

# SUMMER OF PHILIPPIANS

**READING COMPANION** ADAPTED FROM RIGHTNOW MEDIA STUDY:  
THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS BY JOBY MARTIN

## WEEK 1: JOY (JUNE 7 - JUNE 13)

**READ:** Philippians 1:1–11

**REFLECTION:** The apostle Paul, writing this letter to the church in Philippi from his prison cell (vs. 12–13), may seem an unlikely messenger of joy. However, even from prison, Paul’s opening words are filled with gratitude for what God has done and is doing in the people he loves. The good news of Jesus’ work for us not only sustains our joy in seasons of disappointment, but also unites us with other Christians in the church. The church is meant to be a joyful community. A joyless and isolated Christian is foreign to the New Testament. Even though joy and community are hallmarks of Christian belief, we sometimes feel lacking in both. As we continue studying Paul’s letter to the Philippian church, consider your own life and how joyful and connected you feel to God and his people.

**JOURNAL:** When have you experienced joy because of Jesus? How did that joy affect other areas of your life? If you can’t identify a specific joy with Jesus, what do you think could be preventing your joy?

**PRAYER:** Lord, may our joy be rooted in Jesus and expressed in the church. May we begin to know that the gospel, not our circumstances, sustains our joy. Help me to feel excited that we belong to a family of believers, and help me either start or strengthen a meaningful relationship with other Christians. Amen.

## WEEK 2: OPPORTUNITY (JUNE 14 - 20)

**READ:** Philippians 1:12-30

**REFLECTION:** In verse 12, Paul writes that his imprisonment “has really served to advance the gospel.” Paul views his whole life, even this devastating experience, as an opportunity to tell others about the God he worships. He is convinced of his purpose to “advance the gospel” no matter the circumstances. Because of God’s work of salvation for us, we should be focused on Him, faithful to what He has called us to do, and free from things that drag us off course. Focused, faithful, and free lives are lives “worthy of the gospel of Christ” (v. 27) and allow us to advance His kingdom.

**JOURNAL:** What opportunities do you believe God has presented to you to advance the gospel? Why? How can you carry out that purpose this week in your normal day-to-day responsibilities?

**PRAYER:** Lord, help me view my whole life as an opportunity to share the gospel, even when facing significant obstacles. Help me to know that our vision of “the good life” motivates our actions. May my heart feel encouraged that God is sovereign over our good and bad circumstances. May my life be purposeful with our thoughts and actions as we try to live like Jesus. Amen.

## WEEK 3: HUMILITY (JUNE 21 - JUNE 27)

**READ:** Philippians 2:1-18

**REFLECTION:** Whether or not we enjoy being in the spotlight, we often think of ourselves before we think about others. Whenever we make big decisions or read the headlines, we're quick to think, "What does this mean for me?" If anyone had a reason to think of his own needs before the needs of others, it was the imprisoned Paul. However, he exemplified and encouraged a different approach. Paul began his plea for humility by reminding the Philippians of their unity. What's already theirs in Jesus, encouragement, comfort, love, participation in the Spirit, affection, sympathy, and joy, should be expressed to each other (vv. 1-2). Humility and unity go hand in hand.

**JOURNAL:** Does Jesus' example of sacrifice and service in these verses encourage you or convict you? Why?

**PRAYER:** Lord, by modeling Jesus' humility and service, help me foster unity within the church and showcase God's character outside the church. Let me know that God is at work developing Jesus' humble heart within us. Help me to feel honored when I can share in Jesus' sufferings. Help me to eliminate complaining and grumbling as a response to our circumstances. Amen.

## WEEK 4: FAITHFULNESS (JUNE 28 - JULY 4TH)

**READ:** Philippians 2:19-30

**REFLECTION:** Epaphroditus experienced hardship while serving Paul and the Philippians. He became seriously ill, "near to death" (v. 27), and even during that illness, he was concerned not for himself but for the Philippians' worry for him. His level of concern for his church, even during his affliction, exemplifies the selflessness of Christ. Paul gives specific instructions for how the Philippians should receive Epaphroditus when he returns: "[W]elcome him . . . with great joy and hold people like him in honor" (v. 29). Not only should the Philippians "honor" Epaphroditus, but they should honor other people whose character and faithfulness mirror Epaphroditus'.

**JOURNAL:** Who in your life do you feel you should honor, but haven't yet? What could you do to honor them this week (a gift, phone call, text, etc.)? How can you hold yourself accountable to honor that person this week?

**PRAYER:** Lord, we are called to cultivate relationships within the church by expressing honor and gratitude toward one another. Help me to know that honor and gratitude are meant to be expressed to those we respect, and allow me to feel affection for our church family. Help me this week to express honor or gratitude to at least one person in our lives. Amen.



