



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N4 January 26, 2025

ALWAYS WELCOME

“Table Reservations”

Philippians 2:1-11

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Humility

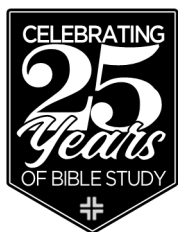
I choose to esteem others above myself.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Philippians 2:3-4



Humility—what good is it?



You’ve heard the expression “teamwork makes the dream work.” You probably haven’t heard the expression “humility makes community work.” But it’s true. Pride gums up the gears of biblical community. In particular, it undermines expressions of *generosity* and *hospitality*.

People disagree; it happens. We get cross-wise with others in the community, sometimes over *principle* but mostly over *preference*. But when we do, the kerfuffle that results and often spreads should not be mistaken for a mark of community. It’s not; it’s an aberration. In Philippians 2:1 Paul describes the norms of Christian community in a series of “if” statements that should really be read as assertions. In this verse the apostle asserts that people who are united to Christ and to each other in community receive encouragement from one another, are comforted by their mutual love, benefit from sharing with each other—they are hospitable toward one another—and show, as well as are shown, tenderness and compassion—they are generous with one another. These are the marks of Christian community.

Most of these marks can either be seen directly or inferred indirectly from the description of the early Christian community in Acts 4:32-36. About it Luke writes, “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’

feet.”

Nevertheless, disputes occur that create disturbances even in the best of Christian communities. It happened in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas disputed whether to take John Mark with them on their second missionary journey. Did pride play a part in their dispute? Perhaps. John Mark had deserted them on their first trip, and Paul wanted nothing more to do with him. The disagreement between them was so sharp that they resolved it by parting company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus; Paul chose Silas and retraced his earlier steps through Syria and Cilicia (Ac 15:37-41). It happened in Philippi. There were those who preached Christ out of selfish ambition hoping to stir up trouble for Paul (1:17). And there were two women, two close associates of the apostle, Euodia and Syntyche, whose very public disagreement had affected the entire congregation (Php 4:2). These women were neither new nor carnal Christians. Quite the opposite, they were women who had, in Paul’s words, “contended by my side in the cause of the gospel” (v. 3), and yet they disagreed vehemently over something. We would like to believe over some spiritual *principle* rather than some personal *preference*, but who knows? Regardless, Paul pled with the two of them to resolve their dispute because their situation, with its consequences, was not the norm of Christian community. It was an aberration, an aberration to be corrected by the humble example of Jesus.

To prevent the introduction of such disturbances into Christian community or to eliminate them once they are introduced, Paul says, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider other better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others.” And then he appeals to the example of Jesus who did just that.



1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Philippians 2:1-11

1 *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

5 *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

6 *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

7 *rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

8 *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!*

9 *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,*

10 *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

11 *and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

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

- Underline “if” in v. 1.
- Double underline “then” in v. 2.
- Box “by” indicating *means* in v. 2.
- Circle the “-ing” verbs in v. 2.
- Box “rather” indicating *contrast* in v. 3.
- Box “but” indicating *contrast* in v. 4.
- Box “same” indicating *comparison* in v. 5.
- Circle “very nature” and “equality” in v. 6.
- Bracket “something to be used to his own advantage” in v. 6.
- Bracket “made himself nothing” in v. 7.
- Circle “likeness” in v. 7 and “appearance” in v. 8.
- Box “even” indicating *emphasis* in v. 8.
- Draw a line across the page between v. 8 and v. 9. In the margin beside vv. 5-8 write, “Christ humbled himself,” and in the margin beside vv. 9-11 write, “God exalted him.”
- Box “Therefore” indicating *result* in v. 9.
- Box “that” indicating *purpose/result* in v. 10.
- Highlight “name” in v. 10 and “Lord” in v. 11.

