



THE PHILIPPIANS
PERSPECTIVE

SEEING LIFE THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS

WEEK 2 BIBLE STUDY

The Self That Has To Die

Digging Deeper into Philipians 2

Monday April 27th - Saturday May 2nd



High
Pointe
CHURCH

WELCOME TO WEEK 2

This week we walked through Philippians chapter 2 and discovered that ego and pride rob us of the very relationships God designed us to enjoy. The path back to those relationships does not start with the people who hurt us. It starts at the cross, where self has to die.

This six-day Bible study is designed to help you go deeper into the themes of Sunday's message. Each day includes a Scripture passage to read, a devotional reflection, study questions for personal application, a daily challenge, and a prayer.

Set aside 15 to 20 minutes each day. Find a quiet place. Open your Bible. And ask the Holy Spirit to do the work that only He can do.

Series Big Idea:

The Christian life is shaped more by perspective than by circumstances.
Paul didn't have better conditions. He had a better perspective.

Week 2 Main Idea:

Ego and pride rob us of the relationships God intended us to have,
and the only way to get them back is to die to self at the foot of the cross.

The Question That Exposes Us

Read: *Philippians 2:1-2*

Paul opens chapter 2 with a question that should stop every one of us in our tracks. He is not asking it to start a debate. He is asking it to expose us.

Philippians 2:1-2 (NLT)

"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? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose."

Paul piles up four conditions in verse 1. Encouragement from Christ. Comfort from His love. Fellowship in the Spirit. Tenderness and compassion. The Greek construction here uses the word *ei*, which is a first-class conditional. Paul is essentially saying, "Since these things are true." He is assuming the answer is yes. Of course you have gotten encouragement from Christ. Of course His love has comforted you. Of course you have experienced the Spirit. Of course your heart has been softened.

And then he drops the hammer in verse 2. "Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other." In other words, if all of those things are true, why does it not show up in how you treat the people around you?

This is the question that should make every Christian uncomfortable. If we have actually been changed by Jesus, the change should be visible. Not just in how we worship on Sunday morning, but in how we love on Tuesday afternoon. Not just in how we sing, but in how we speak. Not just in how we pray, but in how we forgive.

The hard truth is that many of us have a robust private faith and a cold relational life. We say we love God, but we are bitter toward someone in our family. We say we have been forgiven, but we refuse to forgive a friend. We say we walk in the Spirit, but our marriage feels nothing like the Spirit. And Paul is asking, how can both of those things be true at the same time?

The answer is, they cannot. What is happening on the inside between you and Jesus must show up on the outside between you and other people. If it does not, something is wrong. And the most likely culprit is that ego and pride have been quietly robbing your life of the relationships Christ died to give you.

1 John 4:20 (NLT)

"If someone says, 'I love God,' but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we have not seen?"

That is a hard verse. But it is a clarifying one. Our vertical life with God and our horizontal life with people are not separate categories. They are connected. And what is broken on one side will eventually break on the other.

Study and Reflection Questions

1. Paul lists four things every believer should have experienced from Christ. Encouragement, comfort, fellowship, and a tender heart. Which of those four do you sense most strongly in your walk with God right now? Which one feels weakest?
2. If a stranger watched the way you treat the people closest to you, your spouse, your kids, your coworkers, the people in your church, would they conclude that you have been deeply changed by the love of Christ? Be honest with yourself.
3. Read 1 John 4:20 again. Is there someone in your life right now that you cannot honestly say you love? What is that revealing about your walk with God?

Today's Challenge

Identify one relationship in your life where the love of Christ in you is not showing up in your love for them. Do not try to fix it today. Just bring it before God and ask Him to show you what He has been trying to show you all along.

Prayer

Father, I do not want to be a Christian on the inside and something else on the outside. Show me the gap between what I claim to believe and how I actually treat the people You have placed around me. Search me. Convict me. And start the work of closing that gap. I want my life with You to overflow into my life with others. In Jesus' name, amen.

DAY 2 | TUESDAY APRIL 28TH

The Lens of Self

Read: *Philippians 2:3-4*

If verses 1 and 2 ask the question, verses 3 and 4 expose the problem. Paul names exactly what is robbing us of the relationships God intended us to have.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NLT)

"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too."

