


Philippians
Part 5
The Secret to Living in Unity

TALKING WALKINGPOINTS

Leader's Guide

2025-8-31



A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Starter Question

- 1 From Sunday's sermon, what did you **like best**, or what **caught your attention most**—and **why**?

Observation—²As a group, make twenty-five observations from Philippians 2:1-4.

- 2¹ If you have: any encouragement from being united with Christ,
if any comfort from his love,
if any fellowship with the Spirit,
if any tenderness and compassion,
2² then make my joy complete by: being like-minded,
having the same love,
being one in spirit and purpose.
2³ Doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,
in humility consider others better than yourselves.
2⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests,
but also to the interests of others.

Interpretation—What does it mean?

- 3 In what ways do we (1) **gain** encouragement **from** being united with Christ, (2) **gain** comfort **from** Christ's love, (3) **have** fellowship with the Spirit? **How** do we experience tenderness and compassion?
- 4 Assuming that one does indeed experience all of the blessings listed in the "if statements" of v. 1, in what way do the positive and negative commands of v. 2-4 logically and necessarily follow ("then")?
- 5 At <webstersdictionary1828.com>, look up "selfish", "ambition", "vain" and "conceit" (meaning nr. 6).
- 6 Is **Paul** being selfish ("make **my** joy complete") in requiring them not to be?! Why or why not? Explain.

Application—What do I do with this?

- 7 In what ways have you personally been encouraged from your union with Christ, comforted by Christ's love, experienced fellowship with the Holy Spirit, received tenderness and compassion? **Be specific!**
- 8 Looking back at the dictionary definitions of "selfish ambition" and "vain conceit", in what situations are you most tempted to exhibit these traits (1) at home, (2) at work and (3) at church? **Be specific!**
- 9 Rank the following traits in your life: ☐ being like-minded, united in spirit and purpose with others, ☐ having non-prejudicial love, ☐ humbly considering others better than yourself and therefore looking out for their interests rather than just your own. 10 Where do you **most** need to improve?

❶ Standard discussion-starter question. Just get folks talking, but don't linger here.

❷ **Sample observations:**

1. the word "if" can refer to possibility (maybe yes, maybe no), but in this case since the "if" is attached to there being **"any"** encouragement from being united with Christ" (etc.), it's obvious that this "if" means "since", since the fact of escaping hell by virtue of union with Christ is true of every believer.
2. salvation is not merely "a thing you have" but in fact is an eternal, inseparable union with God
3. when in difficulties, we can draw encouragement from the fact that God is inseparably with us
4. the Greek word for "comfort" literally means "called alongside"; God is called alongside us, and brings with him all of his love!
5. the love of God which comforts us is "agape" love—a self-sacrificial commitment to do us good
6. the Holy Spirit is our partner in life.
7. God is not harsh toward us, but tender. God cares about us; he's compassionate.
8. the result ("if"... "then") of these theological truths leads to lifestyle choices (commands)
9. Paul's level of joy was impacted by the Philippians' maturity and stability in Christ (cf. 3 John 4)
10. joy can be "complete" (ie, reaching its goal, lacking nothing)
11. complete joy depends both on positively thinking and doing right and negatively avoiding all evil
12. doing these positives and avoiding these evils are commanded and possible through the Holy Spirit
13. Christians are able to be (and should be) "like-minded"—with the mind of Christ (v. 5)
14. Christians must not show preference/prejudice in whom they love and how they show it
15. Christians are to be spiritually "one"
16. Christians are to have the same, single purpose. We're not allowed to "do it my own way".
17. "selfish ambition" means "being devoted to or caring only for one's own honor or superiority"
18. "vain conceit" means "a favorable or self-flattering lofty opinion of one's self or one's accomplishments which actually is false, empty, worthless; having no substance, value or importance"
19. zero selfish ambition and zero vain conceit is permitted in the Christian life
20. we are to be humble, as Christ is humble (see Matthew 11:29)
21. "consider" = "think carefully about, especially in order to make a decision; contemplate; reflect on"
22. "better than" = "to be of surpassing or exceptional value"
23. this estimation of others does not just apply to celebrities, but to all "others"!
24. everyone naturally looks out for his own interests (cf. Ephesians 5:28–29)
25. there is ultimately no conflict between others receiving good and us receiving it too (cf. Hebrews 12:2)

❸ Help your group answer these questions from their own experience, not merely from the objective observations listed in ❷.

❹ As Romans 12:1-2, this is our "**reasonable** service of worship" to the God who has so blessed us!

