

How Do We Live As A Citizen Of Heaven?

Philippians 1:27 - 2:18

Today, it is all about me.

In sales training, you must show the “What’s in it for me?”

What Does The Bible Say?

37 They replied, “When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left.” 38 But Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?” (Mark 10:37–38 NLT)

Jesus knew that James and John had missed the point.

41 When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. 42 So Jesus called them together and

said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them.

43 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:41–45 NLT)

Jesus is our ultimate example of serving others.

Christianity calls us to live a purpose beyond ourselves.

27 Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. (Philippians 1:27 NLT)

We stand together with one spirit and purpose to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the kingdom.

28 Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. (Philippians 1:28 NLT)

To conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the kingdom, we stand together without being intimidated by our enemies.

29 For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. 30 We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it. (Philippians 1:29–30 NLT)

As a citizen of heaven, we have been granted the privilege of suffering for Him.

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? 2 Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. (Philippians 2:1–2 NLT)

Philippians 1 is “Christ first,” and Philippians 2 is “others next.”

3 Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. 4 Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. 5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

(Philippians 2:3–5 NLT)

Putting others first means you understand it isn’t all about you.

Paul gives us four examples of the submissive mind: Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:1–11), Paul himself (Phil. 2:12–18), Timothy (Phil. 2:19–24), and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25–30).

How Can You Obey?

So how do we live as a citizen of heaven?

Understand we no longer we live for ourselves, but for Christ.

We serve as Christ within a team, or as the Bible calls a body.

We put others first.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Additional Notes:

This week's Deep Dive Into the Bible is inspired from Michael S. Heiser, *I Dare You Not to Bore Me with the Bible*, ed. John D. Barry and Rebecca Van Noord (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; Bible Study Magazine, 2014), 104–105.

Explore:

Verses in Insights To The Biblical World:

When the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, “Moses! Moses!” “Here I am!” Moses replied. 5 “Do not come any closer,” the

Lord warned. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. Exodus 3: 4-5 NLT

17 “Then the Tabernacle, carried by the Levites, will set out from the middle of the camp. All the tribes are to travel in the same order that they camp, each in position under the appropriate family banner. Numbers 2:17 NLT

10 The other goat, the scapegoat chosen by lot to be sent away, will be kept alive, standing before the Lord. When it is sent away to Azazel in the wilderness, the people will be purified and made right with the Lord. Leviticus 16:10 NLT

17 Then Naaman said, “All right, but please allow me to load two of my mules with earth from this place, and I will take it back home with me. From now on I will never again offer burnt

offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the Lord. 2 Kings
5:17 NLT

20 Must I die on foreign soil, far from the presence of the Lord?
1 Samuel 26:20a NLT

17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in
him. Ephesians 3:17a NLT

Explore:

On his second missionary journey Paul visited Philippi. Through
his ministry there several people trusted Christ as their Savior.

Some of these were Lydia and her family and the Philippian jailer and his family (Acts 16:14–34).

Soon after Paul's visit a local church was established in Philippi.

The church helped the apostle in different ways so this epistle was written to acknowledge their help, as well as to help them.

Philippians is personal and practical in its tone and teaching.

Paul emphasized the need for believers to rejoice in Christ.

“Joy” (chara) is used four times (Phil. 1:4, 25; 2:2; 4:1);

“rejoice” (chairō) occurs eight times (1:18 [twice]; 2:17–18; 3:1, 4:4 [twice], 10); and “glad” occurs thrice (2:17–18, 28). (In 1:26

the word “joy” is a different Gr. word; there it is the word

“glad,” “boast,” or “glory,” [kauchēma], which also occurs in

2:16 and 3:3.) Paul wrote frequently in this epistle about the

mind of a child of God. One's manner of life is truly a reflection of what occupies his mind.

Robert P. Lightner, "Philippians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 646–647.

Explore:

The Date of the Epistle

Paul was in bondage when he wrote Philippians. But all do not agree which imprisonment he was experiencing when he wrote the book. Most believe he was in Rome at the time; some suggest he was in Caesarea; and a few argue for Ephesus.

