



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

# BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

**PHILIPPIANS  
& COLOSSIANS**

Week 2

## DAY 8

# Onward, Fellow Soldiers

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Philippians 2:19-30

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Have you received any good news lately? (a) pay raise, (b) promotion, (c) a birth, (d) a Christian birth.

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

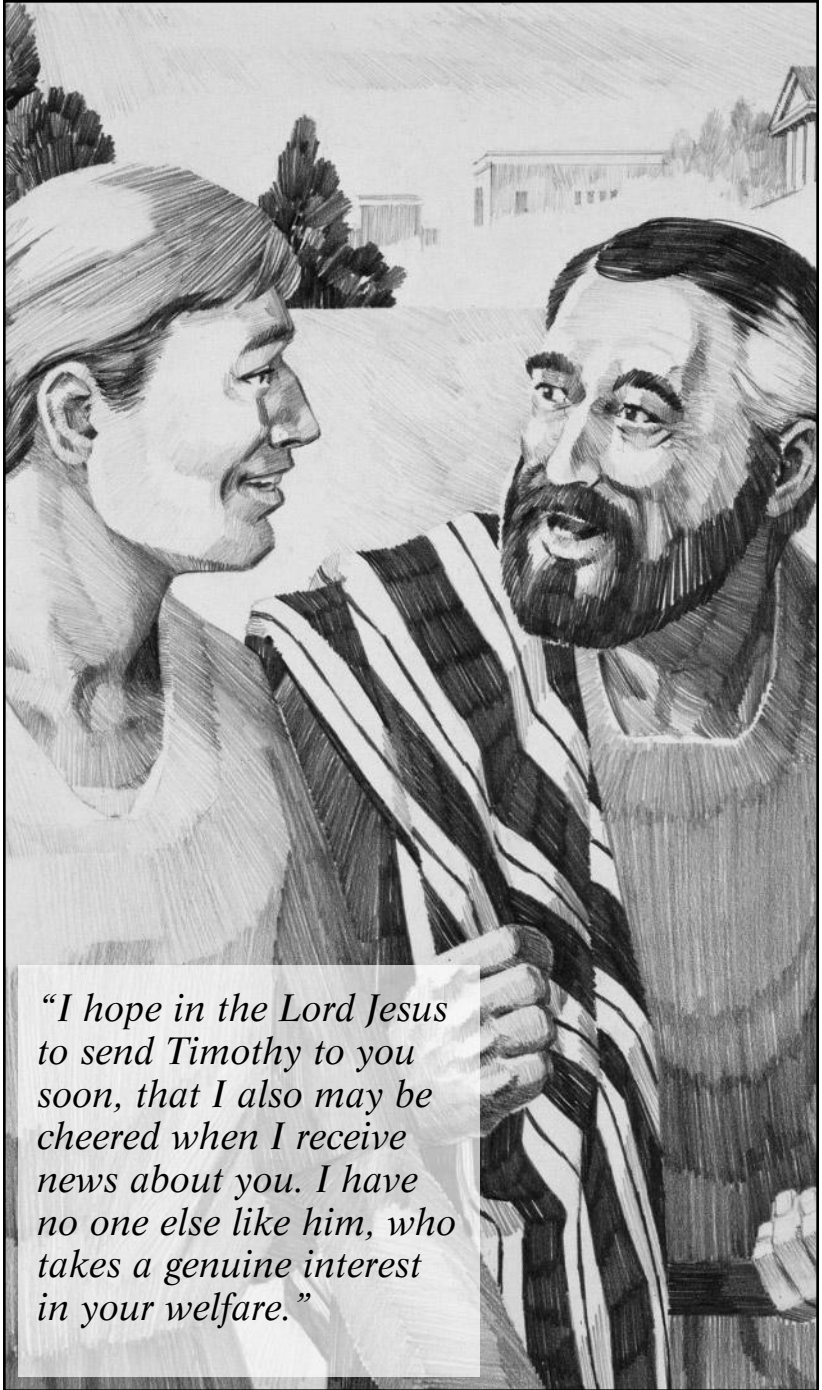
1. What attributes did Paul describe as part of Timothy's Christianity (vs. 19-24)? Are these normal for Christ-followers?
  2. What was Paul's relationship with Timothy (vs. 22)? See 2 Timothy 1:2-5; 2:1.
  3. Describe the many roles of Epaphroditus (Php 2:25). What kind of example did he set as a minister of Christ (vs. 26-30)?
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**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. How much do you look to the interests of Jesus? And to your own interests? How much do they converge?
  2. When do relationships of the spirit become stronger than those of blood? See Proverbs 18:24.
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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*The unity of believers in the body of Christ brings people together from various backgrounds and philosophies to unite them in a common purpose. Paul suggests that Christ-followers would do well to be more like Timothy, because he naturally cared for others.*



