

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*Live a Life Worthy of the Gospel*  
Philippians 1:27-2:15

**Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.**

## **Leaders' Responsibilities:**

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## **Prior to this Coming Session:**

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

Find the music to **Make Me a Blessing** and be prepared to sing or read it both as a Gathering Time closing and as a Worship Time closing. You may choose to have four different young people or older children read the stanzas and chorus.

### **Bible Study Leader:**

Have a white board or large piece of paper and markers to use for a young person or older child to write the attributes of Christ listed in Chapter 2: 6-11.

### **Worship Time Leader:**

Find the music to “Make Me a Blessing” and be prepared to sing or read it as a closing to the Worship Time. You may enlist four young people or older children to read each one of the stanzas and the chorus. (See instructions of the Gathering Time Leader).

### **Music Sources:**

**How Great is Our God**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 5; CCLI # 4348399

**Jesus is Lord of All**, *The Worship Hymnal* #294; CCLI #26478

**Blessed Be Your Name**, *The Worship Hymnal* #26; CCLI#3798438

**Make Me a Blessing**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 380; CCLI # 11603

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

## ***Live a Life Worthy of the Gospel***

### **Focal Text**

Philippians 1:27-2:15

### **Background Text**

Philippians 1:7-2:18

### **Main Idea**

Living a life worthy of the gospel calls for following Christ in a life of humility, concern for serving others, and faithfulness, whatever the cost.

### **Question to Explore**

Are you living a life worthy of the gospel?

### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to understand and state what it would mean to make the Jesus that Paul described for us **truly** their Lord.

### **Gathering together:**

Sing

**How Great is Our God**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 5; CCLI # 4348399

**Jesus is Lord of All**, *The Worship Hymnal* #294; CCLI #26478

### **First Thoughts:**

Unity in a church body—whether it is a large church or a small church- is always a fragile thing. Unity does not mean there is never any differing opinions or preferences. It means we value our relationships more than we value getting our own way. In our study and worship today, we will read how Paul desired unity for a group of believers he loved very much—the church at Philippi. What he has to say is as current for us as believers today as it was when it was first written.

## **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *Live a Life Worthy of the Gospel*

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#### **Teaching Aim**

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#### **Introduction to your personal study:**

***“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ”*** (KJV) ***“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ”*** (NIV)

Today’s study speaks profoundly to participants in house churches. The delicate balance of love and concern that exists in house churches calls for an extraordinary amount of patience and forgiveness. The responsibility of each participant to the good of the body of believers is intensified because the group is small. These words ***“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ”*** speak to us in a special way because the only way a house church can be sustained is that this be our goal and deep passion.

Pray as you prepare the lesson that you may communicate the profound truths of these verses as essential for the health and well-being of the house church of which you are a part.

## **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the **“Introduction”** article found at the beginning of this series of Bible Study and Worship sessions (Bible Teaching #.....). The person who downloaded this session should have that material for you, as well.

In Acts 16: 11-40 we can read the story of the beginning of the church in Philippi as Lydia and the members of her household responded to Paul’s message and were baptized. Paul stayed in Lydia’s home and he and Silas continued teaching and preaching until their healing of a slave girl. The ability of this girl to tell fortunes was a source of income for her owners who were angered by her healing. Paul and Silas were sent to jail, but as they sang and prayed with their feet in stocks, an earthquake shook the jail. The prisoners could have escaped, but did not do so. Paul and Silas then witnessed to the jailer and he and his family became believers.

This was the dramatic beginning of the church in Philippi. We can only imagine the joy and thankfulness that Paul experienced in relation to this church. These were dear friends who Paul had known for some time. Apparently, there was disagreement in the church. The disagreement seemed to be centered around two women. **“I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel.”** (Colossians 4: 2-3a). Paul does not take sides; he obviously cares deeply for both of these women and for their contributions to the cause of Christ. Everything about the letter to the Philippians expresses Paul’s desire that this disagreement can be resolved with no break in the fellowship of the church.

With this in mind, his words **“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”** are a dramatic call to harmonious living as fellow Christians.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

**“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved- and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.”** (Colossians 1: 27-30).