The Scriptures give no clear indication of any imprisonment in Ephesus. As for Caesarea, Paul was confined there for two years, but imminent martyrdom is not suggested in the account which describes this confinement (Acts 23–24). His reference to the palace guard (Phil. 1:13) as well as his concern about facing

possible death (vv. 20–26) argue for his writing from Rome. The date of the writing would then be a.d. 61 or 62.

Robert P. Lightner, “Philippians,” in *The Bible Knowledge*

Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F.

Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985),

646–647.

Explore:

Since Ephesians gives no hint of his release from prison, as do Philippians (1:19–26) and Philemon (v. 22), it is reasonable to think that he wrote it in the early part of his stay, or about a.d. 60. This would have been when Paul was kept under guard in rental quarters (Acts 28:30). Following his release he traveled, wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and was martyred in Rome.

Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 614.

Explore:

The word fellowship simply means "to have in common." But true Christian fellowship is really much deeper than sharing coffee and pie, or even enjoying a golf game together. Too often what we think is "fellowship" is really only acquaintanceship or friendship. You cannot have fellowship with someone unless you have something in common; and for Christian fellowship, this means the possessing of eternal life within the heart. Unless a person has trusted Christ as his Savior, he knows nothing of "the fellowship of the Gospel." In Philippians 2:1, Paul writes about "the fellowship of the Spirit," because when a person is born

again he receives the gift of the Spirit (Rom. 8:9). There is also “the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil. 3:10). When we share what we have with others, this is also fellowship (Phil. 4:15, translated “communicate” in kjv).

So, true Christian fellowship is much more than having a name on a church roll or being present at a meeting. It is possible to be close to people physically and miles away from them spiritually. One of the sources of Christian joy is this fellowship that believers have in Jesus Christ. Paul was in Rome, his friends were miles away in Philippi, but their spiritual fellowship was real and satisfying. When you have the single mind, you will not complain about circumstances because you know that difficult circumstances will result in the strengthening of the fellowship of the Gospel.

Paul uses three thoughts in Philippians 1:1–11 that describe true Christian fellowship: I have you in my mind (Phil. 1:3–6), I have

you in my heart (Phil. 1:7–8), I have you in my prayers (Phil. 1:9–11).

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 64.

Explore:

In Philippians 1, Paul informed the readers that he considered it an honor to suffer on behalf of Christ, even suffering to the point of death. In chapter 2, he invited the readers to share in his suffering and to live lives of humility, modeled best by Jesus himself.

Believers Think and Act Humbly, Following the Supreme Example of Jesus (Philippians 2:1-11)

Verse 1 could easily be misunderstood in the English translation of the original Greek. Paul was not questioning whether or not the Philippian believers possessed the elements expressed.

Instead, the word “since,” rather than “if,” better conveys the meaning. Several qualities are mentioned in this verse, each of which would help the Philippians to live as God desired. First, the word encouragement or consolation referred to the comfort found only in Christ that these believers were sharing with others. Second, knowing the blessing of the love of Christ enables the believer to share this experience with those who need it most. Third, the participation or fellowship that the Spirit gives to the believer can be lived out in a world of disunity. Finally, affection and compassion should mark the believer’s relationship with members of God’s family.

Since the Philippians experienced these key characteristics, Paul asked them to complete or fill-up his joy by maintaining unity within the body of Christ (verse 2). Corresponding to the four qualities mentioned in the previous verse are four specific ways these qualities can be manifested. Many commentators see the fact that Paul was specific in his instructions as an indicator that

these qualities were needed within the church at Philippi. Paul encouraged them to have the same basic outlook or mindset, have the same unconditional love for one another, and to be united in spirit with the same purpose.

When believers pursue unity with one another, they are willing to sacrifice their own preferences for another's (verse 3). The word conceit literally means empty glory, the likely cause of the selfish ambitions or inflated egos being addressed by the apostle. Unity is an essential part of the community of faith. But unity is only realized where humility is present. If there is no humility, there can be no real unity. Thus, Paul's admonition was to exercise humility for the sake of building and maintaining unity.

The means of expressing such humility is given in verse 4. Instead of focusing on their own desires, interests, and preferences, believers should be more concerned with the interests of others, especially those in the household of faith.

