



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V24 N33 August 14, 2022

JOIN THE JOURNEY

Philippians 2:12-18

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Single-Mindedness

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6:33



What is the difference between an "urgent" thing and an "important" thing?

Few things elevate prioritization more than travel. A luggage limit or a traveling partner who wants to "move fast" will force you into a mode where "first things must come first." Thinking ahead becomes essential when you know you will be far from home and yet you will need certain things to survive. As a young boy, my father took me "backpacking" into the Colorado Rockies. We would hike up to timberline and camp out for a week at a time, eating the fish we caught daily and sleeping under a blanket of stars. My father promised he would buy me any gear or food I wanted for the trip with one stipulation: I had to carry all he bought me on *my* back. When climbing uphill, against gravity, at high elevations you learn quickly: less is more. An extra pound of candy or a comfy but heavy sleeping bag are not so desirable when you have to attach them to your aching, straining back. Traveling light is a lesson for a lifetime.

In our Christian journey, we are often weighted down with "extras" that slow us down from progress in maturity and faith. We may think we have to have certain tools, comforts or materials to survive as a believer. But God often wants us to "trim back" our necessities list and trust him for provision and protection. "Less is more" in a Christian sense may mean that we need to give away some of our treasured possessions and trust God to meet our needs in ways beyond our scheming.

Prioritizing or "putting God first" is another way to consider "packing" for our Christian life. Starting the day with God in his Word, praying before beginning tasks, or asking a wise and trusted Christian friend for advice can help us avoid overburdening ourselves with unnecessary baggage and overhead. Daily "packing just the essentials" in our "backpack" works better

if we put the essential things in the backpack first. Once the essentials are in place, then we can add extras as they fit. Filling our day with extras may mean that we have no more room for the essentials. "Essentials first, extras second" works well for packing a travel bag. It also works well when packing for daily life.

Charles Hummel wrote a short, yet impactful book called *Freedom from the Tyranny of the Urgent*. He examines the life of Jesus and how he prioritized important things rather than urgent demands. Jesus put God's will and Kingdom first on a daily basis before he engaged with the urgent matters of life. Hummel observes: "When we stop long enough to think about it, we realize that our dilemma goes deeper than shortage of time; it is basically a problem of priorities. Hard work doesn't hurt us. We all know what it is to go full speed for long hours, totally involved in an important task. The resulting weariness is matched by a sense of achievement and joy. Not hard work, but doubt and misgiving produce anxiety as we review a month or a year and become oppressed by the pile of unfinished tasks. We sense uneasily our failure to do what was really important. The winds of other people's demands and our own inner compulsions have driven us onto a reef of frustration. We confess, quite apart from our sins, we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done.

An experienced factory manager once said to me, 'Your greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important.' He didn't realize how hard his advice hit. It has often returned to haunt and rebuke me by raising the critical problem of priorities. We live in constant tension between the urgent and the important" (Hummel, 1-5).

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Philippians 2:12-18

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline the first word of v. 12.
- Circle the word “obeyed” in v. 12.
- Double underline the phrase “work out your salvation” in v. 12.
- Draw a line to the phrase that modifies “work out” in v. 12.
- Put brackets around words in v. 13 that show action.
- Put a box around the word in vs. 13 that is the agent of all this action.
- Number each of the commands found in vv. 12-18.
- Circle every occurrence of the second person (“you”, “your”, etc.) in the passage.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about _____.”