The Greek word translated "selfishness" here is *eritheia*. It originally referred to a hired worker who would do anything for personal gain. Over time it came to describe people who were always working an angle, always looking out for themselves, always positioning their own interests at the center of every situation. Paul is saying, do not let that be the lens you look through.

And then he uses the word *kenodoxia*, translated "trying to impress others." Literally it means "empty glory." Paul is describing the human compulsion to be seen, to be recognized, to be admired. The exhausting performance most of us are running every day to make sure other people think well of us. Paul calls it empty glory because that is exactly what it is. Empty.

These two things, selfish ambition and the chase for recognition, are the two engines of pride. And both of them put self at the center of every relationship.

Now look at the antidote Paul gives. "Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves." The Greek word for humble is *tapeinophrosune*. In the Greek world, this word was actually negative. It meant lowly, base, contemptible. The Greeks did not consider humility a virtue. They considered it weakness.

But Christianity flipped that entirely. The cross took a word that meant weakness and turned it into the highest virtue. Because at the cross, we see that going low is not weakness. It is the very strength of God.

Paul is calling us to a complete change of lens. Stop looking at every situation through the lens of how it affects you. Stop measuring every relationship by what you are getting out of it. Stop walking into every room asking, "How will I be received?" Start asking, "How can I serve?"

This is the lens of Christ. And it is the only lens that can see relationships the way God designed them to be seen.

James 3:14-16 (NLT)

"But if you are bitter and jealous and selfish, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind."

James does not soften the language. He calls selfish ambition demonic. He says wherever it is found, disorder and evil follow. And if we are honest, we have all seen this play out. Where self is on the throne, chaos follows. In marriages. In families. In churches. In friendships. The disorder is the evidence of the lens.

Study and Reflection Questions

1. Paul says, "Do not look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." Think about your most recent conversation with a family member or close friend. Were you genuinely interested in them, or were you mostly waiting for the conversation to come back to you?
2. The chase for "empty glory" looks different for everyone. For some it is social media. For others it is workplace recognition. For others it is being seen as the spiritual one in the family. Where do you most feel the pull to be seen, recognized, or admired? What does that reveal about where pride is hiding in your life?
3. Read James 3:14-16 again. Where in your life right now are you seeing disorder, tension, or ongoing conflict? Could selfish ambition or jealousy be feeding it?

Today's Challenge

Today, in every conversation you have, ask yourself one question before you speak. "Am I about to say this for me, or for them?" If it is for you, hold it back. If it is for them, say it. Practice taking a genuine interest in others, just for today, and notice how different your interactions feel.

Prayer

Lord, I confess that I have walked into most relationships with the wrong lens. I have been looking out for myself. I have been chasing recognition. I have been measuring everything by how it affects me. Forgive me. Replace the lens of self with the lens of Christ. Help me to truly see the people around me, not as supporting characters in my story, but as people You love and have placed in my life on purpose. In Jesus' name, amen.

The Mind of Christ

Read: *Philippians 2:5-8*

This passage is one of the most profound theological statements in the entire New Testament. Many scholars believe it was an early Christian hymn that Paul wove into his letter. And what it describes is the most staggering act of humility in the history of the universe.

Philippians 2:5-8 (NLT)

"You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross."

Paul says we are to have the same attitude as Christ. The Greek word for attitude is *phroneite*, which means a way of thinking, a mindset, a pattern of how you process the world. Paul is not just calling us to imitate Jesus' actions. He is calling us to think the way Jesus thought.

And how did Jesus think? Look at what He let go.

"He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to." The Greek word is *harpagmos*. It means something to be seized, clutched, held onto for personal advantage. Jesus, fully God, fully equal with the Father, did not consider that something to grasp. He had every right to. He had every legitimate claim to His position. And He let it go.

"He gave up his divine privileges." The Greek word is *ekenosen*, which literally means "He emptied Himself." He did not stop being God. But He set aside the use of His divine privileges. He chose limitation. He chose dependence. He chose to live as one of us.

"He took the humble position of a slave." The eternal Son of God, through whom all things were made, took the form of a servant. Not just any servant. A slave. The lowest social position in the ancient world.

"He was born as a human being." Infinity wrapped in flesh. The One who held the stars in place became dependent on a teenage girl for milk.

"He humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross." Crucifixion was the most shameful, painful, public form of execution Rome had. It was reserved for slaves, traitors, and the worst criminals. And the eternal Son of God submitted Himself to that.

