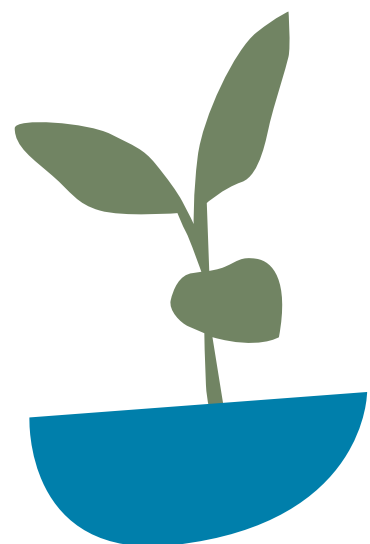
You can do a deeper Bible study as well. Use the Basic Principles for Bible Study and The PRAYER Method to go deeper and study the book to gain a deeper knowledge. The steps are not divided into a certain amount of days, because you can take the entire month (or longer) to do the deeper Bible study.

Because time in God's Word is never wasted,

Sarah

What is included

Simply Read	4
Background Information on Philippians	5
An Outline of Philippians	11
Key Verses	12
A 30 Day Reading Plan	14
Resource Page	15
Self-Paced Study	16
Basic Principles for Bible Study	17
The PRAYER Method for Bible Study	19
In-Depth Bible Study Questions	20
A Special Thank-You Offer	32

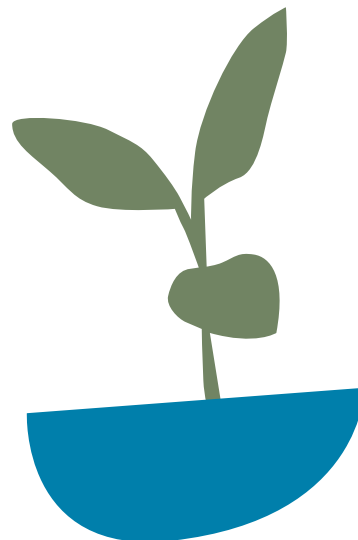




Simply Read

After reading the background information, use the 30 Day Reading Guide and reflection page to simply read God's Word and write your own thoughts and ideas down.

The best place to write reflections, questions, prayers, or simply write the word is a journal.





Background

QUICK OVERVIEW

Author: Paul

Audience: The church at Philippii

Characters: Paul mentions Timothy & Ephradites as examples of the believers to follow. Euodia and Syntyche are two women he mentions who are arguing and he tells the church to help them get along.

Literary Style: A letter

Location: Paul wrote this letter from prison, from either Rome or Ephesus.

Context: Paul's letter is in the New Testament. It was written around sixty years after Jesus was born.

History: During the time of Paul's letter the Romans ruled most of the Middle East as well as Europe. Philippi was a city in the north eastern part of Macedonia (Greece).

Purpose: Paul wanted to write a letter of encouragement to the church at Philippi. He had very little criticism and a lot of admiration for the Philippians.

Themes: Joy, humility, service, and true contentment.

Central Truth: The author wanted to encourage the believers there that their testimony was being proclaimed throughout all of the world and to keep serving Christ.



Background

Paul's journey to the town of Philippi did not begin in Philippians 1. It began in the book of Acts. In chapter sixteen of Acts, we find Paul's first journey to the city of Philippi. The stories will maybe be familiar if you attended Sunday school as a child. If not, don't worry, we are going to talk about some of these amazing transformational stories.

If you are like me, sometimes I wish my life was a little more exciting. You would think it was because we are full-time missionaries in Central America. Sure, my life is different from how we lived in the States. However, most of the time I spend my days within the four walls of my home. I teach my children. Go to church. Work in the nursery. How can I find time in my busy life to "share the gospel?" And do I just witness to my children? Or do I have more influence?

As a stay-at-home mother, sometimes it is even easier to think my life has little to do with the gospel. Although my children need the gospel, and I definitely have a "mission field" within my own walls, isolation makes me feel as if I am a "less than" Christian. How am I sharing the gospel if I'm not going out into the "world" and sharing it with strangers?