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What influenced Paul's charge to the Philippians to continue to obey and work out their salvation (cf. Phil. 1:12-2:11)?
 2. What does it mean to "work out your salvation" (Phil. 2:12)?
 3. How would you reconcile this charge to "work out your salvation" with Paul's words about righteousness in Phil. 3:7-9?
 4. "Fear and trembling" sound negative. How do these actions help with "working out your salvation"?
 5. How does Phil. 2:13 fit with Paul's charge in Phil. 2:12?
 6. What dimension of "working out your salvation" is added to Paul's charge in Phil. 2:14-15?
 7. What are some examples of "holding firmly to the word of life" (Phil. 2:16) that you have seen in your faith journey?
 8. What was the proof of Paul's claim to not have labored in vain (Phil. 2: 16)?
 9. What was Paul's attitude toward sacrifice and suffering (Phil. 2:17)?
 10. Of what can Christians legitimately "boast" (Phil. 2:16-18)?
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Philippians begins with theology that leads to practical application. Good truth leads to good actions. Similarly, Romans begins with eleven chapters on the theology of salvation. The final five chapters dispense exhortations on how to live like “saved” people. Proper doctrine leads to proper practice. This is the Pauline pattern for his epistles.

Philippians 1:12-2:11 provide Paul’s theologizing about the Gospel and the incarnation of Jesus Christ. From this deep well of doctrine, Paul exhorts (Phil. 2:12-18) believers to live in ways that are compassionate and exemplary. “Paul exhorted the Philippians to obey, to work out their salvation, to be the pure children of God in the midst of a crooked world, to hold onto the word of life (so that Paul would not have run his race in vain), to be faithful in their service as a sacrifice to God (over which Paul would gladly pour himself out as a libation offering), and to rejoice with Paul in their shared joy” (Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. David, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon*, Vol. 16, 182). These five exhortations flow from the proper embrace of the Gospel (Phil. 1:12-30) and the example of Christ’s suffering (Phil. 2:1-11). We are challenged to fulfill these exhortations in response to the Gospel (Phil. 1:21,27) and by following the mindset of Jesus’ his “kenosis” or “emptying” of himself (Phil. 2:7).

One of the most compelling of the five exhortations is to “work out our salvation.” Salvation is a free gift and unearned (Eph. 2:8-9). Yet salvation includes more than justification. Salvation also includes sanctification. We live differently as a result of salvation (Eph. 2:10). “The term *salvation* (or its cognate verb) need not be restricted, as it normally is in contemporary evangelical language, to the initial act of conversion (‘Have you been saved?’) or to the status of being in a right relationship with God (‘Are you saved?’). It is of course true that, according to Paul, the initiative for salvation comes from God: our justification (the *establishment* of a right relationship) does not flow from our righteous conduct, for God ‘justifies the ungodly’ (Rom. 4:5). Moreover, once a right relationship has been established, we can in no way ‘add’ to that status by our conduct. But the biblical concept of salvation is not thus restricted to justification; more commonly what is in view includes God’s redemptive work in its totality. Thus, while in a very important sense we have already been saved (Eph. 2:5, 8; Titus 3:5), in another sense we are yet to be saved (Rom. 5:9-10; 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; 2 Tim. 4:18). Calvin rightly claims ‘that *salvation* is taken to mean the entire course of our calling, and that this term

includes all things by which God accomplishes that perfection, to which He has determined us by His free election.’ Because salvation in its entire scope necessarily includes the manifestation of righteousness in our lives, it follows that our activity is integral to the process of salvation; we can never afford to forget the juxtaposition between verse 9 (“not of works”) and verse 10 (“for good works”) in Eph. 2. In the particular context of Phil. 2, the outworkings of the believer’s *personal* salvation take the form of *corporate* obligations within the Christian community: the duty of seeking the good of others” (Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, Baker Exegetical Com., 121).

In 2:14-18 Paul alludes to a number of Old Testament examples as he exhorts living in the mind of Jesus. We should avoid becoming like Israel who were “grumbling and complaining” (Phil. 2:14). We should live in stark contrast to a “crooked generation,” an allusion to Deut. 32:5. Like the promised children of Abraham (Gen. 15:5; 22:17) we should shine like exemplary “stars in the sky” as we “hold out” the Gospel (“the word of life”). Paul’s final climactic allusion is the challenge to live life sacrificially as an offering “poured out like a drink offering” (Phil. 2:17). This example of sacrificial “living” is to be celebrated together with joy (Phil. 2:18).