Read that whole sequence again slowly. From equality with God to a criminal's cross. That is the journey of humility. That is the mind of Christ.

And Paul says we are to have the same mind.

Now think about your life. Think about the things you have been gripping. The position you refuse to give up. The opinion you refuse to let go of. The reputation you refuse to risk. The recognition you refuse to share. The right you refuse to surrender. And then look at Jesus.

If He let go of equality with God, what right do you have to keep clinging to your pride?

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NLT)

"You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich."

This is the gospel in a single verse. Jesus went low so we could be lifted up. He emptied Himself so we could be filled. He became poor so we could be rich. And the only proper response to that kind of love is to embrace the same mindset toward the people around us.

Study and Reflection Questions

1. Paul says we should have "the same attitude that Christ Jesus had." Looking at the descent of Christ from heaven to a cross, where in your life are you most resistant to going low? Where are you still holding on to position, recognition, or rights?
2. Jesus did not just give up something. He gave up everything for people who did not deserve it. Is there someone in your life right now that you have decided does not deserve your humility, your forgiveness, or your love? How does the example of Christ challenge that?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 8:9. The whole gospel is built on the principle of going low for others. How does meditating on what Jesus gave up for you affect your willingness to lay down what you have been gripping?

Today's Challenge

Take a piece of paper and write at the top, "What I have been gripping." List the things in your life that you have been holding onto out of pride. Positions. Opinions. Hurts. Recognition. Reputation. Then take that piece of paper, fold it, and pray over it. Ask God to give you the mind of Christ in each of those areas. Keep the paper somewhere you will see it this week.

Prayer

Jesus, when I see what You let go of for me, every excuse I have ever had for clinging to my pride disappears. You were equal with God and You did not grasp it. I am a sinner saved by grace and I have been grasping for things I have no right to. Forgive me. Give me Your mind. Help me to think the way You thought. Help me to go low the way You went low. And use my willingness to be humbled to bring You glory in the relationships You have given me. In Your name, amen.

DAY 4 | THURSDAY APRIL 30TH

Every Knee Will Bow

Read: *Philippians 2:9-11*

Paul does not stop with the descent of Christ. He keeps going. Because the story of Jesus does not end with a cross. It ends with a throne. And the principle Paul wants us to grasp is one of the most important in all of Scripture. The way down is the way up.

Philippians 2:9-11 (NLT)

"Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

That word "therefore" is one of the most important words in this whole passage. It is connecting what Jesus did with what God did in response. Because Jesus humbled Himself, God exalted Him. Because Jesus went low, God lifted Him high. Because Jesus emptied Himself, God filled Him with the name above every name.

This is a pattern that runs through all of Scripture. The way down is always the way up.

James 4:10 (NLT)

"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you in honor."

1 Peter 5:6 (NLT)

"So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor."

Matthew 23:12 (NLT)

"But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Over and over, Scripture teaches the same truth. The kingdom of God works backwards from how the world works. The world says climb. God says descend. The world says grasp. God says release. The world says exalt yourself. God says humble yourself. And in the kingdom, the only way to go up is to first go down.

But there is something else in this passage that we cannot miss. Paul says that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow. Every. Knee. In heaven, on earth, and under the earth. There is no exception. There is no opt-out clause. Every single person who has ever lived will one day bow before Jesus Christ.

That includes you. That includes your unbelieving family member. That includes your coworker who scoffs at faith. That includes the world leader, the celebrity, the philosopher, and the skeptic. Every knee. Every

tongue. Every soul. One day, all of them will bow.

The only question is when. And the only question is how.

Some will bow today, by choice, in surrender, as His children. They will spend eternity bowing in worship before the One who saved them. Others will refuse to bow until the day they stand before Him in judgment. And on that day, they will still bow. But it will not be in worship. It will be in defeat.

If you are a believer, this should fuel your willingness to humble yourself today. The pride you are clinging to is going to bow eventually. The grudge you are carrying is going to bow eventually. The bitterness you have been protecting is going to bow eventually. So why not now? Why carry it one more day when Jesus is willing to take it from you right now?

And if you are reading this and you have never given your life to Jesus, hear this with love. You are going to bow. The Bible is clear. The only question is whether you will do it today by choice or one day by force. There has never been a better time to bow than now, while there is still grace, still time, and still an open invitation.

