



# Finer Grounds Bible Study

## Philippians

### Lesson 7: Philippians 2:3-11

This week we will dive into one of the most profoundly humbling passages in all of scripture. I hope you have been praying for a soft heart, because this one has the potential to really convict you to the core.

#### Read Philippians 2:3-4

**In verse 3 what does Paul ask his readers to avoid?**

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**What does he ask them to do at the end of verse 3?**

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**What does he ask of his readers in verse 4?**

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The word the NASB renders “selfishness” (ERITHEAIN) literally means strife, contentiousness, or rivalry. This definition sheds a whole new light on the request because it seems to be selfishness that is focused toward another. “Empty conceit” (KENODOXIA) means an exaggerated view of one’s self-worth, vanity, or excessive ambition. The person who

exhibits these traits is not just self-centered, but jealous and continually competing with others to make themselves feel important.

Sound familiar? In our world filled with social media continually bombarding us with the highlight reels of other people’s lives, it is a continual challenge not to feel competitive. Our natural impulse seems to be to compare our lives with those around us and in so doing we often times develop an unspoken rivalry between people we should be loving and supporting. Sisters! This is nonsense! When we get wrapped up in this kind of competitive mindset, Satan is sitting back smirking.

What would our lives look like if we actually followed Paul’s advice: “with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” All of those competitive urges and struggles with having to continually keep up with the Joneses are all rooted in selfishness at the very core. Why do I feel a bit of resentment for Sally Sue who makes the most beautiful sourdough bread I’ve ever seen and posts about it on Instagram? Ultimately, it’s because I’m too focused on self. I should be able to look at someone, especially a sister in Christ, and rejoice at her successes and share her happiness;



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unfortunately, all too often we feel that monster of self-centeredness creep in and make us resentful instead.

**Do you ever struggle with this type of resentment or self-centeredness?**

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**How can this attitude be destructive in the church?**

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**How can having the attitude Paul describes work to heal these issues?**

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**What are some practical ways you can guard your heart and mind against this type of selfishness this week?**

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**Read Philippians 2:5-8**

**Whose example does Paul tell us to model our attitude after?**

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**What are the specific things Jesus did to exemplify His amazing level of humility?**

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In one of our previous lessons, I talked about how Paul was going to give us four different examples of a truly humble mindset. Example number one was Paul himself and now here in example number two we have the ultimate standard of a humble mindset in Jesus Christ.

In verse 5, Paul issues his second imperative command in this letter: “have this attitude.” While looking at the example of Jesus is simple to do, there is nothing easy about actually putting humility of this level into practice in our lives!

In verse 6, the word “grasped” in the NASB is rendered differently in several translations, some even using the term “robbery.” These translation differences can make this passage a little hard to understand, but it isn’t really challenging once you know what Paul is saying. The word HARPAGMOS in Greek means something held onto or retained by force. This is the idea of taking hold of something so tightly that no one can get it from you. Paul is saying here that Christ decided to let go of His equality with God in order to serve us more fully.

Dwell on the gravity of that for a minute. Would you be willing to give up the comfort of your home to sleep on the street in the



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cold for a week if it meant helping someone in need? Really think this through, how much more did Christ give up? He was sitting at the right hand of the Father with all of the power of deity and yet He chose to let go of all of those benefits and comforts to be born to a poor family in a stable. He spent the early part of His life on the run from Herod and the later part of His life continually contending with the Jewish leadership. Not only did He just give up comfort, but He was also willing to undergo unthinkable torture as he was flogged mercilessly and then put to death in the most painful way available at the time. He did all those things just because He cared for us so deeply and wanted to give us a way to reenter the presence of God.

Wow! Talk about humbling. This is one of those passages that I continually return to when I'm feeling grumpy or contentious. Sometimes we all just need a good attitude adjustment, and this is the passage that will do it every time. Whatever offense I think I've been dealt or whatever struggle I have to work through pale in comparison to the experiences of Jesus when He was on this earth.

**What are some practical ways we can immolate the attitude of Jesus shown in these verses?**

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**How would imitating the attitude of Christ affect our relationships in the church?**

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**Read Philippians 2:9-11**

**What does the phrase "for this reason" refer to?**

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**What did God do for Christ?**

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**What will everyone on heaven and earth and under the earth do at the name of Jesus?**

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**What is the ultimate goal of all of this according to verse 11?**

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Because of Jesus's incredible humility God will exalt Him above everyone and everything. This is an important theme in Scripture, if one seeks to be exalted in the eyes of man then they will likely receive that outcome but that will be their reward (cf Matt 6:1-2). If however, we practice humility out of love, God will be the one



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who rewards us. I don't know about you, but I would far rather an eternal reward from God than the fickle passing praise of man.

The ultimate goal of this exaltation is the glory of God. In a church setting, we throw the word "glory" around a lot. It is one of those words we hear but don't always process the full meaning of. The word in Greek is DOXA and it means greatness, splendor, or honor in recognition of great prestige. The ultimate goal of everything Christ did was so that God and His will would be glorified. Think back to chapter 1, this is the exact mindset Paul embodied. He lived his life 100% for the glory of God and the progress of His will.

**What is one way you can focus your mind and attention on the glory of God this week?**

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**How can a focus on making our lives glorify God improve the relationships in the Lord's church?**

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This week has left us with a lot to chew on. We have been presented with the absolute perfect example of humility and those are not easy shoes to even attempt to fill. Take about 15 minutes and read back through the entire letter in one sitting. Are you starting to see the themes more easily?

Is the bigger message of humility of mind jumping off the page at you now? Be sure you continue to read through the letter as a whole every week (or every day if you can!) and take some time to really dwell this week on what it means to truly have the attitude of Christ.