

## THE WEEK AHEAD: Week 1



Paul is confident in *Philippians 1:6* that God will complete the “good work” that he began in the *Philippians*. The studies this week help to explain how we can be confident of our salvation.

### Sunday

Read the passage that will be preached at the church service you attend. If English is your second language, read the passage in your own language and also in English.

**On the other six days...**

### Day 1

Re-read ***Philippians 1:1–11*** and think about the answers you gave to the study questions on pages 5–8.

Memorize this week’s memory verse:

**“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” *Philippians 1:6***

Thank God that he will complete the “good work” that he began in you.

### Day 2

Read ***Ephesians 2:8–10***.

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus (see map on page 4 of Study Guide). These verses explain very clearly how we have been saved.

**1** According to verse 8, how are we saved?

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**2** Can we save ourselves? Why or why not? (see verses 8 and 9)

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**3** What is it that Paul says has no power to save us? (see verse 9)

(Note: He mentions these because it is easy to rely on them rather than God.)

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**4** Are good works important? (see verse 10)

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**5** What do we learn about God in verse 10?

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Thank God for his gift of grace to you. Pray that God would enable you to have confidence in him and not in your own “works”.

### Day 3

Read ***1 John 1:5–10***.

The writer of this letter is John, the disciple Jesus called in *Mark 1:19–20*. He is also the author of the Gospel of John and of Revelation. John wrote this letter in around 90AD.

**1** What is “walking in the light”? (see verses 6 and 7)

(Clue: Walking in the light needs the blood of Jesus to make us pure, so it can’t mean “being perfect”.)

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2 So, what is “walking in the darkness”? (see verses 5 and 6)

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3 Why can't we “claim to be without sin”? (see verses 8 and 10)

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4 How can we be certain that confessing sin will result in our forgiveness? (see verse 9)

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*Spend a few minutes thanking God for the secure faith we have, which is based upon what Jesus has already done for us. Ask God to forgive your sins, confident that he will purify you from ALL unrighteousness.*

#### **Day 4**

Read **John 6:35–40**.

*These verses from the Gospel of John are taken from a discussion the crowd are having with Jesus after the feeding of the 5,000. The crowd demand a miraculous sign like the one Moses gave when he fed the people of Israel with manna in the wilderness.*

*Jesus reminds them that it was his Father in heaven who fed the people. And in any case, says Jesus, the “true bread” is “he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world”.*

*In verses 39 and 40, “raise him/them up at the last day” means that Jesus will raise us from death when he returns on the day of judgment.*

1 What kind of hunger and thirst is Jesus talking about in verse 35?

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2 Look at the promise in verse 37. How can you be sure that you are included in this promise?

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3 God's plan for us is clearly given in verses 39 and 40. What is God's part in this plan?

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4 What is our part? (see verse 40)

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*Thank God that he will keep hold of you and that he will not lose you. Pray that you will hunger and thirst for Christ only.*

#### **Day 5**

*Re-read the Bible passages you have read during the past week. Choose a verse that you found particularly helpful, write it down in the space below and memorize it.*

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#### **Day 6**

Read **Philippians 1:12–26** in preparation for **Discipleship Explored**.

## THE WEEK AHEAD: Week 2



In *Philippians 1:19* Paul tells the Philippian church that he has been helped by their prayers and “the Spirit of Jesus Christ”. The studies this week will tell us more about the Holy Spirit and what he does.

### Sunday

Read the passage that will be preached at the church service you attend. If English is your second language, read the passage in your own language and also in English.

**On the other six days...**

### Day 1

Re-read **Philippians 1:12–26** and think about the answers you gave to the study questions on pages 9–12.

Memorize this week’s memory verse:

**“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21**

Pray that you would be able to say those words and mean them.

### Day 2

Read **Ephesians 1:13–14**.

**1** When do we receive the Holy Spirit?

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**2** Why do we receive the Holy Spirit?

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**3** The Holy Spirit marks us as belonging to God. Does this give you confidence? Why or why not?

