

PHILIPPIANS

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

ANDREW M. DAVIS

WITH JOEL W. HARFORD

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PREFACE TO THE READER

One of the most important elements of a healthy Christian life is regular study of God's word. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 19:7-8 that *"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."* I yearn for Christians to reap the rich benefits of scripture study, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God's word through directly engaging with the biblical text. This is why I have chosen to publish bible study questions instead of commentaries. There are many valuable commentaries to help aid your study of scripture, and I recommend using them. For guidance on commentaries visit www.bestcommentaries.com.

However, the focus of this book is to engage you, the reader, and to challenge you to answer relevant questions based on the scripture.

I have in mind three types of users for this book: First, group bible studies. Most of these questions were written for my weekly men's bible study. I recommend that the leader use this resource to prepare beforehand, reading all the questions and picking only five to seven for discussion. Twenty questions would certainly be a lot of material to discuss! For the bible study, each participant could have a copy to follow along. Second, sermon preparation. Asking questions of the text can be very helpful for understanding the flow and point of a passage of scripture. Third, personal bible study. Again, you can gain valuable insights by asking questions of the text.

My hope for these bible study questions is that they would encourage and facilitate Christians' gathering together to study God's word. One day, as Habakkuk 2:14 says, *"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* Critical to this prophecy in Habakkuk is our *knowing* about the Glory of God, and this is best achieved through the study of the bible. So let's do our part!

I challenge you, reader, to ask some friends, colleagues, classmates, or fellow church members to join you for a bible study. Ask God to open your eyes to understand the scripture (Psalm 119:18), and step out in faith to spread the knowledge of the Glory of God. May this book enrich your study of God's living and active word (Hebrews 4:12), and may the Lord Jesus Christ bless your bible studies!

SUMMARY OF PHILIPPIANS

In Acts chapter 16, the apostle Paul and his companion Silas entered into the Macedonian town of Philippi looking for a place to preach the gospel. Initially there was no church in Philippi; however, after preaching at the local place of prayer at least one person came to faith in Christ. For several more days they went around the city, but their work was hindered by a slave girl who was telling fortunes by the power of demons. Paul cast the demon out of her, but was subsequently beaten and thrown into a dungeon. That night was one of the greatest nights in redemptive history, as the apostle Paul and Silas demonstrated a joy and contentment in Christ that cannot be ruined by any earthly circumstance. They sang hymns to God while the other prisoners listened. By the end of the night, Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Philippian jailer, and the jailer's whole family believed! Thus a church was born in Philippi. Paul left shortly thereafter, but the church continued to grow.

Paul's letter to this Philippian church could be classified as one of the most joyful letters in the bible. Themes of gratefulness, rejoicing, and contentment flow from Paul in Philippians. Yet the epistle also has some strong exhortations, where Paul urges the Philippians to live lives worthy of the gospel, to imitate Christ in humility and service, and to pursue sanctification and holiness with relentless vigor.

The backdrop of the letter is the Philippians' financial and prayer partnership with the apostle Paul. In chapter 1 he expresses his profuse thankfulness for their partnership with him, and he wants them to know that he prays for the Philippians all the time. Paul also gives the Philippian church a theology of sanctification through suffering, for his imprisonment has served to advance the gospel, so he is actually rejoicing! Once again, Paul is in prison, yet rejoicing!

The apostle urges the Philippians to imitate the humility of Christ. Arrogance and self-centeredness have no place in the Christian life, rather we are to put on the humility and service of Christ, who humiliated and lowered himself through the incarnation and crucifixion. God ultimately exalted Christ to the highest of places, for God opposes and hates the proud, but gives grace and raises up the humble.

There is also a warning against spiritual pride and boasting in chapter 3. Paul says he actually has the best spiritual resume in Judaism, but he has renounced it all for the sake of Christ. Righteousness cannot come by obedience to the law, but only from God through faith. Nevertheless, the Christian should exhibit a relentless vigor in sanctification so that he/she may know Christ better and better.