Paul encourages the believers in Philippi, his friends and co-labourers to do whatever they do in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. The word used here indicates that Paul was saying “conduct your selves as citizens”. The context of the letter indicates that this is Paul’s way of reminding them of the obligations of people who participate in a society. In this case, the society was made up of Christians whose strongest ties were in heaven.

What would the Christian influence in the world today be like if whatever happens in the church, we were to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. What if we conducted ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ when our feelings were hurt, when we disagreed with a church decision, when we didn’t like the music being sung, or when our child was not selected for the Christmas pageant. What if we conducted ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ when asked to sponsor a youth event, step down from a position of power so that a younger person could serve, kept on counting the offering when it seems like a thankless job and served one more Sunday in the extended session child care.

These are powerful words, ***“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”***

Paul says that if he comes to see them or only hears about them, he wants to know that they are standing firm. Paul reminds the church in Philippi of his own struggle in the gospel. Some of them were saved the night that Paul and Silas were in prison and an earthquake broke down the prison walls. They were aware of the animosity of the people of the town who put Paul and Silas in jail. They had probably heard of Paul’s other adventures and knew of his imprisonment on more than one occasion. Paul indicates that they are not to expect that their salvation will come at no cost. “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.”

It is one thing to accept suffering and resign oneself to it. It is another to realize the privileges that come through it. This is the meaning Paul conveys here. Paul’s suffering has brought him the comfort of the Holy Spirit and the realization of God’s power in the worst of circumstances. He would have remembered and would have expected the Philippian church to remember that his imprisonment in Philippi resulted in the salvation of the jailer and his family and thus the strengthening of the church. Paul’s belief that good would come from suffering was not a philosophical idea, but a proven reality in his own life.

Paul continues his admonition to the believers in Chapter 2. He speaks of the believers being united with Christ, comforted by his love, enjoying fellowship with the Spirit. All of this gives Paul and the believers a special relationship which should result in a sharing of love and purpose.



Chapter 2 begins with a verse which sounds somewhat like a question. “If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion...”

We might rephrase the verse to read **“Do you have any encouragement from being united with Christ?” “Do you find comfort in his love?” “Do you know the fellowship of the Spirit?” “Is tenderness and compassion a part of your nature?”**

Paul expected his readers then and now to answer, “Well, yes, of course.” Paul then replies, **“Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.”**

If we were to put this in terms of a family today, we might imagine the parent saying to children who are quarrelling or picking on one another. “Is it good to be a part of this family? “Do you feel the love of your family” “Do you like being treated with kindness?” “Well, then, what does that require of you?”

In a supremely practical sense, it means the believer can do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. We are to consider others better than ourselves. We should be as interested in the well-being of others as we are in our own well-being.

Paul then goes into a long descriptive passage challenging the believer to not just try to do the best we can, but to have the same attitude as Christ Jesus (2:5). The verse is written as a command.

The following verses (2:6-11) are an amazing description of Christ’s life and death.

This may have been taken from a hymn sung by the people. If that were true we can imagine that these words would speak deeply to the reader. Verses 6-8 speak to the humility of Christ and verses 9-11 speak of the exultation of Christ.

***Christ Jesus, whose nature was just like God’s:***

***Didn’t need to try to be like God – he was God.***

***He made himself of no importance***

***He became like a servant***

***He became a human being.***

***As a humble human being with no position or prestige:***

***He died on a cross***

***Because it was necessary that he be obedient to the eternal plan for the salvation of the world.***

***Because of his obedience:***

***There is no one higher than He is  
No one has a more important name  
And eventually everyone in the world will worship him  
Every single person will say that Jesus Christ is Lord  
And they will glorify God the Father.***

This acknowledgement of Christ as Lord is a reminder of 1 Corinthians 15: 24-28

The theme of these verses centers around the humility of Christ who was willing to leave his place as God and come to earth as man, suffer the unbelief of those whom he came to help, and eventually die on the cross. Humility was not a thing to be desired in Roman times; it is not necessarily a thing to be desired in modern times. But in Roman times it referred to having the mentality of a slave. It would describe one who was base, unfit, shabby, or no account. Yet this scripture passage elevates Christ's humility to its true place and elevates Christ to his position of authority and power.