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Thank God that the Holy Spirit marks us as God’s own.

### Day 3

Read **Galatians 5:16–26**.

In this letter, Paul is writing to the churches in Galatia (see top map on page 4 of Study Guide). His main point in these verses is that there is a conflict between the Holy Spirit and the sinful nature in every Christian’s life.

**1** What does it mean to “live by the Spirit”? (see verses 16 and 17)  
(Clue: The desires we have lead us in one of two directions.)

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**2** Why is it wrong to live gratifying the “acts of the sinful nature” when you have the Holy Spirit in you? (see verses 19–21)

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**3** Looking at verses 19–21, are there any things mentioned here which you need to turn from and ask forgiveness for? (Notice how some things are obvious actions but others are attitudes that are easier to hide.)

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4 How does the Holy Spirit change us? (see verses 22–26)

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5 Paul tells us to “keep in step” with the Spirit (verse 25). How can you do this, according to the verses you have just read?

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*Although it is important that we see those areas in our lives where we need to change, it is also very important that we don't become weighed down by guilt. Remember, God's acceptance of us is based on what **Jesus** has done, not on what we have done.*

*Memorize the nine fruits of the Spirit in verses 22–23. Which one do you struggle with most? Ask for the Holy Spirit's help with it.*

#### Day 4

Read **Romans 8:26–27**.

*Paul wrote this letter to the Christians living in Rome. These verses tell us a little more about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian.*

1 How does the Holy Spirit help us pray?

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2 How might this be a comfort for someone in a difficult situation?

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3 Why is it so important to pray through the Holy Spirit? (see verse 27)

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*Thank God that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and that we are able to pray to such a powerful God.*

#### Day 5

*Re-read the Bible passages you have read over the past week. Choose a verse that you found particularly helpful, write it down in the space below and memorize it.*

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#### Day 6

Read **Philippians 1:27 – 2:11** in preparation for **Discipleship Explored**.

## THE WEEK AHEAD: Week 3



In *Philippians 1:27* Paul tells us we should conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel and contend for the gospel. These studies will explore that further.

### Sunday

Read the passage that will be preached at the church service you attend. If English is your second language, read the passage in your own language and also in English.

**On the other six days...**

### Day 1

Re-read **Philippians 1:27 – 2:11** and think about the answers you gave to the study questions on pages 13–16.

Memorize this week's memory verse:

**"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5**

Pray for strength and wisdom so that wherever you are, your attitude is "the same as that of Christ Jesus".

### Day 2

Read **John 3:16–21**.

**1** Verses 16–18 are a great summary of the gospel. What is the gospel message according to these verses?

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**2** How do verses 18 and 19 describe people who do not believe in Jesus?

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**3** Jesus is the "light" of verse 19. What will happen to those who hate the light? (see verse 20)

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**4** How should we respond to this?

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Pray for people you know who love "darkness", that they would believe in Jesus.

### Day 3

Read **Colossians 3:12–17**.

Paul wrote this letter to the church at Colosse. Like the church at Philippi, these were a group of young Christians.

**1** What do verses 12–14 tell us about how we should treat each other?

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**2** How can we make sure we give thanks to God? (see verses 15–17)

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**3** Why is it important that we spend time thinking about God's word? (see verse 16)

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Spend some time giving thanks to God. Pray that his word will "dwell in you richly".

## Day 4

Read **1 Peter 2:9–12**.

*This letter was written by Peter, who was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. He wrote it to Christians who were facing opposition because of their Christian faith.*

**1** How does Peter describe Christians in verses 9 and 10?

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**2** What should Christians be doing as a result of these descriptions? (see verse 9)

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**3** Why does Peter describe Christians as “aliens and strangers in the world” in verse 11? (see Philippians 3:20)

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**4** How should we behave, according to verses 11 and 12?