Finally, in chapter 4, Paul gives his theology of gratitude and contentment. There is a secret to the Christian life—learning to be content in any and every situation. Paul is incredibly grateful for the Philippians' support, but he wants them to know that he will be content no matter what happens, and so he is able exhort others to not be anxious about anything, but rather *"Rejoice in the Lord always!"*

PAUL'S THANKFUL PRAYER FOR THE PHILIPPIANS

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section help us to pray for other Christians?
2. What does this section teach us about God's sovereignty in salvation?
3. Paul's tone and message in the letter is one of consistent joy in Christ, no matter what the circumstances. How would growing in this kind of joy make you more fruitful and more glorifying to God?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. To whom does Paul address the letter? Who are the "saints in Christ Jesus"? Who are "overseers and deacons"? What does this teach you about the governmental structure of a local church in the New Testament? (1)
2. How do you understand the difference in the roles of overseers (elders) and deacons? How are both beneficial in the life of a local church? (1)
3. Paul usually includes the expression "grace to you" at the beginning of his letters. How do you understand this practice? How are Paul's letters pipelines of grace for Christians even now? (2)
4. Paul begins with a powerful expression of thankfulness to God for the Philippians. What specifically is Paul thankful about in reference to them? Hint: look at verses 4-11. (3-11)
5. How does Paul's pattern of thanksgiving show his doctrine of God's sovereignty in salvation? (3)
6. How would our lives be enriched by increasingly giving thanks to God in all circumstances? (3)
7. What does verse 4 teach us about prayer? Why should joy be such a vital part of our prayer lives? (4)
8. What specifically does Paul express thanksgiving and joy over in verse 5? What is their "partnership in the gospel"? How does 4:10-16 give insight into an aspect of this "partnership"? (5)
9. How is the worldwide gospel ministry greatly enhanced by partnerships between Christians from different independent local churches? (5)
10. Verse 6 is generally quoted as one of the key texts proving the eternal security of the believer. How does it teach that? How can we derive great assurance from this idea? (6)
11. What does Paul tell them of his affections in verses 7-8? How is his affection for this church evident in these verses? Why is that kind of Christian love so

- vital to the relationship between mentors/elders/leaders/church planters and the people they lead? (7-8)
12. In verse 7, Paul describes his various circumstances and aspects of his ministry. What does this verse teach us about the kinds of sufferings Paul has endured for the gospel? (7)
 13. What is Paul's "defense and confirmation of the gospel"? (7)
 14. How are the Philippians "partakers of Grace" with Paul? (7)
 15. How could we learn to pray these sorts of things for other Christians? How would these types of prayers improve church prayer meetings and ministries? (9-11)
 16. What does it mean for our love to "abound more and more"? How does this show a good pattern for discipleship—"You're doing this well... now I ask and urge you to do it more and more"? See 1 Thessalonians 4:1, 10. (9)
 17. What is "knowledge and all discernment"? Why are they vital for Christian maturity? (9)
 18. What is the relationship between love and knowledge? How does it relate to the common "head and heart" language that many Christians use? (9)
 19. What is the application of this "discernment" and the "approving what is excellent" in verse 10? Why is the discernment of the difference between good, better, and best so challenging in the Christian life? Why is it so important? (10)
 20. What does it mean to be "pure and blameless for the day of Christ"? Why is holiness such a vital goal for us as Christians? What kind of constant attacks are our souls enduring? What wages war against us to prevent us from being "pure and blameless for the day of Christ"? (10)
 21. What does it mean to be "filled with the fruit of righteousness"? How is this language for Christian maturity? (11)
 22. What is the connection between Jesus Christ and our fruit in verse 11? How is it like the "Vine and Branches" teaching of John 15? (11)
 23. How is our fruitfulness in holiness "to the glory and praise of God"? (11)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul writes an exalted thank-you letter to the Philippians for their financial partnership with him in his trial. Beyond that, he opens up his loving heart for their growth as Christians and his prayer life for them.