After all, a preoccupation with self is sin and always leads to further sinful actions.

Paul spoke of humility as the attitude that considers others as worthy of service and focuses on their good more than on selfish considerations. To drive home his point, he transitioned to Jesus Himself as history's best illustration of that attitude or mindset. These verses serve as an amazing summary of Jesus' humanity and divinity and are believed by many scholars to be an ancient hymn of the faith the early church sang.

Because Christ is the supreme example of humility and service, the Philippians were exhorted to have the same attitude and mindset that He did (verse 5). This attitude is especially seen in relationships and how individuals treat one another. The specifics of Jesus' mindset of humility were spelled out in verses 6 through 8.

Paul used the word nature or form in verses 6 and 7. This is a crucial word that stresses reality or essential nature. In verse 6, the apostle was stressing the fact that the very essence or nature of Christ is that of God. It is important to note that long before Jesus became man, He was, by nature, God. He did not, however, consider His being equal to the Father as robbery or something to be held on to or taken advantage of. In other words, Christ did not consider the expression of His divinity to be something to hold on to regardless of cost.

Instead, according to verse 7, He emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant and was born in the likeness of man. The word emptied conveys the notion of divesting of self-interests and not a stripping away of His deity. Instead of clinging to the rights He deserved as God, Jesus took on the form of a servant or a slave and was born in the likeness of men. While He looked like other men and was born in the same fashion as other men, He was more than man; He was still God.

The human fashion or form in verse 8 speaks of an outer appearance that may be temporary. This stands to reason because Jesus' nature as God is eternal. The temporary fashion of His human form is further revealed in the fact that Jesus became obedient to death. He died a cruel death on a cross. Torture and death on a cross were reserved for the worst of criminals. Yet, Jesus humbled Himself to experience such atrocity for our sake. What better illustration of humility could Paul have provided?

In verse 9, the subject changes from Jesus to God the Father. Therefore, or for this reason, shows a cause-effect relationship between the self-humbling of Christ and His exaltation by the Father. Because of His humiliation and sacrifice, the Father gave Jesus a name that is above every name, referring to the exalted place of honor deserved by the Son.

Consequently, and in keeping with the exaltation of Christ by the Father, every member of the human race will one day respond in the same way (verses 10-11). First, every knee will bow, an act that was prophesied in Isaiah 45:23, written seven hundred years before Jesus' birth. The simple fact is, everyone will bow in recognition of who Jesus is. This refers to spiritual beings (in Heaven), living human beings (on earth), and the dead awaiting resurrection (under the earth). Not only will every creature bow, but they will also confess or acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. These are acts and confessions that bring glory to the Father for His amazing work of salvation and the ministry of His Son (see also Romans 14:11).

Explore:

God established the church to make disciples and transfer the faith. Unity and humility are essential for the church to fulfill this mission. Discuss this with family members.

Explore:

In Philippians 2:7, Paul stated that Jesus emptied Himself or made Himself nothing. In theology, this is known as the doctrine of kenosis, a term that literally refers to a self-emptying. It has been the topic of much discussion and debate throughout Church history. What does it mean that Christ emptied Himself? While the Greek term for emptied points to the divesting of self-interests, at no time did Jesus cease to be God. Both His humanity and deity were necessary for Jesus to accomplish the mission for which He was sent. In light of the verses preceding and following verse 7, the term seems to imply that He temporarily laid aside His rights as God in order to become the servant of men. It is not that Jesus laid aside His divinity, but that He took on humanity. God the Son emptied Himself by taking on that which He was not—flesh and blood. In doing so, He counted Himself nothing; He rejected any and all self-

centered considerations to serve all humanity. This is the greatest demonstration of humility.

Explore:

Believers Live Out What God Is Working in Them

(Philippians 2:12-18)

Next, Paul called the Philippians to work out or live out their salvation with a sense of their own inadequacy and of the seriousness of representing Christ (verse 12). Work out, as used by the apostle, had the basic idea of bringing to completion. This was not an admonition for the believers to work for their salvation, or devise their own means of salvation, but for them to put into practice in their daily actions what the Spirit was working into their lives.

