



# Finer Grounds Bible Study

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## Philippians Lesson 6: Philippians 1:27-2:2

Paul has spent a good deal of the first chapter describing his circumstances. He wanted them to understand the proper mindset when it comes to trials and tension with others. He did a lot throughout the first chapter to really illustrate what it means to have a mind that is set on the furtherance of the gospel above all else. I hope you spent the week really challenging your heart and mind when it comes to your attitude in service to God.

**Begin this week by reading through Philippians once more in one sitting.**

**Read Philippians 1:27-28**

In the last few verses of chapter 1, Paul finally gives his first imperative verb. These are verbs that hold the weight of a command. In English we have to use context to determine a command, but in Greek, the form of the verb tells us the intent. This first imperative verb is “conduct yourselves.”

**Knowing what the imperative verb is, what is the first command Paul gives in this letter?**

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**According to verse 27, what does it look like to “conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel?”**

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Philippians 1:27 is a major key verse in this letter; if you are a Bible marker, this is a great one to underline or highlight. As we’ve already discussed, unity is a major theme in Philippians. In this verse this emphasis becomes abundantly clear. Pay attention to the words he uses: **one** spirit, **one** mind, striving **together**. And the focus of the unity is “for the faith of the gospel.” These unity phrases are another good thing to mark as we go throughout the study; you will see a ton of them!

If you are a Dave Ramsey fan you probably will have heard the story about the Belgian draft horses. These huge horses can pull up to 8,000 pounds each. You would think if you put two of them together that the math would be easy...16,000 pounds; however, two of these horses can pull up to 24,000 pounds! That’s as much as a tractor! But that’s not the end of it. If these horses are trained together for a long period of time and focused on the same goal, they can actually pull 32,000 pounds! That is absolutely jaw dropping!



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It is the same way with those of us in the church. As individuals we can accomplish amazing things, but when we work together with unity of focus and we don't allow petty squabbles to get in the way, God can accomplish mind-blowing things through us.

**How can a lack of unity come in the way of accomplishing God's purpose?**

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**What are some ways you have seen unified workers accomplish incredible things for God's kingdom?**

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**What admonition does Paul add to this command in verse 28?**

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This level of unity allows us to work without fear and with complete confidence. There were times in Paul's journey where he waited for his companions to arrive before he started really getting work done (cf. Acts 18:5). Sometimes our fear of others' opinions or ridicule is incredibly strong. It can very much handicap the progression of the gospel if we aren't careful. Paul recognizes that this unity he is describing would allow them to have a level of confidence they otherwise might have struggled with.

**What are some ways that fear can hinder the spread of the gospel today?**

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**How can unity help us to overcome those fears?**

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**Read Philippians 1:29-30**

**What does Paul warn them about?**

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One of the common refrains throughout the New Testament is the idea that life in Christ will be accompanied with a certain level of struggle and suffering. This is nothing new, ever since Cain and Abel righteous men have suffered at the hand of the ungodly. Paul wants them to be aware of this fact. This flies in the face of those that promote the "prosperity gospel" which says that the more holy someone is the more God will bless them. This doctrine couldn't be farther from the truth. Sometimes it is our holiness itself that causes us to suffer. And if we are seeing things as Paul, this is a cause to rejoice if in some way it causes the gospel to progress.



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**How can reminding ourselves that suffering for our Christianity is a natural outcome of the Christian life help our attitudes?**

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### Read Philippians 2:1-2

Once again, the Greek language adds some clarity to this passage that the English language does not. There are different ways this word is used in conditional statements throughout the New Testament, the occurrences of “if” in Philippians 2:1 are first class conditional statements. This means that we can translate them as “since.” A first class conditional statement is assumed to be true. So, this passage could read “**Since** there is encouragement in Christ, **since** there is consolation of love, **since** there is fellowship of the Spirit...”

**How does understanding this grammatical principle change the way you read this passage?**

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**According to Philippians 2:1, what are the blessings we have in this Christian life?**

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This is a short but powerful glimpse into the blessings of Christianity. In Christ we have encouragement (PARAKLESIS) which is the act of making someone bolder in their belief or course of action. Through our love for each other we have consolation (PARAMYTHION) which is the comfort or encouragement during grief or suffering. And finally, we have fellowship (KOINONIA) of the Spirit. The word fellowship literally means to be a fellow participator in something.

**How can a focus on these blessings help us with our struggles both within the body of Christ and outside in the world?**

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**According to this passage, what would make Paul’s joy complete?**

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This word for “united in spirit” (SYMPSYCHE) is a derivative of “one mind” (MIA PSYCHE) found in 1:27, we will see another related word in 2:20 where he describes the mindset of Timothy. The idea is that our mindset and goals should be so united with our brothers and sisters in Christ that it is as if we have one mind. This is not an easy task to accomplish and takes a lot of work, but it all comes down to the ultimate goal of our actions. If our only goal in the work we do is to please God and see



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His will done, this will be much easier to accomplish; however, if our goal is to bolster self, this level of unity will be impossible to achieve.

**What are some things that make unity like this difficult to achieve?**

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**How can we work toward this level of unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ?**

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**What practical benefits could come from a congregation working together with one mind?**

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Think back to Jesus's prayer in John 17:10-11. One of the last things Jesus prayed for his disciples is that they would be one. He wanted them to have this unity just like Paul is describing. It is striking that in His last moments this was one of the most important things he could think to pray. Understanding this should really give weight to our pursuit of unity. This is a really simple concept that we teach to our children from the time they can interact with others; however, being simple does not mean that it is necessarily easy to accomplish. It takes enormous amounts of work and dedication to maintain this

mindset. Next week we will see a second example (really the ultimate example) of what it looks like to embody this attitude.

I will make one last challenge this week. In a study like this, it is incredibly easy to read and just say "Absolutely that's true! Boy does Sally Sue need to hear this!" That may be true, Sally Sue may need to hear it...really, we all need to hear it over and over and over. However, while we are going through this study, try to focus your assessments inward instead of outward. None of us have achieved the ultimate level of humility and unity that Paul describes in this level. We all have work to do. Make sure you are in continual prayer that God exposes those areas you can grow in throughout this study and really take them to heart. You cannot force change on others, but you can change and do better yourself and maybe by doing so serve as an amazing example to all those around you.