

philippians

background: read this stuff before you begin

WELCOME TO ROOTWORKS

This guide is my gift to you to help you study the Bible. This may not seem like an expensive gift, but the treasures you will learn from studying God's Word will be priceless. I'm thrilled that you want to study the Bible! One of my greatest joys is to see students reading and learning from God's Word. Thank you for bringing me joy!

What does RootWorks mean?

The name RootWorks comes from Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT) which reads:

*And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to live in obedience to him. **Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him**, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all he has done.*

As you can read from the passage, maturity in one's relationship with God requires nourishment. The imagery in this passage suggests that our spiritual roots must grow deep so that we'll continue in our vital relationship with God. This type of growth requires putting our ROOTS to WORK. Get it?

Why do this work? Why not just attend another Bible study?

The reason I've put this notebook together is because I want you to learn how to study the Bible through reading and asking questions. It would be easy for you to find a weekly Bible study where you become comfortable attending and digging into God's Word. Chances are, you would go to Bible study, sit, and listen to someone else teach. While this is good, it's definitely not best for your long-term maturity. You need to learn to study the Bible on your own. I want you to develop the habit of studying God's Word.

How long will RootWorks take to finish?

The answer to this question depends on how much thought you give to answering the questions. The questions are not intended to be "raced through." Your goal shouldn't be speed; it should be comprehension and personal application. As a general rule, each lesson should take thirty to forty-five minutes.

How often should I complete a lesson?

This depends upon you; upon how often you decide to sit down and work through this material. The idea would be to keep consistent. You don't want to do too much too fast and get burned out or tired. At the same time, you don't want to answer one question a month—this will break up the continuity and the cohesiveness of the lesson, and you'll be 35 years old by the time you finish.

What do I do when I finish all nine lessons?

Celebrate! You will have worked hard to reach this goal. Chances are you'll have some questions. If you're not in a small group I'd love to meet with you for a few minutes to hear those questions as well as what you learned as a result of your study (if you're in a small group, get together with your leader). When you're ready for the next RootWorks notebook simply print it from the youth website.

What if I don't know an answer for a specific question?

Keep going. Don't let it discourage you. I would be surprised if you didn't have some questions that "stump" you. Give it some good thought and then skip it if you don't know the answer.

What Bible translation should I use?

You can use just about any translation Bible and still be able to figure out the questions. The questions were written using the NIV translation, but they're worded so you can use almost any Bible and make it through. (I prefer the Message, but I realize most people have the NIV).

If this translation talk is confusing, don't worry about it. Basically, when the Bible was written 2,000 plus years ago, it was written in different languages. The New Testament was written in Greek and the Old Testament was written in (mostly) Hebrew. The Bible you own has been translated from its original language into English so you can read and understand it. (If you think economics is tough, you should try Hebrew!) Have you ever noticed that you use some words differently than the ways your parents use those same words? After a time, words simply change their meaning; therefore, we have different translations of the Greek and Hebrew. Imagine the change that would happen over 400 years! That was when the King James Version was written—and that is why some of the language sounds so weird.

Should I also write in my own Bible during this study?

Yes! I hope you will write notes in the margin of your Bible, underline key verses, and watch your Bible become a friend that is waiting to tell you more about God and His desires for your life.

The Author: Paul

Paul wrote over half of the books in the New Testament. In your reading of the New Testament, you will find that Paul is passionate about God. He not only wants to live for Christ, he wants others to know him as well. Paul came from an elite Jewish background and spent several years trying to persecute and destroy the early Christian Church.

His zeal for persecution ended when God "sent him for a spin." If you aren't aware of how Paul became a Christian, I encourage you to read about his conversion experience in the book of Acts (it's mentioned three times: Acts 9:1-19; 22:1-21; 26:12-18). Once God changed Paul's heart, he was on his way to becoming a great preacher, missionary, and church planter. Paul was one of God's key instruments in the rise of Christianity and the building of the early Church.

