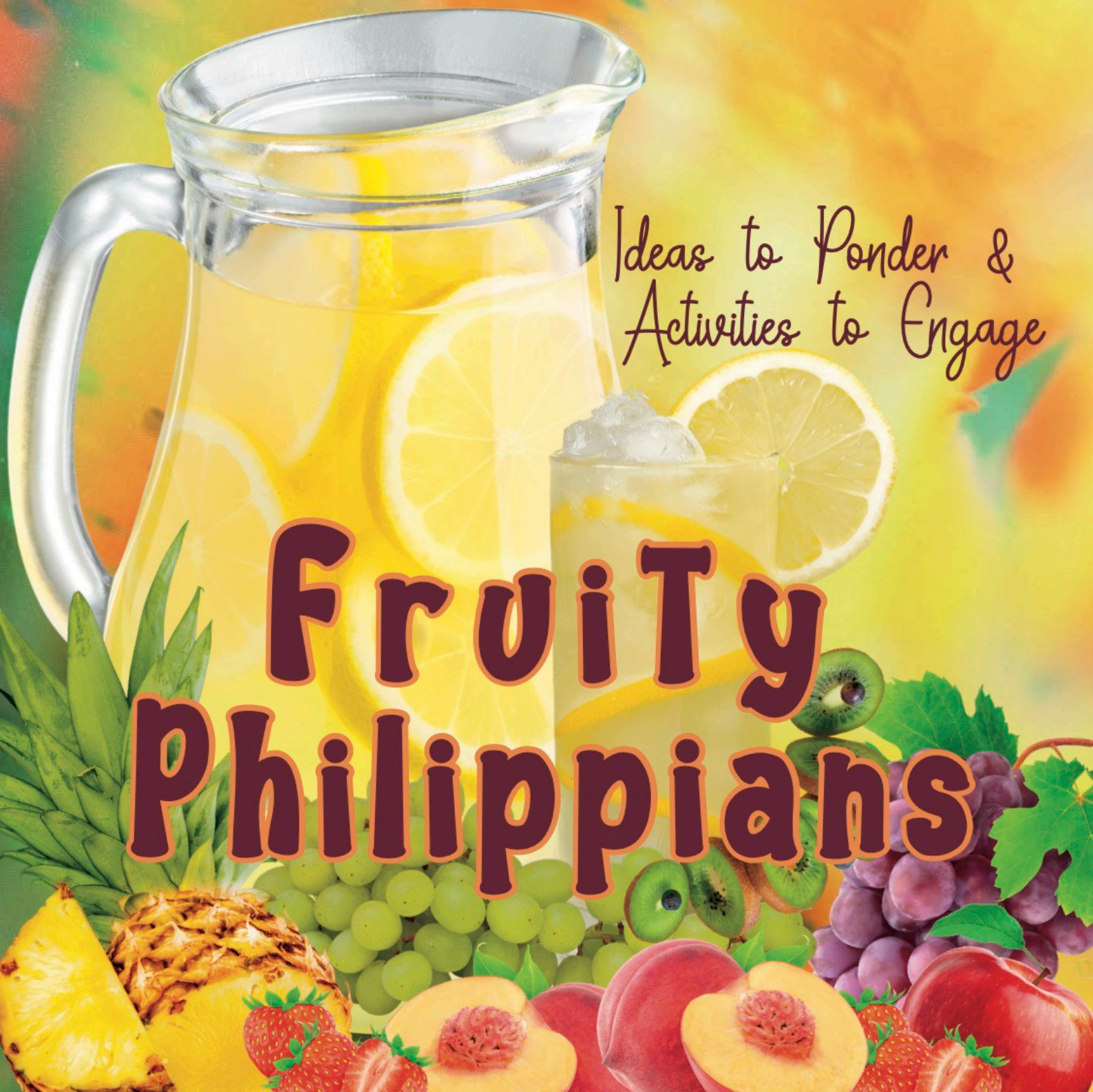


Catherine Hutton

*Ideas to Ponder &
Activities to Engage*

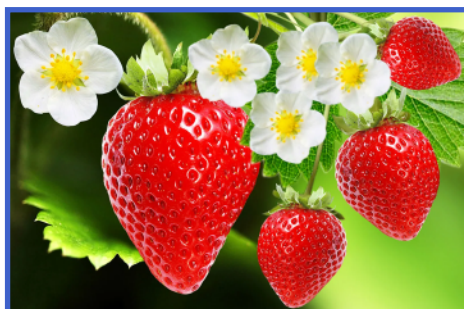
Fruity Philippians



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The Philippian Situation



A Little History

Philip of Macedonia, the Father of Alexander the Great, founded Philippi around 356 BC on the site of a Thracian village known as Krenides, which is 'Springs' in ancient Greek. It was a site that was rich with minerals, having gold mines in the nearby Mount Pangaeus and was also "*strategically important because it commanded the land route to the Hellespont (Dardanelles) and Bosphorous and so across into Asia.*" F.F Bruce, page 1. In 168 BC, Philippi was taken by Rome and in 42 BC Philippi was the site of the battle where Mark Antony and Octavian beat the forces of Brutus and Cassius, who had assassinated Julius Caesar. Augustus then defeated Mark Antony in 31 BC after which Philippi was re-founded '*as a Roman colony in honour of the Julian family (Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis) and under his personal patronage, boosting its native population with army veterans and landed Italian farmers whom he had displaced as former supporters of Mark Antony.*' Bockmuehl page 3.

From this point, Philippi was an outpost of Rome and its people loyal to the Emperor in all things. Philippi was legally constituted on Roman systems. The Biblical commentator, Hendrickson describes it as 'Rome in miniature.' The people of Philippi enjoyed extended Roman citizenship and the rights that came with it.

The Gospel in Macedonia

Less than 20 years after Jesus' death and resurrection, we find evidence of the good News having reached Thessalonica as Paul's letter references him, Sylvanus and Timothy having been there. 1 Thessalonians 2:2 NIV shows that they have previously just visited Philippi;

We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition.

The opposition to the Gospel was often found in pagan and some Jewish religious affiliations. There was, alongside the Emperor Cult, worship of Silvanus – a cult largely followed by lower class Roman men; the cult of Bacchus or Dionysus which was indigenous to the area around Mount Pangaion and the cult the Thracian Rider, which too was local. These would have sat alongside the official Roman religion. Coins with the Emperor on one side and the Thracian Rider on the other are to be found. Bockmuehl pp6-8.

