



STUDYING AND TEACHING THE BIBLE

THIS ESSAY INCLUDES AN IN-DEPTH TEACHING AND STUDY GUIDE ON
PHILIPPIANS.



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Studying and Teaching the Bible

This research essay is primarily concerned with how to study and teach the Bible. I quote from a book written by Elmer L. Towns quite a bit. This essay is a very focused study on teaching; full of recommendations and techniques on how to approach teaching various aspects of the Bible such as: parables, chapters, narratives, prophecies, biographies, doctrines and themes. This essay is divided into eleven minor sections. An additional four categories have been added: This includes teaching strategies, creative teaching, interpreting religious poetry, teaching and mentoring. I also used articles by Stacy Patty of Lubbock Christian University, Carol Lakey Hess of Claremont School of theology, Rolf A. Jacobson of Luther Seminary, and Theresa O'Donovan of Brescia University College. My own experience and knowledge will make up most of what is said in this essay.

The Definition of teaching includes the preparation and guiding those who are learning. But teaching can also be simply presenting the information and ultimately it is the responsibility of the learners to use that information. So teachers cannot make pupils learn, they can only guide the pupil through a learning process and that process must include experience of that information. Teachers are a facilitator to those who want to learn. Sometimes even fun within the classroom can be a great incentive to learning. Yes, there are certain techniques which teachers can use to make learning interesting and even fun. They can motivate pupils to learn by planning experiences, planning the sequence of experience, and planning for outcomes. Motivation is certainly important but sometimes even that isn't enough. Different studies can require different types of motivation. Teaching is not telling, it is guiding pupils through experiences designed for their learning, nor is listening learning. So we see that learning takes place in a number of ways but it's often a matter of actively engaging the person who wants to learn.

Some basic techniques for student engaging in learning are to be physically alert, plus working in a secure uninterruptable environment where they are better able to focus on the work they're doing. But sometimes these are ideal situations and they aren't readily available. What does the teacher do then. Know that study and learning also takes place over a period of time, covering the subject during a certain period of time when the teacher can expect the best outcomes. Individual student needs can also met through various presentation techniques if the learning environment is ideal. Students sometimes learn better with others and when they feel certain problems are being solved.

In regards to teaching the Bible, it's helpful to hear the Word being explained, taught, preached or read. Of course, the scriptures should first be read privately several times. In Revelation 1:3, it says, 'blessed is he who reads.' Study involves the investigation of the Bible which includes looking up words, reading verses and comparing these verses with other verses. You must understand the context by which it is presented. A person should write out notes to help imprint this on their mind. Understanding also comes in committing verses and chapters to memory. But some people are good at memorization. Either way, learning involves reflecting on the things you have studied. Investing time meditating on the scriptures will help internalize the truth of God so that Biblical principles become a part of your normal thought patterns. Asking the following questions will help also in learning:

- a. What is the point of the passage?
- b. Is the idea found in other passages?
- c. What are the problems in this passage?
- d. What are some practical applications for this passage?
- e. What did the originally writer intend the message to be.

The student needs to write out the main idea or point in each sentence or verse in the chapter or story. See what else the Bible has to say about this story or verse. This can easily be done by doing a search if you have an electronic Bible. Consider things that you don't understand by making notes on them, asking other students about it or the teacher. Points of interest can involve anything: books, chapter and verse, author, place, summary of passage, key words or verse and people who are mentioned in the story. You can make a list of words to look up and read about people, places and things in reference books such as an encyclopaedia. You can list things you don't understand for the purpose of solving them later on. What about what the verse means to you and how you can apply it to your life? These are ideas and recommendations and they can't be considered absolute for everyone.

There are a huge number of people mentioned in the Bible involving their day to day lives, ministries, personal problems, calling. Research into these people can take the student deep into the character of an individual where they no longer seem distant but close brothers and sisters by which you learn from their experiences. Studies of these people often invoke high interest. Their lives are like a drama played out in a story of how our God uses them. Often, historical trends are looked upon as being dull but there is a hungry to learn about people who have influenced history; simply because we learn from other people's experiences. In study or teaching about a character you can look for the conditions of the times they live, meaning of their names and who did they associate with at that time. Are

their certain character description associated with that person in the Bible or else where. How did that person influence others or history? Were they considered evil? If so, why? The Bible can become alive by observing accurate facts and meanings correctly, Try applying the principles to your own daily walk and obey its commands implicitly.

In studying a biography one must determine the main character's strengths, weaknesses, failures and negatives aspects of the person. It could even be good to write out character points of each person. You can include what influences the experiences to make him or her the way they ended up. Were there any conditional promises or threats that applied to their lives? Also, are there any positive principles that could apply to your life? You can outline the life of the person in chronological order or you can start with the most significant event in the person's life and talk about things that led up to that point. Let's take Lot, for example. We can ask and answer the following questions:

1. Who was Lot?
2. What relationship did Lot have to Abram?
3. What problem caused a separation to the two?
4. How did Abram solve the problem?
5. On what basis did Lot choose?
6. What was the first step of Lot's downfall?
7. Read the background of Sodom in a Bible dictionary.
8. Read Genesis 19:1-38 for background.
9. What was Lot's next place?
10. What crisis did Lot face?
11. How did Lot want to solve the crisis?
12. What happened to Lot's wife?
13. What good and bad can be said about Lot?

The afore mentioned character information can also include a check list, such as:

1. Who are you studying? Other people?
2. References?
3. Where was the person and why was the passage there?
4. What problem did he or she face and what were they thinking at the time?
5. What decisions were they contemplating?
6. How did they solve the problem?

There are many ways of learning which has already been mentioned and especially with the Bible, it can simply be copying the passage, diagram the sentence, look up meaning

of words, list relationship between characters, understand the background, know the meanings of people's names, and summarize narratives, chapters or verses in your own words.

In dealing with doctrines, for example, it should be thoroughly explained and the purpose of it. Teaching about doctrines is like building a house; a little at a time. You begin with the foundation and then present precept upon precept. Teaching doctrines include explaining the truth that is revealed by God in a systematic and understandable way. Present the doctrine in a relevant context, perhaps by suggesting a problem causes by not understanding such a doctrine. Another way is ask the 'why' question such as: Why do Christians worship on Sundays instead of Saturday? Or what percent of your money belongs to God? It could be a secular issue such as involving abortion, homosexuality, gambling, education, or welfare. Also, consider the process in how God revealed truth over hundreds of years.

One way of presenting doctrinal information is to define the doctrinal words and explain the implications of your statement. You can also list aspects of the topic such as considering first mention of the topic. Using this approach, other verses are consulted to draw out fuller meanings of the text. Another approach, you explain a doctrine in the context of its 'full mention' in the scriptures. This may not be much different from a chapter or book study. You can ask questions such as:

- a. What doctrine are you studying?
- b. What is the primary passage or passages? What does it teach?
- c. What Biblical person or people are associated with this doctrine?
- d. How did it influence their lives?
- e. Summarize the doctrine.
- f. What principles are taught in this doctrine?
- g. How will you practically apply this doctrine?
- h. What happens when this doctrine is ignored or denied?
- i. How deep is your commitment to this doctrine?

Devotional Studies usually applies to one's own situation. What about key words, especially when they are used several times. Think about how this word is used in other places. Does it reveal any significant truth about God, people, sin or salvation? Does it address any concerns that happen in the Christian life? Towns mentions certain principles one should consider:

- a. There's an interpretation governed by a literal interpretation, with many applications.

- b. Be careful of "spiritualizing" making it say something apart from the meaning of the text.
- c. The Bible is a book of principles to guide our daily lives and service.
- d. Know the difference between situations that do not apply today and prescriptions that were written to guide our lives.
- e. Apply direct applications where the Bible generally censors or approves all.
- f. Explicit commands to individuals are not always the will of God for you today.
- g. Apply to your life the obvious principles in the lives of people in Scripture.
- h. You do not need to be in the exact situation that involved a person in the Bible, to apply their principles to your lives

Teachers must lead students deeper in their love commitment to God. But it takes a very spiritual person to do this. The must teach the Bible devotionally by avoiding taking a phrase from the bible because of its wording and using a different sense than what it is intended for. Avoid also imposing a meaning on it that doesn't fit. Start by talking about something relevant. Raise issue of worship in regards to worship Psalms. Provide an outline and then the context of the passage. Focus on a key character and point out key verses. Let your students discover special applications that are relevant for their own Christian walk. Ask which principle is the most important in their lives and then challenge them to take steps to apply it to their own lives.