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 one thing do you 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. Describe the norms of Christian community mentioned in verse 1.
2. List what it would take for the Philippians to make the apostle's joy complete.
3. Explain the *contrast* ("rather") in verse 3.
4. Give an example of each side of the *contrast* ("but") in verse 4.
5. Put the attitude of Christ in your own words.
6. Many think verses 6-11 are an early Christian hymn about Christ. Divide it into two stanzas and title each.
7. What is the relationship between the two stanzas?
8. What did Christ do to make himself nothing?
9. What *purpose* did God have for giving Jesus the "name" Lord?
10. **Discussion:** What do you consider most remarkable about the example of Christ Jesus?

Commentary On The Text

Conflict introduces disturbance into Christian community. The normative experience of community marked by encouragement, love, fellowship, tenderness and compassion is undermined when members act out of selfish ambition and vain conceit, looking out only for their own interests and not the interests of others—all traits of pride. The preventative and corrective for all such behavior involves following the example of Christ who humbled himself for the sake of sinners.

The related words “humble” and “humility” appear 88 times in the NIV©2011. “Humble” appears 57 times in the OT and 16 times in the NT; “humility” appears 6 times in the OT and 9 times in the NT. Both sides of the “humility coin” can be seen in Jesus’ description of himself in Matthew 11:29. “I am gentle (*praus* also translated “meek,” “humble”) and humble in heart (*tapeinos tē kardia* or “lowly in heart”). “The two thoughts stand in parallel and show that Jesus was submissive before God, completely dependent on him, and devoted to him, and at the same time humble before men whose servant and helper he had become” (TDNT, 2:262). Paul had the example of Jesus in mind when he wrote to the church at Philippi telling them, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (2:6).

On the example of Christ one author writes, “The incarnation of Christ Jesus represents the antithesis of the human drive to dominate. Although he had access to all the privilege and power to which his identity with God entitled him, and although he could have exploited that privilege and power to dominate his creatures, Jesus considered his deity an opportunity for service and obedience. His deity became a matter not of getting but of giving, not of being served but of serving, not of dominance but of obedience. The difficult part of all this for the twentieth-century believer is that Paul did not leave his description of Christ’s astounding refusal to dominate in the realm of abstract speculation. Instead, he advised the church at Philippi, and through them the church of today, to follow Christ’s example” (Frank Thielman, *The NIV Application Commentary: Philippians*, 129).

Philippians 2:1-11 is divided into two parts in the NIV. In the first part, verses 1-4, Paul asks his readers to complete his joy. His long *conditional* sentence opens with four “if” clauses (“if you have any encouragement . . . if any comfort,” etc.) and ends with four “-ing” *means* statements (“by being like-minded . . . having the same love” etc.). Sandwiched in between is his request, “make my joy complete.” The *protasis* (the four-fold “if” clauses) is assumed to be true grammatically, so the *apodosis* (the “then” clause) contains the expected consequence to follow. His readers are truly encouraged by being united with Christ, are truly comforted by his

love, do truly enjoy “common sharing in the Spirit,” that is fellowship with one another produced by the Spirit, and do truly express tenderness and compassion toward one another. “All these benefits—encouragement, comfort, fellowship, tenderness and compassion—are viewed by Paul as present realities for the Philippians” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Php 2:1). That being the case, Paul expects his readers to meet his request, and so he goes on to explain how they are to do so. Using *contrast* (see “rather,” “but”), he lists things, both positive and negative, they are to do to “make his joy complete.” Consider the following translation: “Your life in Christ makes you strong, and his love comforts you. You have fellowship with the Spirit, [or the Spirit has brought you into fellowship with one another] and you have kindness and compassion for one another. 2 I urge you, then, to make me completely happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and being one in soul and mind. 3 Don’t do anything from selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast, but be humble toward one another, always considering others better than yourselves. 4 And look out for one another’s interests, not just for your own” (GNT).