Although there is reference to opposition to the Gospel coming from Judaizers, there is no evidence of an established Jewish community in Philippi. This opposition was the threat from other missionaries coming to the Church with the Judaizing (making people be Jewish in order that they can be 'properly' Christian) message. This opposition would distract the church from the importance of sharing the totally transforming gospel of Jesus Christ and growing as His disciples.

We do see in Acts 16:16 how Paul is affronted by the enslaved girl who tells fortunes. Acts 16:16-20 NIV

She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. [17] She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." [18] She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her. [19] When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

Opposition here is in the challenge to finance and wealth as Paul silences the girl with an undramatic exorcism. This is the cause of the bother that he and his team have in Philippi. It is definitely worth turning to Acts 16:16-34 for a full account of how Paul and Silvanus (Silas) share the gospel after that event. It involves a dramatic earthquake and a suicidal jailer!

Since Paul's vision in Acts 16:9 which took him and his team to Macedonia, much happened for the gospel to be established. Notable was the group of women

in Philippi who were meeting for worship by the river and who were converted to Christianity by the preaching of Paul.

The Letter

Paul wrote this letter to the Church in Philippi whilst imprisoned. There has been a long-running debate about where this was. Some argue for Ephesus or Caesarea, but the oldest view of it being Rome seems the most likely – which would have necessitated the captive Paul to have been transferred by Sea to Rome from Macedonia.

If this letter was written from Rome, it was likely sometime after AD 62; *'since Luke's picture for the first two years in Rome (Acts 28.16, 30-31) seems to envision a somewhat less severe and perilous situation than Paul faces at the time of writing.'* Bockmuehl p30-32

The church in Philippi was largely made up of non-Jewish people, or 'Gentiles' as they were referred to. There are both Greek and Roman names gleaned from the letters which show that the main place of influence for the Gospel was in the town of Philippi rather than the predominantly Greek areas surrounding it.

Paul is genuinely fond of the people he met in Philippi and, even though the letter does address some pastoral problems, his main purpose for writing seems to be to encourage his friends there in their faith and discipleship.