One of the things we can learn from Philippians is that God uses everyday, ordinary people for His glorious purpose. When we read Acts 16, we discover specifically who Paul is writing to when he writes to the church at Philippi. They weren't just random people - they had stories of their own. You will love getting to know them in Acts 16.

The Holy Spirit through Paul has a lot to teach us about the gospel, joy, contentment, and anxiety. Living the Christian life is simpler than you think. The book of Philippians is a letter, or an epistle. Originally this was an actual handwritten letter to a group of believers. Paul was the primary letter-writer in the New Testament, but the apostles Peter and John also wrote letters.

Let's keep in mind that this type of writing is more conversational, but would have been read aloud in the hearing of the entire church. It was copied and passed around to other churches in the area, too.



Background

WHAT TYPE OF CITY WAS PHILIPPI?

Paul's letter is addressed to the church (and leaders) in Philippi. It was a coastal town with lots of commerce and trade. A pagan city on the edge of the sea, it hosted many false religions. Although we do not know the names of all of the church members, we have three individuals Paul addressed based on what we learn in Acts 16.

The region of Philippi reminds us of a big city, like New York City, with both extremes: wealth & prominence as well as poverty & despair. Many times we think our world has it the worst. We look back to "simpler" times, but unfortunately there has always been evil in the world.

The people in Philippi struggled with the same things as we do. It was not "easier" to be a Christian during Paul's time. In fact, they faced what many Christians around the world face today: persecution. Just because they choose to be associated with Jesus they were shunned, put in prison, and sometimes put to death.

The beautiful thing is, no matter the type of city we live in, the gospel can go forth through ordinary, everyday people! We can find contentment right where God has placed us. And joy follows us, even when we are drowning in sorrow.



Background

WHO WAS IN THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI?

Most of the people living in Philippi were of Greek and Roman descent. Paul's letter was originally in Greek and the majority of people in this city spoke Greek.

The first person Paul met when he traveled to Philippi was a woman named Lydia, (Acts 16:14) who was already a follower of God. Her occupation was to sell purple clothes, which meant she was a fashion designer for the rich. In her culture, she was wealthy and popular because the color purple was hard to make. It cost a lot of money to make purple clothes, so only wealthy people could afford clothes with the color purple. When Paul tells her about Jesus as the Christ, she immediately accepts this and is baptized.

Paul's next conversation was with someone from the very opposite "sides of the track." There was a girl, we do not know her name, who was possessed with a demon. Paul released her from this bondage (Acts 16:16-18) and she begins to follow Paul. The demons inside of her had given her the ability to "predict the future," so people took advantage of her and made lots of money from her suffering. After Paul set her free, she no longer could help these men make their fortune.

Because Paul had ruined several businesses (Acts 16:19-20), these men had Paul and his companion, Silas, beaten. They then threw Paul and Silas into prison that evening. Instead of wallowing in their suffering, Paul and Silas prayed all night long and sang praises to God.

God caused a great earthquake and through some pretty miraculous circumstances (Acts 16:25-34), the man who ran the prison was saved! This man was nothing like Lydia or the slave girl. He was probably a hard working, tough guy making a living for his family. God's saving power has nothing to do with status or station in life. It says he and his family were baptized that very night!

These people came from pretty different walks of life. Yet together they made up the early church at Philippi. A wealthy woman, a former slave who was demon-possessed, and a gruff prison guard would gather each week in someone's house for church. Even today I doubt we'd see this kind of diversity in our churches. Keep in mind these people when you read through Paul's letter to them.



Background

WHAT IS THE TONE OF THIS LETTER?

Many of Paul's letters to churches have a teaching and correcting tone to them. Much of our core, Christian doctrine can be traced back to Paul's letters.

Romans is one of those letters which provides a lot of teaching and doctrine. In Romans we learn deep truth about our salvation. First & Second Corinthians have a corrective tone to it. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth mainly because they were going through a lot of problems.

Philippians doesn't have much doctrine nor correction. In fact, the church at Philippi seems to be doing really well! It is a thank-you and encouragement letter to the church on the coast. There are a few warnings, but overall Paul's tone of Philippians is warm and inviting. It is also very personal.

Paul obviously loved this church so very much. He spent a lot of time in Philippi, visiting the city twice. It is the first recorded Christian community to be established in Europe.



