



***Student
Devotional***

Before You Start...

We are so excited to study Philippians with you this Winter. We've put together this booklet to give you something for each day. Each day, you will have a chance to spend a few minutes reading God's word, thinking about how it applies to your life, and committing to follow Jesus with your day. We want you to use this book, and here are some great ideas on how to do that:

1. Read and pray through each day along with us.
2. Draw on every space imaginable.
3. Record prayer requests for yourself and for others—then pray over them.
4. Write letters, prayers, questions, and reflections.
5. Share something that hit you with a friend.
6. Tell your youth minister or small group leader what you have learned from Philippians.
7. Give a copy to a friend.
8. Better yet, invite a friend to youth group AND give them a copy.
9. Ask a friend to go through this with you this month and then talk or text about it each day.
10. Post your favorite one or some of your own thoughts on Instagram. Be sure to tag @nextgenecc.
11. Write your own devotional for one of these verses and share it with some friends.
12. Remember this month to own it—to own your faith, to own the truth that God loves you, to own the need to follow Jesus.

We are proud of you. Let's do this.

January 10

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:3-8)

Have you ever started something you loved and then not been able to finish it? Take a minute and think about how that felt.

Disappointing. Frustrating. Maybe you felt like a failure. Perhaps you moved on from it. Or you've made plans to finish it up sometime. For you, what are some of those things?

Ok, new question: Have you ever wondered where God was in your life? Like, maybe He started doing something in your life, but didn't finish it. Or you are waiting for God to finish that work. Sometimes we feel the same things about God as we feel about ourselves: disappointed, frustrated, like a failure...or we wonder if God has just moved on from us.

Paul's words here, then, are comforting, "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion." God will be faithful; He is always working even when you cannot see it!

Today, take some time to be excited that God is at work in your life. Take some time to pray and thank Him for always working in you.

Prayer: "God, thank you for always working and for never leaving me. Help me to know this today. Amen."

January 11

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear (Philippians 1:12-14).

When Paul writes here, he's writing from house arrest. He has been arrested and imprisoned for preaching about Jesus. However, as he has been imprisoned, he has used that awful situation to even talk about Jesus with the people guarding him. Because of this, Paul is optimistic—excited, even—about the work that Jesus is doing.

Have you ever been in an awful situation? Maybe it was a moment where you felt trapped. Or a time where you felt sad and hopeless, sitting in tears. Perhaps it was during an awful time with your family or in an important friendship for you or during a dark night where you felt alone. Let's just pause and think back to how difficult that moment was.

Take a deep breath.

I think you are maybe thinking back to a past moment. Or to the moment you are in right now.

Do you know that God wants to bring hope and life and change to that moment? To this moment.

He wants to use this moment to strengthen your relationship with Him, and He also wants to use this moment to give you a chance to show others the life and hope of Jesus.

Because of those hard things, you have a chance to show your friends, family, and even yourself the beautiful work of Jesus. Today, look for opportunities to do just that—don't miss them!

January 12

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance (Philippians 1:15-19).

As Paul writes from prison here, one thing is clear: Jesus is most important to him. In fact, Jesus is so important to him that he can rejoice...even from prison. Even from an awful situation, the most important thing to Paul is Jesus.

What things or people or places are most important to you? Take a minute and imagine those things. Some of them could be the wrong things, like pride or an unhealthy relationship or a secret. Some of them could be really great things, like family, friends, living with honesty, or music.

Here's the wonderful thing: When you make Jesus the most important thing and person and place in your life, He changes your life in a radical, transforming way. He works through those bad things. He brings health and life to those good things.

Take a minute and picture the most important things to you. Do you have them in your mind? Next, spend some time asking Jesus to take control of things and to become the most important part of your life. Do this and pray through it several times as the day goes on!

January 13

Today is Sunday, and we hope to see you at church today! If you can't make it, spend some time with Jesus by completing the following challenge:

Read the book of Philippians today! Use the space below to journal or draw.

January 14

20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me (Philippians 1:20-26).

Ok, there's some heavy things in these verses. Paul is wrestling with life and death, and he makes a conclusion: to leave this earth means being with Jesus, but remaining on earth is necessary to help people know Jesus. But, I think the key to this is in Verse 20: "I will in no way be ashamed." To Paul, Jesus is so wonderful and filling that Jesus will never cause true shame to come upon him.

Have you ever felt ashamed about something? My guess is that you have. It has come in a moment where someone expressed true disappointment...or failure...or rejection. As humans, we know shame on some level.

And in some ways, we can't avoid it. Like, we can't avoid the shame that people—or ourselves—try to place on us sometimes.

Paul knows of this shame—he is in prison, after all, truly a place of shame! Yet, he says that he will be in no way ashamed! How can this be a thing?

The promise is this: We are not ashamed in Jesus because Jesus does not disappoint us. Today, will you turn to Jesus for your hope, joy, and future?

Jesus does not disappoint.

January 15

27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have (Philippians 1:27-30).