The Audience: Christians in Philippi

The apostle Paul wrote the book of Philippians from a Roman jail cell. He was writing to the Christians in the church of Philippi whom he knew from his earlier years of ministry. Paul established this church and was keeping in contact with them. He had heard reports that they were suffering and that there was some false teaching in their midst. He wanted to set them straight and remind them of his foundational teaching.

As a pastor, I love reading this book because Paul expresses, in great detail, his love for his people. He wants them to know that he loves Jesus, and he wants them to follow and love Jesus too. Paul is filled with the love of Christ and everything else is worthless in comparison.

My prayer is that you will also find everything in life worthless in comparison to knowing Jesus Christ.

lesson 1: philippians 1:1-8

Questions for Philippians 1:1-2

1. The term "servant" is similar to the word "slave" or "slave to a master." Why do you think Paul would call himself a servant or slave of Jesus Christ?

2. What would a present-day servant "look like"? Give some specific examples.

3. When Paul addresses all the Christians in Philippi he greets them using the word "grace." This word means "God's favor is given to sinful people with no strings attached." I like to define grace as "undeserved favor." Why do you think Paul started a letter with this greeting?

Questions for Philippians 1:3-6

1. In verses 3-6 you should be able to sense Paul's love for these Christians. List three examples of Paul's love (i.e. v. 3 "I thank my God every time I remember you.")

- Who is someone in your life that when you think of them, you break out in a prayer of thanksgiving? Have you ever told this person? [At the end of your study, try writing them a letter and let them know you appreciate them.]

2. Paul affirms the Philippians' partnership with him in his goal to spread the gospel of Christ. How do you think they helped him? How do we spread the Good News today?

3. Paul is very confident that God not only started a good work in their lives but He will continue ("carry it on to completion"). Why do you think Paul is so confident that God will "carry it on to completion"?

4. What "good" work has God started in your life?

5. Based on these verses (1:3-6), how will you look and act as God's work in you is finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again. What would the finished product look like in your life?

6. How do you know God isn't done with you yet?

7. What is one area of your life that you'd like God to focus His attention on?

Questions for Philippians 1:7-8

1. We know that when Paul was going through some difficult times, the Christians at Philippi helped him with money and housing. In this letter he thanks them. How was their response an act of spiritual maturity?

2. Think of one of your friends and list three ways he or she might need your help:

1.

2.

3.

3. Is it easy or difficult for you to help your friends during their difficult times?

4. How do you like to be treated during difficult times?

5. Reread Philippians 1:1-8 and summarize the passage in one sentence.

- What is one truth you've learned from lesson one? How can you apply this truth to your life?

lesson 2: philippians 1:9-19

Questions for Philippians 1:9-11

1. In these verses Paul outlines a prayer for the Christians in Philippi. Read the first two sentences of this prayer and then fill in the blanks.

Dear _____, (insert your name)

I pray that your love will _____. I also pray that you will not only love much but you will love _____. Your heart and your feelings will definitely lead you, but I also want you to think so your love will be more than emotional. It will be intelligent and _____.

2. What do you think it means to be "pure and blameless?"

3. List three words that define purity to you.

4. Do you know any Christians who could be described as pure? What is it about that person that is attractive to you?

5. Using verses 9-11 as an example of a prayer, spend a few minutes and pray that prayer for someone you love.

Questions for Philippians 1:12-14

1. What has happened as a result of Paul's imprisonment?

2. What does Paul's experience say about how God can work through difficult circumstances?

3. How does Paul's experience relate to the following verse?

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them (Romans 8:28).

4. Do you ever feel imprisoned at school or chained to someone?

5. How might your "imprisonment" serve to help you talk about God?

Questions for Philippians 1:15-18

1. Paul is talking about two types of preaching being conducted while he's in jail. One group has sincere motives while the other group has greedy motives. Paul recognizes the mixed motives but he's thrilled the message of Christ is getting out regardless of motives. What is an example of a church having greedy motives?