There is a good amount of theology and doctrine within the letter, as we would expect from Paul. As you progress through this study it is well worth reading the letter in its entirety to note its progression; the gospel is advancing – despite opposition of a most violent nature; the knowledge and joy of knowing Jesus; Jesus' humility and our union with Him; the union with Christ beyond death and into eternity; Jesus' future coming; prayer's power; pursuing goodness – in all our ways following Christ. These are all found in Philippians. Bockmuehl adds an additional emphasis; *'Above all, perhaps, the sovereign power and generosity of God the Father (cf Schlosser 1995a) and the all-encompassing centrality of Christ himself...'* p41

Philippians is a magnificent letter, and through its study we glean a greater understanding of the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord and how that love might be evident in our being and our doing.

Paul was a great missionary with an all-embracing love for Jesus. May his letter to the church in Philippi which he loved inspire the people of the church we love, to love Jesus and share the Good News of salvation in our lives of faithful service and acts of grace as well as in the message we bring.

With love to you all, 

A Florida Cocktail to Begin!

Orange and grapefruit segments are often served with a cherry as a 'starter course' to whet the appetite ready for the main course. Here are a few simple starters for the course. You can choose to have them all at once or one per session!



Love

How do you show love to someone? Is it through being present, food, contact on the phone, letters or cards, gifts, words of encouragement & positivity, hugs (if appropriate).

How do you best appreciate love being shown to you?

Goodness

What is your measure for what is 'good'? What might be graded as 'good'? Think about how 'goodness' has become a benchmark.

Self Control

Where is your self control most tested? Maybe when in the supermarket, waiting for a bus, seeing injustice, driving, in heated conversation, bureaucracy. How do you 'get a grip' on your temper/reactions to restore an equilibrium?

Joy

During the day, note what gives you joy and what makes you happy. What are the distinctions between joy and happiness?

Gentleness

List the ways that being gentle benefits the world. *Gentle breeze, words, manners etc.* How do these areas of gentleness affect the environment or society we are in?

Patience

Which of the areas of Spiritual Fruitfulness do you find easiest and which is the most difficult for you to embody in your every-day? *Remember that we are all 'works in progress' and some of us wait – impatiently to be kind and joyful!!*

Offer encouragement to someone today.

Peace

Where do you see peace at work in a beautiful way? *An evening sunset, a child asleep, a diplomatic resolution, a morning walk, and lots more...* Do you consider yourself to be a peaceable person? Do you know people who are? What do you value about their company and influence?



Pressing the Word for juicy fruit LOVE

Read Philippians 1:3-11

We press into the Word to release God's goodness into our lives.

Note phrases and words that feel significant.



In what ways do these opening sentences read as a love note from Paul to the Church in Philippi?

If Paul is showing Love to the Philippian Church, what words and phrases do you see in the passage which demonstrate the hand of a loving author?

What are Paul's hopes for the Church in Philippi?

Consider how 'love' and 'hope' are linked. Can you be hopeful and not have love, or loving and not have hope? What is your reasoning?

Look at verses 9-11. Why might 'knowledge and depth of insight' be linked to love here? What might the 'fruit of righteousness' look like in a person?

Philippians 1:9-11 NIV

[9] And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, [10] so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, [11] filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ---to the glory and praise of God.

In what ways might love and praying in this way for your church to be loving benefit the mission and fellowship of your local church and fellowship?



Out in the Orchard

This section is designed for you to be out and about, exercising your faith in a missional way. It is divided into three sections of varying levels of commitment and confidence needed.

The Low Hanging Fruit section should be simple, easily achievable activities.

A Bit of a Stretch will encourage you to go a little further.

Reaching for the High Branches will require more effort, a bit of organisation and maybe some equipment!

Missional Activity: Low Hanging Fruit

Make and send a card to someone, filling it with loving words of encouragement.

Choosing and buying a card is also a good option! Is there a suitable Bible verse you might include?

Missional Activity: A Bit of a Stretch

Invite a friend or neighbour round for coffee and a 'good biscuit'.

Meeting in a coffee shop is also a good option! Remember to be a loving and encouraging presence in your time together. This could be a playdate at a park or soft play if you are doing this section with a young family.

Missional Activity: Reaching For the High Branches

Showing love to the community. Can you and a few friends organise a litter-pick or clean up of a neglected area?

Make sure you have any needed permissions and the right equipment for protection and disposal of rubbish.

Pressing the Word for juicy fruit GOODNESS

Read Philippians 1:15-21 in your Bible.

We press into the Word to release God's goodness into our lives.

Note words and phrases which feel significant.



Love motivates us to good actions and inspires good intentions.