Background

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THEMES OF PHILLIPIANS?

Each chapter has various themes, and scholars cannot agree on the precise purpose for this letter. Many times Paul talks about prayer, rejoicing, and living for Christ. Overall the letter was written to be an encouragement to the church to continue to live for Christ.

Many miracles were performed in this city (Acts 16). Paul challenges them to keep going in their faith (Phil. 1:8).

Most people will agree that the idea of joy and rejoicing is also a strong theme found throughout the book. In chapter one we see a theme of how to live for Christ and sharing the gospel.

The idea of our “life” is mentioned six times in the entire book. An honest look at humility is given in chapter two. Chapter three reveals for us Paul’s background and our worth in Christ is what he focuses in.

The power of prayer and peace-filled living seems to be the focus of chapter four. As we study, we will see all of these themes repeated.



Outline

CHAPTER 1 - THE GOSPEL

1. Greeting. (1:1-11)
2. The Gospel. (1:12-18)
3. Living for Christ (1:19-30)

CHAPTER 2 - HUMILITY

1. Christ's Humility (2:1-11)
2. Our Humility (2:12-13)
3. Complaining and Humility (2:14-18)
4. Examples of Humility (2:19-30)

CHAPTER 3 - PAUL'S STORY AND OURS

1. Paul's True Worth (3:1-8)
2. Our Gain in the Gospel (3:9-11)
3. Pressing on in the Gospel (3:12-16)
4. True Citizenship (3:17-4:1)

CHAPTER 4 - HOW TO LIVE

1. True Humility (4:2-3)
2. True Peace (4:4-7)
3. True Thinking (4:8-9)
4. True Provision (4:10-23)

Key Verses

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6

“What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.” Philippians 1:18

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21

“Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:4

“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.” Philippians 3:8

“I press on toward the goal for the price of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:14



“Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice.” Philippians 4:4

“Do not be anxious 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.” Philippians 4:6-7

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13



Key Verse Cards

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6

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“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.” Philippians 3:8

30 Day Bible Reading Plan

Because this is a short book we are going to try and read it two times this month! Use this reading plan and write down any thoughts, prayers, reflections, or just simply a verse that stands out to you.

- Philippians 1:1-8
- Philippians 1:9-11
- Philippians 1:12-25
- Philippians 1:26-29
- Philippians 2:1-11
- Philippians 2:12-13
- Philippians 2:14-18
- Philippians 2:19-24
- Philippians 2:25-30
- Philippians 3:1-8
- Philippians 3:9-11
- Philippians 3:12-16
- Philippians 3:17-4:1
- Philippians 4:2-3
- Philippians 4:4-7
- Philippians 4:8-9
- Philippians 4:10-13
- Philippians 4:14-20
- Philippians 4:21-23
- Philippians 1:1-11
- Philippians 1:12-18
- Philippians 1:19-30
- Philippians 2:1-11
- Philippians 2:12-18
- Philippians 2:19-30
- Philippians 3:1-11
- Philippians 3:12-4:1
- Philippians 4:2-9
- Philippians 4:10-18
- Philippians 4:19-23



Resources

FOR PHILIPPIANS

- ▶ <https://bible.org/seriespage/introduction-background-and-outline-philippians>
- ▶ <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/matthew-henry/Philippians>
- ▶ <https://www.desiringgod.org/scripture/philippians>
- ▶ <https://www.amazon.com/Philippians-You-Steven-J-Lawson/dp/1784981141>
- ▶ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/help-me-teach-the-bible/john-piper-on-philippians-part-1/>
- ▶ <https://www.gty.org/library/bible-series-library/7165/philippians-vol-01>

FOR COMMENTARIES & GENERAL BIBLE STUDY

- ▶ <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng.html>
- ▶ <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/>
- ▶ <https://www.gty.org/library/articles/45STUDY/how-to-study-your-bible>
- ▶ <https://www.nancyguthrie.com/help-me-teach-the-bible-podcast>
- ▶ Women of the Word: How to Study the Bible with Both Our Hearts and Our Minds
by Jen Wilkin



Self-Paced Study

You can do a deeper Bible study as well.