2. What can one do when he/she recognizes impure motives?

3. What is an area of your life where you find yourself with impure motives on a regular basis?

4. Reread Philippians 1:9-19 and summarize the passages in one sentence.

- What is one truth you've learned from lesson two? How can you apply this truth to your life?

lesson 3: philippians 1:19-30

Questions for Philippians 1:19-26

1. Why do you think Paul had such a great attitude while he was in jail?
2. What would it take for you to get to the point in your spiritual maturity where you would say, "everything God wants to do in and through me will be done"?
3. How can Jesus be more "exalted" by Paul through his imprisonment?
4. Paul's pulpit became jail because he preached while he was there. Where is your pulpit? What message are you "preaching"?
5. How would you respond to someone if they said, "my lifestyle is my pulpit?"
6. Paul's attitude is pretty amazing! He's saying, "If I'm alive I can preach . . . if I'm dead I get to be with God. I can't lose!" Why do you think Paul can have this type of attitude?
7. Why do you think it was such a "hard choice" for Paul to decide between life in heaven or on earth?

8. How do you think someone gets to the point in his/her life where all they think about is being with Christ?

Questions for Philippians 1:27-30

1. Answer the following question: "For me to live in such a way that I am a credit to the Message of Christ I would need to . . ."

2. Why do you think Paul encourages the Christians at Philippi to stick together and "stand firm in one spirit"? (In other words "stay united.")

3. Why do you think it is important for a church to stay united and all be following the same purposes?

4. Do you know the purpose of our youth ministry?
Try writing it out from memory:

Here are key words to help you: Reach, Connect, Growth, Discover, Love God.

5. When Paul refers to "the same struggle" he is writing about persecution that some Christians in Philippi are going through. This persecution was a result of their faith. How do you feel about the following quote?

"Wherever Christians will live as they ought to live in this world, where they will live righteous lives and aggressively seek to spread the Gospel, in that place there will be persecution. This is true for all Christians. If you bear a proper witness for Jesus Christ, as God intends you to do, there will be persecution for you."

6. Reread Philippians 1:19-30 and summarize the passage in one sentence.

- What is one truth you've learned from lesson three? How can you apply this truth to your life?

lesson 4: philippians 2:1-13

Questions for Philippians 2:1-4

1. Paul asks the Christians of Philippi for a favor. He lists eight actions he wants. List these eight and circle the three that need the most work in your life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

2. In Paul's desire for Christian unity he also seems to emphasize humility. How would you define humility?

3. Who is someone you know that fits that description of humility?

4. Why do you think humility is a marker of spiritual maturity?

Questions for Philippians 2:5-8

1. In these verses, Paul uses Jesus to illustrate humility. How is Jesus a model of humility?

2. What does it mean that Jesus had equal status with God and yet set aside the privileges of deity?

3. What is so important about God becoming human?

4. Do you believe an invisible God can relate to and understand your human needs? Why? Why not?

Questions for Philippians 2:9-11

1. How did God honor Jesus' obedience?

2. Why will all created beings bow in worship before Jesus?

Questions for Philippians 2:12-13

1. Why do you think Paul had to encourage the Christians to live in obedience now that he was away from them?

2. Do you need encouragement to live in obedience to Christ's teachings? How are you getting that encouragement?

3. What kind of encouragement works best for you?

4. Who is someone in your life that can encourage you on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis? Have you told this person of your need for accountability? Why? Why not?

5. How would you describe salvation?

6. Why should you be energetic in your salvation?

7. How do you know that God is working in your life?

8. Reread Philippians 2: 1-13 and summarize the passages in one sentence.

- What is one truth you've learned from lesson four? How can you apply this truth to your life?

lesson 5: philippians 2:14-30

Questions for Philippians 2:14-16

1. Why would Paul ask Christians to "do everything without complaining or arguing"?

2. In The Message paraphrase, verse 15 reads: *Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society.* (I have no idea what "squalid" means but it sounds gross doesn't it.) What does that sentence mean to you?

3. How can you provide your family and friends with a "glimpse" of God?

4. Respond to the following two statements:

"You may be the only representative of Jesus that someone will ever see."

"Non-Christians have the right to judge Christianity by how Christians live."

5. What does it mean to "shine like stars in the universe."?

[For further study you might read Matthew 5:14-16.]