Also in regards to interpreting parables. avoid thinking about possible deeper meanings other than what's obvious. On the other hand, the context of a parable makes it clear that certain details may be significant. The Parable of the Sower, for example, was more than just a basic message that the Gospel should be sown widely in the world. In the end, one must understand that each parable has its own meaning and message. The teacher should also be careful of using parables for doctrinal use. Parables shouldn't be used to teach new doctrines. The examination of the parable should include the following:

- a. Who are the people in the parable. What was characteristics of the individual, including how they lived out their purpose?
- b. What is described in the parable.
- c. Determine the main point of the parable..
- d. Begin with the Lord's interpretation of the parable and extend your study from there.
- e. What are the events that led up to the parable.
- f. Be careful of trying to prove a doctrine from parables.

- g. Be careful of developing prophecy from parables because they usually illustrate predictions that are made elsewhere in Scripture.

Teaching parables involves the art of story telling. Truths have been taught through stories for thousands of years. In story telling, one must capture the interest of students quickly. One of the ways to do this is to voice different characters in the story. Use a creative setting, perhaps an up to date setting of the same story. Of course one could act it out with the students. You could even use a hat or costume. But this must be fresh. Another application would be to help the student apply it to their lives.

There are also key themes in the Bible, such as creation, the Fall, Ethics, Suffering Saviour, the New Birth, Founding of the Church, Nature of Love, Resurrection, Faith, the Kingdom of Christ in Revelation and many more. Look at the facts and analyse them to understand the general focus and structure. The list is endless. Try outlining the book and find the key verse or verses and the key word and see how often it's mentioned. Reflect on how you can apply it to your life. Read through the book several times in preparation to studying it. Once you've done this, you can raise other questions such as, are there any specific actions to take? How does it add to my understanding of God and the Christian life? You can do a chapter study by listing the prominent characters and note how these characters are related. List the major events and minor events of each chapter. Where is this situation placed in the world around it? What are the motives behind such actions? How does the author describe the people in the chapter? The Bible must be understood with a view that God is speaking. First, determine whether the chapter or book is historical, poetic, and didactic, a sermon or a biography. Determine the meaning of proper names, events, things, geographical places and customs. In teaching a chapter of the Bible, ask an opinion question which leads group members to express their own views about the theme.

For narratives, again, who are the major characters, plots, protagonist, antagonist, themes, events, subplots, etc? Outline the story gathering up the main points and consider how it fits into the main book. Look at the narrative in its historical and geographic context. List the rulers of the day and their influence, feasts, festivals, places and even the history of those places. Always probe the details by asking who, what, where, when, why and how. Look at the complete story by referring to other books or quotes of others that relate to the narrative. When teaching about narratives, a goal to keep in mind is getting the student involved in the drama of the event. Sometime, you can retell the event in chronological order, dividing the narrative into a series of dramatic scenes. You can even begin with the climax and flashback to explain how common events moved to such a place. In teaching anything,

the level of the students and their knowledge must first be determined. Never make false suppositions in your mind about anything. Always change techniques every 20 or 30 minutes such as using dvd's, tapes, handouts etc.

What did the author have in mind? What was his meaning? Don't use allegorical or figurative speech for this, as this leads to reading into the passages things that aren't there. If the passage makes sense, then leave it at that. The Westminster Confession of Faith says, 'Interpret the Bible in light of its historical background, in light of the cultural plan and purpose, in light of the context of the chapter and within the author's meaning of words and also according to the rules of grammar.' Give attention to verb tenses, singular and plural and relationship of words. In lesson plans, make sure you write the aim, the objectives, the time spent on each section, resources you will use and list the points and activities which you will have along the way. A clear aim will help with unity, order and efficiency to teaching, it gives teachers confidence in the classroom, helps with time scheduling and selecting all the teaching aids and methods. This should be ordered sequentially, building fact upon fact. Use various kinds of questions: factual, interpretive, discussion, exploration and opinion. In factual questions, the student looks for the facts presented whereas in interpretive questions, the student is challenged to interpret a verse of scripture. Discussion questions are simple open ended questions much like opinion questions. Of course, ask questions to get the pupil involved, for motivation, invoked class discussion, keeping students on the toes, applying the lesson. List the Scripture verses with their explanation. Summarize everything at the end ... this could be in the form of a review.

Additional articles include Stacy Patty of Lubbock Christian University who describes a teaching tactic that could be used by others. Stacy said that the exercise forces students to self select events and make judgments about the differences of various stories of a similar experience can be. There were two groups with a recorder. Each told the story of their semester's experience. The exercise reinforced by way of discovery that statements of historical study is perspective (a particular way of regarding something). Julia Winden-Fey of the University of Central Arkansas used a tactic in World Religion on Indigenous Religions in discussing the Mythological Dimension. The Pedagogical purpose was to help students understand that creation 'stories' have not always been conveyed in written form. Part of the tactic was to engage the student to introduce themselves to other members of the class. The group was divided into smaller groups and given a particular creation story. They were to present the story to the entire class by way of a oral and non-literate culture. An alternative would be to give students a list of basic elements of a creation story and ask them

to create their own. Most students presented the story as a skit with costumes, pictures and drawings. The presentations were creative, colourful and interesting. This provided a pedagogic whereby the students were actively learning.

Theresa O'Donovan of Brescia University College provides a creative article entitles, 'Doing It differently: Unleashing Student Creativity'. The assignment required addressing a topic in any way other than an essay. This of course involved basic intelligences of linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal. The idea and understanding was that essays and exams measure certain aspects of student's abilities but where do they leave those students whose learning is not necessarily best expressed in written form? They were given the opportunity to choose a form of expression such as poetry, diaries, short stories, painting, photographs, film, dance, music needlework etc. The results came in terms of Biblical women were given voice through monologues or diary entries: they were rendered present through poetry and art. One such presentation included an actual party taking the form of explaining why each one of the six biblical characters had been invited and their contribution to the feast. One script read, 'god the Mother was the first invited, seated at the head of the table, and asked about her reaction to being cast in masculine garb. God's reply was 'what is important is not the fact that I am male or female but the fact that I am both. If men take comfort in the fact that I am male then that is what I am to them. If a woman prefers to think of me as female then I will be that to her. An anonymous concubine was invited so that her name would be revealed. If we can give her an identity she may finally feel respected after all.' Other portrayed characters included Eve, Mary Magdalene, Sarah, and Hagar. Critical elements of each character were considered.

Interestingly, the students did not take the texts at face value, but adopted from the outset an attitude of suspicion toward them. They dealt with the identity of God and the significance was actually the compassion of God. Eve and Mary Magdalene were described as 'maligned by the men of history;' Both figures have been interpreted quite negatively in ways that are not justified by the biblical text itself. Most of the presentations were successful in every way. But be warned, there is a risk factor with this. The assignment required the student to temporarily leave the safe ground of distanced rationality and approach the material different. The risk is self disclosure for each student. For the teacher, how can they contextualize the submissions of individual students and at the same time being respectful to the students and also serve the interests of the class as a whole. Another problem is establishing criteria by which to grade the assignments. Of course, class room dynamics

presented a sense of community in sharing the student's projects. These engagement heightened awareness and learning exponentially.

Let's look at poetry with Rolf A. Jacobson of Luther Seminary who says that teaching religion and theology requires interpretation of a vast corpus of religious poetry that is found in every religious tradition but students aren't equipped to do this. Poetry relies on linguistic features but not narrative elements. Poetry thinks and means in a different way than more linear propositional thinking. Lyric poetry means in a different manner than what narrative means. This expands their thinking and enables them to do reflective thinking. One cannot handle poetry without understanding history, creeds, scriptures or even its theology. Students are not conscious of the difference between poetry and prose. Interestingly when students reach such books as Hosea, comprehension dropped drastically. The teacher thus changed tactics and instead of lecturing on the content of this material, started with lab experiments. This extended to the types of assignments and homework. Poetry requires students to understand multivalent, ambiguous nature of language. So in an assignment, the students were asked to look for multiple meanings of various words and ambiguity. For example, collar could be a clerical that was a symbol of priestly vocation. But Caller could be that God calls a person to do something and then Collar could be a shackle that keeps a person imprisoned or Choler is anger or something that flows in human blood. Also, the students can look for double meanings of words. For example, 'in suit' refer to calling as a priest but also refers to paying court to a superior or a beloved. Many poems are constructed around a central theme, which poets manipulate to tease out meanings. For example, Psalm 19 has strands of two complementary motifs. One is speech with references of recounting, declaring, knowledge, words, voice and then there's the motif of creation with words like heavens, firmament, day, night, earth, world, sun, gold, honey etc. The student is required to identify the two main themes and where they occur in the article. Psalm 42/43 is built around the theme of water and Psalm 2 around the dual motifs of kingship and speech. The student must be required to show rather than tell. The most basic element of poetry is the metaphor. For example, 'My love is like a red, red rose.' The paradox created by the metaphor; on one hand it is the more used in poetry, but because we live in an electronic, visual age where every image is pre digested for the consumer. Asking a student to close their eyes and imagine such things and then ask what did it sound like? What did it feel like? How did it taste? This enables the student to disassemble a set of poetic metaphors with a more complete tool box for understanding. The teacher could add a historical component to the exercise or even a cultural component showing how people of different cultures, religions and classes made

different associations based on the image of the tree. You can instruct a student to draw a poem but let them figure out how to draw it. You could say with such features, they can show the structure of the poem. This helps the student to understand that decorates and illustrates are not just for show. Another exercise would be to have the student to write their own poem, psalm, proverb, or hymn. Students need details in the assignment to do this. Assign four or five features and have the students to work around this. This exercise helps the student to learn to interpret poems. The same can be done for a song. Have the student interpret the way the song uses images, metaphors, repetition etc.