In the second part, verses 5-11, Paul asks his readers to follow the example of Christ. He begins by admonishing them to “have the same mindset as Jesus Christ” (v. 5), who willingly humbled himself. Then he goes on to describe both Christ’s divine status, “being in very nature God” (v. 6) and his willingness not only to empty himself, “he made himself nothing” (v. 7a), by becoming human, “being made in human likeness” (v.7b), but also to humble himself by submitting to a cruel form of death, “becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross” (v. 8). Verse 9 introduces the *result* of what Jesus did. God responded in two ways (v. 9). He ‘exalted’ Jesus ‘to the highest place,’ that is, he exalted Jesus “to a position of recognizable superiority over all creation” (Thielman, 120), and he “gave” to him “the name that is above every name,” that is, the name “Lord” (v. 11). He concludes by describing the outcome of God’s response, namely, that “every knee should bow” and “every tongue acknowledge” the deity and Lordship of Christ (vv. 10-11).

It’s possible to serve Christ for prideful reasons, to use our place in his church for personal gain. And when we do, our good deeds, whatever they might be, are tainted by our ulterior motives. Leading to wield influence in the body and get our own way—tainted. Teaching to gain the praise of others—tainted. Giving to be known for our generosity—tainted. Serving to outdo everyone else—tainted. Talking piously to impress others with our spirituality—tainted. You get the picture. In other words, don’t toot your own spiritual horn in church; in humility toot the horns of others instead.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1-4 Verses 1-4 constitute one 58-word-long sentence in the Greek text that contains just one basic command, “make my joy complete.”

v. 1 *therefore* The Gk. word *oun* (“therefore,” “so;” cf., the NET Bible, ESV) ties verse 1 to Paul’s exhortation in 1:27 “to live as ‘citizens’ worthy of the gospel by standing firm in one Spirit against the opposition” (Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT, 175).

v. 1 *if* The word implies doubt in English, but this Greek construction assumes an affirmative response. “They should be translated ‘assuming . . . then make my joy complete’” (Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, NAC, 93); or perhaps “since there is . . .” (Fee, 177).

v. 1 *with Christ* Lit., “in Christ.” Cf., “if there is any encouragement in Christ” (ESV, the NET Bible). Paul assumes his Christian readers derive encouragement from one another or perhaps directly from Christ as a result of their relationship to him.

v. 1 *from his love* Lit., “comfort of love.” The NIV takes this (correctly according to Melick, 93) as a reference to comfort from Christ’s love for his people (cf., “and his love comforts you,” TEV). Other translations leave it ambiguous (NKJV, NASB, NRSV, NET). More likely, it refers to comfort they receive from one another as the outworking of God’s love in their hearts (see Frank Thielman, *The NIV Application Commentary: Philippians*, 96).

v. 1 *in the Spirit* Lit., “of the Spirit.” The phrase may refer to the Spirit as object (i.e., fellowship with the Spirit) or more likely, to the Spirit as subject (i.e., fellowship with others in the body of Christ that comes from the Spirit) – just as encouragement comes from Christ and comfort comes from love. Some commentators take it both ways, “any fellowship with the Holy Ghost and mutual fellowship in the Spirit” (Jac. J. Muller, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, NICNT, 73; cf., Homer A. Kent, “Philippians” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 11:121).

v. 1 *tenderness* . . . The Spirit not only produces fellowship in the body of Christ, but he also produces within each member tenderness and compassion for other members of God’s family (see Thielman, 97). Some take it as a reference to mercies shown directly to the body by the Lord (Melick, 93).

v. 2 *like-minded* Lit., “think the same thing.” “The word does not mean ‘to think’ in the sense of ‘cogitate’; rather it carries the nuance of ‘setting one’s mind on,’ thus having a certain disposition toward something (e.g., life, values, people) or a certain way of looking at things, thus ‘mind set’” (Fee, 185). “This occurs when Christian people have the same values and loves” (Melick, 94). Paul stated what it would take to make his joy complete, then he used four

participles to elaborate on what he meant: 1) having the same love, 2) being one in spirit and purpose, 3) considering others better than themselves, and 4) looking not only to their own interests but those of others (Kent, 122). The parallelism is lost in English translations.

