

S T U D Y G U I D E



SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON

MY JOY AND CROWN



PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

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My Joy and Crown

Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Sinclair B. Ferguson



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Study Schedules</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1 A Joy and Crown Congregation</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>2 Lessons on Prayer</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>3 The Wonder of God's Providence</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>4 Worthy of the Gospel</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>5 The Secret of Unity</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>6 The Secret of Humility</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>7 Fear and Trembling with Love</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>8 Servants of Christ</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>9 Paul's Righteousness in Christ</i>	<i>63</i>
<i>10 Paul's Transformation in Christ</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>11 How to Think as a Christian</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>12 Fellowship in the Gospel</i>	<i>84</i>

Introduction

Paul's letter to the Philippians is his most personal and affectionate letter in the New Testament. He even calls the congregation his "joy and crown." But the Philippians were not without their problems, so Paul writes to encourage them to greater unity by pointing to Christ in His humility. In this teaching series, Dr. Ferguson explains the theology of Philippians and the pastoral counsel that flows from it, drawing out its practical application for churches today to become joy-and-crown congregations.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson. How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind yourself of what you have already covered and where you are headed.
LEARNING GOALS	The learning goals are the knowledge and skills that the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content. How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.
KEY IDEAS	The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture. How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge that each lecture is communicating.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that is intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning. How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The time stamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.
PRAYER	The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture. How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.
REVIEW QUIZ	The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson. How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.
ANSWER KEY	The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz. How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *My Joy and Crown* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 14-Week Plan	Standard 12-Week Plan	Abbreviated 6-Week Plan	Intensive 4-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1 & 2	1–3
2	1	2	3 & 4	4–6
3	2	3	5 & 6	7–9
4	3	4	7 & 8	10–12
5	4	5	9 & 10	
6	5	6	11 & 12	
7	6	7		
8	7	8		
9	8	9		
10	9	10		
11	10	11		
12	11	12		
13	12			
14	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

A Joy and Crown Congregation

INTRODUCTION

Since Christ is Lord of the church, every Christian should be devoted to the family of the church. The church in Philippi provides us with an example of what it means to live as servants of Christ in the context of a local church. In this lesson, Dr. Ferguson explains the value of studying Philippians and explores the key ideas in Paul's introduction to the letter.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Understand Paul's relationship to the Philippian church
- Identify key figures in the Philippian church
- Explain the nuances of Paul's introduction to this letter

KEY IDEAS

- The church in Philippi is an example to every other church of what it means to live in the service of Christ, enjoying Christian fellowship.
- In his introduction to Philippians, Paul describes the Philippian Christians in ways that set up the rest of his letter.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- How do you think your church would respond if you received a personal letter from an Apostle? What emotions would you feel? What questions would you want answered?
- How should Christians think about membership in a particular church? What principles govern when they should stay and when they should leave a church?

Scripture Reading

He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

—Ephesians 4:11–13

- How does Jesus build His church, according to Paul? Why does this exclude the category of a lone-ranger Christian?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

The Christians in Philippi

0:00–11:46

- What is the great lesson that we should learn from Philippians, according to Dr. Ferguson?
- What two reasons do we have for reading and studying Philippians?

Paul's Introduction to Philippians

11:46-23:49

- What are the three contexts in which the Philippian Christians lived?
- What are the two elements of Paul's greeting?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- How should the providence of God influence how every Christian thinks about his church?

If you are in a group, ask the members what they appreciate about their churches. Have them use the formula "I love my church because . . ."

- In his introduction, why does Paul feel no need to describe himself as Christ's Apostle and prisoner?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss how we often use our titles and achievements to gain attention or credibility. Ask: What contexts merit using and relying on titles, and what contexts do not?

- Why does Paul mention the elders and deacons in his address to the Philippians?

If you are in a group, have the members explain the different ways that elders and deacons help the church. Ask: From what other resources do we often seek help when we should be going to our elders and deacons instead?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God that He is sovereign over creation, orchestrating all things to accomplish His will.
- Confess ways that you have failed to love your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Thank God that Jesus Christ is building His church, giving them pastors and teachers to exposit His Word and help His people.
- Ask God that His Spirit would give you joy in obeying God and serving others.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Who helped Paul in prison, became very ill, and carried Paul's letter to Philippi?
 - a. Demas
 - b. Epaphroditus
 - c. Timothy
 - d. Luke
2. Which of the following people was *not* part of the Philippian church's beginning as recounted in Acts 16?
 - a. A seller of purple
 - b. A jailer
 - c. A tax collector
 - d. A demon-possessed girl
3. Which truth means that every Christian should be predisposed to believing that he belongs in his church?
 - a. The world hates the church.
 - b. God is providentially sovereign.
 - c. Sickness can come to any church.
 - d. Every church needs elders and deacons.
4. What self-description does Paul use in his introduction to Philippians?
 - a. A prisoner for the Lord
 - b. Set apart for the gospel
 - c. An Apostle of Christ Jesus
 - d. A servant of Christ Jesus
5. To what did Dr. Ferguson attribute the Philippian church's unity?
 - a. They all saw themselves as servants of Jesus.
 - b. The prosperous church members were also generous.
 - c. The elders at Philippi were faithful and godly.
 - d. The church regularly read from the four Gospels.
6. What two members of the Philippian church were fighting with each other?
 - a. Epaphroditus and Clement
 - b. Ananias and Sapphira
 - c. Jannes and Jambres
 - d. Euodia and Syntyche

