

the
MIND
of
CHRIST

Philippians 2:1-8



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(1) If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

(2) Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

(3) Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

(4) Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

(5) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

(6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

(7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

(8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Now let's try to understand the people of Philippi and the times they were living in. This is important because the context in which something has been written often influences its meaning.

Find a map of the land surrounding the Aegean Sea (maybe in the back of your Bible or an atlas). If you are using *blueletterbible.org* on a computer, type Philippians in the search box, click on the first verse of chapter 1 and then find the misc tab and click on that (this is not available on the app). If you like drawing, or even if you don't, draw a small map below to show where Philippi is. Now you can see how far from the provinces of Galilee and Judea this was and how unlikely that they had heard much about Jesus before this.



Find out a little about the city of Philippi. You can do this by finding Philippians 1 in the *blueletterbible* app (BLB), click on verse 1 and then choose Text Commentaries. Choose *Matthew Henry's Commentary* and then the Introduction to Philippians. Take notes on what you find. The fact that this was a mainly Roman town, with only a few Jews, helps to understand why this new "religion" would have been seen as threatening.

Try to find out what you can about Roman religion, and the Emperor Nero who was in power around this time. This website has plenty of information: <http://tribunesandtriumphs.org/>. The contrast between the Lord Jesus and the gods of the Roman religion and the emperors of Rome who claimed to be gods is very relevant to this particular study.

Before we get into the section in chapter 2, take time to read the whole book today. While you are reading make note of any prominent thoughts in each chapter. For example, Philip-
pians is often summarized in the following way: Chapter 1: Christ our Life, Chapter 2: Christ our Mind; Chapter 3: Christ our Goal, Chapter 4: Christ our strength. See if you can find why it would be summarized in this way.

In the first verse of Philippians 2 there are four “ifs”. Today take a few minutes to look at each “if” a little more closely. This is not apparent in every translation, so I am using the *King James Version*, which is also linked most closely with most study aids.

“If there be an consolation in Christ”: look up the word ‘consolation’ - to do this, open up Philippians 2 in the BLB, tap on verse 1 and then tap on Interlinear. This opens a dictionary of the Greek words that were used in composing the New Testament. Although translators do their best to represent the Greek words with an English equivalent, there are often nuances in meaning that can be missed in English. The interlinear will give all the words used in the verse and their Greek counterparts. Click on the word for consolation. Under Outline of Biblical Usage there will be multiple possible meanings, although they are similar. Scroll down to Thayers Greek Lexicon and click on *Read the Full Entry*. You will notice that the verse we are considering is mentioned in the #3 paragraph. Note this meaning under consolation. Scroll down through the verses where this word is also used, and write down any that seem relevant to “consolation in Christ”.

Next, do the same for “if any comfort of love”, “if any fellowship of the Spirit”, and “any bowels and mercies”.

How do these four “ifs” relate to your experiences in being a Christian? Do you find encouragement in the words of the Gospel? Do you find comfort in the love of God and one another? Do you sense the potential of strength in fellowship with God and with one another? Does the Gospel reveal compassion and mercy and inspire this in you and others?

So now that we have looked at the things that we can appreciate about the Gospel, how do we show our appreciation for this?

Paul gives us the answer in verse 2. Open BLB and find Philippians 2. Tap on verse 2 and choose interlinear. We are going to look at the word “fulfil”, but first tap on the little box that says PARSE. This tells us a bit about the grammar of the word itself. Click on each of the explanations for Tense, Voice, and Mood and take notes on what this tells you about

what Paul is saying here. Then close that tab and click on the Greek word to get a fuller understanding of what it means to “fulfil”.

Paul often spoke of the people that he had brought to the faith being “his joy”. We all know what it is like to be disappointed by those who could have brought us joy. It can be devastating. Paul did not want this lovely little group of believers to be torn apart by differences and difficulties. They needed to stand strong on the things that brought them together. Paul sums up the key as being **likeminded**.

Write down the three components of being likeminded. Look up the words using the interlinear tab, and write down their definitions. Scroll through the other passages where the words are used, and then go back to verse 2 and tap on cross-references. Read through these, and write down any that are relevant.

What insight does this give you on what we should be striving for in our spiritual community?

We have found that our appreciation of the benefits of the Gospel can be shown by unity - the same love, the same purpose, the same mind. However, we all know that this is not as easy as it sounds. We all come from different places in life, and consequently see things in slightly different ways. So Paul continues his explanation of how to achieve this.

Read through Philippians 2:3-7 and write down the three “buts...”

When you have all three written down, read back through them. What is the similar thought in each of these statements?

Paul identifies four means by which unity can be destroyed: strife, vainglory, looking only on one's own interests, and grasping at equality with God.

What have you learned about what causes strife in a community and how it can be averted?

The second destroyer of unity is: Vainglory. This is a very old-fashioned word and if you use a different translation you may have “conceit” or “vanity”.

Open up Philippians 2 in the BLB, and tap on verse 3 and then Interlinear. Have a look at the definition for “vainglory” - this is the only place that this particular word is used in the New Testament, but if you tap on the root word, you can find another similar occurrence.

This word is similar to pride, so once again tap on the little magnifying glass in the top right corner, and type in “pride”. Scroll down to the verses in Proverbs and note any wisdom you find there.

Why is pride damaging to unity? How can you guard against it?

Here is the answer to strife and vainglory. Find Philippians 2 in the BLB, tap on verse 3 and then tap on Translation Comparison. Read through the various translations and then write out in your own words how Paul suggests avoiding strife and vainglory.

Go back to Philippians 2, tap on verse 3, and then Interlinear, and then “lowliness of mind”. Write out the definitions given, and then scroll down through the other verses where this word is used. Note any that are significant.