After this magnificent hymn and description of who Christ is, Paul returns again to his theme of asking his friends of the Philippian church to remain faithful.

***“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”***

The passage is a reminder that the Christian walk demands a constant dying to self; a constant renewal of commitment. It is not something we do lightly; it is a task done with fear and trembling. Paul is not referring here to the importance of the effort we make as if our salvation depended on that effort. He refers to the continual upward walk in which we are involved. It is a walk with God which should elicit in us a sense of awe – of fear and trembling. The enterprise in which we are involved is not an earthly one – bound by earthly rewards. It is a heavenly one and God Himself works within us to accomplish his purpose. This working out of our own salvation is not something we accomplish, but something that God accomplishes within us.

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

Paul strives to help the Philippian believers realize the importance of unity. Disunity in the church negates the message of the Christian faith. Lead your group to value the importance of unity and encourage them to examine their hearts individually to ask how they are contributing to or preventing unity in the church.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***Live a Life Worthy of the Gospel***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Philippians 1:27-2:15

#### **Background Text**

Philippians 1:7-2:18

#### **Main Idea**

Living a life worthy of the gospel calls for following Christ in a life of humility, concern for serving others, and faithfulness, whatever the cost.

#### **Question to Explore**

Are you living a life worthy of the gospel?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to understand and state what it would mean to make the Jesus that Paul described for us **truly** their Lord.

#### **Connect with Life:**

Offer the group these ideas: It does not take much to disrupt the unity of a church body. We may disagree with a decision made by the finance committee. We may not like the music the new leader has chosen. We may feel that our children are not adequately cared for or that we have a job which is unappreciated by others. We make a critical statement and then we feel that we must defend that statement. We begin to look for areas which displease us. Soon our joy in the fellowship and worship is gone. But we seldom admit that it all started with our own critical attitude. Instead we continue the vicious cycle of criticism until there is no joy left for us in the fellowship. That grieved

Paul and it grieves us. May today's examination of Scripture help us adjust our own attitudes and encourage us to be more like Christ.

## **Guide the Study:**

Review the story of the beginning of the Philippian church found in Acts 16: 11-40. Do not spend much time here since this wonderful story could easily form another Bible study.

Question the group: If a church started in such a remarkable way, what might we expect it to continue to be as time went on?

Tell them: Paul does not clarify what problems existed in the church, but he speaks of the need for unity. He does admonish two women in the church (Philippians 4:2) to agree with each other in the Lord.

Guide a brief discussion: What are some issues of disunity which exist in modern churches? (Disagreement about music and worship styles; disagreement about parenting styles; disagreement about use of money). {Note: Be very careful here that you do not allow this time to go on to become a litany of bad things that have happened to people in church}.

Have someone read Philippians 1: 27-30.

Comment on the important words, ***“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”*** Refer to the probability that Paul is using a Greek word to mean “conduct yourselves as citizens” and in this case he is referring to our citizenship in the body of believers or our membership or participation in a local church.

Discuss: What are some of the struggles that Paul experienced in his ministry?

Ask: What are some of the struggles Christian believers experience today?

Comment: Paul said ***“For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him”*** (v. 29).

Seek an answer and examples: What is the difference between accepting suffering and resigning ourselves to it in contrast to understanding how it may work for good in our lives? Give opportunity for the group to share how they may have seen this happen in other people's lives or in their own life.

Have someone read Chapter 2: 1.

Ask: Is Paul expressing doubt that encouragement, comfort, fellowship, tenderness and compassion are a part of our being united with Christ? Indicate that the word “if” here means “since” or “because of the fact that”. Paul is using a literary style to emphasize that these are indeed true elements of the Christian experience.

Request someone read Chapter 2: 2-5.

Look for a response to this question: What is Paul desiring for the believers in Philippi? (Unity.)

Have someone describe how selfish ambition or vain conceit would look in a church today.

Ask: Who is to be our example of how to live? (See verse 5).

Call for someone to read verses 6-11.