GOSPEL ADVANCE THROUGH SUFFERING

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-30

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section display both the external advance of the gospel (verse 12) and the internal advance of the gospel (verse 25)? How are these two advances equally vital in the plan of God?
2. How does this section show a marvelous attitude toward both life and death for the Christian?
3. How does Paul teach us how to suffer well in this section?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Much of this section is devoted to Paul's teaching the Philippians his attitude toward suffering and the gospel ministry. How could verses 12-14 help encourage people to be more courageous in evangelism now? (12-14)
2. Verse 12 uses the word "advance." The exact same Greek word is used in verse 25 translated "progress." What kind of "advance" or "progress" does verse 12 speak of? What kind of "progress" does verse 25 speak of? How are they related? How are they different? (12, 25)
3. How does Paul argue that his being in chains for the gospel has actually served to advance the gospel? (12-14)
4. Who are the "imperial guard"? What implications does verse 13 have concerning the spread of the gospel among these elite soldiers? How would this encourage the suffering Philippian church? (13)
5. How could other people's suffering for the gospel actually make us bolder witnesses ourselves? What does Paul say about this in verse 14? (14)
6. What bad topic does Paul bring up in verses 15-17? Why would some people be trying to make trouble for Paul? How would preaching Christ openly do this? (15-17)
7. Why do you think others might have been jealous of Paul? (15)
8. Why does Paul say he is in prison in verse 16? (16)
9. What perspective does Paul give on the issue of people preaching the true gospel from false motives in verse 18? What does this teach us about people being saved through ministries that are later discredited but who preached the true gospel at the time? What is the difference between Paul's attitude in verse 18, and his anger against the Judaizers of Galatians 1:6-9? (18)
10. What does Paul teach about prayer in verse 19? (19)

11. What does Paul mean when he talks about his “deliverance” in verse 19? How does our temporary suffering play a role in our final salvation? (19)?
12. How does it take courage to lead a fruitful Christian life? (20)
13. How could Paul exalt Christ by either living or dying? (20)
14. What does Paul mean in verse 21, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”? How is this the most healthy attitude possible toward both life and death? (21)
15. What is Paul’s perspective on the purpose of his life in the body in verse 22? How should this motivate us now? (22)
16. What two things is Paul torn between in verses 23-24? How is this an amazingly mature and Christlike perspective? How is it selfless for Paul to want to continue living in the body for the benefit of others? (23-24)
17. How was it “more necessary” for the Philippians that Paul go on living? (24)
18. What is “progress and joy in the faith”? How is that a central ministry in the life of the church? (25)
19. How would Paul’s being with the Philippians again result in their overflowing joy in Christ? (26)
20. What does Paul exhort the Philippians to do in verse 27? How should we seek to live this out as well? (27)
21. What does it mean to “strive for the faith of the gospel”? (27)
22. What kind of blessings and encouragement flow from Christians standing “side by side” for the gospel? (27)
23. How is boldness and fearlessness in the face of persecution tremendous evidence of the truth of the gospel? How is it insufficient, however, given the boldness and fearlessness of Islamic jihadists in the face of death? (28)
24. What is “granted” to Christians according to verse 29? How should we consider our suffering for Christ as something that is a gift from the Father to us? See Acts 5:41. (29)
25. How is the Philippian’s suffering and Paul’s suffering related? (30)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul instructs the Philippian church concerning his imprisonment for the gospel, teaching them the proper attitude of joy-filled faith that should characterize them and us in suffering for Christ.

IMITATING THE HUMBLE MIND OF CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think it is so vital for Christians to be characterized by Christ's humility as displayed in these verses? Why is it so difficult?
2. What does this passage teach us about the person of Christ before and after his incarnation?
3. How would meditating on this passage improve our worship life? Our family life? Our church life?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What four things does Paul mention to the Philippians in verse 1 as motivation for them to be humbly united with each other? (1)
2. Why does Paul use this language, "If there is any..." and then lists things that all Christians *do* have in Christ? (1)
3. What does Paul ask them to do? How would their obedience in this make his joy complete? (2)
4. Why is a strong unity in the Christian church vital for our witness to a sinful and fractious world? (2)
5. What does it mean to do nothing from "selfish ambition" or "conceit"? How do these attitudes characterize the "mind of the flesh" Paul refers to in Romans 8? Why are they so damaging to church life or family life? (3)
6. What does it mean to consider others more significant than yourself? How is this humility a work of the Holy Spirit in Christians? (3)
7. What else does Paul command in verse 4? How do we learn to look not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others? What examples of this do you see in the church? How do we live this out practically? (4)
8. Why would a church that truly did practice verses 2-4 consistently be a powerful witness for the gospel in this world? (2-4)
9. What does it mean to "have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus..."? As Christians, must we actively seek to have our minds conformed to the mind of Christ? How do we do this? (5)
10. How does Christ's example of humility in 5-11 help Christians humbly consider others more important and live for the interests of others? (5-11)
11. What is the humble, downward journey Jesus makes in verses 6-8? Where does Jesus start? And where does he end up? (6-8)

