

# PHILIPPIANS

## JESUS OUR JOY

### A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families for the week of December 13, 2020

#### Count Others

This week, Pastor Steve Shelby preached from [Philippians 2:3-4](#)

Humility (3): We put ourselves first, even as we serve others often. Comparison is deadly to humility and therefore the kind of service addressed in this passage.

“And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” ([Matthew 22:39](#))

The point is not what others are. The point is what you count others to be. And the focus is not on any other skill or trait or asset they may or may not have. The focus is: Will you count them as worthy of your help and encouragement? Not are they worthy? But will you count them as worthy?

“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (4). The word “interests” is a very general word. In Greek, it’s open-ended. All that is specified is “your own (something)” or “the other’s (something).” So it could be, “Let each of you look not only to your own financial affairs, or your own property, or your own family, or your own health, or your own reputation, or your own education, or your own success, or your own happiness — don’t just think about that, don’t just have desires about that, don’t just dream about that, don’t just work toward that, but look to the financial affairs and property and family and health, and reputation, and education, and success, and happiness of others.”

The Incarnation stuns us into humility, and then service.

Jesus: “Have this mind among yourselves [the mind of verse 4!], which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count [notice the word!] equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing [literally emptied himself], by taking the form of a servant [that is what it means to look to the interests of others], being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself [he laid down all his legitimate entitlements] by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” ([Philippians 2:5-8](#))

Paul: “Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me.” ([Philippians 2:17-18](#))

Timothy: “I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare [literally: your interests, your things]. For they all seek their own interests [there’s the exact wording of verse 4], not those of Jesus Christ. But you

know Timothy’s proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.” ([Philippians 2:19-21](#))

Epaphroditus: “I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. [Notice how amazingly their interests dominate: He was not distressed that he was ill, nor was he distressed that they had not heard he was ill, like most of us who want others to know if we are sick; instead he was distressed because they heard he was ill! Would they be too worried? Would they fear he died? Their interests were on his heart.] Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. . . . So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.” ([Philippians 2:25-29](#))

#### For Further Discussion: [Philippians 2:3-4](#)

<sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

- Having talked about our unity in Christ, our single-mindedness, and love, **Paul now confronts practices that undermine unity in Christ** and strain relationships in the church.
- “**Selfish ambition**” has to do with the ways we create factions or instigate strife in the community. It is the shameless promotion of self. Why is **selfish ambition antithetical to the Gospel**? What **effect does our selfish ambition** have on relationships in the body of Christ?
- “**Conceit**” is vainglory, or empty pride. It is the shameless boasting in self. Why is **conceit antithetical to the Gospel**? What **effect does our conceit** have on relationships in the body of Christ?
- What is “**humility**”? Can you give an example of humility counting others more significant than yourself? How does the **Gospel give you power to be humble**?
- Paul advocates for eyes to see, not just ourselves, but also the “interests of others”. What **blinds you to the interests of others**? How does the **Gospel give you power to see what captures the heart of others**?
- **Pray together** in light of this week’s passage. Ask the God who has made us one with Himself and one another to expose the ways we strain relationships in the church. Ask Him for grace to repent, humility to count others as more significant, and power to discern their interests. Ask the Spirit to show us all Jesus, who humbled Himself for our salvation.

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Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin Greene, [kevin@wepc.org](mailto:kevin@wepc.org)