With Carol Lakey Hess of Claremont School of Theology, narcissistic pedagogy is explored in terms of how the teacher experiences students not as centres of their own activity but as part of the teacher's self. The term 'narcissism' comes from the myth of narcissus, a tale that focuses on a young man who falls in love with his own image as reflected from a pool. Imagine the following learning environment where the charismatic professor attracts a variety of students, including vulnerable students, who have had their voices quelled before. The professor fails to see any of them except the ones who admire him which the professor thirst for. Thus a narcissistic person is one with a grandiose sense of importance; preoccupation with success, power, brilliance, and perfect love, exhibit need for constant attention and excessive admiration. Jess says that Narcissistic Pedagogy deals with a person who expects his or her students to mirror his or her needs. When the students do not perform this function, the teacher shows disappointment, offense, and subtle forms of rage. Yet, one must remember we often teach the way we learn which comes natural. For myself, learning is experiential and that is the way I learn and thus I teach that way often. Students learn to accommodate and gratify the teacher's needs.

So, we have seen that teaching and studying various aspects of the Bible must include an in-depth analysis of the verses, paragraphs or narratives. Students can be challenged through questioning techniques aimed at particular words, verses, chapters and their characters. Extensive time should be given to understand all the points mentioned above. Parables are exactly what they are and the teacher should not try to read too much into them.

We have an example of teaching using the Book of Philippians; an outline divides the study into four lessons, each with four or five mini-lessons of about one to two hours each. This lesson provides ideas to help the student know what type of writing will be required of them in this study. Lesson one also provides evidence of what is generally recognised standards of scholarship.

Next, the study delves into the purpose of the letter to the Philippians. In a way, Lesson Two is an in-depth introduction to the Letter to the Philippians. The first item under this heading is the Book of Philippians using the King James Version of the Bible. This version was chosen because of copyright issues. However, the Student will be encouraged at all times to use a modern English translation of the Bible. Next, a short biography of Paul the apostle and his missionary activities are presented. Following that, the student is introduced to the Church at Philippi. Finally, the literary style of the book is discussed.

Lesson Three is all about outlining the content and theme of Philippians. Examples are given of outlines, what is required in outlining Philippians and then giving the student a chance to outline the book. In Lesson Four, the student takes three different passages and has an in-depth look at them.

Each of the lessons has a section review, and the study ends in a conclusion and review of the study before the assessment. The overall time commitment for this study is about 35 to 40 hours. About 25 of those hours involve class contact time the remaining time with for individual student work. The 35 to 40 hours include class work, reading, answering exercises, class review, individual work and assessment.

COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

A. THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 4

B. PAUL, AUTHOR OF THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

C. PHILIPPI AND THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH

D. THE LITERARY STYLE OF THE BOOK

E. SECTION REVIEW

THE OUTLINE OF THE LETTER

A. EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS OUTLINES OF PHILIPPIANS

1.) THE FIRST OUTLINE

2.) THE SECOND OUTLINE

3.) THE THIRD OUTLINE

B. PREPARING YOUR OUTLINE

C. OUTLINING THE CONTENT AND THEMES

D. SECTION REVIEW

OUTLINING THREE PASSAGES

A. THE FIRST PASSAGE – PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

- 1.) RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONTEXT OF THE BOOK
- 2.) EVERYDAY MEANING OF SIGNIFICANT WORDS AND SENTENCES
 - A.) VERSES 2 AND 5
 - B.) VERSES 6 AND 7
- 3.) MEANINGS FOR BOTH THE PHILIPPIANS AND FOR BELIEVERS TODAY
 - A.) THE PHILIPPIANS
 - B.) TODAY’S BELIEVERS

B. THE FIRST PASSAGE – PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

- 1.) RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONTEXT OF THE BOOK
- 2.) EVERYDAY MEANING OF SIGNIFICANT WORDS AND SENTENCES
- 3.) MEANINGS FOR BOTH THE PHILIPPIANS AND FOR BELIEVERS TODAY

C. THE FIRST PASSAGE – PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

APPENDIX I - LESSON PLANS WITH EXERCISE ANSWERS

APPENDIX II – NON-TECHNICAL WORKS OF BIBLICAL SCHOLARS CONFIRMATION

This is a letter that Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. It’s referred to as the Book of Philippians or The Letter to the Philippians. This study looks at the purpose of the Book of Philippians; especially the context in which it was written. It will explain the historical background surrounding the author and his circumstances, along with the background of the Philippians’ Church. The study will identify the connections between the author and the people who received the letter, and explain their need for the message of the book. The literary style of the book will be discussed to help confirm the authorship of Philippians. At least two themes of the book will be traced and its content will be summarised in an outline to help contribute to understanding the purpose of the book. Biblical references will be provided to support the two themes. The two selected themes ones commonly regarded by Biblical scholars as contributing significantly to an understanding of the Bible, such as recurring ideas, in the case of Philippians, joy and fellowship. The outline will also help identify the importance of the two themes for the original recipients and for believers today. In addition, the study of Philippians will take three passages and outline them to establish connections between the selected passages and the content of the whole book. In all quotations of scripture, the King James Version will be used due to copyright reason. Students are

encouraged to have a modern English translation of the Bible to read. The outline will establish the everyday meaning of significant words and sentences in each passage with reference to the literary form of the passage. The study will be in keeping with non-technical works of Biblical scholars recognised as conforming to international standards of scholarship.

Throughout the study, the use of the words, 'letter' and 'book' will be synonymous. For example: 'The Letter to the Philippians' and 'The Book of Philippians' means the same.

Students credited with this NZQA unit standard will be able to explain the purpose of Philippians, outline the content and themes of the book; and outline the meaning of at least three passages which represent discrete portions of meaning within the book. The study of these three passages will be a progressive study with the student having to do more and more of the interpretations of the second and third passage.

To begin, it would be a good idea to read Paul's letter. This is why it's included as the very first part of lesson one. Answer the questions that follow it? It is four chapters long. For copyright reasons we have used the King James Version of the Bible and we realise that this version is somewhat difficult to understand. So if you find the translation a little difficult, read the letter in a modern English translation of the Bible.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS COURSE

A modern English translation of the Bible is highly recommended.

A dictionary / Bible dictionary would be helpful but not essential.

An exercise book to write in.

A pen or pencil.

A Facilitator / Teacher.

First using Philippians 1:9-11; we see that these verses contain the prayers he put up for them. Paul often let his friends know what it was he begged of God for them, that they might know what to beg for themselves and be directed in their own prayers, and that they might be encouraged to hope they should receive from God the quickening, strengthening, everlasting, comforting grace, which so powerful an intercessor as Paul asked of God for them. It is an encouragement to us to know that we are prayed for by our friends, who, we have reason to think, have an interest at the throne of grace. It was intended likewise for their direction in their walk, and that they might labour to answer his prayers for them; for by this it would appear that God had answered them. Paul, in praying thus for them, expected good concerning them. It is an inducement to us to do our duty, that we may not disappoint the expectations of praying friends and ministers. He prayed, 1. That they might be a loving people and those good affections might abound among them; *That your love might abound*