12. What does verse 6 teach us about Jesus before he was incarnate? What does it mean that he was “in the form of God”? How does this tend to prove the deity of Christ? (6)
13. What does it mean that Jesus did not count equality with God something to be grasped (seized, clung to, taken advantage of)? How would this motivate us to not hold onto our reputations, pleasures, comforts, etc.? How does it make us stand in amazement at what Christ willingly did for us? (6-7)
14. What does it mean that Jesus “emptied himself,” or in other words, “made himself nothing”? Why do we have to be careful to not take this too far, thinking that in some way, Jesus ceased being fully God when he became human? What did Jesus leave behind when he entered the earth? (7)
15. How could one argue from verse 7 that all humans were created to be servants? Who were we created to serve? (7)
16. How is verse 8 one of the most amazing displays of the greatness of Jesus Christ in all the Bible? (8)
17. Contrast the humble submission of Jesus in verses 6-8 with the magnificent exaltation in 9-11. How does Jesus’ humiliation contribute to his exaltation in glory? (9-11)
18. What is the link between verse 8 and verse 9? How does verse 9 teach us that God rewards humble servanthood with exaltation? Should this motivate us to humble, self-sacrificing service to others? (9)
19. How highly did God the Father exalt Jesus in verse 9? How could it be argued that Jesus has the highest place of honor that any human being could ever occupy? (9)
20. What is the significance of the word “name” in verses 9-10? (9-10)
21. What does verse 10 teach us about the worship that Jesus deserves in verses 10-11?
22. Who will bow the knee and swear with the tongue that Jesus is Lord? Why does this not imply universalism? (10-11)
23. What does it mean that “Jesus is Lord” in verse 11? How does verse 11 relate to Isaiah 45:23? Do you think Paul is equating Jesus Christ with the God of Isaiah 45:23? (11)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul uses the example of Jesus Christ’s infinitely downward journey of humility in his incarnation and crucifixion, and his infinitely upward journey of glory after his resurrection to motivate Christians to be humble servants of others.

SHINING LIKE LIGHTS FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-30

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Paul commands the Philippians to “work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.” (2:12) What does this mean? How would it be easy to misunderstand this expression?
2. What is the connection between Christians “shining as lights” (in the midst of an unbelieving world) and us “holding fast to the word of life”? Why is it vital to live out our faith in order to be effective in evangelism?
3. How is Timothy a role model for the Philippians and us to follow? How is Epaphroditus? Why are men like this so vital to the health of the church and the spread of the gospel?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

WORKING OUT YOUR SALVATION SO OTHERS CAN BE SAVED (VV. 12-18)

1. Verses 12-13 are two of the most important verses in the bible on the topic of human effort in sanctification? What do these verses teach about that? (12-13)
2. What is the relationship between obedience and working out salvation? (12)
3. What does it mean to “work out” our salvation? How does that relate to Paul’s assertion that no one is justified by works of the law (human effort) in Romans 3:20? How does Philippians 2:12 teach us that “salvation” is bigger than justification? (12)
4. Why is it true that we will make no progress in sanctification without our own effort? (12)
5. What does it mean to work out our salvation “with fear and trembling”? How do you relate that idea with Romans 8:15 and 1 John 4:18? (12)
6. What is the significance of the word “for” at the beginning of verse 13? (13)
7. How does God’s work in us always precede our work for him? See also 1 John 4:19. (13)
8. What effect does God’s work have in us according to verse 13? What is the significance of the fact that God works in us “to will and to work”? How does that relate to the topic of “free will”? (13)
9. What is God’s “good pleasure”? See Romans 8:28-30. (13)
10. What does Paul command in verse 14? How is it easy to understand but hard to do? (14)

11. How would your life greatly improve if you perfectly obeyed verse 14 every single day? (14)
12. How would being “children of God without blemish” greatly improve our witness to the watching world? How is our witness as a church greatly hindered by complaining and arguing? (14-15)
13. How do Christians “shine like lights” in the world? How is it related to Matthew 5:14-16? (15)
14. What does Paul mean about boasting about them on the day of Christ? What would it mean to run or labor “in vain”? (16)
15. What does Paul say about his own life and ministry in verse 17? What does it mean to be “poured out as a drink offering”? (17)
16. What does Paul command (not for the last time!) of the Philippians in verse 18? (18)

