



Study of Philippians

*The house church at Philippi
and beyond
with the women who led there.*

*“Grace and peace to you from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Table 2

Philippians 3

Welcome to Table 2! My love for Philippians began in chapter 3 with this verse from the Amplified Bible.

3:10 And this, so that I may know Him [experientially, becoming more thoroughly acquainted with Him, understanding the remarkable wonders of His Person more completely] and [in that same way experience] the power of His resurrection [which overflows and is active in believers], and [that I may share] the fellowship of His sufferings, by being continually conformed [inwardly into His likeness even] to His death [dying as He did].

This verse became my personal mission statement. Could there be a better asset to acquire in life than knowing Christ? I can't think of any. What began here has only grown with time. This fall, thinking more about the Church at Philippi based on the size, the women, the conflict, the joy, and the generosity has expanded my love for this letter. **As wonderful as it is to learn new things, I'm learning how easy it is for knowledge to become a distraction from the main goal of knowing Christ with ever increasing familiarity and experiences.** This study, which started after my silent retreat in October, has provided me a great place for self reflection and to help me plan for 2025. In this lesson I'm inviting you to do the same.

On the podcast Twila and I had some discussion on where verses from chapter 3 rank on the most searched Bible verses lists. This was a conversation point since Bible scholars call Philippians 3 the most loved chapter in Paul's letter to the Church at Philippi. On the flip side Philippians 4 has the most searched verses consistently taking the top spots or at least making the top 10. Listen here: [Apple](#) or [Spotify](#).

Our conversation on the podcast may have created a little problem for me. It's not really a problem. I'm simply having a hard time separating chapter 3 from chapter 4. It's the "Rejoice in the Lord" in 3:1 that makes me want to jump ahead to 4:4. The final two chapters flow together. Paul rejoiced because to know Christ is to know joy. Paul learned the secret to contentment through His lived experience with Jesus.

His Word before my words: [Philippians 3](#) and maybe go ahead and read [Philippians 4](#).

As you read Philippians 3, watch how Paul is moving us away from religion and moving us toward Jesus.

On November 4th I began this crazy goal of listening to the Old Testament before the end of the year. To be safe I gave myself two months to finish. I felt pretty confident in my ability to meet this challenge, so I decided to see if I could finish it in thirty days.

I finished in 24 days.

It was a drinking from the fire hydrant experience.

I found the parts I thought would be hard to be delightful. ([Psalm 1:1-3](#))

Sure my mind wandered some. I wasn't still. I was driving or cleaning or doing Thanksgiving meal prep. On the day before Thanksgiving I listened to Ezekiel thru Malachi. I couldn't stop. It wasn't even about the goal at that point I was enthralled by what the prophets did and what it cost them. The history of God with His people filled me with love, joy, and peace. My faith was activated. I listened and interacted with Jesus. I dreamed and was challenged.

(This is the bright side of my goal. Hold on because there was a negative side. We'll get to that.)

A few days after I finished I read a post by Jackie Hill Perry. Jackie talked about how when you read an entire book of the Bible at once it just hits differently. I completely agree with her. It's changing the way I'm planning to read the Bible in 2025.

"Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you." Philippians 3:1

Paul, who authored much of the New Testament, says **God's Word is our safeguard**. We absolutely cannot neglect Bible reading. I have found what works best for me is to be doing some kind of reading plan and be anchored down studying one book at the same time. It took me a while to figure this out. You need to figure out what works for you in your season of life, but I have learned if you really want to know God, you better make time for the Bible.

My challenge for you is to make a reading plan for 2025.

If it helps call it your safety plan.

There's lots of Bible reading plans to choose from or you can make your own plan.

Really challenge yourself to pursue joy through retreating into God's Word.

His Word can become your safe respite. No matter what unfolds next year.

You will be better equipped to stand your ground. Making ourselves ready to stand is our responsibility. Remember, we're simply asked to hold the ground Jesus won. ([Ephesians 6:10-17](#))

Assets and Liabilities

Paul did some accounting in verses 4-11. Paul had an impressive list of inherited assets. He had also chosen other assets like to be a Pharisee. He was zealous in persecuting the church. Then... Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road.

Jesus flipped the table for Paul.

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. (3:7)

I enjoy making lists. I'd like to invite you into the list making madness.

Make a current list of your assets and liabilities.

- What do you have going for you?
- What are the things that some might call an advantage, but you are realizing might be things that are coming between you and God's purposes for your life? These might be things you've chosen or inherited.

As you're getting to know me, you are learning I like self evaluation. Goals help me accomplish things. Let me assure you I know above all my plans and goals that knowing Jesus is the only thing that matters. **Knowing Jesus is the *pièce de résistance!***

I want the masterpiece of my life to not be some list of accomplishments, rather to be a picture of me knowing Jesus. When I finished my goal of reading the Old Testament, something became apparent to me. To be frank it sent me into a bit of a tailspin.

The picture painted in that month was one where my life was out of balance.

- Increased Bible reading had swallowed up time I had cultivated this year of sitting still in the presence of Jesus. Lingering in the silence I had discovered was so life giving but my ambitious goal had caused me to neglect this new spiritual discipline. I know it didn't have to be this way.

- My prayer life also decreased. Prayer was much more hurried. Even to the extent where I felt like I was treating God like a drive thru window. Again, it didn't have to be this way.

Increase will naturally result in areas of decrease. However, we can make better choices in where the decrease occurs. With the help of the Spirit we can become balanced. I'm not saying it's easy but with Christ it's not impossible.

I obviously love listening to the Bible in big slices. I don't want to discourage you from challenging yourself to read more of the Bible. I pray you will try reading or listening to whole books all at once. I just want to paint an accurate picture so you make a plan to not neglect other essential spiritual disciplines like prayer.

- *3:10 I want to know Christ...*

Knowing Jesus involves both devoted time reading the Bible and devoted time in prayer. This is the bottom line. Above all else these two practices need to be in our 2025 plan.

3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

In Philippians 3 Paul walks us through subtracting religion from our lives while anchoring us to the superior mission. Being a Pharisee had nothing on knowing Jesus.

Everything flipped for Paul when he first encountered Jesus.

The first table flip is always the easiest! This is the one where we gain by grace everything we could not attain on our own merit. Forgetting what is in the past is harder, especially when we were good at it. Paul had been exceptionally good at religion.

I understand Paul. I have been good at religious practices. **What I want to be really good at is knowing Jesus.**

Knowing Jesus will still give me many opportunities to use my strengths of making plans, goals, and lists.

Paul may have counted all of his assets as loss but no one can deny Paul still leveraged many of these strengths for the Kingdom. **Jesus flipped them into assets for His upside down kingdom.**

- Paul went from self confidence to confidence in Christ.
- He may have been an insider but He joyfully accepted the call to be sent to the outsiders. He used all that knowledge of the law to teach Gentiles what God is like. The Old Testament is a masterpiece of revealing Jesus so of course God would use an expert in the Old Testament to teach and write most of the New Testament.

- All of that zeal was put to good use in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. Don't forget the Church at Philippi was the first Church in Greece. A stubborn zealous person was needed to endure all of what Paul went through to spread the gospel.

In Phil. 3:15-19 Paul invited the Church at Philippi to follow his example.

He did this while reminding them they were no longer citizens of earthly empires but they were citizens of heaven, Phil. 3:20-21.

Paul is a great example of what following the Table Flipper is really like no matter whether you lived in the First Century or now. Thanks to the Spirit of the Living God working through Paul and the other Biblical authors we have a Living Word to read so that we can know our triune God. Let's make plans to know and follow the Table Flipper in 2025.