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**5** What will be the effect of our behaviour on those who do not know Jesus? (see verse 12)

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*Pray that your life would be a powerful witness to those who do not know Jesus.*

## Day 5

*Re-read the Bible passages you have read over the past week. Choose a verse that you found particularly helpful, write it down in the space below and memorize it.*

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## Day 6

Read **Philippians 2:5-18** in preparation for **Discipleship Explored**.

## THE WEEK AHEAD: Week 4



*Philippians 2:5–11 are a wonderful picture of the humility and selflessness of Jesus. The studies this week focus on Jesus and his mission to rescue us from our sin.*

### Sunday

*Read the passage that will be preached at the church service you attend. If English is your second language, read the passage in your own language and also in English.*

**On the other six days...**

### Day 1

*Re-read **Philippians 2:5–18** and think about the answers you gave to the study questions on pages 17–20.*

*Memorize this week's memory verse:*

**“Shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.”**

**Philippians 2:15–16**

*Ask God to help you to shine like a star among your family, friends and community.*

### Day 2

*Read **Isaiah 53:1–6**.*

*These verses describe the suffering of God's “servant”. They were written about 700 years before Jesus was born. But notice how they describe so much of what would happen to Jesus.*

**1** Look at verses 2 and 3. What similarities can you find between the “servant” and Jesus Christ?

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**2** What does the servant's suffering achieve? (see verses 4 and 5)  
(Note: “Transgressions” and “iniquities” are another way of describing sin.)

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**3** Why is this suffering necessary? (see verse 6)

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*Give thanks to God for the wonderful good news of Jesus and the extraordinary humility of God that he chose to suffer for us on the cross.*

### Day 3

*Read **Luke 15:11–32**.*

*This passage is often called “The Parable of the Lost Son”. It is a wonderful picture of the compassion of God, who is represented by the father in this story.*

**1** What do we learn about the younger son from verses 11–17?

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**2** What changes do you see in the younger son in verses 17–19?

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**3** What surprises you about how verses 20–24 describe the father?  
(Note: Remember that the father in this story represents God.)

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**4** What is the older son's attitude to his father/God? Why is this wrong? (see verses 25–31)

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5 Are you like one of the sons? Which one?

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6 How is the father/God gracious to both sons? (see verses 22, 28 and 31)

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*Thank God for the extraordinary nature of his fatherly compassion for you.*

#### Day 4

Read **Colossians 1:15–23**.

*We have already looked at a passage from this letter by Paul to the Christians in Colosse. These verses help us to understand who Jesus is.*

1 Paul calls Jesus “the image of the invisible God” (verse 15). What does he mean? (see verse 19)

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2 Paul also describes Jesus as “the firstborn over all creation” (verse 15). What does he mean by that, according to verses 16–18?

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3 God created us to have a right relationship with him. Because of our sin, that relationship was broken and needs to be restored/fixed. How is this achieved? (see verse 20)

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4 What does it mean to be reconciled with God? (see verses 21 and 22)

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5 Read verse 23. How should we respond to what Jesus has done for us?

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*Think about the descriptions of Jesus in this passage and praise God for such a mighty Saviour. Pray that you will “continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel”.*

#### Day 5

*Re-read the Bible passages you have read over the past week. Choose a verse that you found particularly helpful, write it down in the space below and memorize it.*

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#### Day 6

Read **Philippians 3:1–9** in preparation for **Discipleship Explored**.



## THE WEEK AHEAD: Week 5



In *Philippians 3:9* Paul speaks about a righteousness that comes as a gift from God and which can be ours through faith. The studies this week explore that theme.

### Sunday

Read the passage that will be preached at the church service you attend. If English is your second language, read the passage in your own language and also in English.

**On the other six days...**

### Day 1

Re-read **Philippians 3:1–9** and think about the answers you gave to the study questions on pages 21–24.

Memorize this week's memory verse:

**“Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.” *Philippians 3:9***

Thank God that we have a “righteousness that comes from God and is by faith”.

### Day 2

Read **Ephesians 2:1–10**.

You may remember that we explored part of this passage in week 1. These verses contain an overview of our salvation.