Use the following Basic Principles for Bible Study and The PRAYER Method to go deeper and study the book to gain a deeper knowledge.

The steps are not divided into a certain amount of days, because you can take the entire month (or longer) to do the deeper Bible study.



Basic Principle for Bible Study

UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

Most of the time we will spend trying to understand the text without other people's thoughts clouding our view. We will learn how to research cultural insights, historical background, and author information. Who? When? Why? What? Where? Will be some of the questions we will try to answer during the first four steps. We are going to try to avoid opinions. We want to understand what the Bible literally says.



For this Bible Study Guide I will provide either places for you to search or give you the answers to these questions.





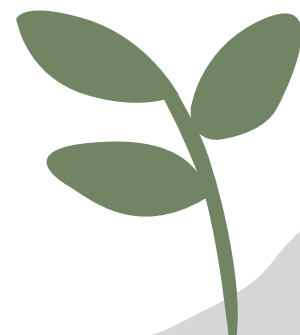
INTERPRET THE TEXT

After we have a clear understanding of the passage, we will try to figure out the meaning. Why did the author write this? The next step take will take you through figuring out what you think the text means first, but then we will move on to what others have to say. We might be able to figure out what we think most of the verses are saying, but we might still have questions. This is where we will use the Resource page to help expand our knowledge.

APPLY THE TEXT

In this final step we will ask ourselves the same application questions each week. What aspect of God's character has been revealed in the text? How is this character trait illustrated? How does understanding that characteristic of God change the way I should think and act? How can I better live in the world based on these truths? Ultimately the Bible is about God.

When we know Him better, we can learn how to live. Reflecting and changing also involves prayer. So make sure prayer is a part of this last step as well.





The PRAYER Method

After reading Jen Wilken's book, "Women of the Word", I put together this method for studying a book of the Bible. You can take a day or a week to do each step. Each step does not take an equal amount of time. The first two steps will take significantly less time than the third and possibly the sixth step. The last step will probably take the least amount of time. Each step is vital to really digging deep and studying the entire book. Make sure to follow the steps in order.

Prepare. Prepare to understand the text by setting the background. First, we will look at the context of the passage we are studying. The author, the audience, the setting, and themes of the book. We will always keep the big picture in mind. You will answer: who? what? where? when? These answers will be available in your reading guide. You can also search up these answers yourself. Use the resource page if you want to do your own research.

Read. For this second step, we will focus on reading. We will start to notice key words and phrases. We will use this day to write the text. When we physically write out the words of scripture for ourselves, we slow down and read it more slowly. This practice will help us begin to see details.

A Closer Look. Let's look closer. For this step, we will study smaller phrases and words in the text. We will look in other passages of scripture. We will use a dictionary and thesaurus to help us. We will study Scripture with Scripture. Reading God's Word in context and looking at cross references is the best tool for figuring out what a word or phrase means.

Your Turn. After you look at what the passage says, it is your turn to look at the passage and determine what it means. Put the pieces of the first two days together to form what you think the passage means. Now you will answer the question, why. It is important you still do not consult a commentary. Try to figure out the purpose of the verses before looking at what others have to say.

Expand. Now is the time to look at commentaries. Expand your knowledge by reading what others have said. There are men and women who have studied the Bible a lot longer than we have. We can gain much from their knowledge. What do other theologians have to say about this book? You can look in a variety of places, but I've provided a couple of resources that I've found helpful on the resource page. Write down the verses you didn't understand. Look those up and see what others have to say. Record your thoughts.

Reflect. The very last step in studying the Bible is application. We tend to skip ahead to apply God's truth to our lives right away. If you do the hard work of the first few days, the application section will not only be easier to determine, it will be focused on what the text has already told us! These questions will guide you to honestly reflecting on what you've learned and how God can change you after reading and studying this book of the Bible.

LET'S GO DEEPER!

Bible Study Questions



STEP 1 - PREPARE

Use the **Resource** page and the **Background** information to answer these questions:

Author: Who wrote it?

Audience: To whom was it written?

Characters: Who else is mentioned?

Style: What is the literary style?

Location: Where did the audience live?

Context: Where does it fit into the Big Story of the Bible?

History: What is the historical context?