Answer Key—A Joy and Crown Congregation

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- How does Jesus build His church, according to Paul? Why does this exclude the category of a lone-ranger Christian?

According to Paul, Jesus is building His church by giving faith and knowledge of Himself to all Christians through the ministry of His pastors and teachers. Because Paul places every Christian under Christ, and therefore under pastors and teachers, there can be no lone-ranger Christians.

During the Video

The Christians in Philippi

- What is the great lesson that we should learn from Philippians, according to Dr. Ferguson?

Dr. Ferguson tells us that the church in Philippi gives us an example of a joy-and-crown congregation. Paul's letter teaches us how to think and act as members of a local congregation. The lesson to learn, then, is how to live in fellowship with our church families, such that our pastors could consider us their joy and crown.

- What two reasons do we have for reading and studying Philippians?

First, we should read and study Philippians because Paul is an Apostle commissioned by Jesus to teach the whole church. Second, we can be excited to learn from Philippians because the church in Philippi presents a strong example of what every church ought to be. In both cases, we can think of Philippians as a letter to us.

Paul's Introduction to Philippians

- What are the three contexts in which the Philippian Christians lived?

First, the Philippian Christians lived as saints in Christ and in the kingdom of Christ. Second, they lived in the Roman colony of Philippi. Third, they lived as a Christian community that was led and disciplined by elders and deacons.

- What are the two elements of Paul's greeting?

The first element of Paul's greeting is "grace." The church in Philippi needed God's grace, which is Jesus Himself. The second element of Paul's greeting is "peace" for the saints' fellowship.

After the Video

- How should the providence of God influence how every Christian thinks about his church?

Christians often look for reasons to criticize and bemoan their churches. But since God is sovereign over all things, no Christian can claim that he stumbled into his church by mistake. Instead, every Christian finds himself in his church because God's providence brought him there. This does not mean that there will never be a time to leave a church. It does mean that the Christian's default thought should not be "Is it time to leave?" but "Have I served this church as much as I am able? Have I loved my brothers and sisters from the heart?"

- In his introduction, why does Paul feel no need to describe himself as Christ's Apostle and prisoner?

In our day, titles and reputation are often used to get attention or a higher quality of service. People appeal to their status to ensure that they get the response they want. Paul, however, does nothing of the sort. Instead, the only referent he uses for himself is "servant of Christ." This is because Paul knew that the Philippians did not need to be reminded that Paul was an Apostle or that he was suffering in prison. They, like Paul himself, viewed themselves as servants of Christ and were therefore ready to listen to a fellow servant teach and exhort them.

- Why does Paul mention the elders and deacons in his address to the Philippians?

This is the only letter in which Paul mentions a congregation's deacons in his introduction. By mentioning the church's elders and deacons, Paul reminds the congregation that they are under authority. At the same time, he reminds them that they have leaders who can help them. Later in his letter, Paul will mention a problem in the church that needs a solution. By mentioning the church's structure and source of leadership early on, Paul's readers will know where to go when they realize their need for help.

REVIEW QUIZ

1. **B.**

While Epaphroditus is not commonly mentioned among modern Christians, he was highly esteemed and well loved by the Philippian church. Epaphroditus had been sent to minister to Paul in prison but had become very sick. God, however, restored the health of Epaphroditus, who was privileged to deliver Paul's letter to the Philippians.

2. **C.**

Acts 16 records Paul's initial ministry in Philippi and the beginnings of the Philippian church. While the narrative does not mention a tax collector, Lydia, a seller of purple, was the first to be baptized. After this, Paul cast the demon out of a possessed girl. This caused the imprisonment of Paul and Silas, which led to the conversion of the Philippian jailer.

3. **B.**

Because God is sovereign, orchestrating every part of our lives, we should never imagine that we stumbled into a church by accident. Instead, we should always be ready to love and serve the church in which God has placed us.

4. **D.**

While Paul often appeals to his office as an Apostle or mentions his imprisonment in his writings, his relationship to the Philippians means that he does not need to focus on these things. Instead, he names himself as a servant of Christ, a bond that unites all Christians to one another.