**1** What were we like before we became Christians? (see verses 1–3)

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**2** Why did God do something about this? (see verse 4)

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**3** Look at your answer to question 1. In what ways did we deserve God's love?

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**4** So what does Paul mean when he says “it is by grace you have been saved” (verse 5)?

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**5** Why is it important to understand that we are saved through faith (verse 8) and not by works – the things we do (verse 9)?

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Pray that you will have a clear understanding of God's grace. Ask God to help you to show your thankfulness for his grace by living in a way that pleases him.

### Day 3

Read **Romans 3:20–26**.

This is one of the most extraordinary passages in the New Testament. It explains what God has done for us through Christ's death.

**1** What does “the law” do, according to verse 20?

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**2** According to the same verse, what will keeping the law not do?

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**3** The word “justification” means being declared “not guilty”. How can we, who are guilty, be made right with God? (see verses 22–24)

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**4** Because God is just, he has to punish sin. Jesus gave his life to pay for our sin. How does this show God’s justice? (see verses 25–26)

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*Give thanks to God for his justice, shown by Jesus’ death.*

#### **Day 4**

Read **Romans 5:6–11**.

*In these verses Paul describes the peace and joy that come from being justified.*

**1** What is so amazing about verses 6 and 7?

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**2** How can we be sure of God’s love, according to verse 8?

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**3** What has Jesus’ death achieved for us, according to verses 9 and 10?

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**4** Why should we praise God? (see verse 11)

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*Thank God for the reconciliation with him achieved through Jesus’ death.*

#### **Day 5**

*Re-read the Bible passages you have read over the past week. Choose a verse that you found particularly helpful, write it down in the space below and memorize it.*

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#### **Day 6**

Read **Philippians 3:10 – 4:1** in preparation for **Discipleship Explored**.

# THE WEEK AHEAD: Week 6



In *Philippians 3:12–14* Paul declares his determination to “press on” as a Christian. The studies this week will help you think about how you can “press on”.

## Sunday

Read the passage that will be preached at the church service you attend. If English is your second language, read the passage in your own language and also in English.

**On the other six days...**

## Day 1

Re-read **Philippians 3:10 – 4:1** and think about the answers you gave to the study questions on pages 25–28.

Memorize this week’s memory verse:

**“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings.” Philippians 3:10**

Ask God to help you to “press on” as a Christian and to know Christ more and more.

## Day 2

Read **Matthew 6:19–24**.

These verses are part of a passage known as the “Sermon on the Mount”. Jesus was on a mountainside with his disciples when he taught them these things.

**1** Jesus tells us to store up “treasures in heaven” rather than “treasures on earth”. Why? (see verses 19–20)

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**2** What does Jesus mean when he says: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (verse 21)?

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**3** How do you use most of your time and energy? What does this show about where your heart is?

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**4** Jesus says in verse 24 that no one can serve two masters. What are the things in your life that make it hard to serve Jesus?

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**5** What should you do about that?

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Ask God to help you choose treasures that will last through eternity.

## Day 3

Read **Matthew 6:25–34**.

This passage carries on from Day 2’s reading.

**1** What do you learn about God’s love for you from verses 26 and 30?

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**2** According to verse 32, why shouldn’t we worry about food or drink or clothing?

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3 What should we do instead, according to verse 33?

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4 In what practical ways can we do that?

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*Pray that you will be able to trust God and depend on him for everything.*

#### **Day 4**

Read **Matthew 7:24–29**.

*Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount by telling his followers a parable – a story with a meaning.*

1 There are two men in this parable. How are they described?

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2 Something is the same and something is different about the two men. What are they?

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3 The two houses are built on different foundations. What is the difference between them?

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4 There are two results in this parable. How are they described?

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5 Is it enough to listen to Jesus' words? Why or why not?

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*Pray about the areas of your life where you need to put into practice what Jesus teaches here.*

#### **Day 5**

*Re-read the Bible passages you have read over the past week. Choose a verse that you found particularly helpful, write it down in the space below and memorize it.*

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#### **Day 6**

Read **Philippians 4:2–9** in preparation for **Discipleship Explored**.