Read Acts 16 to read about the beginnings of the church of Philippi. Write down what stands out to you. Who was present? What were their names? What miracles did Paul perform? What was the response from the Jewish leaders? What happened to Paul and Silas? Who got saved in this chapter?

Record your answers here or in your own notebook.

LET'S GO DEEPER!

Bible Study Questions



STEP 2 - READ

Take several days to just read through the book over and over again. You might want to use a different translation or listen to the book being read aloud. Then, answer these questions.

Do any words/phrases stand out?

Why do you think Paul wrote his letter?

What do you think the themes are for the book of Philippians?

These are a few of the key words found in Philippians. Use a thesaurus or dictionary to write out the definitions.

Work/Working

Spirit

Joy/Rejoice

One (being in unity)

What other words could you add to this list? Look up those as well.

Record your answers here or in your own notebook.

LET'S GO DEEPER!

Bible Study Questions



STEP 3 - A CLOSER LOOK

Here are a few cross-references based on the key-words. Write any observations you have about these verses and how they might relate to the verse from Philippians

Work/Working - Phil. 2:13
Proverbs 16:3 & Colossians 3:23

Spirit - Phil. 1:27
Romans 15:13 & Galatians 5:22-23

Joy/Rejoice - Phil. 3:1
Colossians 1:24 & Psalm 13:5

One (being in unity) - Phil. 2:2
2 Corinthians 13:11 & Romans 15:6

Read Acts 16 again. Now that you have studied a little of Philippians, what stands out to you about Paul's experience in the city versus what he writes to the church?

Record your answers here or in your own notebook.

LET'S GO DEEPER!

Bible Study Questions



STEP 4 - YOUR TURN

Read through this list of these key verses from the book of Philippians.

Philippians 1:6

Philippians 1:18

Philippians 1:21

Philippians 2:4

Philippians 3:8

Philippians 3:14

Philippians 4:4

Philippians 4:6-7

Philippians 4:13

Write your observations and what you think each verse means. Don't worry if you don't know. Just do your best. Don't forget to use the context (the verses surrounding it) to help you.

Try to paraphrase each chapter of Philippians. What was Paul trying to tell the Christians in Philippi?

Record your answers here or in your own notebook.

LET'S GO DEEPER!

Bible Study Questions



STEP 5 - EXPAND

Use the questions from Days 4-7 and the Resource page to look up anything that doesn't make sense to you.

Record your answers here or in your own notebook.

LET'S GO DEEPER!

Bible Study Questions



STEP 6 - REFLECT

Answer the following questions and don't worry about having the "right" answers. These are between you and God!

- What aspect of God's character has been revealed in the text?
 - Faithfulness? Greatness? Just? Loving? Merciful?
- How is this character trait illustrated?
- How does understanding that characteristic of God change the way you should think and act?
- How can I have peace and contentment because of Christ?
- Why did Paul say to "rejoice" in all circumstances?
- What does it mean to "live for Christ"?

Record your answers here or in your own notebook.

WRITE A REFLECTION PRAYER HERE.

Watch the teaching videos
here:

An Overview of Philippians

https://youtu.be/wWt20y8Qr_8

A Devotional from Philippians 4:13

<https://youtu.be/xugRUoYDM4E>

**Discover a group of more than 800 women
who love to read God's word.**

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9499](https://www.facebook.com/groups/212119880449499)

*These videos are private. Please do not share
with your friends - they are exclusively for this
guide.

Thank you!

Thank you for using this Bible Reading and Study Guide! I pray it was a blessing to spend time getting to know God through the book of Philippians. I pray He continues to grow your faith through the study of His word.

I CAN HELP YOU STAY IN GOD'S WORD!

email me at:

sarah@sarahefrazer.com

**As a special thank-you use this code to get 25%
off your next purchase at:
sarahefrazer.com/shop**

THANKYOU

SARAH E. FRAZER IS A WRITER AND BIBLE STUDY MENTOR AT SARAHEFRAZER.COM. SARAH IS THE WIFE OF JASON AND MOTHER OF FIVE. SHE AND HER FAMILY SERVE AS FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES IN HONDURAS. HER PASSION IS TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO START TODAY WITH A BIBLE READING AND PRAYER HABIT..

