



Philippians Bible study guide

A clear 4-session guide for personal study, small groups, and churches

Read Philippians as a whole before working through the sessions. Let its own structure set the agenda.

Every question sends you back to the biblical text. The guide helps you observe the passage, follow the author's argument, interpret it in context, and respond faithfully.

CHOOSE YOUR DEPTH

- Short: Read the book overview and discuss the first and final question in a session.
- Study: Work through all 4 sessions and answer each question from the passage.
- Deep: Open the free chapter commentary and dictionary links while you study.

protos-app.com/commentary/philippians

Philippians at a glance

BIG IDEA

How do you live as a Christian in a non-Christian world? [1]

HISTORICAL SETTING

Author: Paul. Date: Traditionally, AD 60-62, but possibly earlier, around AD 53-56. Setting: Written while Paul was in prison and while the church at Philippi—which had recently sent Paul a financial gift—was also undergoing persecution. [1]

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Read this letter as sustained pastoral reasoning. Track the argument, audience situation, repeated words, and the move from God's work to the response asked of believers.

MAJOR THEMES

- To thank the Philippians for their recent gift and to encourage them to experience joy and contentment in the midst of their suffering
- The book's literary movement and central claims
- Faithful response within the people of God
- Hope, judgment, grace, and obedience in their proper context

INTERPRETIVE CARE

- Follow the letter's argument instead of isolating a familiar verse.
- Distinguish what the writer says God has done from the response asked of believers.

Philippians 1

30 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Paul · Timothy · Gospel · Faith · Grace

Questions

- Try to state the argument in one sentence before anyone reacts to it.
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Why does the writer bring Timothy into this argument, and what claim does the example support?
- The word gospel is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What problem was this letter written to solve, and does knowing that change how the instruction lands?
- Where does this cut against something you already believe or already do?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Philippians 2

30 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Timothy · Death · Joy · Affection · Brother

Questions

- What is the writer trying to get these readers to do or stop doing?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- What does the writer assume the readers know about Timothy, and how is that knowledge being used?
- Define death from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- Is this a command, a description, or an argument? They are not read the same way.
- What would actually be different this week if you took this seriously?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Philippians 3

21 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Hebrews · Pharisee · Flesh · Righteousness · Church

Questions

- What has the writer already established that this section is building on?
- Which single verse carries the weight of this section?
- What is left unsaid that you expected to be said?
- Where else have you heard flesh used, and is it being used that way here?
- What did the first readers face that we do not, and what does that change?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this, and what stops you saying it?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Philippians 4

23 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Macedonia · Thessalonica · Gospel · Peace · Saints

Questions

- Where does the writer expect pushback, and how do you know?
- Where does the tone shift, and what causes it?
- What question does this section answer that you had not thought to ask?
- The word gospel is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- Where does the writer move from what God has done to what we should do?
- What is the hardest thing in this passage to accept, and why that one?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Sources, method, and reuse

Protos created this guide to help readers understand Philippians in its literary and historical context. Questions are designed to be answered from the passage, not from guesswork or personal opinion alone.

REFERENCES

[1] Tyndale Open Study Notes

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<https://tyndaleopenresources.com/>

[2] Protos study guide editorial

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A Bible dictionary, 1,129 entries [_protos-app.com/bible-dictionary](https://protos-app.com/bible-dictionary)

Printable Bible reading plans [_protos-app.com/reading-plans](https://protos-app.com/reading-plans)

Protos is also available on iPhone and Android, with verse-by-verse study help beside the passage you are reading.

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