Invite responses to this: What attributes of Christ are mentioned here? (Nature was like God’s; he was God.; he became a servant; he became a human being; he had no prestige or position; he was humble: he died on a cross; he was obedient to the eternal plan of God). **{Use a white board or large piece of paper and have a young person or older child to write these attributes down}.**

Discuss with your group the view of humility which was present in the Roman world.

Ask: Is humility a value for many people today?

Search out an answer: What will be the eventual relationship of every person on earth to Jesus Christ?

### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Ask your class to conclude your Bible study for today by several sharing briefly how they think this passage of scripture and the discussion can be applied to their lives and, most importantly, the life of your home church.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***Live a Life Worthy of the Gospel*** **Philippians 1: 27-2:15**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **Now This Is a Real Job Description!!! Could You Fulfill It???**

Write a job description using the attributes of Christ listed in Chapter 2:7-11.

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Live a Life Worthy of the Gospel***  
**Philippians 1: 27-2:15****Beginning the Service:**

Sing

**Blessed Be Your Name**, *The Worship Hymnal* #26; CCLI#3798438

**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

Pray for the establishment and development of a training center for Iranian believers, especially the Sorani-speaking (sor-AHN-ee) Kurds. A property has been purchased with a small building on it and the facility is currently being repaired and remodelled. Plans include providing a small recording studio to create music and teaching media in the heart languages of the Iranian peoples as well as a facility for printing, storing, and distributing Farsi and Kurdish Scriptures and other printed evangelistic materials.

**Sharing Guide:**

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

**Shining as Stars****Philippians 2: 12-18**



Most of us can remember various occasions in our lives when we were outside on a starry night. Few natural occurrences are more memorable than the sense of awe and wonder than the starlit sky engenders.

Paul reinforces his admonition to the Philippian church to live in unity of purpose by having the same love as Christ did, having a harmonious affection for one another and by valuing the same things. He then states that blameless and pure children of God will shine like stars in a crooked and depraved generation.

### **We are admonished to continue to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.**

Paul continues to speak to the Philippian church – his good friends- about the ongoing task of living the Christian life. He is not speaking here of gaining salvation; he is speaking of the day by day work it takes to live like Christ lived. We have to daily die to self; become humble; learn to be content without public praise and adulation; be obedient; and be a servant. In order to accomplish this we need a realization of the holy nature of our call to serve. When we understand that, we go about every day's task with fear and trembling. This is not fear in its usual sense, but it is a holy awe that we have been chosen to serve and represent Christ.

### **Blameless and pure children of God light up a dark world.**

There is no need greater in the Christian community today than for every Christian to live a blameless and pure life. Evangelism and mission outreach, church planting and growing are all brought to a screeching halt when an example of a Christian living an impure life is publicized. Years after the downfall of public Christian figures, people say, "I guess I live as good a life as John Doe." It is hard for us as Christians to move beyond the scepticism which has been implanted in the hearts of those who see hypocrisy in people in positions of authority and leadership – either in the public arena or in a local church. It takes years for a church to recover from the influence of a Christian who lives an impure life.

### **We must be glad and rejoice.**

Throughout the letter to the Philippian church, Paul emphasizes how much joy he receives from knowing of the faithfulness of the believers. Paul's joy is a reflection of God's joy over a repentant sinner and a faithful believer. Even as a small child longs for the expressed approval of his parents, we should long to please God and receive His approval. And as we please God, we bless others through our rejoicing. Few of life's experiences are as rewarding as seeing a new believer whom one has influenced grow and prosper in Godly service. Paul says, "I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me." (Chapter 2:18). There is a mutuality in the Christian life – blessing and being blessed. No one is ever only a giver of blessing; we are also receivers of blessing.

***“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.” (2:14-16a).***

May we in our mind’s eye remember a starlit night which brought us joy. Let us long to shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the word of life.

**Call to Commitment:**

**May we pray this verse together:**

**Lord, may we live without complaining or arguing. May we be blameless and pure in the world in which we live. May we shine like stars in the universe. May we never stop holding out the word of life.**

**Concluding the Service:**

Sing or read:

**Make Me a Blessing, *The Worship Hymnal* # 380; CCLI # 11603**