

“Being The Light Of The World”

Philippians 2:12-18

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June 14, 2026

Teaching Aim: To demonstrate Christians should live their lives with a healthy sense of reverence and awe before the holiness of God. To realize God is at work in the life of every Christian to will and to do His good pleasure. To recognize born-again Christians are called to be lights in a dark world and to offer their lives as a living sacrifice to God.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Working out your salvation with fear and trembling (vv. 12-13)

1. The word “*therefore*” indicates the conclusion is coming (vs. 12). How do **verses 5-11** set the tone for Paul’s thoughts on “*obedience*” to God in Paul’s absence (vs. 12)? Who is the supreme example of obedience in the Bible? How should we as Christians living in the 21st Century respond to Christ’s death on the cross for us?

2. Why was it so important for the Philippian Christians to “*step it up*” in their Christian walk at a time when Paul was under house arrest 700-800 miles away in Rome? Why is it important for Christians to be continually growing in their relationship with Christ today? What are some of the harder times you’ve gone through in your life spiritually?

3. Does Paul’s exhortation to “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*” mean that Christians must be continually terrified of losing their salvation and being condemned to an eternity in hell (vs. 12)? (See Commentaries) What did Paul mean? (See **John 3:16-17; John 10:27-30; 1 John 5:11-13**)

4. Are Christians saved by being good or the things that they do? Note: Think about this a little more deeply before answering. (See **Rom. 5:3:10-12; 8-9; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:3-4**) Whose works are we saved by? Now for a different question, “*Are Christians saved by their own works?*” (See **Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5-7**) When do spiritual works begin in the life of a born-again Christian? (See **Eph. 2:8-10**) What is the purpose behind these works? What are some ways that you are serving the Lord today?

5. The Bible teaches that there are three aspects to our salvation: 1) our justification; 2) our sanctification; and 3) our glorification. Which aspect of our salvation is past tense? (**See Rom. 3:20-26; 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:11**). Which aspect is present tense? (**See John 17:19; Phil. 2:12; Heb 10:14**) Which aspect is future tense? (**See Rom. 8:17, 29-30**) Which aspect of our salvation do we normally think of when we talk about our salvation?

6. Have you ever felt unworthy to live the Christian life in your own strength. If you have, you are in good company as no Christian has the power within him or herself to do so. Christians are dependent upon God and the power of God's Holy Spirit to live the Christian life. According to **verse 13**, who is working in you "*both to will and to do His good pleasure*?" How do you see this working out in your own life?

Part II: Shinning as lights in a very dark world (vv. 14-16)

1. **Verse 14** indicates that the Philippian church was facing some problems within the church body. What were they? (**Also see Phil. 4:2**) How do negative comments and disputes within the local church take away from the effectiveness of any ministry? What do we need to do to get our lives and the church back on track? (**See 1 John 1:9**)

2. Does being "*blameless*" mean a person is living in sinless perfection (**vs. 15**)? (**See 1 John 1:8**) What does the word blameless mean in this context? William MacDonald defines blameless this way: "*A blameless person may sin, but he apologizes, confesses, and makes it right whenever possible.*" Is there anyone in your life you need to get right with? If so, have you tried? If they were unwilling at the time, are you open and willing to try again if they do become ready? How do you think Jesus would want you to handle this situation?

3. What are some ways that we can live today as "*children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*?" What are some of the unique challenges that our younger generation faces today?

4. Have you ever gone camping in a very dark place on a clear night? What did you see when you looked up into the sky? Why were the stars so bright? According to **verse 15b**, how should Christians appear to a dark world? Someone has said, "*The darker the darkness, the brighter the light.*" How does this illustration apply to the Christian and to the gospel message in the 21st century? What is required for a Christian to walk in the light? (**See 1 John 1:6-7**)

5. What are some practical steps that you can take to help you develop in your Christian growth and the image of Christ you share with others? (**See Matt. 5:14-15**) Jesus said in **Matt. 5:16**, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*" How are you letting your light shine today?

6. What is meant by, "*the word of life,*" and why is it so important for the Christian to hold fast to it (**vs. 16**)? How should the Christian react when false doctrine creeps into the local church? (**See Matt. 18:15-17**) Why do you think so many churches are straying away from Biblical truth today? (**See vs. 12**) What can we do about it as Christians?

7. What are some practical steps you can take to solidify your understanding of the Bible and correct doctrine (teaching)? Are you willing to make the extra effort?

8. What is meant by, "*the day of Christ*" (**vs. 16**)? (See Commentaries; **2 Cor. 5:10**) What did Paul indicate would bring him great joy on "*the day of Christ*?" Are you holding fast to the truth of God's Word?

Part III: Making your life a living sacrifice (vv. 17-18)

1. What is the significance of the Old Testament “*drink offering*” (vs. 17)? (See **Exod. 29:38-41; 2 Kin. 16:13; Jer. 7:18; Hos. 9:4**) Did the Greeks have a similar offering?
2. According to John MacArthur, a drink offering “*refers to the topping off of an ancient animal sacrifice. The offering poured wine either in front of or on top of the burning animal and the wine would be vaporized. That steam symbolized the rising of the offering to the deity for whom the sacrifice was made.*” How might Paul see his entire life and ministry as a drink offering being poured out? Are you pouring out your life for Christ, or are you only taking in? (See **Rom. 12:1**)
3. What are some ways that Christians can find joy in the midst of suffering for the Lord today? How did Jesus respond to His suffering for our sins? (See **Heb. 12:2; 1 Pet. 2:19-24**)
4. Have you ever suffered because of your faith in Jesus Christ? If so, how? Were you able to praise the Lord during this difficult time? Why or why not? (See **Jam. 1:1-4**) Looking back, can you praise the Lord now for the growth in your life that took place and for the way He strengthened you spiritually during that time of trial?

MINER’S CORNER – *Manna for today!*

- There are three aspects to our salvation: 1) Justification (*Past tense—God did it*); 2) Sanctification (*Present tense—We work together with God throughout our lifetime to become more Christ-like*); and 3) Glorification (*Future tense—God will do it*).
- To work out our salvation with fear and trembling means to live our lives with a healthy sense of reverence and awe before the holiness of God.
- As Christians, we are called to be “*the light of the world.*” (See **Matt. 5:14**)
- The darker the darkness, the brighter the light of the gospel and the Christian life.
- The Christian should live his or her life as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. (See **Rom. 12:1**)