Study and Reflection Questions

1. Paul says God exalted Jesus *because* Jesus humbled Himself. The way down was the way up. How does that pattern challenge the way you have been trying to get ahead, get noticed, or get what you want?
2. Every knee will bow. Either today by choice or one day by force. What is one thing in your life right now that needs to bow before Jesus that you have been refusing to surrender? Why have you been holding onto it?
3. Think of someone you love who has not yet bowed their knee to Jesus. The truth that one day they will bow either in worship or in judgment is sobering. How does that change the urgency of how you pray for them, share with them, and live in front of them?

Today's Challenge

Find a quiet place today. Get on your knees. Physically bow. Speak out loud the things in your life that you are bowing before Jesus. The pride. The hurt. The bitterness. The fear. The relationship. The ambition. Do not just think it. Say it. There is something powerful about physically bowing what your heart needs to surrender.

Prayer

Jesus, You are Lord. Of everything. Of everyone. Of every part of my life. I bow today by choice, not by force. I bow in worship, not in defeat. I bow as Your child because You first humbled Yourself for me. I lay before You every area of my life that has resisted Your Lordship. Take it. All of it. Reign in

places I have tried to rule for myself. And help me, Lord, to live every day as one who has already bowed. In Your name, amen.

Work It Out

Read: *Philippians 2:12-15*

After Paul shows us the example of Christ, he turns the corner and gets practical. He stops describing what Jesus did and starts telling us what we are supposed to do with it.

Philippians 2:12-13 (NLT)

"Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."

Notice the language. Paul says "work hard to show the results of your salvation." The Greek phrase is *katergazesthe*, which means to bring something to its full effect, to carry it through to completion. This is not earning salvation. This is working out what God has already worked in. Salvation is a gift. But the visible results of that gift have to be lived out in our daily lives.

And then Paul gives us one of the most encouraging promises in the New Testament. "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him." The Greek word for "working" here is *energeo*, where we get the word energy. God is supplying the energy. He is giving you the desire and He is giving you the power. You are not doing this on your own. You are cooperating with what He is already doing.

Then Paul gets very specific about what working it out looks like.

Philippians 2:14-15 (NLT)

"Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people."

Two things. No complaining. No arguing. Most of us read past these words because they sound small. But complaining and arguing are two of the greatest weapons ego uses to tear down the relationships God designed us to enjoy.

Complaining poisons your home. It says, "Life should be working better for me." It puts self at the center and makes everyone around you responsible for your happiness. The Israelites complained their way through forty years in the wilderness. And what did their complaining produce? It kept them from the very thing God had promised them.

Arguing fractures your relationships. It says, "I have to come out on top." It turns every conversation into a contest. And the truth is, even when you win the argument, you usually lose the relationship.

Both of these postures keep self center stage and push everyone else off the platform. But Paul says when you stop complaining and stop arguing, something happens. You start to shine. You stand out in a dark world. People notice the difference.

Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT)

"You are the light of the world. Like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."

This is how the world gets convinced that Jesus is real. Not by your arguments. By your life. By the way you stop fighting for self and start living for Christ. By the way you let what God has worked in actually work itself out in your daily interactions with the people around you.

Faith without action is just opinion. James said it bluntly. Faith without works is dead. Paul is saying the same thing here. What God is doing in you must be lived out through you. Otherwise, it is just sermon material. And sermon material does not change marriages. It does not heal families. It does not transform churches. Lived faith does.

Study and Reflection Questions

1. Paul says God is giving you both the desire and the power to do what pleases Him. When you try to grow in humility or change a relational pattern, do you tend to operate in your own strength or in His? What would it look like to actually rely on the energy He is supplying?
2. Complaining and arguing are the two specific things Paul calls out. Be honest. Which one is more present in your life right now? Where does it show up most? At home? At work? Online? In your own internal monologue?
3. Read Matthew 5:14-16. Paul says the absence of complaining and arguing is what makes us shine. If your life were on display this week, would people see a light shining or a fire burning? What is one specific habit you could change to let more of His light show through?

Today's Challenge

For the next 24 hours, do not complain about anything. Not the weather. Not the traffic. Not the coworker. Not the spouse. Not the situation. Every time you feel a complaint rising in you, replace it with a prayer of gratitude. See how different a single day feels when self is not allowed to take the microphone.