At the same time, he assured them that God would be at work in them (verse 13). He would give them the will and power to do His will if they relied on Him. Because they lived in a sinful

generation, they were challenged to let their actions and attitudes reflect their identity in Christ. Because they were God's children, they needed to model how living for Christ is different from living for the world. In doing so, they would be holding firm to God's Word and proving the genuineness of their faith.

In verse 14, Paul gave the Philippians a specific command regarding how they could work out their salvation. They should do all things without grumbling or complaining. The specific use of these terms seems to indicate that these were recurring issues within the Philippian congregation. By definition, grumbling is typically directed at specific individuals. And while complaining often referred to a person complaining within themselves or toward God concerning their situation, here it seems more likely to be directed toward or about others within the church.

As verse 15 states, believers, both then and now, live in a crooked and depraved generation. The wording of this verse echoed the description given by Moses in Deuteronomy 32:5. In

the midst of a people fitting this description, children of God are to have lives that are above criticism and are thoroughly wholesome in character. Without blemish was an expression used to describe acceptable animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. When believers live in the way Paul portrayed here, they shine as lights in a dark world.

In verse 16, the Philippians were encouraged to hold fast to the word of life. The expression could mean either to “hold firmly” or to “hold forth.” Paul could have been encouraging them to hold out or offer the word of life, the message that brings life, to those around them. Or he could have been encouraging them to keep obeying God’s Word with the return of Christ in view.

Most translators tend to lean toward the latter.

In verses 17 and 18, the apostle returned to the subject of his imprisonment and the fact that his life might be taken because of his faith. The drink offering of which he spoke was an ancient

Old Covenant sacrifice that represented pouring out one's life for God. In spite of this possibility, Paul could rejoice and encouraged the Philippian congregation to rejoice with him.

Explore:

This is the simplest self-identification used by Paul in any of his letters, except for the two to Thessalonica. In nine of the thirteen letters (all but here, Philem., and the Th. letters) he identifies himself as an apostle, either using that word alone or along with another identification. Perhaps he did not feel that his apostleship needed to be mentioned to the Philippians.

Only here, in Titus, and in Romans does he use the word servant in the formal opening. This word (Greek *doulos*) referred to the bondslave in Paul's world, totally at his owner-master's disposal. By this word Paul indicates that he (with Timothy) is the property of his Master, Jesus Christ. He does the Lord's bidding.

A few writers have preferred to find the significance of “servants” in the fact that the O.T. sometimes refers to the special servants/prophets of the Lord. This would give the word a “higher” sense as referring to God’s “accredited” spokesmen. But Paul is writing to Gentiles, primarily, and the common Greek use of the word is more probable. Ronald Russell suggests that the phrase “servants of Jesus Christ” is anticipatory: “The meaning of being a servant of Christ and the related experience of suffering are definite themes throughout the letter” (297). See 1:13, 17; 2:7, 17, 22, 25; 3:7, 8, 17; 4:3.

Robert E. Picirilli, “Commentary on the Book of Ephesians and Philippians,” in Galatians through Colossians, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, First Edition., The Randall House Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1988), 272.

Explore:

In seven of the thirteen letters there is an “associate writer,” as we might express Timothy’s role here. (The others are 1, 2 Cor., Col., 1, 2 Th., and Philem.) In five of those, Timothy has that honor. I do not mean that Timothy helped dictate the letter or was, like Paul, inspired. Furthermore, in this letter Paul does not use “we” (as in some other letters), but “I” throughout.

Philippians is very personal.

Still, considering how sparingly Paul named others with him in these formal openings, the role means more than a mere co-worker present at the time and sending greetings. Paul had other ways of sending greetings from co-workers, usually at the end of his letters. Someone associated with him in the formal opening should be regarded, therefore, as one present at the time, especially interested in and known to the recipients of the letter, and probably one with whom Paul would have discussed the situation at the letter’s destination and what he was writing them. Indeed, he might even have sat in on the session (s) when

the letter was dictated. (There is no reason to think he was the scribe; see Rom. 1:1 and 16:22.)

