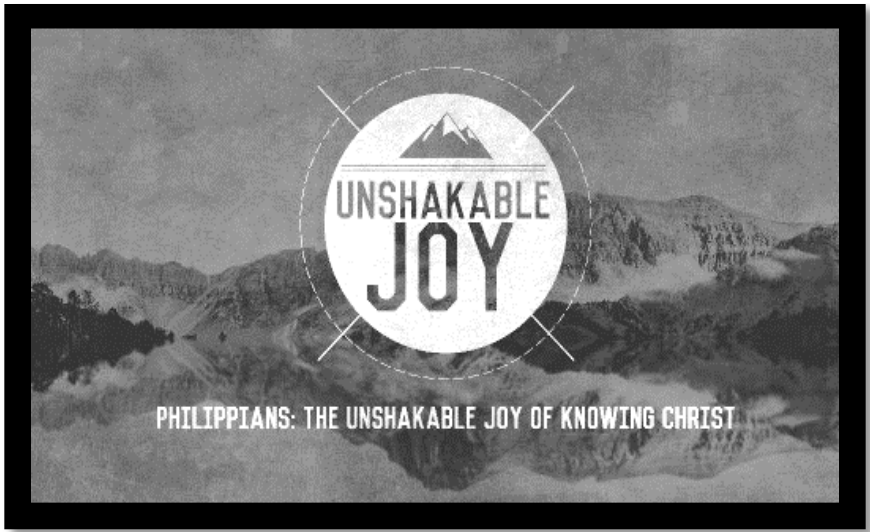


Philippians: Unshakable Joy Companion Devotional



Redeemer Baptist Church
at Romeo

Week 4:
January 17-23, 2022

WHY USE THIS GUIDE?

We are going to be covering a very rich letter by Paul in just four weeks. That means that there will be details that will not be covered from the pulpit, but we want you to walk away from this study with an understanding of the book of Philippians as a whole and the tools to feel confident to study the Bible on your own or with your family.

Try to stay on track with the readings because they will build to the message on Sunday. If you do this preparation, you will be in the best place to hear and understand all that is going on as we open the text together in corporate worship.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE: FIVE STEPS

1. Before you do anything, pray. This isn't some magical incantation to utter, it is a recognition that we are not in the right frame of mind and attitude often when we come to Scripture. Prayer helps us to humble ourselves to be teachable by the Holy Spirit.
2. Read the day's introduction then take your time reading the assigned passage. These are usually short passages, so read them more than once or write it down in a journal to help grasp what Paul is saying.
3. Remember that Paul is writing to a real group of people in a real time and place. Ask yourself, "What did Paul's words mean to the people that originally heard it?" Put yourself in their shoes. What is the theme, and what encouragement or criticism is being offered in this passage?
4. Work through the questions in the booklet. Ask yourself what this passage is teaching you about Jesus or about yourself. Although Paul was writing to those people in Philippi, the Holy Spirit intended this passage for you here and now.
5. Pray again. Ask God to help you live out the teachings and truths that you have learned. These could be things about the character of God in Christ, the ministry and zeal of Paul, the situation of the Philippians, or something else that God has impressed upon your heart.

Monday, January 17 – Week 4 – Day 1

As chapter 4 opens, Paul is concluding his thoughts from chapter 3 and urging the Philippians to stand firm in their heavenly citizenship. Then as the chapter continues, we see Paul continuing his plea for unity and humility in a very personal and heartfelt way.

Read Philippians 4:1-3

Verse 1 is a transitional sentence in that it looks back to what came before and forward to what's ahead. Which word in verse 1 points us backward? Which word points us forward?

How does Paul's call to "stand firm" (4:1) relate thematically to what came before (3:17–21) and what comes after (4:2–9)?

Paul addresses the church with six different affectionate terms in verse 1. Note them. Why do you think Paul stresses this so? Do you see any other warm, personal terms in verses 2–3?

From verse 2, we learn that there were two ladies in Philippi having a disagreement. Paul urges them to make amends, to set aside whatever differences they have and seek peace with each other. Why would Paul care if everybody is getting along or not?

We don't have any details about their quarrel, but Paul's plea to "agree in the Lord" should remind us that unity has been a large theme in Philippians. What other verses in Philippians 1–3 touch on unity?

Tuesday, January 18 – Week 4 – Day 2

We can be tempted to form little camps based upon our opinions, to hold grudges over real and perceived slights, and to focus on repaying people what we think they deserve. But while all these things may give us a smug sense of satisfaction, they will never produce real, deep, and abiding joy. When the people in a church dwell together in the unity of the gospel and together pursue the building up of one another in love, they are providing fertile soil for the roots of deep joy.