# THE WEEK AHEAD: Week 7

The studies this week will help you find out more about prayer.

## Sunday

Read the passage that will be preached at the church service you attend. If English is your second language, read the passage in your own language and also in English.

On the other six days...

## Day 1

Re-read **Philippians 4:2–9** and think about the answers you gave to the study questions on pages 29–32.

Memorize this week's memory verse:

**“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Philippians 4:6**

Remembering the memory verse, pray about the things that make you anxious.

## Day 2

Read **Matthew 6:5–13**.

Matthew, one of the twelve disciples, is the writer of this Gospel. In this passage Jesus teaches his disciples about prayer.

1 How does Jesus tell us we should pray in verses 5–8?

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2 What does Jesus tell us not to do in verses 5–8? Why?

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3 What are the first things that Jesus tells the disciples to pray? (see verses 9–10) (Note: “Hallowed” means “revered” or “honoured”.)

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4 Why should we pray for these things first?

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5 Go through the rest of the prayer phrase by phrase. What is Jesus teaching us about prayer in each phrase?

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Use Jesus' prayer as a model for your own prayer.

## Day 3

Read **Colossians 1:3–14**.

We have looked at passages from this letter of Paul to the Christians in Colosse before. Here Paul prays for the Colossian Christians.

1 What does Paul thank God for when he prays for the Colossians? (see verses 3–4)

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2 Where does the Colossians' faith and love come from? (see verse 5)

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3 What is the main thing Paul prays for the Colossians? (see verse 9)

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4 Why does he pray for this? (see verses 10–12)

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Use these verses as a model to help you pray for the people in your group.

#### Day 4

Read **Colossians 4:2–6**.

Here Paul is telling the Christians in Colosse the prayers he would like them to pray for him.

1 What do we learn from verse 2 about the way we should pray?

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2 Paul is in prison because he has been telling people the good news about Jesus (see the end of verse 3). So why is Paul's request in verse 3 surprising?

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3 How can verses 3 and 4 help you pray for other Christians who want to tell their friends about Jesus?

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4 What advice does Paul give about how we should act towards non-Christians? (see verses 5 and 6)

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Ask God to help you, and the others in your group, to tell people the good news about Jesus.

#### Day 5

Re-read the Bible passages you have read over the past week. Choose a verse that you found particularly helpful, write it down in the space below and memorize it.

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#### Day 6

Read **Philippians 4:10–23** in preparation for **Discipleship Explored**.

## THE WEEK AHEAD: Week 8



Paul ends his letter by speaking about contentment. The studies this week will remind us of some practical things we can do to be content.

### Sunday

Read the passage that will be preached at the church service you attend. If English is your second language, read the passage in your own language and also in English.

**On the other six days...**

### Day 1

Re-read **Philippians 4:10–23** and think about the answers you gave to the study questions on pages 33–36.

Memorize this week's memory verse:

**"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation."  
Philippians 4:12**

Pray that you would learn to be "content in any and every situation".

### Day 2

Read **Hebrews 4:14–16**.

This short passage gives us great confidence.

**1** Why should we hold "firmly" to the faith we believe in (verse 14)?

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**2** What do you think are your particular weaknesses and temptations (verse 15)?

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**3** Jesus knows exactly what it is like to be tempted. But he never sinned. What should we do in times of weakness and temptation? (see verses 15–16)

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**4** How will God respond if we do this? (see verse 16)

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Use your answers to these questions to help you pray.

### Day 3

Read **1 Timothy 1:12–17**.

Paul wrote two letters to his younger colleague Timothy. Here Paul talks about his sense of unworthiness because he used to persecute Christians.

**1** What does Paul thank Jesus for in verse 12?

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**2** What did Paul receive from Jesus, according to verse 14?

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**3** Why is the "saying" in verse 15 so important for Paul and for us?