Would you be as generous as Paul is towards people who are supposedly 'playing for the same team' as him but are motivated by the opportunity to make a name for themselves?

The nature and purpose of Paul's confinement have genuinely strengthened many believers in the task of evangelism, the majority being motivated by love and goodwill. Others, however, smell an opportunity for self-advancement, even at the expense of causing the captive Paul distress. (Verse 17). Page 76, Bockmuehl.

Paul is genuinely glad of the support in the task of evangelism by many people who are now proclaiming Christ in Philippi. He is less happy about the motivation behind some of their work. In Psalm 51, King David is clear that his motivations need to be corrected by God so that he can have good and pure intentions.

It would be hard to live good, godly lives if our motivation is that we seek to stir up trouble for other partners in God's work.

How might our mission be hampered by such envy and ambition?

How is envy at work in the world?

What might a Christian response to envy look like?

Are you able to work with people whose motivation is different from your own? How might you show God's goodness in your interactions?

Paul's example in this is something that we can take hope and inspiration from for our own everyday-interactions, mission and world-view. **Ponder where Jesus' love in us might transform our attitude and behaviour towards those whom we find difficult or complicated.**

Out in the Orchard

This section is designed for you to be out and about, exercising your faith in a missional way. Each week, there are three suggestions of increasing levels of effort.



Missional Activity: Low Hanging Fruit

Deliberately engage someone in conversation about the Sunday Service over coffee afterwards or an invitation to lunch.

Maybe you have been looking for the right opportunity to get to know people at Church? This could be the right moment to forge a good friendship, or deepen an existing relationship.

Missional Activity: A Bit of a Stretch

Using the guide to prayer-walking and its companion methods detailed in the “Lent Project booklet”, take a prayer walk, noticing and giving thanks for the good things you notice in the area.

You can find the pages for ‘how to prayer walk’ by copying the link below. It is found on pages 12-13 of the booklet.

www.catherinehutton.com/lent-project



Missional Activity: Reaching For the High Branches

This is about adding goodness to your location. Is there something you can do to beautify your street?

Maybe trim the verges in front of your home, regularly pick up litter on your walk to work, leave out snacks and a drink for your delivery driver/postie if you are expecting any deliveries.

Pressing the Word for juicy fruit SELF CONTROL



Read Philippians 1:27-30 in your Bible.

We press into the Word to release God's goodness into our lives.

Note words and phrases which feel significant.

Self control is a discipline which is born of a fruitful life of Christ-like responding. Through it, we reveal that our lives are empowered and equipped by the Holy Spirit, bringing the person of the Resurrected Jesus into every part of our being.

Read verse 27 (NIV) out loud six or seven times, noting how Paul doesn't allow for loop-holes or disharmony among believers.

What are the outcomes of self-control in this circumstance?

Consider the phrase 'manner worthy of the gospel'.

How might this phrase be an inspiration to you?

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...

Pray this scripture for your group, fellowship and church.

It can be easy to fall into a state of being so frightened by the opposition to the Gospel by the world, the culture and the politics of the age that Christians today give up trying to share the hope we have in Christ. **Look at verse 28.** Howard Marshall helpfully offers some insight into the difficult portion of this verse:

Of course Christians are called to love their enemies, but this command is not to be reinterpreted to mean that they should not or cannot have any enemies; on the contrary, they are to recognise that there are people whose aims are hostile to them and the existence of the church. Love for enemies must not blind us to the necessity to resist evil. P. 37

Have you been 'trembling' under the weight of the, quite often very 'reasonable' opposition that comes from outside the Church or even on occasion, from within? How have you dealt with that fear?

Talk to a trusted leader or Christian friend to help you pray and process this fear.

Verses 29 & 30 reference the suffering of Jesus and the suffering of his disciples. I understand that this is an uncomfortable notion. It is the intersection of where God's goodness and self-giving love meets the world of self-love and ungodliness. As we become more Christ-like, our self-control motivates a response of confident love in all these circumstances.

Pray for the Church and the transforming love of Jesus to be fearlessly made known, in your Community – and to the ends of the Earth!

Out in the Orchard

This section is designed for you to be out and about, exercising your faith in a missional way. Each week, there are three suggestions of increasing levels of effort.



Missional Activity: Low Hanging Fruit

Resist the desire to complain...

Maybe have a 'fines jar' for when you forget and either donate the money to a charity or use it to treat a person who has borne the brunt of your complaining!