Robert E. Picirilli, “Commentary on the Book of Ephesians and Philippians,” in Galatians through Colossians, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, First Edition., The Randall House Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1988), 272.

Explore:

The anxiety of the Philippians for Paul’s welfare is understandable. His circumstances had changed. No longer was he allowed the relative freedom of living within his own hired house in Rome (Acts 28:16, 23, 30 f.). He had recently come to trial in connection with his appeal to Caesar and was currently in prison awaiting the verdict. The decision, once reached, was beyond appeal; he would either be released or sentenced to death (1:7, 13, 16, 19–26; 2:17). Paul was not deceived about the seriousness of the moment, nor was he unappreciative of his

friends' concern (cf. 4:14). Yet the appropriate response to anxiety was—and remains—a quiet reliance upon God expressed through prayer (1:19; 4:6).

Paul has peace of mind, for behind the troubles that have befallen him he can discern the hand and purpose of God. His altered circumstances had actually served to advance the gospel (12). During the course of his trial it had become known to the whole praetorium guard (Caesar's elite troops) and to all associated with his case that his imprisonment was due to his bold witness for Christ, not for a criminal offense (13).

Moreover, as a direct result of his defense of the gospel, local believers were proclaiming Christ with greater boldness (14).

Their number included slaves and freedmen attached to the emperor's residence (4:22). In this turn of events Paul saw the affirmation of the principle he had expressed earlier in a Letter to Rome: 'In everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose' (Rom.

8:28). He knew from his experience that the Christian does not live ‘under the circumstances’ but above them!

Arthur E. Cundall et al., *Romans–Revelation, Daily Devotional Bible Commentary* (A. J. Holman Company, 2019), 261–262.

Explore:

This profound thankfulness and love led to specific prayers for the Philippians, as it should for us. Christians shouldn’t just say, “You’re in our thoughts.” We should say, “You’re in our prayers” —and we should mean it! Paul certainly did. His deep, joyful contemplation of the Philippians prompted him to pray for some specific things, things that can only come from God.

First, he prayed that their love would continue to grow and would be characterized by “real knowledge and all discernment” (1:9). I like to picture love like a river. It needs to be guided by the banks of knowledge and discernment. Paul isn’t telling the Philippians to let their love blind them to truth and righteousness

so they end up overlooking sin and compromising holiness.

That's a false interpretation of "love" we often see in the world today. True Christian love is guided by the best interest of others. With true knowledge and discernment, love learns to spot the phony, the wrong, the evil. It learns to "approve the things that are excellent" (1:10). This love, guided by wisdom, will preserve believers in righteousness until "the day of Christ"—the Second Coming, when the Lord Jesus will reward them for faithfulness.

Second, Paul prayed that they would be filled with the "fruit of righteousness" (1:11). Don't confuse this with self-righteousness, personal piety, or self-motivated works. Paul is referring to the righteousness of Christ working in us by the indwelling Holy Spirit to produce fruit in our lives (see Gal. 5:22–23). The result of such good works empowered by God will be "the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:11)—not our own praise and glory. Jesus said essentially the same thing: "Let your

light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

What a solid basis for abiding joy! When Paul scanned the ten-year life span of the body of Christ in Philippi, he had every reason to rejoice in confidence, as expressed in thanksgiving, prayer, and praise.

Charles R. Swindoll, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 9 of *Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2017), 20.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

1. Believers Think and Act Humbly, Following the Supreme Example of Jesus.
2. Believers Live Out What God Is Working in Them.

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: The apostle Paul likely wrote this letter to the Christians in Philippi while under house arrest in Rome, around AD 62.

Paul led the way in obeying Christ's command to take the gospel to all people groups, establishing churches and teaching them to obey Christ's commands.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or

her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ- followers. When they do,

Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

How do you explain the inspiration of Scripture? Does it include the option of an editor?

Question 2 of 5

What is your definition of humility?

Question 3 of 5

How does Christianity call us to live a purpose beyond ourselves? What does that mean to you?

Question 4 of 5

What does it mean to live in a worthy way of Christ and the Gospel?

Question 5 of 5

What are examples of ways we can put others' interests ahead of our own?