6. Why would Paul be concerned he "did not run or labor for nothing"?

Questions for Philippians 2:17-18

1. What does it mean to rejoice?
2. Why can Paul rejoice in jail while facing possible execution?
3. How is Paul's joy an example for you?

Questions for Philippians 2:19-24

1. Paul wants to hear reports of their lives in Christ. Why do you think a pastor wants to see his people grow?
2. Paul introduces his friend Timothy in these verses and comments on his genuine love for God. List a few terms that Paul uses to describe Timothy.
3. How would someone that knows you well describe your relationship with God?

Questions for Philippians 2:25-30

1. Since Paul couldn't send Timothy right away he sent Epaphroditus. List three things Epaphroditus did for Paul.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

2. What types of qualities or attitudes does each of Epaphroditus actions require?

3. Why do you think Timothy and Epaphroditus are so important to Paul's work?

4. Are you a "Timothy" or "Epaphroditus" to anyone's work?

5. If not, is there any ministry or minister that you can help? What's an action plan to help you get started?

6. Reread Philippians 2:14-30 and summarize the passages in one sentence.
 - What is one truth you've learned from lesson five? How can you apply this truth to your life?

lesson 6: philippians 3:1-11

Questions for Philippians 3:1-6

1. What point do you think Paul is trying to make in these verses?

2. "Those dogs" Paul refers to are false teachers who are trying to steer the Christians away from Paul's original teaching. What is a present-day example of a false teacher who is leading followers from the truth?

3. How can you protect yourself from false teachers?

4. I realize it may seem strange to read the words "circumcise or circumcision" in the Bible, but there was a significant spiritual meaning attached to circumcised Jews in the Old Testament (see Genesis 17:1-14). To the Jewish people, circumcision had a symbolic, spiritual meaning. It meant they had a relationship with God. In the New Testament, Paul tries to show that "circumcision of the heart" signifies faith in God for Gentiles (non-Jews) who normally weren't circumcised. [For further study see Romans 2:28-29; 4:6-12; Galatians 3:7, 29; Colossians 2:11-14.]

5. Paul tries to show, by his own example, that if godliness had to do with impressive credentials or following the rules he has more reason to brag than anyone. Below is the list that Paul gives. Next to each credential write a present day "rule" that someone might try to keep to "earn" their way to God. (By the way, this isn't easy).

Paul's credentials

- legitimate birth
- Circumcised on the eighth day
- From an elite tribe

What looks good for Christians today

(example: growing up in a Christian home)

- A strict and devout follower of the Law
- A strong defender of purity

Questions for Philippians 3:7-11

1. How does Paul view his credentials now that he's a Christian?
2. Before becoming a Christian, what are a few things you thought were important that are now gone?
3. What are some things that are too important (and should be gone) that keep you from growing in Christ?
4. What's your plan to get rid of these? Who is going to hold you accountable to this plan?
5. Complete the following sentence: "Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Lord, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is . . . "
6. Paul wanted to know Christ personally. He didn't want to focus on following rules and rituals. He wanted to embrace Christ and be embraced by Him. Why do you think he was opposed to making a religion out of rules? (For further study read how Jesus responded to the Pharisees in Matthew 23.)
7. What would it look like for you to "embrace Christ and be embraced by Him?" Where does this embracing take place? (i.e. during quiet times, at church, while alone, etc.)

8. Attempt to memorize Philippians 3:8

Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ.

9. Reread Philippians 3:1-11 and summarize the passages in one sentence.

- What is one truth you've learned from lesson six? How can you apply this truth to your life?

lesson 7: philippians 3:12-19

Questions for Philippians 3:12-16

1. How does it make you feel to know that the apostle Paul doesn't have it all together when it comes to following Christ?

2. When I say, "Christianity is a journey," what am I trying to communicate?

3. Where do you consider yourself along this journey? (circle one)

At the beginning

Off the path

Moving slowly but moving

Somewhere in the middle

Running strong with my eye on the goal

Near perfection

4. What do you think Paul considers the goal when he says, "*I press on toward the goal*"?

5. What do you think Paul means by "*Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal*"?

6. What are the past failures or troubles that you keep "looking back" at that you've been forgiven of? What can you do to move forward?