Missional Activity: A Bit of a Stretch

Develop a holy routine for your daily life. This is a challenge to be brave in your life and your faith.

If your life has become limited and inward-focussed, you could take this as an opportunity to stretch yourself in your routines. Where could you go? Who could you make the effort to contact? What have you missed? Could it be possible to do something lovely with 2 or more friends?

Where has your **faith** become stuck or sloppy? Commit to developing a good routine for worship, fellowship and Bible Study. Contact your Church leaders for some help if you need it! Church leaders love to help people who are desiring to become more effective disciples.

Missional Activity: Reaching For the High Branches

Where are the places in which self control is notably missing in your community or area? Be the difference rather than avoiding them.

This could be at the pub, the office, the playground, the WhatsApp Group, the sports field or gym. It could be in the group of friends you have.

Pray constantly – Love determinedly – Act graciously



Pressing the Word for juicy fruit JOY

Read Philippians 2:1-11 in your Bible.

We press into the Word to release God's goodness into our lives.

Note words and phrases which feel significant.

We begin to create a culture by our Jesus-centred living that makes our place of living an 'outpost of heaven'. This passage is delightful. It moves from our being at one with Christ through a further examination of the completeness of that 'at-one-ness' which results in such a state of being that Paul's joy is completed in its outworking. He concludes the 'shout of joy' with a hymn of adoration to God. There is a motivation of holy intent that permeated our being and results in Joy.

Paul stacks up the qualities of Christlikeness that promote the one-ness of a Church. The congregation which has a common heart for love for God, the people around them in the world and for one another and a common desire for worship & service/mission does indeed set a leader's heart soaring! It is a joy to lead a church like this into effective discipleship and mission.

Look at the positives and negatives in the passage. Which leap out at you above the others? Spend awhile reflecting on this and on the reasons why it might be. Give your thoughts to God in prayer, asking for holy insight and wisdom.

Read aloud verses 6-11. Take them 'to heart'.

This is a character and life portrait of Jesus. The scope and extent of his majesty and humility is a powerful tool for reminding us of our 'place' when trying to elevate ourselves over our fellow disciples. The message is that if Jesus embraces humility, then we can too, having begun much, much lower.

Ponder why Paul might set this picture as a mirror for the actions and attitudes of the church in Philippi and by extension to our church and fellowship today.

Look closely at verses 10-11. Consider Markus Bockmuehl's observations:

Paul points them (the Church in Philippi) to the pre-existent Christ's self-giving humility and uncalculating service of humanity, all the way to death on a cross, and to God's powerful vindication of his faithfulness by exalting him to the highest place in heaven, so that his unchallenged Lordship may be universally acknowledged. This is the secret of a 'citizenship' that is worthy of the gospel (1:27). P148

The Church ever seeks to elevate the Name of Jesus and so Glorify God.

How do you express this joy in your church relationships, worship & service?

Embrace humility – Live selflessly – Elevate Jesus above all



Out in the Orchard

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Each week, there are three suggestions of increasing levels of effort.

Missional Activity: Low Hanging Fruit

We derive joy from our service.

“When you remember the Lord, you get your reward!”

Have a summery treat with a friend!

Missional Activity: A Bit of a Stretch

‘Shaking it off’ can be a way of getting our minds reset. This week, take a POWER WALK (or ride, or nap). Notice all the crosses that occur as you look around.

You may find patterns of crosses in window leading and frames, stonework, tiling fencing, wires, clouds, aircraft trails, or anywhere lines cross.

Also notice things that are lovely, beautiful or make you smile.

Let all else but your focus on Jesus fall away as you walk in His power.

Missional Activity: Reaching For the High Branches

We, and those around us, derive joy from our Jesus-like nature.

Choose to spontaneously treat a friend or neighbour.

Holy Service is where we bless other people.

How might you offer to serve a friend or neighbour this week?

We choose to serve others rather than ourselves to honour Jesus’ own servant attitude

Serve Generously – Love Intentionally



Pressing the Word for juicy fruit GENTLENESS

Read Philippians 2:12-16 in your Bible.

We press into the Word to release God's goodness into our lives.

Note words and phrases which feel significant.