This “working out” of salvation is possible because of the work that God is doing already on our behalf (Phil. 2:13). We cannot do 2:12 without 2:13. “The new life in Christ is the work of God and is consistently described in Paul by means of a series of indicatives: so our incorporation into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the freedom in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death, the ‘putting off’ of the old nature and the ‘putting on’ of the new, and the reception of God’s Spirit have all taken place and are all asserted by means of ‘indicative’ statements (Rom. 6:2-6; 8:1, 2, 9; Gal. 2:20; 3:27; Eph. 2:5, 6; 4:24; Col. 2:11, 12, 20, etc.). Closely related to and dependent on these indicative statements are the ‘imperatives’ of ethical admonition in which believers are exhorted to become what they already are in Christ” (Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary, 285).

Put another way, “God’s working in us is not suspended because we work, nor our working suspended because God works. Neither is the relation strictly one of cooperation as if God did his part and we did ours so that the conjunction or coordination of both produced the required result. God works in us and we also work. But the relation is that because God works we work” (John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 148).

Word Studies/Notes

v.12 *Therefore* “Although Paul switches from the heights of christology to the practical reality of Christian ethics, he clearly regards what now follows as arising from what he has just said: *and so (hōste)* begins a new sentence by offering an inference from the preceding argument. The topical links are not difficult to identify: they include the continuing themes of unity (2:2–4; 2:14), salvation in the midst of adversity (1:28; 2:12, 16), and Christian citizenship in the face of a hostile public (1:27–30; 2:15f.). There is also a specific verbal link between the word ‘obey’ in this verse and Christ’s obedience in verse 8” (Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary, 149).

v. 12 *obeyed* “By complimenting his readers for their obedience after leading them through the hymn to Christ, Paul implies that they are already obeying the gospel encapsulated in the hymn by following the example of Christ’s obedience (2:8) and by acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Lord of their lives (2:9–10). Although Christ is not explicitly stated as the object of their obedience, the very close connection between the hymn and the affirmation of their obedience points to Jesus Christ the Lord, whom all must worship and obey to the glory of God the Father” (G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, 171).

v.12 *fear and trembling* “‘Fear and trembling’ is at the front of the final clause for emphasis. Believers cannot have a cavalier attitude toward obedience. Their final salvation has a present outworking among the believing community. ‘Fear and trembling’ (*tromos kai phobos*; Ex. 15:16 LXX) accompanied ‘salvation’ (*sōtēria*; Ex. 14:13; 15:2) at the Exodus, but there is one key difference: the ‘fear and trembling’ at the Exodus was external to Israel; it gripped the peoples surrounding them (Ex. 15:16). God’s new covenant salvation is greater because God works fear and trembling within his people (‘in you’; Phil. 2:13) because of their ‘salvation’ (*sōtēria*) in Christ” (Benjamin L. Merkle, et al. *Ephesians–Philemon*, ESV Expository Commentary, 158).

v.14 *grumbling* “This language is borrowed from OT descriptions of the generation of Israelites that went through the wilderness under Moses’ leadership after the deliverance from Egypt. Repeatedly they complained about their hardships and said they should never have left Egypt (Num. 11:1–6; 14:1–4; 20:2; 21:4, 5). Moses described them as “a warped and crooked generation” (Deut. 32:5, quoted in v. 15 below), “a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful” (Deut. 32:20)” (F. F. Bruce, *Philippians*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, 84).

v. 15 *blameless* “This purpose clause calls the Christian community to fulfill its mission in the world by cleaning up the conversation in the community. When Christian conversation is laced with complaints and personal attacks, Christians have lost their distinctive quality as the children of God in a world characterized by that same kind of negative tone. Three adjectives set a high standard for the character of the children of God: *blameless (amemptoi)*, *pure (akeraioi)*, and *without fault (amōma)*. The first letter in each word, *alpha (α)*, the first letter in the Greek alphabet, is a prefix that negates the root word: no blame, no flaw, and no fault. To understand Paul’s application of these words here we must keep in mind that he is addressing the entire Christian family and talking about the quality of their life together” (Hansen, 181).

