

Philippians – Week 5 – Spiritual Growth – Bible Study Helps

Sermon Summary: This sermon emphasizes the Christian's responsibility to actively participate in their spiritual growth, working out their salvation with fear and trembling. The sermon stresses the importance of obeying God's Word in every area of life, avoiding complaining and disputes, and shining as lights in a dark world. The message underscores the need for believers to take their spiritual growth seriously, recognizing that God is working in them for His good pleasure and that their lives are a platform for the gospel.

Key Points:

- Christians must take responsibility for their own spiritual growth
- God is working in believers to accomplish His will and pleasure
- Believers must do all things without murmuring and disputing
- Christians are called to be blameless and harmless in a crooked world
- Our lives should shine as lights, holding forth the word of life
- Constructive feedback differs from complaining and is necessary for growth
- Social media and personal conduct greatly impact our Christian witness

Scripture Reference:

- Philippians 2:12-16

Stories:

- The example of John the Baptist's parents being described as blameless
- An analogy of a carpenter's files is used to illustrate different levels of spiritual refinement needed in a believer's life
- Personal experiences from workplace management to illustrate the difference between complaining and constructive feedback
- The story of the Israelites complaining in the wilderness is referenced as a negative example

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Discipleship and small group guide

Small Group Guide: Spiritual Growth - Working Out Your Salvation

Opening Prayer

Key Takeaways:

1. Our spiritual growth is our personal responsibility.
2. God is working in us, but we must work out what He's doing.
3. We are called to do all things without murmuring and disputing.
4. Our lives should shine as lights in a dark world, holding forth the word of life.

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon emphasizes our responsibility to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). What does this mean to you practically? How can we take ownership of our spiritual growth?
2. It mentioned that many Christians view God's word as optional. Do you agree? How can we cultivate an attitude of obedience to all of Scripture?
3. The sermon highlights the difference between complaining and constructive feedback. Can you share an example of how you've seen this play out in your own life or in the church?
4. How does the command to "do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Philippians 2:14) challenge you? In what areas of your life do you struggle most with complaining?
5. The sermon emphasizes that we are to shine as lights in a "crooked and perverse nation" (Philippians 2:15). What are some practical ways we can be distinctive as Christians in our current culture?

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6. How does the idea that we are living for God's pleasure (Philippians 2:13) impact your perspective on daily life and decision-making?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, commit to catching yourself when you start to complain. Instead, try to offer constructive feedback or simply pray about the situation.
2. Identify one area of your spiritual life where you need to take more responsibility. Make a plan to "work out" that aspect of your faith.
3. Look for opportunities to "shine as lights" in your workplace, school, or community this week. Be prepared to share your experience with the group next time.
4. Spend time meditating on Philippians 2:12-16. Write down any insights or convictions the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.
5. Practice giving and receiving constructive feedback with a trusted Christian friend or family member.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for His work in our lives and ask for His help in working out our salvation with fear and trembling. Pray for opportunities to shine as lights in the world and for the strength to do all things without complaining.

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Discipleship Questions

How can we practically 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling' in our daily lives, and what does this look like in modern contexts?

In what ways might we be unintentionally 'murmuring and disputing' in our Christian walk, and how can we recognize and address these behaviors?

How can we balance the need for constructive feedback within the church with the command to avoid complaining?

What does it mean to be 'blameless and harmless' as sons of God in today's 'crooked and perverse nation,' and how can we embody this?

How can we effectively 'shine as lights in the world' while navigating the complexities of social media and online interactions?

In what ways might our personal growth and obedience to God's Word impact our ability to advance the gospel?

How can we cultivate a mindset of living for God's pleasure rather than our own desires, and what challenges might we face in doing so?

What does it mean to 'hold forth the word of life' in our current cultural context, and how can we do this effectively?

How can we develop a perspective like Paul's, who was willing to rejoice even in the face of potential martyrdom for the sake of others' faith?

In what ways can we practically 'esteem others better than ourselves' while still maintaining healthy boundaries and self-care?

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A 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide

Day 1: Working Out Our Salvation

Reading: Philippians 2:12-13

Devotional: Today's passage reminds us of our responsibility in our spiritual growth. While salvation is a gift from God, we are called to "work out" this salvation in our daily lives. This doesn't mean earning our salvation, but rather living it out with reverence and awe. Reflect on areas in your life where you might be taking God's grace for granted. How can you more actively participate in your spiritual growth today? Remember, it is God who works in you, empowering you to will and to act according to His good purpose. Take comfort in this partnership with the Divine, and ask God to reveal one specific area where He wants you to grow.

Day 2: The Power of a Positive Attitude

Reading: Philippians 2:14-16

Devotional: In a world full of negativity, we are called to shine as lights. Today's reading challenges us to do everything without murmuring (complaining) or disputing (arguing). This is no small task! Consider how your words and attitude impact those around you. Are you spreading light or contributing to the darkness? Pray for God to help you cultivate a spirit of gratitude and positivity, even in challenging circumstances. Remember, your life is a testimony to the transforming power of Christ. How might your attitude today draw someone closer to Jesus?

Day 3: Humility in Action

Reading: Philippians 2:3-8

Devotional: The example of Christ's humility is unparalleled. He, being in very nature God, made Himself nothing for our sake. This radical selflessness challenges our natural inclinations towards self-promotion and pride. Today, intentionally look for ways to put others first. It might be as simple as letting someone go ahead of you in line or taking time to truly listen to a friend's concerns. Reflect on how practicing humility makes you feel. How does it change your perspective on your own importance? Ask God to help you see others as He sees them, and to love them with the same selfless love Christ demonstrated.

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Day 4: Unity in the Body of Christ

Reading: Philippians 2:1-2

Devotional: Paul's plea for unity among believers is as relevant today as it was when he wrote it. In a world that often thrives on division, we are called to be of one mind and one spirit. This doesn't mean we'll agree on everything, but it does mean we prioritize our shared faith in Christ above our differences. Consider your relationships within the church. Are there any unresolved conflicts or grudges you're holding onto? Pray for the courage to seek reconciliation and the wisdom to know how to do so in a God-honoring way. How might your efforts towards unity today reflect Christ to a watching world?

Day 5: Shining as Lights in the World

Reading: Philippians 2:15-16

Devotional: As children of God, we are called to shine as lights in a dark world. This imagery is powerful – light dispels darkness, provides guidance, and brings warmth. How are you shining Christ's light in your sphere of influence? It might be through acts of kindness, speaking words of hope, or standing firm in your faith amidst challenges. Remember, you hold forth the word of life – the gospel message that has the power to transform lives. Pray for opportunities today to shine brightly for Christ, whether through your words or actions. Ask God to help you be bold in your witness, trusting that He will use your faithfulness for His glory.