TIMOTHY AND EPAPHRODITUS (VV. 19-30)

17. Why does Paul want to send Timothy to them? (19)
18. How does Paul describe Timothy? How is that description a challenge to all Christians in every generation to imitate? (20-22)
19. What do verses 20-21 teach us about Timothy’s heart and desires? (20-21)
20. How do Christians get tangled into worldly pursuits rather than Christ’s goals? (21)
21. What does the expression “as a son with his father” help us understand Christian parenting? How about discipleship? (22)
22. How does Paul describe Epaphroditus? What happened to him? (25-30)
23. How do you relate Paul’s statement of “sorrow upon sorrow” to his statement that he is rejoicing (verses 17-18) and also his commands them to rejoice? (27)
24. Paul says he has anxiety in verse 28. How does that relate to 4:6-7? (28)
25. What does Paul say should be done for Epaphroditus in verse 29? Why is it vital for local churches to honor men and women who serve the Lord with distinction? What is the danger of doing it? (29)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul commands the Philippians to “work out their own salvation with fear and trembling” by the power of God working in them. This is to enable them to grow and to witness more effectively. He commends the example of two key fellow workers as role models: Timothy and Epaphroditus.

PAUL'S SPIRITUAL RÉSUMÉ REJECTED; CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS RECEIVED

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What great danger does Paul see in the false teachers of the circumcision group? Why is it so dangerous to trust in our own “spiritual résumé”?
2. Why does Paul present his own credentials as a Jew in verses 4-6? Why did Paul consider those credentials to be “rubbish”?
3. How is knowing Christ greater than anything that Paul had apart from Christ?
4. What does Paul teach us about the “fellowship of sharing in Christ’s sufferings”? Why is this vital for us to learn?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL’S WARNING ABOUT THE CIRCUMCISION PARTY (VV. 1-3)

1. What command does Paul give the Philippians in verse 1? What does this teach you about the importance of joy in the Christian life? (1)
2. What is said about the value of reminders in the ministry of the Word? (1)
3. What warning does he give in verse 2? Who is he talking about? Note: to answer this question, Acts 15:1 and Acts 15:5 will help. (2-3)

The False Teaching: Faith in Christ + Obedience to the Law of Moses = Salvation from Sin. The whole Book of Galatians was written to refute these false teachers. In Galatians, Paul asserts that adding any requirements to faith in Christ for salvation is no gospel at all. We are justified by faith alone, apart from works of the law.

4. What does Paul say about true Christians in verse 3? John MacArthur says this is the best single-verse definition of a Christian in the Bible. What does it mean to “worship by the Spirit of God”? What does it mean to “glory in Christ Jesus”? What does it mean to “put no confidence in the flesh”? (3)

PAUL’S SPIRITUAL RÉSUMÉ (VV. 4-6)

5. What does Paul say about himself in reference to putting confidence in the flesh? What boast does Paul make about himself? Why does he do it? (4)
6. What are the elements of Paul’s spiritual credentials as he lists them out in verses 5-6? What is the significance of each of these elements? How do they reveal what Jewish religious people valued? (5-6)
7. What does Paul mean by, “as to righteousness under the law, blameless”? (6)

8. How could other people put together similar résumés? For example, what would the credentials of a faithful Muslim look like? A moralistic atheist? A nominal Catholic? A faithful Hindu? (5-6)
9. Why is such a mentality (“Here are my credentials! Aren’t they awesome!”) so repugnant to God? Why is God so zealous to save us in such a way that totally humbles our soaring pride? For more examples, see 1 Corinthians 1:29, 1:31, Ephesians 2:8-9, James 4:6, and Judges 7:2. (5-6)

PAUL’S NEW QUEST: KNOWING CHRIST (VV. 7-11)