yet more and more. He means it of their love to God, and one another, and all men. Love is the fulfilling both of the law and of the gospel. Observe, Those who abound much in any grace have still need to abound more and more, because there is still something wanting in it and we are imperfect in our best attainments. 2. That they might be a knowing and judicious people: that love might abound *in knowledge and in all judgment*. It is not a blind love that will recommend us to God, but a love grounded upon knowledge and judgment. We must love God because of his infinite excellence and loveliness, and love our brethren because of what we see of the image of God upon them. Strong passions, without knowledge and a settled judgment, will not make us complete in the will of God, and sometimes do more hurt than good. The Jews had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, and were transported by it to violence and rage, Rom. 10:2; Jn. 16:2. 3. That they might be a discerning people. This would be the effect of their knowledge and judgment: *That you may approve the things which are excellent* (v. 10); or, as it is in the margin, *Try the things which differ; eis to ,dokimazein* that we may approve the things which are excellent upon the trial of them, and discern their difference from other things. Observe, the truths and laws of Christ are excellent things; and it is necessary that we every one approve them, and esteem them such. We only need to try them, to approve of them; and they will easily recommend themselves to any searching and discerning mind. 4. That they might be an honest upright-hearted people: *That you may be sincere*. Sincerity is our gospel perfection, that in which we should have our conversation in the world, and which is the glory of all our graces. When the eye is single, when we are inward with God in what we do, are really what we appear to be, and mean honestly, then we are sincere. 5. That they might be an inoffensive people: that you may be *without offence until the day of Christ*; not apt to take offence; and very careful not to give offence to God or their brethren, to *live in all good conscience before God* (Acts 23:1), and to *exercise ourselves to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men*, Acts 24:16. And we must continue to the end *blameless*, that we may be presented so at the *day of Christ*. He will present the church *without spot or wrinkle* (Eph. 5:27), and *present believers faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy*, Jude 24. 6. That they might be a fruitful useful people (v. 11): *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness*, etc. From God is our fruit found, and therefore from him it must be asked. The *fruits of righteousness* are the evidences and effects of our sanctification, the duties of holiness springing from a renewed heart, the *root of the matter in us*. *Being filled* with them. Observe, Those who do much good should still endeavour to do more. The fruits of righteousness, brought forth for the glory of God and edification of his church, should really fill us, and

wholly take us up. Fear not being emptied by bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, for you will be filled with them. These fruits are *by Jesus Christ*, by his strength and grace, for *without him we can do nothing*. He is the root of the good olive, from which it derives its fatness. We are *strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus* (2 Tim. 2:1) and *strengthened with might by his Spirit* (Eph. 3:16), and they are *unto the glory and praise of God*. We must not aim at our own glory in our fruitfulness, but at the *praise and glory of God*, that *God may be glorified in all things* (1 Peter 4:11), and *whatsoever we do we must do all to the glory of God*, 1 Co. 10:31. It is much for the honor of God, when Christians not only are good, but do good, and *abound in good works*.

We look at the purpose of the letter for the next part of the lesson. The student will be able to explain the purpose of the Letter to the Philippians. They will be able to explain the location of the letter in the context of the Philippians and the Philippians need for the message of the letter. Their explanation will identify the connections between Paul (the writer), and the Philippians, and the needs of the Philippians. They will be able to account for the way the letter was written. Finally, they will be able to give an explanation of the purpose of the book in a way that conforms to international recognised standards of non-technical works of biblical scholars.

Exercise 1: Read the Book of Philippians through several times.

CHAPTER 1 - ¹Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: ²Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

³I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, ⁵For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; ⁶Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

⁷Even as it is okay for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. ⁸For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

⁹And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment; ¹⁰That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; ¹¹Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

¹²But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; ¹³So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*; ¹⁴And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. ¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: ¹⁶The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: ¹⁷But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. ¹⁸What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. ¹⁹For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

²¹For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. ²²But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I know not. ²³For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: ²⁴Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. ²⁵And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; ²⁶That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

²⁷Only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; ²⁸And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. ²⁹For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; ³⁰Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

Chapter 2 - ¹If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ²Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³*Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. ⁵Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of

the cross. ⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ¹¹And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed; not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

¹⁴Do all things without murmurings and disputing: ¹⁵That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; ¹⁶Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. ¹⁷Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me. ¹⁹But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. ²⁰For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. ²¹For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. ²²But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. ²³Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. ²⁴But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly. ²⁵Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. ²⁶For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. ²⁷For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. ²⁹Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: ³⁰Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

Chapter 3 - ¹Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe. ²Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. ³For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

⁴Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

⁶Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: ¹⁰That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ¹²Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. ¹⁶Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same thing.

¹⁷Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. ¹⁸(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.) ²⁰For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

CHAPTER 4 - ¹Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved. ²I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. ³And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellow labourers, whose names *are* in the book of life. ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand. ⁶Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure,

whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. ⁹Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

¹⁰But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. ¹¹Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. ¹²I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. ¹⁴Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. ¹⁵Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. ¹⁶For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. ¹⁷Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. ¹⁸But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. ¹⁹But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

(b) ²⁰Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. ²¹Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. ²²All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. ²³The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

For an exercise, the learner can individually answer questions such as the following: After doing this, discuss these with your classmates.

- 1) What is included in the opening paragraph of the letter?
- 2) What is the main point of the second paragraph?
- 3) As a result of Paul's situation, what has happened to him? (1:12-20)
- 4) How does Paul describe living and dying? (1:21)
- 5) How would you summarise the first paragraph of Chapter 2?
- 6) What does Paul say about Timotheus, himself and Epaphroditus? (2:18-30)
- 7) How does Paul summarise his life? (3:5-7)
- 8) What do you think the word 'Finally' in 3:1 and 'therefore' in 4:1 might indicate?
- 9) Who is Paul referring to in 4:1 when he says, 'my dearly beloved'?
- 10) What does he say about the support from Philippi? (4:13-18)
- 11) How does Paul end the letter? (4:20-23)

So here we have general information and history of Paul. Scholars agree that Paul wrote this letter. The events of the letter are in line with the life of Paul. He indicates that he was in prison at the time. There's discussion as to whether he was in prison in Corinth, Ephesus, Caesarea, or Rome. Paul was imprisoned three times altogether, first at Philippi, then in Caesarea for two years and the third in Rome. There was a very short imprisonment in Jerusalem which, if counted, would make four. Many advocate that the letter was written from Rome around AD 60-62 and other evidence points to that fact, but it is still not totally clear. Even though Paul was imprisoned, he seemed to have quite some freedom in that imprisonment and was expecting to be released. The imprisonment was due to Paul's appeal to Caesar at Caesarea, as a way to escape the Jew's attempt to put him to death. After arriving in Rome, his imprisonment or house arrest lasted for two years there too. Scholars aren't exactly sure during what part of the two years Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians but there's speculation that it may have been during the earlier part of those two years; as toward the latter part of Paul's imprisonment, he experienced less freedom. His imprisonment at Rome did allow him to receive fellow Christians including those from distant cities and churches in Asia Minor. In fact, the letters to the Philippians and Colossians were responses to letters brought to him by Epaphroditus and Epaphras. Paul also sent letters to Laodicea and to the Ephesians. As with all of the churches Paul had established, Paul was always concerned about their spiritual welfare. Paul was their mentor and the churches were his disciples. In the case of the Philippians, he appreciated their growth and encouraged them to maintain their unity in Christ.

By this time Paul was well-known throughout the churches in Asia. This was not only true because of his missionary journeys; Asia Minor was Paul's home. He was born in Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia, and he was born a Roman citizen. Before Paul became a Christian, he used the name 'Saul', a Jewish name. Paul called himself 'a Hebrew of the Hebrews' and studied under Gamaliel, a famous rabbi of that time. Paul was a zealous student and that zeal led him to persecute the early Christians. He even participated in the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian church. But that all changed on his travels to Damascus. There, he experienced an extraordinary event. Jesus met him on the road to Damascus and forever changed Paul's life. The zeal that Paul had continued with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, first in Damascus, then Arabia, and from there to Jerusalem, after that, he returned home where he lived for the next ten years. He preached Christ to the whole area and after working with the church at Antioch for a brief time Paul joined up with others and began the evangelisation of the Roman world.

TO SUMMARISE PAUL'S LIFE

- ORIGIN: TARSUS IN CILICIA (ACTS 22:3); TRIBE OF BENJAMIN (PHIL. 3:5)
- TRAINING: LEARNED TENT-MAKING (ACTS 18:3); STUDIED UNDER GAMALIEL (ACTS 22:3)
- RELIGION: HEBREW AND PHARISEE (PHIL. 3:5); PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS (ACTS 8:1-3; PHIL. 3:6)
- SALVATION: MET THE RISEN CHRIST ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS (ACTS 9:1-8)
RECEIVED THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT (ACTS 9:17)
- MISSIONS: THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH WAS INSTRUCTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SEND OUT PAUL TO THE WORK (ACTS 13:1-3)
CARRIED THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES (GAL. 2:7-10)
- ROLES: SPOKE UP FOR THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH AT THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM (ACTS 15:1-35)
OPPOSED PETER (GAL. 2:11-21)
ARGUED WITH BARNABAS ABOUT JOHN MARK (ACTS 15:36-41)
- ACHIEVEMENTS: THREE EXTENDED MISSIONARY JOURNEYS (ACTS 13-20)
FOUNDED NUMEROUS CHURCHES IN ASIA MINOR, GREECE AND POSSIBLY SPAIN (ROM. 15:24, 28)
WROTE LETTERS TO NUMEROUS CHURCHES AND VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS WHICH NOW MAKE UP A QUARTER OF OUR NEW TESTAMENT
- END OF LIFE: FOLLOWING ARREST IN JERUSALEM, WAS SENT TO ROME (ACTS 21:27; 28:16-31)
ACCORDING TO CHRISTIAN TRADITION, RELEASED FROM PRISON ALLOWING FURTHER MISSIONARY WORK IN MACEDONIA; REARRESTED, IMPRISONED AGAIN IN ROME, AND BEHEADED OUTSIDE OF THE CITY