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## WEEK 5: RIGHT LIVING (JULY 5TH - JULY 11TH)

**READ:** Philippians 3:1-11

**REFLECTION:** Ultimately, our salvation is based on faith, not works. Referencing Ephesians 2:8–10, “We are saved to good works, but we are not saved by our works.” The enemies of the Philippian church were confident “in the flesh” (v. 3), meaning their identification with God’s people through circumcision. While we may not face the same temptation to ground our confidence before God in circumcision, we are tempted to think we can do things that will make us right with God. Knowing Jesus means having an authentic relationship with him where we “cherish” Him above everything. This means we must “repent,” or turn from, our love of anything else more than Jesus, even good things like families, privileges, or comforts.

**JOURNAL:** What would change about your relationship with Jesus if you viewed your efforts for right living as gifts from Him? What would it look like to acknowledge God as the source of your good works (i.e., through prayer, Scripture reading, etc.)? Be specific with your answer.

**PRAYER:** Lord, we rejoice and trust in Jesus’s finished work, not in our accomplishments or performance. Help me to know that faith in Jesus is the primary identifier of your people. Allow me to feel joyful that Jesus saves us apart from anything we can do. Help me this week to adopt one spiritual practice (Ex: Prayer, Scripture memory, community, etc.) to remember that our good works are gifts from God. Amen.

## WEEK 6: PURSUIT (JULY 12TH - JULY 18TH)

**READ:** Philippians 13:12-4:1

**REFLECTION:** There’s a big difference between working for a position in God’s family and working from a position of belonging to God’s family. In verse 14, Paul distinguishes between the “goal” ahead of him and the “prize” that awaits him. “The prize is that we get [Jesus].” One translation helps explain this distinction, saying, “I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us” (Phil 3:14 NLT). The end of our race is Jesus’ return to perfect and resurrect us. The prize we receive at the end of the race is more of Him.

**JOURNAL:** What do you think of when imagining the “prize” that awaits you when Jesus returns? Are those mental pictures related to Jesus’s presence with you? Why, or why not?

**PRAYER:** Lord, help me to become more like Jesus, and help me to continually trust that God loves me. Help me to follow the example of mature disciples. However, help me to also know that the gospel is not about earning anything from God, but putting in effort towards Him. Allow me to feel loved by Him, even when we feel like our past disqualifies us. Help me to focus on Jesus when our past or sinful desires distract us. Amen.



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## WEEK 7: PEACE (JULY 19TH - JULY 25TH)

**READ:** Philippians 4:2-9

**REFLECTION:** Do you struggle with anxiety or worry? There's a difference between clinical anxiety and general worry that focuses too much on our circumstances. Thankfully, Paul shares how we can combat our anxiety and worry: prayer. Many of us know that we can and should pray to God about everything that troubles us. However, we often fail to go to God as a first response when our circumstances shake us. Some of us believe what we worry about is too "small" for God, so we don't go to Him when we feel anxious. To counter this thought, remember that you are a big deal to God; therefore, your worries and anxieties are a big deal to God.

**JOURNAL:** Do you regularly pray when you feel anxious? Why, or why not? What else do you typically rely on to combat anxiety when you're worried? Why?

**PRAYER:** Lord, I pray that we can experience the peace of God by practicing gratitude and praying about what worries us. Help us to know that You offer us peace through prayer. Encourage me to feel hopeful about overcoming worry by being able to respond to worry and anxiety with prayer. Amen.

## WEEK 8: CONTENTMENT (JULY 26TH - AUGUST 1ST)

**READ:** Philippians 4:10-23

**REFLECTION:** Though Paul received support from the Philippians, he makes it clear that he wasn't in "need" of what the Philippians sent. Paul uses the Greek word *hysterēsis* to describe being in need, which means "lacking in what is essential or needed" (Louw-Nida Greek English Lexicon). So, although he rejoiced at the Philippians expressing care for him, he didn't lack anything. The type of contentment that Paul describes in verses 11 – 13 isn't based on what's happening around us or to us, it's based on Jesus. Paul claims, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (v. 13). While we might be familiar with this verse in popular culture, the context dictates that when Paul says, "all things," he's talking about the extremes of living abundantly and in desperation (v. 12). It's not about accomplishing a massive achievement. Rather, no matter his circumstances, he can be content because of Jesus, who strengthens him.

**JOURNAL:** Re-read Philippians 4:11 – 13. How does the context help your understanding of verse 13? How can we know that Christ is strengthening us? What does it look like for Christ to strengthen you?

**PRAYER:** Lord, help us to learn to be content in every circumstance by trusting Jesus and rejecting our impulse to find satisfaction in lesser things. Remind me that contentment is counterintuitive and must be learned. Help me to feel at peace regardless of our circumstances. Also, root out what robs us of contentment and take our discontentment to Jesus in prayer. Amen.



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