10. What amazing change happened to Paul concerning his spiritual résumé? When did that happen? (7-8)
11. What does Paul mean by “gain” and “loss” in verse 7? (7)
12. How has Paul come to think about all his old “spiritual gain” apart from Christ? (8)
13. What does he mean by “the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”? (8)
14. It seems like Paul is still questing, still yearning, still reaching to know Christ. Doesn’t he already know him? How do you understand this drive in Paul? (8)
15. What does Paul mean by “for his sake I have suffered the loss all things”? What had Paul lost by pursuing Christ instead of his own righteousness in Judaism? How does it relate to 1 Corinthians 4:11-13? (8)
16. Paul considers his righteous achievements to be “rubbish” (literally. “dung”). How will that be clear on Judgment Day? (8)
17. What does Paul want to gain from Christ? (8-9)
18. What righteousness does Christ offer to sinners apart from the Law? (9)
19. Paul says again his desire is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. What does this mean? Why does he keep asserting this intense desire? (10)
20. What does he mean by “share his sufferings”? (10)
21. What is the ultimate goal Paul wants in verse 11? How is it clear that our own righteousness gained by the Law will not result in our resurrection from the dead? (11)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul rejects the basic premise of the circumcision group: righteousness can be gained by the Law. Instead, he shows the deep yearning he has for knowing Christ and having his righteousness by faith.

PRESSING ON TOWARD PERFECTION IN CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-4:1

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section capture the drive and passion that should be part of every Christian's life?
2. How can Christians combine a strong sense of the imputed righteousness that is ours in justification with a passion to press on ever higher toward perfection in Christ?
3. Why is aiming for perfection a necessary goal? How could it be dangerous for Christians if not understood biblically?
4. What does this section teach us about non-Christians?
5. What does this section teach us about our future glory?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PRESSING ON TOWARD PERFECTION IN CHRIST (VV. 12-16)

1. Notice the final security of justification righteousness in verse 9. How do we see a relentless drive toward sanctification righteousness in 12-14? (12-14)
2. Why is it vital to understand these two themes and combine them properly?
3. What does Paul say he's not already obtained in verse 12? How does verses 12 relate to verse 11? (12)
4. What does the word "perfect" mean in verse 12? How does Paul strive after perfection? How should a Christian define perfection? How would the idea of Christlikeness relate to Christian perfection? (12)
5. Some Christians embraced an ideal called "Christian perfectionism" or "entire sanctification." Why is it dangerous and unbiblical to believe that we can actually attain perfection in this life? (12)
6. On the other hand, why is a constant yearning for and striving after perfection necessary for a healthy Christian life? (12)
7. What is the role of human effort in sanctification? How does Paul's "pressing on" shed light on this? How does verse 3:12 relate to 2:12? (12)
8. How does the sense of Christ taking hold of us for our final perfection give us a sense of security while we strive? How does it guarantee our final perfection? (12)
9. What does Paul emphasize in verse 13? How is it vital for us to acknowledge that we've not yet arrived? (13)

10. What does Paul mean by “forgetting what lies behind”? What role does forgetfulness play in the Christian life? On the other hand, what role does remembering play? (13)
11. What is the goal toward which Paul strives in verse 14? How do you understand this “upward call of God in Christ Jesus”? How is it both relentless and comforting at the same time? (14)
12. What sweeping statement does Paul make in verse 15? How is it that we can be “mature” and not yet “perfect”? (15)
13. Paul says that everyone should look at the Christian life this same way. He also says some Christians may think differently on some point. What does he say they should do until they come to see things his way? (15-16)
14. What does it mean to hold true what we’ve already attained? (16)

THE PATTERN OF LIFE FOR CHRISTIANS VS. NON-CHRISTIANS (VV. 3:17-4:1)

15. Paul commends his life as a worthy example to emulate. Why is such imitation of role models essential to Christian discipleship? (17)
16. In verse 17, Paul speaks of an “example” or “pattern” of lifestyle. He also uses this word in 2 Timothy 1:13. There he speaks of a pattern of sound words, here a pattern of daily lifestyle. Why are both patterns necessary in Christian discipleship: book learning and life learning? (17)
17. What devastating things does Paul say about the lost in verses 18-19? (18-19)
18. What does it mean to be an enemy of the cross? What are Paul’s emotions toward those who live apart from Christ? (18)
19. What does Paul mean by saying their end is destruction? What about the expression, “Their god is their belly”? How do people live that out? (19)
20. What is the significance of the statement that our “citizenship is in heaven”? How should this limit patriotism for anyone on earth? (20)
21. How is eagerly awaiting Christ’s return essential to a Christian’s life here on earth? (20)
22. What does verse 21 teach us about Christ’s power? What does it teach about our resurrection bodies? (21)
23. How does Philippians 4:1 sum up all of Philippians 3? How do you reconcile the image of “straining forward” and “standing firm in the Lord”? (4:1)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives a powerful overview of the Christian life as a constant pressing after perfection.