Paul first worked with Barnabas at Antioch in Syria. After the church released them, they went to Cyprus (Barnabas' home) and then to Galatia where they established churches in various cities in the vicinity. After that Paul linked up with Silas, a member of the Jerusalem church and also a Roman citizen. They went back and visited the churches in Galatia and were soon joined by Timothy, a young man who came to Christ through Paul and Barnabas' earlier work. Paul, Silas and Timothy travelled to Macedonia and were joined by another believer, Luke (author of the Gospel of Luke). Their first city in Macedonia was the Roman colony of Philippi. Here, the foursome planted a strong church. This was the first Christian church in Europe. After that the group moved on to Thessalonica where they planted another

church. They experienced quite a bit of trouble there and had to leave. This became common as more and more people accepted the Gospel of Jesus Christ. After a short stay in Athens, Paul moved on to the city of Corinth where he stayed for the next year and a half. After that his missionary travels took him back to Jerusalem and Antioch and then on to Ephesus where he stayed for three years. It was not until five years after he had founded the Philippian church that Paul had the opportunity to visit it while on his third missionary trip, about AD 55 (Acts 20:1, 2). After three months in Corinth he paid a second visit to Philippi, spending Easter here en route to Jerusalem (Acts 20:6). After his arrest in Jerusalem (AD 57) and confinement in Caesarea (AD. 57–59), he appealed to Caesar and was therefore sent to Rome (AD 60).

TO SUMMARISE PAUL’S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS:

PAUL AND BARNABAS	PAUL’S FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR FROM ANTIOCH TO NUMEROUS PLACES, INCLUDING THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS AND THE CITIES OF ATTALIA, PERGA, ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA, INCONIUM, LYSTRA, AND DERBE	ACTS 13; 14
PAUL AND SILAS	PAUL’S SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR FROM ANTIOCH TO NUMEROUS CITIES, INCLUDING TARSUS, TROAS, NEAPOLIS, PHILIPPI, AMPHIPOLIS, THESSALONICA, BEREIA, ATHENS, CORINTH, AND EPHEBUS	ACTS 15–18
PAUL	PAUL’S THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR FROM ANTIOCH TO NUMEROUS CITIES; NEW LOCATIONS VISITED ON THIS TOUR INCLUDED ASSOS, MITYLENE, MILETUS, COS, PATARA, MYRA, AND THE ISLAND OF RHODES IN THE AEGEAN SEA OFF THE COAST OF ASIA MINOR. HE ALSO VISITED PHILIPPI AGAIN.	ACTS 18–21
PAUL	PAUL’S JOURNEY TO ROME	ACTS 28:17-31

We need to look at the Roman world also. A few years after Jesus rose into heaven, Pontius Pilate was removed from office under Tiberius who died in AD 37. After that, Herod Agrippa came to power but died seven years later. Caligula followed Tiberius as Emperor in Rome. Claudius succeeded Tiberius after four years. Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome

around AD 49, and Felix was made procurator of Judea in AD 52. Seven years later Porcius Festus took over. Paul appeared before Porcius Festus before he was sent off to Rome. After Claudius, Nero came to power in Rome. In AD 64, he blamed a great fire in Rome on the Christians. In AD 66 the Jews revolted against Roman power in Jerusalem. The new Roman emperor Titus marched into Jerusalem four years later and destroyed the state of Israel.

Then we have Paul's imprisonments. His first lengthy imprisonment, recorded in Acts 21:27–28:31, resulted from false accusations by Jews in Jerusalem. Because he was a Roman citizen (this was his passport to the Roman world), Paul was offered protection by the Roman authorities from the Jerusalem mob and was transported under guard to Caesarea (23:11–35). After hearings before the Jewish Sanhedrin (22:30–23:10), the Roman governor Felix (24:1–21), the succeeding governor Festus (25:1–12), and King Agrippa (25:13–26:32), Paul was taken to Rome (27:1–28:16). The book of Acts closes with Paul under house arrest in Rome awaiting his hearing before the emperor (28:17–31).

For an exercise, we can ask the individual student to answer the following questions. After doing this, discuss these with your classmates.

- 1) Who was Paul?
- 2) What kind of passport did Paul have?
- 3) How did Paul become a Christian?
- 4) List a few of the things he was known for over the period of his life.
- 5) How many times was Paul imprisoned? Where?
- 6) What were the attitudes of Rome toward Jews and Christians between A62-AD70?
- 7) Why was Paul imprisoned in Rome?
- 8) How many letters are attributed to Paul?
- 9) In what way did Paul relate to the needs of the Philippian church?
- 10) List four immediate companions who worked with Paul.
- 11) How many missionary journeys did Paul take?

Next we look at Philippi and the church there. The Philippians had their own culture and history that made them who they were. After a vision from God, Paul went and established a church in Philippi. Over the years the church bonded increasingly with Paul and financially supported his endeavours in Thessalonica, Corinth and Rome. Paul had become their missionary. He wrote to assure the Philippians that he was okay and also that Epaphroditus who had come from the church at Philippi, was okay. Epaphroditus was recovering from some kind of sickness. Paul also wanted to express his appreciation to the church for their concern and support of him.

The city of Philippi was originally named Krenides, meaning “The Little Fountains” because numerous springs surrounded the place. Philippi was a prosperous Roman colony (Acts 17:12) within Greek Macedonia on the highly travelled Via Egnatia. It was situated on a plain surrounded by mountains, and lay about 16 kilometres inland from the Aegean Sea. The Egnatian Way, the main overland route between Asia and the West, ran through the city. In 356 BC, Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, seized the city, enlarging it and renaming it. Philip resettled people from the countryside in Philippi and built a wall around the city and an acropolis atop the surrounding mountain. Although they date from later periods, other points of interest in Philippi in Paul’s time included a forum the size of a football field, an open-air theatre, two large temples, public buildings, a library, and Roman baths. Philip made the city his empire’s eastern military outpost, protecting it from the wild Thracians.

In 42 BC, Mark Anthony and Octavian (later Augustus Caesar) combined forces to defeat the armies of Brutus and Cassius, assassins of Julius Caesar, at Philippi. In celebration of the victory, Philippi was made into a Roman colony; this entitled its inhabitants to the rights and privileges usually granted those who lived in cities in Italy. The members of the colony were Roman citizens placed there to defend the homeland and its borders. The colony was intended to Romanise the district around it. The Romans granted Philippi the highest status possible for a provincial city, the status of a Roman colony. This meant that the citizens of Philippi could purchase, own, or transfer property. They also had the privilege of filing civil lawsuits in Roman courts and were exempted from paying both poll and land taxes. Their elevated status and wealth gave them not only confidence but a pride that bordered on arrogance. Eleven years later, Octavian defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra in a naval battle at Actium, on the west coast of Greece. Octavian punished the supporters of Antony by evicting them from Italy and resettling them in Philippi.

In obedience to the Macedonian call, Paul and his co-labourers, on the second missionary journey, took the gospel into Europe for the first time in AD 49 (Acts 16:12; 20:6). There was no synagogue there as the city did not have the necessary number of Jewish males (ten) to form a synagogue, so Paul met with the Jews at the riverside. Paul’s labours were crowned with success, and a church was established. The first convert was Lydia, an Asiatic woman, at Philippi. (Acts 16:13, 14) Paul and Silas were arrested, beaten and put in prison, having cast out the spirit of divination from a female slave who had brought her masters much gain by her power. The narrative tells of the earthquake, the jailer’s terror, his conversion and baptism. Acts 16:26-34. In the morning the magistrates sent word to the

prison that the men might be let go; but Paul denounced plainly their unlawful acts, informing them moreover that those whom they had beaten and imprisoned without trial were Roman citizens. The magistrates, in great alarm, saw the necessity of humbling themselves. They came and begged them to leave the city. Paul and Silas consented to do so, and, after paying a visit to “the brethren” in the house of Lydia, they departed.