There is something about the gentle quality of starlight which is appealing and beautiful – arguably far more so than the harsh glare of neon or LED lighting, or the sulphurous glare of the lime-light. Shining like a star in the universe is your gentle and enticing promise within these few verses. We persevere in faithful and Christ-like living in every aspect which will inevitably be at odds with the chaotic and corrupted culture of our time, just as the early Christians did as Paul wrote to them. Our only fear, should be the proper attitude of 'fear of the Lord'.

How are you working out your salvation?

Paul offers us the key to this in the earlier verses. What goes on within us is worked outwards from us.

Look up Deuteronomy 32. As you read through the story of Israel's salvation from their oppressors in Egypt, you will find the same words that Paul has borrowed for this occasion. Verse 5: *They are corrupt and not his children; to their shame they are a warped and crooked generation.* NIV.

Famously, the Israelite people complained greatly after their salvation from Egypt. They were unable to enter into the promise of Land that God had prepared for them due to their lack of trust and propensity for disunity.

Consider Philippians 2:13. This is the empowering energy of God which ignites our hearts and wills for his glory in worship, fellowship and service.

What does/might this look like in your life?

Howard Marshall presses the point that; *Paul contrasts the sinful, faithless, grumbling ways of the Israelites going through the desert to Canaan with the ideal attitude of Christians. Where the Israelites failed, the followers of Jesus are meant to succeed!* P.63

Who do you see shining for God today? How do they inspire you?

How does/might your Christian witness shine a light for or show the direction for others?



Out in the Orchard

This section is designed for you to be out and about, exercising your faith in a missional way.

Each week, there are three suggestions of increasing levels of effort.

Missional Activity: Low Hanging Fruit

Make some bird-scarers from shiny items.

This will assist the growth and fruitfulness of your plants. Give them away to people with gardens.

Missional Activity: A Bit of a Stretch

Take a spiritual-detox!

Our lives can become clogged with bits of unhelpful bits and pieces that inhibit our ability to live gracious and faithful loves which are honouring to God. Take time to consciously take time in prayer to raise Jesus' supremacy over your life. As He becomes higher in priority, you will notice things which can be confessed, repented of and set free from: *Jesus, I'm sorry, I hand it to you, let it no longer have a hold on me. Amen.* In this way, you increasingly become the shining, joyful people Paul describes as you lead a grace-filled life.

Missional Activity: Reaching For the High Branches

Shine gently and confidently in the darkness.

This is about committing to support those people who constantly exercise their faith in hard places. Or to commit yourself again to the discipline of working out your salvation and shining like a star in the hard place where you are called to work or serve.

Maybe you can pray for someone you know who is serving the Lord daily in their office, place of learning or workplace where being a Christian is not easy.

Pressing the Word for juicy fruit
PATIENCE



Read Philippians 3:7-14 in your Bible.

We press into the Word to release God's goodness into our lives.

Note words and phrases which feel significant.

Paul had once set great store in being a man of his Jewish inheritance through ancestry and learning. He was zealous in keeping this life and pruning hard at anything that was a threat to it. Now, he offers hard comments to those who don't believe solely in Salvation by faith alone in Jesus who saves us by Grace alone. Christ alone was the cause of Paul's change of direction and thinking. He was utterly transformed in his encounter with Jesus.

Remind yourself of your faith's development over time.

Verses 7 & 8 contain much imagery which has its roots in finance. Bockmuehl guides us to see how Paul is showing the value he had placed on the assets we have mentioned. We can see how the words 'gain' and 'loss' figure in the passage. Paul has reassessed the worth of what he has. As his objectives have changed, so the values of the assets have changed. **Look back over your faith and see how far you have come in your transformation from worldly values to Christ as priority.**

On account of Christ, his prior gains have turned out to be loss-making investments. Christ as the supreme gain has become the overriding concern of Paul's life. Faith in [Christ] has showed up self-righteous pride in his achievements for what it is: not profit but loss, not asset but liability, not light but darkness. On becoming a Christian, his previous balance sheet suddenly looked alarming. P.205 Bockmuehl

Being a Christian is a commitment towards holiness which requires patience.

Circle how you are doing in this area: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Paul does not expect to 'get it all at once'. He knows that his journey into Christlikeness is ongoing. It doesn't gain anything to become irritated at the unfinished business of becoming holy, but to progress patiently, bringing those around him along as he teaches the discipline of patience.

Look at verses 10 & 11, noting how Paul has his goals and is moving continually towards them.

Consider the following phrases and how moving into them requires effort and diligence - or their patient pursuance.

To gain Christ. To be found in Him.

To know Christ.

To know the power of the resurrection.