UNITY, JOY, AND CONTENTMENT IN CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 4:2-23

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section teach us vital principles for a joyful life in Christ?
2. What can we learn here about Paul's approach to Christian discipleship?
3. Why is consistent contentment in Christ so important, but also so difficult to attain?
4. What does this chapter teach us about financial generosity and its rewards?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

APPEAL FOR UNITY—EUODIA AND SYNTYCHE (VV. 2-3)

1. What do these verses teach us about Euodia and Syntyche? How would the ministry of the gospel of Christ in Philippi suffer if this rift is not healed? (2)
2. What role do other Christians have when there is a conflict between fellow Christians? How does Paul appeal to his "true companion" to help? (3)

EXHORTATIONS FOR A JOYFUL, FRUITFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE (VV. 4-9)

3. What is the significance of Paul's frequent commands to us to "rejoice in the Lord," even to the point of saying it twice in this one verse? (4)
4. How is joy in the Lord a barometer of Christian health? How does James 1-4 help us understand this? (4)
5. Why is "reasonableness" a powerful Christian attribute? What would the opposite be? How is it a measure of Christian maturity for a person to be easy to approach, convict of sin, negotiate with, and be with? Can someone with strong convictions and a zealous personality also be a gentle, reasonable person? How do you harmonize these? (5)
6. What is anxiety? How is it so dishonoring to God? Why is it wrong to be anxious about anything? How is hope the opposite of anxiety? (6-7)
7. How do verses 6-7 give us a powerful weapon in the fight against anxiety? How is a healthy prayer life, with thanksgiving, the best antidote to anxiety?
8. How does the peace of God "surpass all understanding"? How does peace "guard" our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus? Why is that essential if we're going to be peace-filled and hope-filled in the midst of a turbulent life? (7)
9. What does Paul command that Christians think about in verse 8? Look at each of the words of verse 8. How is it essential for Christians to control their thought life? (8)

10. What bold statement does Paul make as a disciple-maker in verse 9? How does it point to both “patterns” of discipleship—doctrinal pattern like in 2 Timothy 1:13, and lifestyle pattern like in Philippians 3:17? (9)

THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT (VV. 10-23)

11. What is the overall purpose of this section (4:10-20) of Philippians? How could we call this the most exalted thank you note in history? (10-20)
12. What is Paul expressing thankfulness for in verse 10?
13. What clarification does he make in verse 11? What is his goal in verses 11-13? (11-13)
14. What is Christian contentment? How is it tied to a healthy doctrine of God’s sovereignty in daily life (providence)?
15. How is consistent Christian contentment a “secret” to be learned? How is it evident that many Christians have not yet learned it? (11-12)
16. How would consistent Christian contentment in all circumstances be a powerful Christian witness? How would your life change if you were consistently content with your earthly circumstances? (11-12)
17. Why is it a challenge to be content in *both* times of plenty and times of want? How does the prosperity gospel fail to put both on display? (11-12)
18. What does Paul say is the secret of consistent contentment? How do you understand the relationship between strength and contentment? Why is it a display of moral weakness to be discontent and to complain about circumstances? (13)
19. What topic does Paul address in verses 14-20? After having made the point that Paul didn’t need their money in order to be content, yet he still says it was good for them to care for him. How do we harmonize these? (14-20)
20. What does Paul say about their financial gift in verse 18? What does he teach about such gifts in verse 17? What does it mean that such “fragrant offerings” are a “credit” to our account? (17-18)
21. What does Paul promise them in verse 19? (19)
22. How does verse 20 sum up this whole section very well? (20)
23. What is the significance of verse 22? How is it very exciting? (22)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul concludes his epistle by pleading for unity, exhorting toward joy, and instructing them on contentment and the value of storing up treasure by generosity.

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About the Author

Dr. Andrew M. Davis is the senior pastor of the First Baptist Church of Durham, North Carolina and the founder of Two Journeys Ministry. He holds a bachelor's degree from MIT, a Masters in Divinity from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is also a visiting professor of church history at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Council Member of The Gospel Coalition, and a trustee of the International Mission Board. He and his wife Christi have five children.

Books By Dr. Andrew M. Davis

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