Read Philippians 4:4-7.

Paul specifies the kind of joy he is calling the church to: it is “in the Lord” (v. 4). What does it mean to rejoice “in the Lord?”

In verse 5, Paul calls the Philippians to “reasonableness” (or gentleness) followed by a brief comment: “The Lord is at hand” (or near). What does the Lord’s nearness have to do with the pursuit of gentleness?

Verse 6 issues one negative command (what not to do) and one positive command (what to do). What are they, and how do they relate to each other?

In verse 6, Paul uses multiple words for prayer. What does each mean? How does each relate to resisting anxiety (v.7)?

Wednesday, January 19 – Week 4 – Day 3

When we worry, we mentally chew on things that are generally outside of our control. This is unhelpful. John Piper says that the intellect exists to throw logs into the furnace of our affections for God (read that again and mentally chew on it).

Because Paul is helpful, he immediately gives us instructions on how to guard our minds in Christ Jesus. He tells us how to regulate our minds so that we can continue to throw logs into the furnace of our affections for God.

Read Philippians 4:8-9.

In verse 8, Paul provides eight parameters for our thinking. How might these serve as a filter for what not to think, and a prescription for what to proactively think and meditate upon?

In what practical ways might you proactively “think about” things that are true, honorable, just, etc. (v. 8)?

This section draws to a close with Paul reiterating his call to follow his example and teaching (v. 9). They are to “practice these things.” Explain the significance of that word, “practice.”

How might each of the commands in verses 4–9 be relevant to Paul’s concern for unity in verses 2–3 and elsewhere?

Thursday, January 20 – Week 4 – Day 4

As we begin to bring the book to a close, Paul warmly thanks the Philippians for once again supporting his mission, but he also takes the opportunity to explain that he has learned to be content, with little or much.

Read Philippians 4:10-13

Philippians 4 provides further insight into Paul's long history with this church. He alludes to several previous occasions where they supported his work (vv. 15–16). Now read 2 Corinthians 8:1–4, where Paul certainly has the Philippians in mind when he commends the giving of the “churches of Macedonia” (Philippi was a city in the region of Macedonia). How do these details further shed light on the warm, affectionate tone of Philippians (e.g., 1:3–8; 4:1)?

Looking back through the whole of Philippians 4, which verses and words speak to the partnership in the gospel that the Philippians shared with Paul? How should this theme factor into our understanding of the overall purposes and emphases of the letter?

In the middle of acknowledging the Philippians' support, Paul inserts a parenthetical comment about his contentment (vv. 11–13). Why do you think he did this? Are there potential misunderstandings that he might have been trying to avoid?

Paul testifies, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (v. 13). What does he mean by “all things”? What “things”? God “strengthens” him for what? (Hint: don't forget the importance of context!)

Friday, January 21 – Week 4 – Day 5

Paul describes the Philippians' gift as "a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God" (v. 18). This kind of ceremonial worship language is found throughout the Old Testament, and while such burnt offerings and sacrifices have been done away with in the coming of the true and final Sacrifice (see Heb. 8–10), Paul is making a quick and powerful analogy. The Philippians' financial support was an act of worship. It was sent to Paul, but in a very real sense it was also to God. It was "pleasing to God"—it smelled good to him. The Philippians, and we today, are called to be deliberate about this worshipful dimension to giving.

Read Philippians 4:14-23.

Based on Paul's language in verses 11–18, what can be determined about the extent of the Philippians' recent gift to Paul?

Again, based on Paul's own words, how did he come to be so content (vv. 11–13)? We know that his testimony isn't sinful boasting, but how do we know that?

The ideas in verses 17–19 are also found in 2 Corinthians 9:5–15 in greater detail. Read both passages and compare. What themes and language do they share?

In verses 14–20 Paul mingles thanks to the Philippians and praise to God. He does the same in other letters. But why? What is Paul teaching us by this model? What is different about doing one without the other?

Saturday, January 22 – Week 4 – Day 6

As we began this study, we started by reading the whole book of Philippians as a unified letter from a spiritual father. Now that we have read in more detail and reflected upon Paul's words, I want you to read it all again and see how your thoughts have changed.

Read the whole book of Philippians straight through. Think about the themes that we have explored in this study and how they fit together.

What verses or idea immediately stands out to you?

If you felt like you had questions on your first reading, have those questions been answered? Do you have other questions now?

How would Paul's words leave you feeling if you were a Philippian?

What attitude marks Paul's character? What about yours?

What is the most important thing to Paul? What about you?