v. 2 *being one in . . .* Lit., “together in soul,” or “fellow souled.” “Not only does he want their minds set on the same thing, but he wants them to do so with their whole being. This adjective harks back to ‘as one soul/person,’ which modifies ‘contending side by side for the faith of the gospel’ in 1:27” (Fee, 186).

v. 3 *selfish ambition* The term refers to “a greedy attempt to gain the upper hand through underhanded tactics” (Thielman, 97). “‘Selfish ambition’ stands at the heart of human fallenness, where self-interest and self-aggrandizement at the expense of others primarily dictate values and behavior” (Fee, 186).

v. 3 *humility* Although humility was not highly regarded in the Greek world, Jesus revealed it to be a virtue. The sense Paul had in mind in v. 3 is inferred from the contrasts in the preceding and following verses.

v. 6 *very nature* The expression ‘equality with God’ denotes Christ’s preexistence in-a-manner-equal-to-God, which implies his divine ‘existential glory, the majesty of His revelation, the greatness and splendour of His manner of being’ (Greijdanus)” (Muller, 80).

v. 7 *made himself . . .* Lit., “emptied himself” (NASB). “While he did not cease to be in nature what the Father was, he became functionally subordinated to the Father for the period of the incarnation. By taking on human nature, he accepted certain limitations upon the functioning of his divine attributes. These limitations were not the result of a loss of divine attributes but of the addition of human attributes” (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2:735).

v. 8 *appearance* “The primary sense of the word has to do not with the essential quality of something, but with its externals, that which makes it recognizable. Thus, having said that Christ came in the ‘likeness’ of human beings (v. 7b), Paul now moves the narrative on to its next point, by saying he ‘appeared’ in a way that was clearly recognizable as human. Together the two phrases accent the reality of his humanity, just as the first two phrases in the preceding sentence accent his deity” (Fee, 215).

v. 9 *highest place* “God has ‘highly exalted’ Christ, meaning exalted him to the highest possible degree” (Fee, 221).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Following Jesus' example of humility, look out not only for your own interests but also for the interests of others, considering them better than yourself.

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?



PARENT CONNECTION

Recently at Harbor (a mom connection group), a speaker encouraged all moms to step outside their front door and enter their home with fresh eyes. She challenged the moms to consider what others experienced as they crossed the threshold. What’s the overall vibe of the home? What does the house look and smell like? Does it feel chaotic, like a tornado hit it (in my case, yes!), or does it feel orderly? Is it a place of comfort and stability or is it sterile and empty of things that define it as home? The thing is, she wasn’t encouraging the ladies to think about guests in this exercise, the people coming for home group or attending a first grader’s birthday party, but their own family. How often do you have a hospitality mindset for the people who live in your home—your kids and your spouse? Hospitality starts with your first community, your family. What’s more, hospitality isn’t just about guests and the state of your home, but is more clearly marked by how you view and deal with others. We are called to live with others with the same mindset as Christ—in servant-hearted humility. So often, we view hospitality as hosting. But what if we flipped that mindset and considered hospitality through the lens of serving, caring for, and providing for others? What would happen if we set aside our own agenda and considered the interests of others, our family? This week, challenge yourself to have a hospitality mindset with your spouse and kids. Honor Christ by putting them first. With humility, treat them as treasured guests in the home.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Philippians 2:1-11.

1. What mindset should we have in our relationships with others?
2. What was Christ’s nature while He was on earth?
3. What will the name of Jesus cause everyone to do?

What Do You Think?

How does Paul describe believers as being like-minded?

What Do You Do?

This week, pretend the members of your family are guests in your home. How will you treat them differently?

CORE COMPETENCY: Humility

I make others more important than me.

MEMORY VERSE: Micah 6:8

“He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

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.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) from 1986 to 1998 and Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church (Fort Worth, TX) from 1998 to 2022. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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

© 2025 Central Bible Church.

Material researched, written and supervised by Dr. Tom Bulick. All Scripture referenced from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. This resource is freely distributed and may be copied without permission.



**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org

OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.