Do the same for the word “esteem” and “better”.

How does this change the way you look at your fellow believers?

It is not good enough to just be humble and esteem others as better than oneself - although this will help to keep unity, it will not develop it. There must be an interest in it growing together as a community.

Let's have a look at what "look" means... Open Philippians 2, tap on verse 4, and then Interlinear. Choose "look" and read through the Outline of Biblical Usage. Then click on the Root Word and have a look at that. It is not just being nosy about what other people are up to. Take notes.

Go back to chapter 2, tap on verse 5 and then tap on Translation Comparison. Read through the various translations of this verse and then write it out in your own words.

How do you think this kind of action promotes unity?

Paul has stated that humility, esteeming others better than ourselves, and looking to the interests of others is a foil to strife and vainglory.

Now he explains that the key to being likeminded is to have the mind of Christ.

Today, let's just briefly look the word "mind". Open up the BLB to Philippians 2 and tap verse 5. Open up the Interlinear and tap on the word for "mind". We have looked at this word previously, so scroll down through the verses where this word is also used, and write down any that seem relevant. Then go back to Philippians 2, tap on verse 5 and tap on Cross-references. Read through these and write down any that seem relevant.

At this point, how would you summarize the mind of Christ?

If we are to have the mind of Christ, we must be able to identify with what he did to have such a mind.

Open BLB to Philippians 2 and tap on verse 6. Choose Translation Comparison and read through the different translations of this verse. Do the same thing for verses 7 and 8. It is not super clear what these verses are referring to, so we will look at them a little more closely over the next couple days.

First of all, in other places Paul compares Jesus to Adam - and refers to Adam as a figure of him that was to come (Romans 5:14). Take a few minutes to compare the actions of Adam and Jesus. What was different about their thinking?

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness to use his power for his own glory (Matthew 4) - how was his response different than what Adam or the natural man's may have been?

How can you relate to this?

What does it mean that Jesus was in the form of God?

Open up the BLB to Philippians 2, tap on verse 6, then Inter-linear, then the word for "form". Write down the definition for this word. Scroll down to the other verses which use this word. You will notice that this word occurs again in the next verse as "the form of a servant."

If we compare the two, it is evident that Jesus was like God in his actions and mind, as he was like a servant in his actions and mind. He spoke the words of God, he healed and raised the dead, he challenged and comforted with the authority of God. Likewise, he spent his days in service to others, and obeyed his Father in every respect, whose servant he ultimately was.

We have mentioned before that Paul compared Jesus to Adam. So let's quickly find Genesis 1 in the BLB, and tap on verse 26, and then Interlinear. There are two words here that are similar to the idea of "form". Click on them both and write down the definitions. Go back to Genesis 1, tap on verse 26 and then on Cross References. Read through them and write down any that seem relevant. In what way are men made in the image and likeness of God? Do you see how Jesus was indeed a true image of God?

Jesus was given the Holy Spirit and power so that He could do the works of God, but He did not use it for selfish motives. Look up the word "robbery" in verse 6 and write down the definition. Take a look at the root word as well.

He did not try to seize equality with God. Go back and read what happened in Genesis 3, especially verse 5 and 6. What difference do you see in the mind of Adam and Jesus Christ?

So we have Jesus, who, although he has the power and the Spirit without measure, does not take advantage of this for his own use - unlike Adam and Eve, who with the tree of knowledge available to them, and the thought that they could be their own gods and make their own rules, reach out and take the forbidden fruit for themselves.

Instead, this is what Jesus does: he makes himself of no reputation. Open Philippians 2 in the BLB and tap on 7. Go to the Interlinear and tap on the word for “reputation”. Scroll down to read Thayer’s Greek Lexicon. What was it that Jesus had to empty himself of? We can get an answer to this question from Jesus himself. Find John 5 and go to verse 30. Read through this verse, and then tap on Cross References and write down any others that seem relevant.

What Jesus emptied himself of was his own will. This is important in trying to mirror the mind of Christ in ourselves.

Although Jesus chose to take the form of a servant, he was made in the likeness of man. Open Philippians 2, tap on verse 7, and then Interlinear. Let’s look first at the word “made”. Write out the meanings given under Outline of Biblical Usage. Go back to verse 7, and click on Cross References. Have

a look at the verses under “in the likeness” and write down any that tell you he was made in the likeness of man.

He wasn't only made in the likeness of man, but to clear up any confusion about whether he was actually a man or not, Paul goes on to say that he was “found in fashion as a man”. Tap on verse 7, and Interlinear and then the word for “fashion”.

How does this encourage you that you can have the mind of Christ?

Open up Philippians 2, tap on verse 7, and then Interlinear. Let's look at the word “took”. Write down the definition. How is this different than being “made” a servant?

Whose servant was he? Go back to verse 7 and tap on cross references, and then look through the references under “form of a servant”. Write down what you find out about whose servant he was, and also examples of him being a servant.

What does this tell you about the mind of Christ?

There are two qualities of character mentioned in verse 8. Let’s look at them.

Open up Philippians 2 in the BLB, and then tap on verse 8. Go to the Interlinear and tap on the words “humbled” and “obedient”. Write down the definitions given, and then go back and tap on Cross References. Write down any that are helpful.

How did these two qualities help the Lord Jesus to accomplish his purpose?

Go back through your notes and make a summary of what the mind of Christ is. Take a bit of time to go through the book of Philippians and find examples of Paul or other believers demonstrating this mind of Christ in words and actions.

Make a list of what changes you can make to develop the mind of Christ in yourself.

Challenge yourself to memorize this passage: write it on your heart!