❺ They're found above, in ❷.

❻ Absolutely not! Paul is saying "I can't be happy if you're not become all you can and should be!"

❼ Be ready with your own answers, but wait, letting group members speak up first.

❽ Ditto. ❾ Ditto. ❿ Ditto.

**PLEASE DON'T TELL ME
IT'S TOO LATE TO JOIN
"THE FAITH WE PROFESS"!**



**Join other TCC adults as together we explore
thirty truths of "the faith we profess"!**

When? Wednesday nights (6³⁰-8⁰⁰pm) **or**
Thursday mornings (9³⁰-11⁰⁰am)
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BEGINS THIS WEEK!

Sermon Summary Text: Philippians 2:1-4

The Apostle Paul is in prison in Rome as he writes the church in Philippi. In the Christian life, faith and suffering go together, so it's critical to have a biblical perspective. We are to imitate Jesus, who is our ultimate example. Due to various afflictions the Philippian church was experiencing, the community had become discouraged. They also were worried about Paul. There is a difference between unity and uniformity. True spiritual unity comes from within; it is a matter of the heart. Uniformity is the result of pressure from the outside. That is why Paul opens this section of his letter appealing to the highest possible spiritual motives (v. 1–4). Since the believers at Philippi are “in Christ,” this ought to encourage them to work toward unity and love, not division and rivalry. For Paul, the remedy was for the church to be like minded—ultimately to have the mind of Christ—where they saw things from His perspective which in turn would lead them to live as He lived, and to love as He loved.

Paul begins by using a Greek literary convention that involves several “if” statements. These statements are designed by Paul to lead to the following conclusion: “If all of these things are true, then complete my joy by living together in unity.” Another way we may look at Paul’s question is: If it is true that encouragement, consolation, and fellowship can be found in Christ, then why can’t you Christians get along with each other? He then goes on to list what it takes to really get along in a way that exhibits a unity of love, spirit, and purpose. There can be no joy in fellowship with others; there can be no unity in the body, when we constantly put ourselves above others. The secret to experiencing a joyful, harmonious life in spite of circumstances, is possessing a humble, submissive mindset (v. 3). The humble person isn’t someone who thinks lowly of himself; he just doesn’t think about himself much at all! It is not that the humble person gives no attention to his own needs. He does. But he doesn’t do so to the exclusion of the needs of others (v. 4). A godly believer’s eyes aren’t focused on himself or herself. Their eyes are always looking upward and outward, not inward! Having a humble, submissive “mindset” doesn’t mean that you become a doormat for others to manipulate. It doesn’t mean that you try to maintain unity by giving in to everyone else’s whims and wishes. In 2 Corinthians 4:5, Paul says Christ first, others second. We should have a humble and submissive “mindset” that is always looking to find ways to serve Jesus by serving others.

Signs of self-centeredness include: (1) frequently interrupting others, (2) constantly seeking attention, (3) having limited interest in others, (4) difficulty sharing credit, (5) difficulty accepting blame, (6) being hesitant to praise others, (7) displaying insensitive behavior, (8) preferring to work alone, (9) having difficulty apologizing, and (10) having frequent fallouts with friends. We need to repent of our self-centeredness and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to allow Him to express His life through us. I want you to think about how having a humble, servant’s mentality might manifest itself for the glory of God in each of these areas: at church, at home, at work, with your neighbors. A humble, servant’s mentality would: (1) be empathetic, (2) practice active listening, (3) be generous, (4) help others, (5) welcome collaboration, (6) express gratitude, (7) put others first, (8) be quick to apologize and to forgive, (9) give credit where credit is due, and (10) experience enduring friendships. If we were focused on loving each other this way at home, at work, at church and in the neighborhood, it would change everything!

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

***"Selfish ambition and vain conceit" (Philippians 2:3) are downright exhausting!
Let's explore the "rest" Christ promises—if we will just do life his way...***

Monday— Read Matthew 11:28-30. How does Jesus describe those whom he invites to himself?

Tuesday— Read Matthew 11:28-30. How does Jesus describe himself and his yoke and burden?

Wednesday— Read Matthew 11:28-30. What do "come," "take" and "learn" mean? Be specific!

Thursday— Read Matthew 11:28-30. What is the connection between Jesus' character and our rest?

Friday— Read Matthew 11:25-27. How are the blessed, and those excluded from blessing, described?

Saturday— Read Matthew 11:20-27. Describe God's active role in hiding and revealing truth.

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would ***this text*** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]