To become like Christ in his death.

'Press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me' – Patiently! 18

Out in the Orchard

This section is designed for you to be out and about, exercising your faith in a missional way.

Each week, there are three suggestions of increasing levels of effort.

Missional Activity: Low Hanging Fruit



Are you a good ambassador for Christ? Life is full of ups and downs. With other people, take a ride on a rollercoaster or drive/cycle/run/ride up and down some hills and talk about your experience and the effects of your efforts!

Be patient with yourself, your companions and any queueing or heavy traffic!

Missional Activity: A Bit of a Stretch

Life is full of ups and downs. Prepare for ‘The Next Thing’. How do you shape your life in a holy way? Are you able to help other people shape their lives to be orientated in a Christlike way?

How might you prepare your own heart? Be out in the community and take note of the people who are around you. Could you talk to them, putting them at ease and sharing a little with them.

The putting them at ease is important to this – there are too many awkward experiences of ‘peddling the gospel’. Jesus builds friendships and responds to questions on the whole – maybe we copy his example. Be patient.

Missional Activity: Reaching For the High Branches

Are you a good ambassador for Christ? Ride the buses!! Go to a place, have a cup of tea there and come back again.

Who do you meet? What do you notice on the return journey that you didn’t notice on the way out? What do you value about your day? How does it feel to go some place new and to people where you aren’t known? How did you show Jesus on your outing? What do you value about home? How has patience shown itself today?



Pressing the Word for juicy fruit PEACE

Read Philippians 4:4-8 in your Bible.

We press into the Word to release God's goodness into our lives.

Note words and phrases which feel significant.

The fruit of the Spirit demonstrate our Christlikeness. Peace is shown in the quietness of our spirit, both on the inside and the outworking of our life. Paul begins this passage with a double emphasis on 'rejoicing in the Lord!' Verse 4. When our spirit is peaceful, our clarity on what is important increases. We delight in the Lord. F.F Bruce sets out his thinking over these passages;

The assurance of the Lord's nearness, confidence in approaching God in prayer and thanksgiving and the ensuing sense of peace at heart will be manifested in an attitude of Christian courtesy to all. P.142

In your Bible, read the passage through. Circle and note where the 'fruit of the Spirit' are referenced or alluded to in these verses.

Our behaviour towards one another as Christians should be an example of the peace of assurance which comes from knowing Jesus. Consider how you conduct your friendships and relationships. Are they exhibiting gentleness? What small shifts might you make to ensure that they are. Why is this important as part of our Christian discipleship and mission?

Paul references anxiety in the next verse, 6. He is wanting to ensure that the relationships which are complex in the church do not consume all their thinking. Take a look at the previous verses about Euodia and Syntyche.

These are worrying times that we currently live in. Paul reminds us all that prayer is powerful and effective. Allowing the presence of Jesus to take his seat within our being can be so helpful when anxiety threatens to overwhelm. 'Breathing prayers' can be particularly useful at these times. One phrase to breathe in and its companion to breathe out. "*Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, Son of the Living God; Fill my heart and my life with your peace.*"

Look at the types of prayer and how Paul encourages their use. How might you pattern them in your every day? Embrace the promised effects of prayer in v7.

Prayer Petition Thanksgiving Requests

Paul has learnt this through his lived experience. He asks us to shift focus from the present irks in verse 8. In this context, he uses them to promote the joyful and peaceful mind and attitude that is associated with 'the mind of Christ'.

Philippians 4:8 NIV:

whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable –if anything is excellent or praiseworthy –think about such things.



Out in the Orchard

This section is designed for you to be out and about, exercising your faith in a missional way.

Each week, there are three suggestions of increasing levels of effort.

Missional Activity: Low Hanging Fruit

Do something that you love which also gives you a sense of achievement. You might like to play golf, climb a hill, finish a puzzle. Note how you keep a Christ-like demeanour and attitude throughout! Do you have to call yourself back to peace? How might you use these skills in your every day?

Missional Activity: A Bit of a Stretch

Make a hoopla (or purchase one) with a central stick to represent Jesus and the hoops to represent the stresses, worries and anxieties. Enjoy trying to get your hoops of stress over Jesus. Encourage others to play with it as they come to your home – or take it to the beach!

Missional Activity: Reaching For the High Branches

Gather up some people and visit a castle or a fortress. Consider what it means for the peace of God to guard your heart and mind.

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Your Notes



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