7. Paul encourages Christians to keep focused on the goal and to stay on the right track. What will it take in your life to respond this way?

8. Why do you think Paul encourages Christians to keep track of or stick together with other Christians who are running the same course?

9. Who are some Christian friends running their faith toward the goal?

Questions for Philippians 3:17-19

1. According to verse 18, how would you describe today's "enemies of the cross of Christ"?

2. Think of some friends who have chosen other goals and try to get you to "run" with them. What do you do when this happens?

3. What is the final result of living life as "enemies of the cross of Christ"?

4. Reread Philippians 3:12-19 and summarize the passages in one sentence.

- What is one truth you've learned from lesson seven? How can you apply this truth to your life?

lesson 8: philippians 3:20-4:9

Questions for Philippians 3:20-21

1. Paul says that Christians have a different citizenship. What do you think he means by this? (For further study on our citizenship, see John 17:14-16; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; 1 Peter 2:11.)

2. When you think about yourself as a "citizen of Heaven," how does it make you feel?

3. Should a heavenly citizenship affect your behavior, priorities, attitude, relationships, and goals? If yes, how are they affected?

4. What will happen when Jesus returns?

(For further study on bodily transformation see 1 Corinthians 15:12-58.)

Questions for Philippians 4:1-3

1. When it comes to standing "firm in the Lord," are you more on track this year than you were last year? Why or why not?

2. Paul is becoming specific in some of the things he taught earlier (2:2) when he addressed two women in the church who seem to be in conflict. Who are these two women? Why doesn't God want Christians holding grudges?

3. When you're in conflict with another Christian, whose responsibility is it to reconcile the conflict?

4. Paul encourages a "loyal yokefellow" (a guy actually named Syzygus . . . WOW!) to help them resolve conflict. When is it appropriate to ask for help in resolving conflict?

Questions for Philippians 4:4-9

1. List three specific ways you can celebrate God every day:

1.

2.

3.

2. List some things you've been worrying about lately.

3. How does prayer help you when you worry?

4. I've heard before that the human mind can't focus on two things at once. If that is true, when you think about God and pray to Him, you'll block out your worries until your focus changes again. What qualities of God can you think about when you're worrying?

5. It seems as though Paul knew the importance of filling one's mind with good things. What are we to fill our minds with?

6. List ten things that are worthy of praise:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

7. Spend a few minutes and ask God to help you replace the worries you listed earlier with things worthy of praise.

8. In the NCV translation, verse 8 reads like this:

Brothers and sisters, think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected (Philippians 4:8).

Why would this be an important verse to memorize?

9. Reread Philippians 3:20-4:9 and summarize the passages in one sentence.

- What is one truth you've learned from lesson 8? How can you apply this truth to your life?

lesson 9: philippians 4:10-23

Questions for Philippians 4:10-14

1. Paul begins to conclude this letter by thanking the Christians for their support. In doing this, he expresses he has learned to live without needing. How can Paul be content with what he has when he's in jail?

2. Finish this sentence, "I would really be happy if only I had . . . "

3. How can Paul's attitude of joy and contentment challenge your wants?

Questions for Philippians 4:15-23

1. Paul says that the church of Philippi was the only church to support his missionary work. With today's missionaries it might not be that much different—only having the support of one church. Why do you think Christians love to send missionaries out to the mission field but so many missionaries have a tough time raising money?

2. Do you have any opportunities where you can financially help some missionaries? If yes, how?

3. What about helping with the needs of local Christians in need? Who are they? How do you find out their needs?

4. Paul tells the Christians that their generosity will be rewarded. How do you think this will happen?

5. In 2 Corinthians 9:7 Paul says: *You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully* (NLT). What do you think this means? (Have you completed the Tithing Commitment portion of H.A.B.I.T.S.?)

6. Reread Philippians 4:10-23 and summarize the passage in one sentence.

- What is one truth you've learned from lesson ten? How can you apply this truth to your life?