The church membership was largely non-Jews, and women occupied a prominent place (Acts 16:12–15; Phil 4:2–3). It was a mixture of races, cultures, and social classes (although mostly poor; see 4:15,16) from its inception. This was the first church in Europe. The first converts were an upper-class woman (Lydia, a seller of royal dyes; see Acts 16:14, 15), a middle-class Roman jailer (Acts 16:22–34), and perhaps a lower-class young girl who had been demon-possessed (Acts 16:16–18). As the church grew, it maintained a primarily Gentile flavour, yet the less populous group of Jewish-Christians exerted much influence over the church. The church was loyal to Paul and grateful and generous to him (Acts 18:5; II Cor 8:1–5; 11:8–9; Phil 4:15–18).

The following passage, II Corinthians 8:1-5, provides more evidence of the generosity of the Philippians. Even in their poverty, they gave and committed themselves completely to the Lord. Remember, after leaving Philippi, Paul stayed in Thessalonica for 18 months and after that he went on to Corinth and stayed there for three years.

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit (we want you to know) of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; ²How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. ³For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves; ⁴Praying for us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

Please read the passage in a modern English translation for a better understanding. After leaving Timothy, Paul ventured on to Thessalonica where the Philippians more than once sent Paul funds (Phil. 4:15-16). Jewish opposition forced him to leave, and he travelled through Berea, Athens, and finally, Corinth, where he decided to stay for some time (18 months altogether). During his stay at Corinth, the Philippian church again sent him aid (2 Cor. 11:7-9).

It is clear the church flourished, as in his letter he refers to levels of leadership in the church, such as overseers and deacons. The New Testament specifically mentions an Asian, a Greek, and a Roman. On the surface, these people had little in common. One was a businesswoman who sold purple cloth to the rich; one was a slave girl who had been possessed with a spirit of divination; the third was a jailer. In a world segregated along class and ethnic lines, the church at Philippi broke the rules: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). This church was one of the most integrated places in the Mediterranean world. Paul taught them that all were equal in the body of Christ; all were sinners saved by God’s grace. They were to humble themselves as Jesus had done, and be unified in the love of Christ.

When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, the Philippians lost sight of him for two years. Finally they heard that he was imprisoned in Rome. The hearts of these people went out to him, and immediately they dispatched their church worker, Epaphroditus, with a gift that would minister to Paul’s needs.

Paul provides further evidence of the generosity of the Philippians. (Philippians 4:10-18). Please read this in a modern English translation for a clearer understanding.

¹⁰But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. ¹¹Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. ¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. ¹⁴Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. ¹⁵Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. ¹⁶For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. ¹⁷Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. ¹⁸But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

To sum up, Philippi was established as a major Roman military outpost and colony in Macedonia. The Philippians had been given the status of Roman citizens with all the

privileges associated with that status. Paul's letter was addressed to the church at Philippi. This church was established during Paul's second missionary journey and during the next ten years the Philippians followed Paul's ministry throughout Asia Minor sending him support on many occasions. They had obviously developed a bond with Paul and the concern and love for Paul, with the provision of support, that bond continued to grow. The support was proof that Paul was highly regarded and loved by the Philippians. Paul was their missionary. When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem they lost contact with him for two years. Their love for Paul was so much more evident that upon hearing that Paul was in Rome they sent Epaphroditus, their pastor to find out his situation. Paul's return letter to them was like a father to his family.

Another exercise can involve answering the following questions.

- 1) What was the importance of Philippi and what effect did that have on the Philippians?
- 2) What were Paul's first experiences with Philippi and the Philippians?
 - a. The Macedonian call?
 - b. The first converts?
 - c. Paul befriending Lydia?
 - d. The casting out of the spirit of divination from a female slave?
 - e. Paul and Silas' arrest?
- 3) The relationship with the Philippians continued to grow after Paul left to work in Thessalonica and later in Corinth. Why do you think this is?
- 4) What reasons would you give for the flourishing of the church in Philippi?
- 5) Describe Paul's relationship with the Philippians ten years later (when he was imprisoned in Rome). Why was that relationship as strong as ever?
- 6) Why did the Philippians send Epaphroditus, their church worker, to Paul?
- 7) Why had the Philippians become concerned about Epaphroditus?

Okay now we look at the literary style of the book. The Letter to the Philippians is a personal letter of friendship and encouragement. Paul thanks the Philippians for their gifts using endearing terms to describe his thanks. He tells them that Epaphroditus had recovered from a serious illness. Paul also expresses paternal admonitions to the church and appeals to quarrelling friends in the church.

Paul starts the Letter to the Philippians with an opening in the Greek-Roman style; a style common in that day. The author of the letter, and the letter's recipients, are noted, and a greeting is given. In Paul's greeting, he uses two words, 'grace' and 'peace'. 'Grace' comes from the Greek, meaning unmerited favour of God and 'peace', a Jewish concept meaning: a

right relationship with God. The letter follows Paul's criterion of authorship. In verse 1:3, he thanks God for every thought of the Philippians. Other criteria include:

- Thanks offered to God because of the Philippians.
- The main text of the letter
- A personal desire to see the Philippians or to send someone to them
- Greetings to the readers from those with him
- A statement of blessing, which serves as a conclusion

Philippians agrees closely in style within the Pauline Way of writing, as confirmed with most conservative Biblical scholars.

Altogether, Paul wrote 13 or 14 letters (depending on whether or not he wrote Hebrews) and perhaps no other Pauline letter more conclusively bears the seal of Paul's authenticity, than Philippians. There is naturalness, a balanced feeling, and an outpouring of Paul's heart which could not be made up. He shares with them his own spiritual experiences. It's full of kindness, warmth and affection for the Philippians. It's as if he is acknowledging a certain kinship with the Church at Philippi, an adult child talking to his parent. We see this by him sharing his own experience with Christ, and his struggle over whether to prefer dying to be with Christ or living to serve the Philippians (1:21–26). The Philippians were in his heart as they supported him in his imprisonment (1:7), a fact which explains the note of gratitude that Paul frequently sounds (1:3–11; 2:19–30; 4:10–20).

Paul had suffered a lot for the cause of Christ over the years. He had long learned to be content in all circumstances, an ability that Paul encouraged the Philippians to cultivate (4:11). In fact, his letter to the Philippians is a testimony to this attitude. Even though he was in prison, facing an uncertain future, Paul wrote this thank-you letter to the Philippians, a letter that expresses Paul's abundant joy in what God was accomplishing through them. In addition, the letter is full of instructions on practical Christianity; one of the purposes for writing the letter. Paul doesn't set out to teach theology but we see that it's included in his description of Christ. In this description he says that just as Christ became a slave, so also the Christian becomes the slave of Christ (1:1). Only the person enslaved to Christ is free to love and serve others (2:3–5). The importance of striving toward the goal of full salvation is highlighted. As Christians work they realize that God is working in them (2:12, 13). While his primary reason for writing the letter was to acknowledge the gift sent by the Philippians, Paul also appeals for a spirit of unity and steadfastness among them. He encourages Euodias

and Syntyche, two women in the church, to get along. In addition, he warns against dangerous heresies that were threatening them, probably Judaism and Gnosticism.

Paul goes on to say that the key reason Christians *can* rejoice is that the Son of God was willing to come to earth as a man—and a bondservant at that! He healed, He taught and He went all the way to die on a cross. Philippians 2:5–11 expresses this great truth in a beautiful paragraph that many believe is an early Christian hymn, either quoted by Paul or written by him. This passage is included to teach unity through humility.

In conclusion, the literary style of the Philippians confirms that the book is a personal letter from Paul to the Philippians expressing gratitude for their gifts and support. Paul expresses appreciation and affection and uses endearing terms like “I hold you in my heart”, “I yearn for you with all the affection of Christ.” The style is very personal and affectionate, including paternal kinds of appeals and admonitions. So there is a paternal relationship of Father and sons/daughters, and also of church leader and missionary/disciples. Although Paul doesn’t set out to teach theology it is included when describing the example of Christ. He appeals to quarrelling friends and uses words like “I entreat”, “true companion, and help these women”.

Another exercise can involve questions of the information we have just covered; such as:

- 1) What type of letter is Philippians?
- 2) What evidence is there that Paul is the author of the letter to the Philippians?
- 3) List five or six elements of style in Philippians that are common with Paul’s style of writing.
- 4) Who is Epaphroditus and what is mentioned about him?
- 5) What word(s) can describe Epaphroditus relationship to the Philippians?
- 6) How did Paul express his appreciation of and affection for the Philippians?
- 7) Why was Paul expressing gratitude?
- 8) In what way did Paul touch on theology about Christ?
- 9) Why did Paul appeal for a spirit of unity?

The student now knows a lot about the letter. They now know who received the letter and who wrote it. You know why the letter was written and what the recipients wanted to know. You also know about the father and son/daughter relationship between the author and those to whom the letter was addressed. You understand the concern the author had for the church as a church leader, missionary and pastor. You also understand the literary style the book was

written in; What that style included and why it was written in that way. This review is very important. Try to answer these questions in an open class discussion.

