



## Daily Devotional - Philippians Study

Week 3 - Day 2

### Approaching God

**John 15:9** - "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love."

Start today by listening to this song by **Matt Maher - Abide with Me** and make this the prayer of your heart as you seek to spend time with Jesus today. [Click here to listen.](#)

### Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Philippians 2:5-11

*There are some things that can perhaps only be said in poetry. While some translations don't lay out this passage as poetry, it is clearly a powerful poetic presentation of a central Christian truth and a very, very early statement of faith in who Jesus was, and is, and what he accomplished.*

*As you read this poem, take a quick look back at the first four verses of Philippians 2. How does this poem fit with and emphasize what Paul has already said at the beginning of this chapter?*

**Philippians 2:5-11**

**5** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

**6** who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

**7** but made himself nothing,  
taking the form of a servant,  
being born in the likeness of men.

**8** And being found in human form,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to the point of death,  
even death on a cross.

**9** Therefore God has highly exalted him  
and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,

**10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

**11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

**Start with Engaging the Text:** Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words. Which words or phrases stand out to you as significant, important, or unusual? Is anything repeated or emphasized?

## Daily Study Questions

You may find it helpful to read through the commentary in “Resources for Further Study” at the end of today’s study to answer these questions.

- In what ways does Jesus humble himself in this passage? How is he now exalted?
- What is the connection between Christ’s humiliation and his exaltation? Why should the Jesus who did what vs. 6-8 say he did be honored this way?
- Yesterday we looked at God’s love *defined* in 1 Corinthians 13. Now we see God’s love *demonstrated* in the person of Jesus. Based on this passage, how do you see the love of God embodied in the person of Jesus?

## Meditation & Reflection Questions

- What key truth are you taking away from today’s study? Why might God be showing you this truth today?
- Compare the attitude of Christ in this passage with the typical attitude of worldly leaders? What does leadership look like from God’s perspective?

## Close in Prayer: (Read this prayer by William Wilberforce)

*May we adore you, O merciful Redeemer, who did willingly lay down the glory of heaven and its happiness, did become a wailing infant, subject to all the weaknesses and evils of our nature, and after a life of poverty and hardship did at length die the most cruel and shameful death human nature could endure; and all to rescue us from everlasting misery, and make us partakers of your heavenly glory. Oh, may we consider these things till they have in some degree their due effect upon us. May the love of Christ henceforth constrain us to live no longer to ourselves, but to him who died for us. May we more and more consider ourselves not as our own, but as bought with a price, and may we use the blessings that you have given us in your fear and love, with gratitude to you the giver of them all.*

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## Resources for Further Study

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### Bible Study Tools: Look for the Literary Devices

When we read scripture and study scripture one way we can go deeper into the text is by looking for different literary devices the particular authors are using. Some of these are pretty straightforward. We can easily look for words or phrases that are repeated or themes or concepts being compared and contrasted. Are there cause and effect statements? What metaphors are being employed and what are they teaching? But others require some help to identify. The New Testament letters/epistles are ancient works of literature. The techniques or literary devices they use can be really different from what we're used to! Being familiar with these literary devices helps us understand the meaning the author is wanting to communicate. One literary device in particular stands out when we are trying to understand the literary meanings in Philippians—the chiasm.

### What is a Chiasm?

A chiasm is a common literary device in biblical poetry that uses repetition to highlight the writer's main idea, make comparisons, and connect the main idea to other subtopics. Chiasms have a symmetrical structure that look like this:

- A
  - B
    - C
      - D: The center of the chiasm is often a really important idea
    - C2
  - B2
- A2

### The Chiasm in Philippians 2

If we look for repetition, we can find a chiasm in Philippians 2:6-11 that tells the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in a poetic format. Check out how this "Jesus poem" maps onto the structure of a chiasm.

- **A - Jesus' Glory as God** (vs. 2:6) "*Though he was in the form of God, he didn't consider equality with God something to be grasped.*"
  - **B - Jesus' Service to others** (vs. 2:7) - "*he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.*"
    - **C - Jesus' Humility** (vs. 2:7) - "*being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself.*"
    - **D - Jesus' Death** (vs. 2:8) - "*by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*" **This is the key idea.**
  - **C2 - Jesus' Exaltation** (vs. 2:9) - "*Therefore God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name.*"
  - **B2 - All Humanity Bows to Jesus** (vs. 2:10) - "*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.*"
- **A2 - Jesus Gives Glory to God** (vs. 2:11) - "*and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*"

## **How Would I Notice This?**

At this point, you may be asking how you might notice something like a chiasm, especially since they are so unfamiliar to us as modern readers. One of the best ways to start looking for literary devices is to read along and write out what you think the main idea of each section is. You can do that with each daily chunk of scripture throughout this study. Also, notice the word in vs. 9 - “therefore.” In a poem like Paul is writing here, “Therefore” becomes a shift away from the decent and humiliation of Jesus to a new theme: his exaltation. When you notice some repetition in ideas, look back and try to see if the author is relating other ideas into a discernible structure or a chiasm.

## **What Does the Chiasm Show Us?**

At the crux of the chiasm (point “D”), Paul draws the other ideas together around Jesus’ crucifixion. It is the turning point which shows how far Jesus was willing to go to serve his people. Jesus’ life plotted the path for the return journey that all his followers get to take: give yourself away to be found in God, humble yourself and God will exalt you, die to yourself in order to find true life. Meditate on that, and think about what that would look like in your life today?