As Paul finishes this first part of his letter, he has one main request: Walk worthy of the Gospel of Christ. He wants his readers to live in a way that looks like Jesus.

He wants *you* to live in a way that looks like Jesus.

This isn't meant in a judgmental or harsh way, but God wants His people to live their lives like Jesus did. Because when you live like Jesus, there is freedom and life and change and so much beauty in that. God isn't asking you to live a certain way to ruin your life, but so you can experience the fullness and glory of following Him.

God is asking you to leave hate behind. To leave gossip behind. To leave secrets behind. Envy. Lust. Apathy. Laziness. Rudeness. Holding grudges. Addiction. Jealousy. He's asking you to leave that all behind to experience the greatness of following Him.

And when we follow Him? Love. Kind words. Openness and freedom. Being content. Drive. Understanding. Forgiveness.

Today, find and write down one thing you want to change so you can follow Jesus. Share that with someone and take an active step to changing this thing.

January 16

Youth Group is tonight, and we hope to see you there!
Today, we will be talking about Philippians 2:12-13:

***12** So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; **13** for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

Use the space below for notes, journaling, drawing—
whatever you need!

January 17

Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. ³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-4).

Have you ever experienced someone being selfish? That's never fun. You often feel left out, not cared about, and empty because of that. Selfishness drains the life and energy out of people.

But, let's ask a more difficult question: Have you ever been selfish? What did that look like? You might be remembering something from years ago or something from yesterday, but the reality is: we've all been selfish at some point. And the truth is the same: selfishness drains the life out of people.

It's not surprising, then, that Paul writes about the opposite of selfishness: "But with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves."

What would your life look like if you lived like others were more important than you?

Work on that question today.

January 18

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; **15** so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, **16** holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. **17** But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. **18** You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me (Philippians 2:14-18).

There's a lot happening in Philippians 2:14-18. Go read it again if you need and just soak in the depth in these five verses. But, I think one of the most difficult to apply and do is Verse 14: "Do all things without grumbling or disputing." It seems like there's plenty to grumble and dispute, so that's a difficult one.

On some levels, maybe the "without disputing" part is easier. I can have bad things happen and not make a big deal about it or try to get it changed. We can be passive with these things and pretend they don't matter. Maybe you've even tried to pretend something didn't bother you, when it truly did.

But, "without grumbling" is way more difficult. Sometimes we grumble in our own minds, in those alone conversations where we talk to ourselves, or we grumble to friends.

Yet, Paul says to rejoice! This doesn't mean we ignore awful things, but it means that in everything we can find something worth rejoicing!

Today, find five things you are thankful for and thank God for them each hour of the day.

January 19

19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. 20 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. 23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; 24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly (Philippians 2:19-24).

I love the friendship that Paul describes here. He talks about Timothy as a kindred spirit—someone who will be concerned for their well-being. We need these friends in our lives. We need people who are dependable, who love us no matter what, who will support us in hard times. That is the friendship that Paul and Timothy have.

These friendships are given to us by God, and they fill a beautiful purpose.

Here's the thing, though: We can't control what our friends do, but we can control how we treat our friends. We can choose to treat them with love, kindness, respect, and generosity.

Spend some time today thinking about your friendships and how you can show Jesus to your friends this week.

January 20

Today is Sunday, and we hope to see you at church today! If you can't make it, spend some time with Jesus by completing the following challenge:

Pray for 5 people by name throughout the day. Write those names down below and write out some prayers for them.

January 21

25 *But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;***26** *because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27* *For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. 28* *Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you (Philippians 2:25-28).*

In these verses, Paul gets super personal: He talks about his friend Epaphroditus (cool name, bro) and how he was very ill, and he almost died from that illness! That is heavy stuff, and maybe you can relate with a friend, family member, or someone from school.

In this case, Paul says that his friend recovered due to God's mercy! God did something incredible in this story to change it. And, God is often and regularly doing things in your story—many of which you don't even realize—to change your story in a great way.

God cares about every part of you. God is doing work in your life that you can't even see. He's just that big.

Spend some time today imagining the work God could be doing and thank Him for always caring for you!

January 22

29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;**30** because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me (Philippians 2:29-30).

These verses are all about sacrifice. The author's friend—a man with a pretty wild name of Epaphroditus—literally risked his life for the work of Jesus. He almost died for the sake of Jesus. His entire existence on this earth almost ended because of the important work of Jesus.

Sacrifice is giving up something important because someone else is more important.

Jesus showed “sacrifice” to us by dying for us. He so desperately wanted you to be in his family, that he was willing to die—and then defeat death by coming back to life—for you.

Following Jesus is also a call to sacrifice—it means giving up your own way of doing things to let Jesus say what you do.

This week, what do you need to give up and let go of to follow Jesus?

January 23

Youth Group is tonight, and we hope to see you there!
Today, we will be talking about Philippians 3:17-21:

***17** Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. **18** For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, **19** whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. **20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*

What questions do you have about these verses? Write those down below.