Another exercise can be for Individual and/or class discussion. Look at these questions.

- 1) Who was the letter written to?
- 2) Who wrote the letter?
- 3) Why was the letter written? What did the Philippians need to know?
- 4) What was the relationship of the author of the letter to the recipients?
- 5) The author's relationship to the recipients needs was a little more formal than the style of the letter implied. Why was this and how did the author relate to those needs?
- 6) What is included in the literary style of the book?
- 7) Why was this particular style chosen for this book?
- 8) How does the literary style help establish proof of authorship?

The student should now be able to explain the purpose of the Letter to the Philippians. They should be able to explain the location of the letter in context to Philippians and the Philippians need for the message of the letter. Their explanation should be able to identify the connections between Paul, the writer, and the Philippians and the needs of the Philippians. They should also be able to account for the letter's literary style. Their explanation should be in keeping with non-technical works by biblical scholars which are generally recognised as conforming to international standards of scholarship.

In the next part of the lesson, we can look at the objectives of the letter. The student will be able to outline the content of the Letter to the Philippians. The outline will cover the following points: first, it must include substantial information about the purpose of Philippians; second, the outline must trace two themes of the letter with each theme having two Biblical references; and finally it must discuss the importance of the two themes, both for the Philippians and for Christians today. The student will also be able to provide an outline that conforms to international recognised standards of non-technical works of biblical scholars.

Sample outlines of the Book of Philippians. Remember that your own outline must summarise the content of the Book of Philippians. Study the outline below.

1.) THE FIRST OUTLINE

Introduction (1:1, 2).

I. Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Philippians (1:3–11).

A. Thanksgiving (1:3–8).

B. Prayer (1:9–11).

- II. Paul's Situation in Rome (1:12–26).
 - A. Imprisonment and Opposition (1:12–18).
 - B. Expectation of Deliverance (1:19–26).
- III. Paul's Exhortations (1:27–2:4).
 - A. To Steadfastness (1:27–30).
 - B. To Meekness and Unity (2:1–4).
- IV. Paul's Supreme Example (2:5–18).
 - A. The Humiliation of Christ (2:5–8).
 - B. The Exaltation of Christ (2:9–11).
 - C. The Working Out of Salvation (2:12–18).
- V. Paul's Messengers to the Church (2:19–30).
 - A. Timothy (2:19–24).
 - B. Epaphroditus (2:25–30).
- VI. Paul's Warning Against Heresies Which Threatened the Church (3:1–4:1).
 - A. The Legalism of the Judaizers (3:1–14).
 - B. The Libertinism of the Antinomians (3:15–4:1).
- VII. Paul's Final Admonitions (4:2–9).
 - A. To Heal Dissensions (4:2, 3).
 - B. To Prayer and Noble-Mindedness (4:4–9).

As you can see, this outline separates the main content of the book into seven different points or headings. It follows a linear pattern beginning with chapter 1, verse 1 and ending with chapter 4, verse 9. However your outline doesn't necessarily have to follow a linear pattern.

Even though you are not allowed to use this outline, you can see that it includes some headings that would relate to the purpose of the Book of Philippians. This is the second aspect you will need to consider in developing your outline. Your outline must contribute substantially to the purpose of the book. For example, the outline includes items such as Paul's Thanksgiving and prayer for the Philippians in 1:3-11. It also includes Paul's situation in Rome with subtitles A and B: Imprisonment and Opposition and Expectation of Deliverance in 1:12-26. It talks about unity in III B. which is also mentioned as part of the purpose of Philippians. Again in VII (4:2-9), it mentions in A (4:2, 3) about the healing of dissensions. This refers to the two ladies who are quarrelling with each other.

Exercise 1 : You need to re-read the Book of Philippians and write down headings that would represent main points of the content of the book. This will give you an idea of

how close the outlines are to the book. There should be at least 12 or 13 points. This will also help you focus on the main content of the book. Make sure to write the chapter and verse alongside each point. Write these into your exercise book. You will be able to use these points later on in developing your own outline.

2.) THE SECOND OUTLINE

I. Salutation 1:1, 2

II. Paul's prayers for the Philippians 1:3–11

A. Praise for the Philippians 1:3–5

B. Promise: Paul's confidence in Christ and His work 1:6, 7

C. Prayer for the Philippians 1:8–11

III. The Biography of Paul 1:12–26

A. Success in jail: the gospel proclaimed by Paul and others 1:12–18

B. Success in Jesus: Paul's desire and determination to glorify Christ 1:19–26

IV. The body of the letter 1:27—4:9

A. Excellence in conduct 1:27—2:18

1. The privilege of suffering for Christ 1:27–30

2. The priority of submitting to others 2:1–4

3. The picture of Christ's humble suffering 2:5–11

4. The priority of sanctifying oneself 2:12–18

B. Examples of good conduct: Timothy and Epaphroditus 2:19–30

C. Example of commitment: Paul's rejection of the world for Christ 3:1–21

D. Excellence in commitment: dedication to Christ 4:1–9

V. Blessings 4:10–20

A. For Paul 4:10–18

B. For the Philippians 4:19, 20

VI. Benediction and greetings 4:21–23

This outline separates the main content of the book into six different points with a larger variety of sub-points than the first outline. As you already know, your outline must include information about the purpose of the Book of Philippians. The next aspect of your outline is that it must include two main themes in the book of Philippians. Look closely at IV in the outline above, starting with chapter 1, verse 27 and ending with chapter 4 verse 9. This could possibly be considered a theme: Suffering and Commitment. The theme covers excellence in and examples of good conduct and commitment. Under excellence in conduct (1:27-2:18), there are four more subheadings, all to do with suffering.

3.) THE THIRD OUTLINE

- I. Salutation (1:1, 2)
- II. Opening Message: Thanksgiving and Prayer (1:3–11)
- III. The Truth of the Gospel (1:12–2:30)
 - A. The Gospel and Paul (1:12–26)
 - 1. Paul's Imprisonment (1:12–14)
 - 2. Rival Messengers (1:15–18)
 - 3. Paul's Prospects (1:19–26)
 - B. The Gospel and the Philippians (1:27–2:18)
 - 1. A Call to Unity (1:27–2:4)
 - 2. The Example of Christ (2:5–11)
 - 3. A Further Call to Unity (2:12–18)
 - C. Two of Paul's Co-workers in the Gospel (2:19–30)
- IV. Truth Against Error (3:1–4:1)
 - A. The Gospel Against Legalists (3:1–11)
 - B. The Already and the Not Yet (3:12–16)
 - C. The Gospel Against Libertines (3:17–4:1)
- V. Exhortations (4:2–9)
- VI. Thanksgiving (4:10–20)
 - A. Contentment (4:10–13)
 - B. Partnership (4:14–20)
- VII. Final Greeting and Benediction (4:21–23)

Again, we have a possible theme in III: The Truth of the Gospel (1:23-2:30) covering The Gospel and Paul and the Gospel and the Philippians, with additional information in IV, V, VI and VII covering the rest of the content of the book and perhaps the purpose of the book. Two additional points that you must include in the outline: the importance of each theme to the Philippians; and the importance of each theme for Christian believers today.

Another exercise can include a discussion on which of the three outlines the student prefers and the reason why.

So what does an outline do?

- 1. Summarises the content.
- 2. Contributes to the purpose of the book.
- 3. Traces two themes of the book with two biblical references per theme.
- 4. Identifies the importance of the two themes for the Philippians.

5. Identifies the importance of the two themes for Christians today.

At this point the student can suggest that the learner re-read the Book of Philippians to find which verses support the various aspects of the purpose of the book. Write those points down with the scripture verses beside them. Use your exercise book for this.

Also they can look at the following themes and find the verses in the Book of Philippians that would best support two of these themes. (At least two verses per theme.) It is suggested that for one of your themes, you choose: joy or rejoice. Write these in your exercise book.

- Joy
- Partnership in the gospel
- Christ's humility
- Practical Christianity
- Paul's appeal to have the mind of Christ
- In Christ satisfied
- Rejoice
- Follow good examples

An outline of the contents and themes can be considered through these questions:

1. Summarises the content.
2. Contributes to the purpose of the book.
3. Traces two themes of the book with two biblical references per theme.
4. Identifies the importance of the two themes for the Philippians.
5. Identifies the importance of the two themes for Christians today.

Now the student can develop their own outline making sure that it includes the five items above. You can use the sample template below if you wish but it is suggested that you develop your own. The template below uses the heading, 'purpose'. It may be more appropriate to insert information on the purpose of the book under other headings.

After they have written their outline they can answer further questions. The answers to these questions form part of your outline.

- 1) Summarise the contents of the book using your outline.
- 2) How does your outline contribute to the purpose of the Book of Philippians?
- 3) Summarise the first theme showing references and comments.