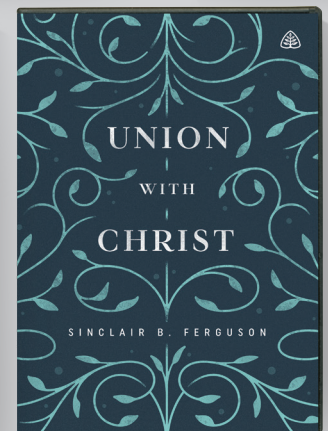
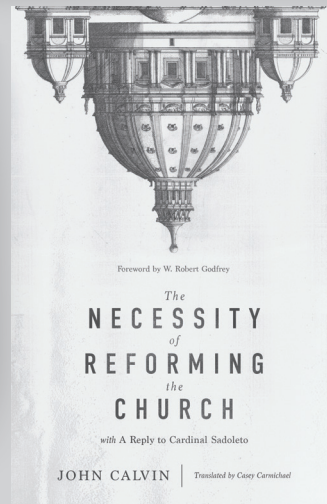
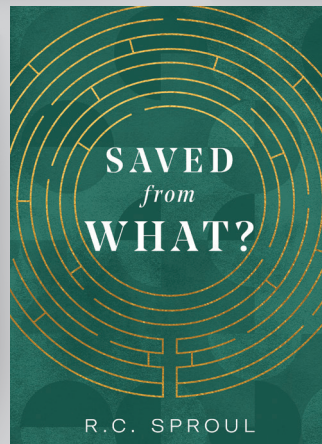
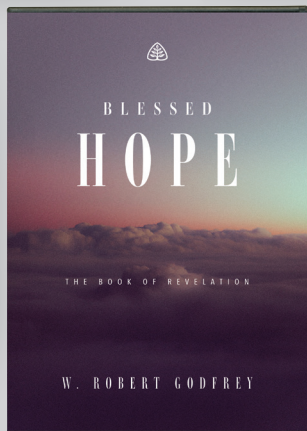
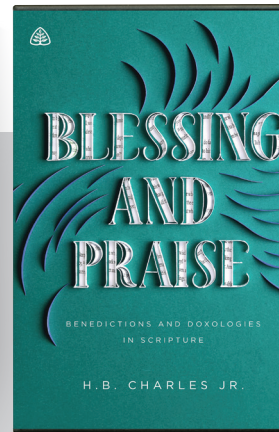
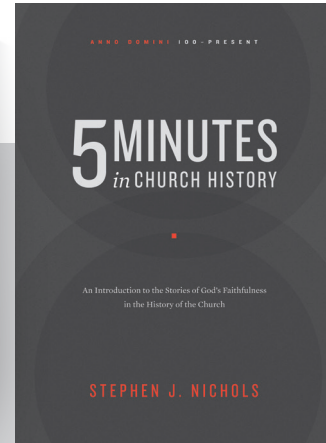
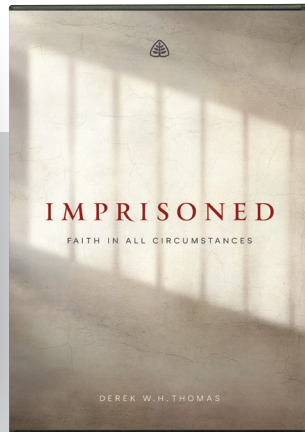
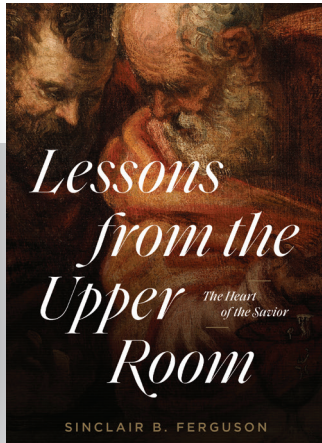
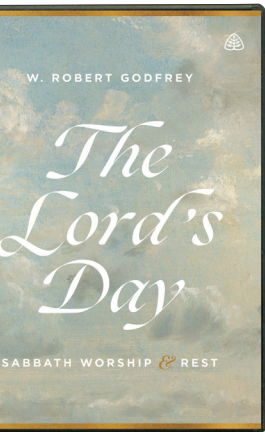
5. **A.**

Dr. Ferguson noted that there's a clue to the Philippian church's unity in Paul's own self-description. If every Christian were to view every other Christian as a fellow servant of Jesus Christ, there would be no opportunity for self-exaltation. Instead, the church would be united in one purpose under one name: servants of Christ.

6. **D.**

In his letter, Paul urges Euodia and Syntyche to stop fighting. These women had apparently fallen out with each other, and Paul recognizes their need for help, commanding his true companion to help them agree.

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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