January 24

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; 3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, 4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless (Philippians 3:1-6).

There's some strong wording in these verses, but Paul is making a pretty important point: Watch out for anything that will distract you from Jesus. And in Paul's life, he had lots that could have been distracting for him. He lists off some of those things in these verses.

What are the things in your life that distract you from following Jesus? They might not even all be bad things —just good things that are misplaced in your life. This week, Jesus may be calling you to let go of something that is distracting you from following Him. Or, Jesus may be asking you re-order some priorities in your life.

Be brave, jump in, and do it—Jesus does not disappoint.

In the space below, list out your priorities and spend time praying through them.

January 25

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:7-11).

“Whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as a loss.” For Paul, everything is counted lost compared to knowing Jesus. He desire that his whole identity and life be found in the life, cross, and resurrection of Jesus. He knows that if his identity is rooted in Jesus, then he will always know who he is. There won't be a question.

What do you place your identity in? Who or what defines how you think about yourself and how you view yourself? Depending on your answer, those can be scary questions because when we are honest, we often discover that our identities are connected to the wrong things, wrong people, and wrong opinions.

Jesus, though, because of the cross and resurrection gives you an identity that is always true. You are loved. You are forgiven. You are changed. You are not forgotten. You are His.

Today, we hope that you will find and root your identity in Jesus. Remember who you are in Jesus!

January 26

12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; 16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained (Philippians 3:12-16).

Press on. Keep going. Don't give up. Don't relent. You've maybe told yourself words like these while working on something really difficult or during a competition or during a really rough class at school. We need phrases and encouragements like that to keep going.

In Philippians 3:12-16, you are encouraged to keep going in following Jesus. Don't give up. Keep working. "Press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Sometimes, following Jesus can be difficult. Our lives, schedules, and other things actively work against us being able to follow Jesus well sometimes. Or maybe life has been full of sadness or anxiety or struggle lately, and you feel like giving up.

Keep going. Press on. Keep praying. Keep reading God's Word. Keep loving. Keep forgiving. Keep living like Jesus.

January 27

Today is Sunday, and we hope to see you at church today! If you can't make it, spend some time with Jesus by completing the following challenge:

Turn on some worship music and write an encourage letter to someone important in your life.

January 28

Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved (Philippians 4:1).

Have you ever tried to move something that was too heavy or was impossible to move? It could have been a vehicle, large box at your house, boulder, or the pile of clothes in your room. When we can't move something, we might say that it is solid or firm—it is standing firm.

In Philippians 4:1, Paul hopes that followers of Jesus will “stand firm the Lord.” This doesn't mean that we never learn or change at all, but it means that we stay faithful to God no matter what. Are you made fun for following Jesus? Stand firm. Do you have questions about your faith? Ask them...and stand firm. Are you the only person in your family who is a Christian? Stand firm. Are you unsure where God will take you over the next year? Stand firm. Does it feel like God has been silent? Stand firm.

And, let's stand firm together. Today, take some time to text some friends to encourage them in their relationship with Jesus.

January 29

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. **3** Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life (Philippians 4:2-3).

You've never met Euodia or Syntyche (again, cool names) from Philippians 4. And we don't know much about them, except that Paul calls them out in his letter and asks them "to live in harmony in the Lord." It's probable that some conflict was happening between the two of them.

Conflict. Struggle. Fights. Drama.

We've all been through it. It's pretty unavoidable, yet God does call us to live lives of forgiveness, grace, and understanding. God even asks us to pray for and love our enemies.

My guess is that there is someone in your life right now who could use forgiveness from you. Or an apology. Or an explanation. Or grace. Or, if things are really bad, maybe they just need your prayers.

Today, will you take some time to show grace to your enemies?

January 31

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; 16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. 17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. 18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen (Philippians 2:14-19).

There's a lot of personal details in these verses, but one thing is clear: The church has been incredibly generous to Paul. They've given him gifts, time, resources, money — anything that he needed to continue His work for the Gospel.

Anything they have, they give freely. As a result, Paul is changed!

Sometimes, it can be easy to live in a selfish way. We hold on to our time, resources, money, and things because of the safety and comfort those things bring us. But, what if we lived like this church? What if we lived with great generosity and gave freely?

This week, consider: Who needs your time? Who needs some resources that you have? How could use your money in a caring and generous way?

February 1

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. **22** All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. **23** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit (Philippians 4:21-22).

You've reached the end of Paul's letter to the Philippians. He concludes the letter with a few greetings and a final wish that God's grace would be with them. Yet, I'm struck by something awesome and hidden happening here. Notice the wording. "Greet every saint in Christ Jesus." Then, he talks about the Christians who are with him and those who are with Caesar's household.

It's as if God's people are everywhere.

And they are. Around the whole world right now, Christians are following Jesus just like you. Friends, don't lose heart—you are part of the greatest kingdom this world and beyond has ever known. It's a kingdom ruled by a powerful king who created all, knows all, sees all—a king who died for his people. Press on. Be firm in Jesus.