- 4) Summarise the second theme showing references and comments.
- 5) What is the importance of each theme to the Philippians?
- 6) What is the importance of each theme to Christians today?

We can now review the last section as the student has learned how to outline the content of the Book of Philippians. First, the outline includes substantial information about the purpose of Philippians; second, it traces two themes of the book with each theme having two biblical references; and finally it identifies the importance of the two themes, both for the Philippians and for Christians today. The student will also be able to provide an outline that conforms to internationally recognised standards of non-technical works of biblical scholars internationally.

Another exercise that can be for class discussion:

- 1) Compare your outline with that of your classmates. Discuss the differences.
- 2) Discuss the different themes that are supported by scripture.
- 3) Vote on which outline is best in that it most closely fits the requirements set out in the study.

This next section can look closer at the objectives of the lesson itself. The student will be able to outline the meaning of selected passages in the Book of Philippians also. They will be able to establish connections between selected passages and the context of the whole book. The context includes content, themes, possible original recipients and their need for the message of the book, possible authorship, and purpose of writing. The student will be able to establish the everyday meaning of the significant words and sentences in each passage. (Everyday meaning is very much dependent on which translation the student uses. Modern translations already have the everyday meanings.) The student will be able to identify meaning in each passage for the original recipients and for believers today, with reference to the literary form of the passage. The outline will be in keeping with non-technical works by biblical scholars which are generally recognised as conforming to international standards of scholarship.

In the second section above, we provided the student with the Book of Philippians, itself. It also provided an introduction of the book wrapped up in study the the writer, Paul the Apostle, the letter's purpose and why the letter was written like it was. The lesson provided some insights into Paul's life and that of the Roman World and the Philippian Church.

Section three required the students to immerse themselves in its content of the book, relating the purpose of the book with the actual content. Several possible themes (main ideas)

were chosen and discussed. Lesson four will prepare the student for yet a deeper study of Philippians whereby three different passages are analysed.

The following is an example of an exercise regarding three different verses. These include Philippians 2:1-11, 3:2-11 and 3:12-16. Before going on, take some time and re-read the Book of Philippians. (You can read the Kings James Version in lesson two, however it is recommended that you read a modern English translation) When you come to these three passages, underline them, pausing long enough to think about them in relation to the outline of the book and the overall content of the book. If there are any ideas that come to you while reading these passages, make sure you write them down. These may be of help later.

THE FIRST PASSAGE - PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

¹If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ²Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³*Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. ⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ¹¹And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1.) RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONTEXT OF THE BOOK. *In the context of the whole book, Paul is encouraging the Philippians to continue to be united and uses the example of Christ's humility as a model for all Christians to follow in laying down their own preferences to serve the needs of others.*

¹If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ²Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

Paul encourages the Philippians to be united together.

³*Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Look down on your own interests; don't think you are better than others. Look up to others; think of others being in some way better than yourself.

⁴Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. *Look out for others; don't think of your own interests but show interest in what others are doing.*

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
Observe the example of Jesus and have the same attitude.

⁶Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
Jesus always in God, having the same essential form of God. Although He is divine He didn't cling to His rights as God nor refuse to let them go.

⁷But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

He emptied Himself and made Himself as nothing as a human. Then He took on another essential form; this time as a slave.

⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He brought Himself even lower again by submitting Himself to a life of total obedience to God, having no authority of His own. Jesus made a total identification with humankind, accepting the death penalty of human sin and paying for the consequences with His own life.

⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

God saw all that Jesus had done and was satisfied and raised Him back to life again in a dramatic demonstration of glorious power.

¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

Jesus is now given all authority in heaven and earth. The Gospel now makes tremendous claims and demands an acknowledgement of Jesus as absolute Lord; every knee ought to bow and all creation should worship Jesus.

¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Everyone ought to confess that Jesus is Lord. Jesus had the right to be worshipped before he came to earth because he was God but He put all His divinity to one side and as a human being battled through in faith and obedience to His Father to regain

his right to honour. As a representative of all humans he overcame the effects of the Fall of Man because of sin and appropriated mastery again. Now God has honoured what Jesus has done and made Him Lord of all.

2.) EVERYDAY MEANING OF SIGNIFICANT WORDS AND SENTENCES. The everyday meaning of significant words and sentences is very much dependent on which translation the student uses! Modern translations already have the everyday meanings.

A.) VERSES 1 AND 5

¹If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Be of the same 'mind'; have this 'mind' among yourselves. 'Mind' means to think about; put your mind to this. Choose this mindset. Paul wanted the Philippians to be likeminded and think the same way about things; particularly by adopting the same mindset that Jesus had.

B.) VERSES 6 AND 7

⁶Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

'Form' of God, 'form' of a servant: 'form' means morph – the essential form of something that never changes. In verse 6, Jesus is the 'morph' of God; he is essentially divine; he always was, and always will be, God. In verse 7, Jesus took on the 'morph' of a slave; he took on another essential form. He was not pretending; it was a reality.

3.) MEANINGS FOR BOTH THE PHILIPPIANS AND FOR BELIEVERS TODAY

A.) PHILIPPIANS: Paul believed it was important for all Christians to maintain their unity through mutual humility, and used the example of Jesus.

B.) CHRISTIANS TODAY: As followers of Jesus we should not grasp our rights, we should live unselfishly and humbly put others first. Christians should behave the same way that Jesus did and leave the results to God because He is often the only one who recognises our behaviour and is able to honour us.

Exercise 3: For 1.) above, read through the answers in italics and then summarise what the ten verses are saying. Write this summary in your exercise book. If you're in a class, discuss your paragraph with other students.

Exercise 4: In number 2.) above, are there any more words that you're not sure of? Try to find one or two others and look these words up in a dictionary.

The second passage is PHILIPPIANS 3:2-11

1.) RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONTEXT OF THE BOOK. *In this letter Paul is encouraging unity and he alerts the Philippians to divisive and destructive interference from outsiders whose authority and practices he discredits.*

²Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. ³For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

⁴Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: ¹⁰That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

For Philippians 3:2-11 above, questions can be ask on how does it relate to the context of the book? To answer this, first it will help by referring to a modern English version. Next, in order to see how this relates, you will need to answer some questions. For example:

- 1) What does Paul say that the Jews were trusting in?
- 2) What does Paul say he would rather trust in? (Verse 7 to 8).
- 3) By what authority does he say this? (Verse 5 to 6.)
- 4) In Verse 9 Paul compares circumcision to a righteousness that is from the law. Where does Paul say righteousness should come from?
- 5) Verses 10 and 11 are more or less a continuation of verses 7 and 8. What is Paul saying in Verses 10 and 11?

If you have answered these questions, then you've shown the relationship of the verses to the context of the book. As shown above Paul is encouraging unity in this book and alerts the Philippians to divisive and destructive interference from outsiders whose authority and practices he discredits. The Jews were trying to force their practices onto the non-Jewish Christians.

2.) EVERYDAY MEANING OF SIGNIFICANT WORDS AND SENTENCES.

In verse 2, 'mutilation of the flesh' – this is circumcision as a surgical operation of the body, compared to:

Verse 3 - real circumcision – According to Paul, what is real circumcision?

Verse 9 – 'not having a righteousness of our own' that comes from fulfilling the law as compared to:

Verse 9 – 'a righteousness from God through faith' in Christ.

3.) MEANINGS FOR BOTH THE PHILIPPIANS AND FOR BELIEVERS TODAY

EXERCISE 6: What was Paul saying to the Philippians in this passage?

Exercise 7: What is Paul saying to us today?

THE THIRD PASSAGE IS PHILIPPIANS 3:12-18

¹²Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. ¹⁶Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same thing.

¹⁷Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. ¹⁸(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ.

For this passage, the student will have to do the analysis themselves:

(RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONTEXT OF THE BOOK.): What is the relationship of Philippians 3:12-18 to the context of the book?

(EVERYDAY MEANING OF SIGNIFICANT WORDS AND SENTENCES.) List some significant words and sentences and state their everyday meanings.

(MEANINGS FOR BOTH THE PHILIPPIANS AND FOR BELIEVERS TODAY.) Show what this passage meant to the Philippians and also for believers today.

So in conclusion, the explanation of the purpose will locate the book in the context in which it was written and their need for the message contained in the book. The explanation will identify the relationship between the author, Paul, and the Philippians and their needs. The explanation will account for the way the book is written (the literary style of the book). Next, an outline will summarise the content and relate that to the book's purpose. The outline covers two themes of the book with two biblical references per theme. The outline will identify the importance of the two themes to the Philippians and for Christians today. Finally, the outline of three selected passages relates these passages to the context of the whole book. The outline provides everyday meaning of significant words and sentences in each passage. It identifies meaning in each passage with reference to the way the passage is written for the Philippians and for Christians today.

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