v. 16 *hold* “There seems to be a double application possible of the verb ‘holding forth.’ It may mean ‘setting forth’ by your conduct, what the word of life has been able to do for you: how it has made your life a real one, and done it by directing you to the life eternal; or it may imply that Christians are to act the part of evangelists, and carry to others the glad tidings, from which they draw such joy for themselves. The ‘word of life’ in either case is the Gospel of Christ, showing itself in its effects, or preached by His messengers” (Philip Schaff, *The Epistles of St. Paul*, Vol. 3, A Popular Commentary on the New Testament, 444).

v. 17 *offering* “Paul viewed the Philippians’ service to the Lord as a sacrifice of faith upon which he would pour out his life as a drink offering. Since they had displayed sacrificial faith and loving service, what would be more fitting than for Paul to crown that consecration with the drink offering of his life? Thus, Paul considered his suffering a libation (see 2 Tim 4:6) poured out to consummate the Philippians’ faithful service (see Rom 12:1; 15:16). Paul’s offering could refer to his present suffering or to the blood of his death, if he were to die as a martyr” (Hoehner, 185).

v. 18 *rejoice* “Every mention of ‘joy,’ except in 1:25, has had to do with Paul himself. With this imperative a subtle, but noticeable, shift toward them takes place. What began in 1:25 as concern for their ‘progress and joy regarding the faith’ is now put into the form of an imperative, an imperative that will recur at further points in the rest of the letter; significantly, its first occurrence (1) is totally intertwined with Paul’s joy, and (2) is found in the context of rejoicing in the midst of suffering and opposition. Here, then, is the most likely reason for this otherwise unusual conclusion to the long appeal of 1:27–2:18. Paul has already modeled joy in the face of opposition and suffering (1:18); his concern for them is both with their ‘progress’ and their joy” (Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, 256).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Live out the salvation God is working in you by treating others well and shining brightly as an example of righteousness, hope, sacrifice and joy.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Years ago, an instructor in a parenting class said something that stopped me in my tracks. She told parents that our kids don't magically flip a switch into adulthood when they turn 18. They won't suddenly be the person you hope them to be (smart, kind, thoughtful, servant-hearted, etc.). She said we must continually and intentionally work on leading them toward character development and responsibility, preparing them to be decent adults with a strong Biblical worldview. Before that moment, I'm pretty sure I thought parenting was all about playing Candyland and having dance parties. The weight of the responsibility in the years ahead kind of terrified me. There was (and still is) an intense amount of prayer, discipline, grace and love involved in training up my kids. I'm seeing the other side of the coin, and as I look at my adult kids, I realize the hard work and intentionality is revealing some sweet results. I actually like the people my kids are becoming and genuinely want to spend time with them. This same principle of growth applies to our spiritual life. We're not going to flip a switch years from now and mysteriously have grown spiritually. It will take dedication and discipline to train ourselves for godliness. We are responsible for our own spiritual journey and no pastor, leader or spouse can feed us into growth. Is there a spiritual discipline you'd like to develop further? What's your plan to develop this? Do you need to get up earlier? Is there an accountability partner that will help nudge you? How will you take responsibility for your growth today?

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Philippians 2:12-18

1. What does Paul say to do in verse 12?
2. With what attitude should we do everything (v. 14)?
3. If we do as Paul instructs, what will the result be?

What Do You Think?

Explain the difference between working "out" and working "for" our salvation. Can you work for your salvation? How do you work out your salvation?

What Do You Do?

Make stars by poking holes through a sheet of paper and shining a flashlight through the holes in the paper in a dark room. Do these stars light up the room? What if you had tons more? How do you shine like a star in the darkness?

CORE COMPETENCY: Single-Mindedness

I pay attention to what God thinks is important for my life.

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!"

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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