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4 How was Paul's life an example of God's patience? (see verses 13 and 16)

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5 How is your life an example of God's patience to those who aren't yet Christians? (see verse 16)

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6 In verse 12, Paul says that Jesus gave him strength. In what ways have you too received strength from Jesus?

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*Pray about your life as a Christian in the places where you work and live. Ask for God's strength to help you.*

#### Day 4

Read **Ephesians 3:14–21**.

*This prayer is right in the middle of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. In it, he prays that they would have "power".*

1 What is the first thing Paul prays for the Ephesians? (see verses 16–17a)

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2 The Ephesians are already Christians, and therefore already have Christ living in them. So what does Paul mean when he prays that Christ would "dwell" in them?

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3 What is the second thing Paul prays for the Ephesians? (see verses 17b–19)

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4 Read verse 19. How can this "love" be known, but at the same time "surpass knowledge"?

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5 What is it about the end of Paul's prayer that encourages us to pray? (see verse 20)

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*Using these verses, pray for yourself, and the others in your group, that you would grow in your knowledge of the love of Jesus.*

#### Day 5

*Re-read the Bible passages you have read over the past week. Choose a verse that you found particularly helpful, write it down in the space below and memorize it.*

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#### Day 6

*Now that you have finished **Discipleship Explored**, spend some time writing down the things you have learned. Pray that you would be able to put them into practice.*



## THE WEEK AHEAD: Extra



**Note:** There is an extra study on pages 37–38 of the Study Guide, based on Philippians 2:19–30. If your group chooses to use this study for one of your weekly meetings, then use the following Bible-readings at home on that week.

*Timothy and Epaphroditus are both examples of Christ-like service. The studies this week will explore further what it means to serve Christ and others.*

### Sunday

*Read the passage that will be preached at the church service you attend. If English is your second language, read the passage in your own language and also in English.*

**On the other six days...**

### Day 1

*Re-read **Philippians 2:19–30** and think about the answers you gave to the study questions on pages 37–38.*

*Read the memory verses you have learned so far. If you are finding any of them hard to remember, spend some time now relearning them.*

*Pray that the verses you have learned will stay in your mind and encourage you to live for Christ.*

### Day 2

*Read **Mark 8:34–38**.*

*In this passage, Jesus explains what it will cost to follow him.*

**1** What is the cost of following Jesus, according to these verses?

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**2** How would you answer Jesus' questions in verses 36 and 37?

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**3** Why should we not be ashamed of Jesus? (see verse 38)

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*Pray that Jesus will be more important to you than life itself.*

### Day 3

*Read **1 John 4:7–12**.*

*We read part of John's letter in Week 1. Here he describes God's love and ours.*

**1** What do we learn about love from verses 7–8?

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**2** How did God show his love to sinful human beings? (see verses 9 and 10)

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**3** Since God loves us, what should we do? (see verse 11)

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**4** What happens if we love one another, according to verse 12?

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5 How can you show your love for other Christians this week?

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*Thank God for loving us so much that he sent his Son to die for us. Pray that you would be able to love other Christians.*

#### Day 4

Read **Romans 12:1–8**.

*This letter was written by Paul to the Christians in Rome. The “therefore” in 12:1 follows on from the first eleven chapters of Romans, which are an explanation of the gospel message. In chapter 12 Paul lays out the practical implications the gospel should have on our lives.*

1 What does verse 1 teach us about worship?

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2 Verse 2 suggests that our whole way of thinking needs to change. What will the result be?

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3 What should our attitude be towards the gifts God has given us?

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4 Verses 3–8 are about using our gifts for the church. In what ways are you using your gifts? (Note: The list Paul gives in verses 6–8 does not include every gift.)

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*Pray through these verses, asking that God would help you not to conform “to the pattern of this world”. Pray that you would know what your gifts are and that you would use them humbly to serve the church.*

#### Day 5

*Re-read the Bible passages you have read over the past week. Choose a verse that you found particularly helpful, write it down in the space below and memorize it.*

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#### Day 6

*Read next week’s passage in preparation for **Discipleship Explored**.*