Prayer

Father, thank You that You are the One working in me. I do not have to manufacture this. I just have to cooperate with what You are doing. Give me the desire and the power to live out my faith in real,

practical ways. Help me to stop complaining. Help me to stop arguing. Help me to be a light in a dark world. Not so people will think highly of me, but so they will think highly of You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Poured Out for Others

Read: *Philippians 2:16-30*

Paul ends Philippians 2 with three pictures of poured-out lives. His own. Timothy's. And Epaphroditus'. He does not just talk about humility as a concept. He shows us what it actually looks like in flesh and blood. Three men. Three different lives. One same heart.

Philippians 2:16-18 (NLT)

"Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy."

Paul uses the imagery of an Old Testament drink offering. In the sacrificial system, a drink offering was wine that was poured out completely on the altar. There was nothing left to take back. Nothing held in reserve. It was emptied entirely as an act of worship.

And Paul says, "That is me. My life is being poured out for you. And I am rejoicing in it." Sitting in a Roman prison, facing possible execution, Paul is not asking, "What do I get out of this?" He is asking, "How much more can I pour out?"

Then Paul gives us a second picture. Timothy.

Philippians 2:20-22 (NLT)

"I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News."

Did you catch what Paul said? "All the others care only for themselves." That is a startling statement. Even in Paul's day, surrounded by ministry leaders, most people were still living for self. Timothy was the rare exception. He genuinely cared about other people. He served. He poured out. He was the kind of person who would inconvenience himself for the sake of someone else.

Then comes the third picture. Epaphroditus.

Philippians 2:25-27 (NLT)

"Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need. I am sending him because he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill. And he certainly was ill; in fact, he almost died."

Epaphroditus had been sent by the Philippian church to bring Paul a gift and to assist him. And in the process, he became so sick he almost died. But notice the detail Paul includes. Epaphroditus was distressed because the Philippians had heard he was sick. He was not worried about his own illness. He was worried about how his sickness was making them feel.

That is a poured-out life. Even on his sickbed, even nearly dying, Epaphroditus was thinking about other people.

Three men. Three different lives. Same poured-out heart.

Now here is the question for you. What are you pouring your life into right now?

Because every one of us is pouring our life out somewhere. The question is not whether you are spending your life. The question is what you are spending it on. Some pour their life into career and call it provision. Some pour it into image and call it identity. Some pour it into entertainment and call it rest. Some pour it into bitterness and call it justice.

Paul says he wants to know that he did not run the race in vain. The Greek phrase is *eis kenon*, which literally means "into emptiness." Paul is saying, "I do not want to look back at my life and realize I poured it into nothing."

There is a way to pour out your life that is wasted. And there is a way to pour out your life that produces eternal joy. The difference is not in the act of pouring. The difference is in what you are pouring it on. Pour your life into self and it disappears into emptiness. Pour your life into Christ and the people He loves and it gets multiplied for eternity.

2 Corinthians 12:15 (NLT)

"I will gladly spend myself and all I have for you, even though it seems that the more I love you, the less you love me."

That is the heart of someone who has died to self. They will gladly spend themselves on people, even when those people do not return the love. Because they are not pouring out for a return. They are pouring out for the glory of the One who poured Himself out for them.

Study and Reflection Questions

1. Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus are three different examples of poured-out lives. Which one resonates with you most? Which one feels most foreign to how you have been living?
2. Paul says he does not want to look back and realize he poured his life "into emptiness." When you take an honest look at your life, what are you pouring most of yourself into right now? Is it producing eternal joy or temporary satisfaction?

3. Read 2 Corinthians 12:15. Paul says he will gladly spend himself even when his love is not returned. Is there a relationship in your life where you have been holding back because the other person has not given back? How does Paul's posture challenge that?

Today's Challenge

This is the last day of the study. Take some time today to reflect on the entire week. Then identify one specific person God has placed in your life that you are going to begin pouring into intentionally. Not for what you will get. Not because they deserve it. But because Jesus poured Himself out for you. Make a plan. A weekly text. A monthly meal. A regular prayer. Whatever it is, commit to pouring out into one life this season.

Prayer

Father, thank You for this week. Thank You for showing me how ego and pride have been robbing me of the relationships You designed me to enjoy. I do not want to pour my life into emptiness. I want to pour it out the way Paul did. The way Timothy did. The way Epaphroditus did. The way Jesus did. Show me the people You have placed in my life to invest in. Give me a poured-out heart. And use what is poured out for Your glory and for their good. In Jesus' name, amen.