*“I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.”*

## DAY 9

# Watch Out for Legalists

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Philippians 3:1-3

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

What makes your list of requirements for Christians? (a) physical circumcision, (b) spiritual circumcision, (c) political involvement, (d) accepting Jesus, (e) commandment keeping.

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. Why did Paul call for the church to rejoice in the Lord (v. 1)? How does this help safeguard them?
  2. Who does Paul warn them about? How do the terms “dogs,” “evil” and “mutilators of the flesh” refer to actions opposed to salvation in Jesus (v. 2)?
  3. Paul refers to Christians as “the circumcision”—meaning the spiritual circumcision of the heart (v. 3; see Gal 6:12-15). How is this circumcision reflected?
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**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Do you need to look out for legalists who demand conformity to something other than Jesus?
  2. Take an inventory of your life to see if religious devotion is trying to overwhelm your love of Jesus.
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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*In verse 2, Paul refers to the dirty, diseased, **scavenger dogs** that ran in packs as a metaphor of the destructive nature of those who were imposing old covenant requirements, including circumcision on Christians as a means for attaining salvation. For Paul, life in Christ does not demand legalism, mysticism or asceticism (see Col 2:11-23).*

## Flesh or Faith?

DAY 10

Philippians 3:4-7

What human law bothers you the most? What violations bother you the most? (a) speeding, (b) jay-walking, (c) curfew, (d) littering.

**1.** Consider Paul's life as a Pharisee (vs. 5-6). As for "legalistic righteousness," Paul was without fault (vs. 6). How could this have given him confidence in legal requirements he once considered obligatory for salvation (v. 4)?

**2.** Consider Paul's point in Romans 9:30-33. How does righteousness lie in faith, not in legalism?

**3.** Why was Paul's preconversion life seen as loss for his new life in Jesus (Php 3:7; see Ac 8:1-3; 9:1-19)?

**1.** Write a brief summary of your religious heritage. What does it contribute to your life as a Christ-follower today?

**2.** What major changes have resulted in your maturity in Christ? What are you willing to lose for Jesus?

*Paul speaks of his former **zeal** (Php 3:6). Because of his commitment to the theology of the Pharisees, he had persecuted Christians for their belief in Jesus and their commitment to Jesus as Messiah. See Paul's testimony in Acts 22:3-21.*

### OPENING

up to the Word

### DIGGING

into the Word

### LIVING

out the Word

### WINDOW

on the Word

# DAY 11

## Stride for the Prize

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Philippians 3:8-14

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

How would you describe the Christian race? (a) 100 yard sprint, (b) mile run, (c) cross-country run, (d) 26-mile marathon.

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** How did Paul come to the “surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus” (v. 8)? Review Acts 9 for Luke’s account.

**2.** In Philippians 3:9, Paul considers righteousness earned by an individual as rubbish. Do you have past religious accomplishments of your own that you have placed in the rubbish heap?

**3.** How did Paul, the former legalist, come to have righteousness (v. 9)? How is it defined (vs. 10-11)? Compare this passage with Paul’s statement in Romans 9:30-33.

**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** How have you shared in the suffering of Jesus (v. 10)? And how will you share in the resurrection from the dead (v. 11)?

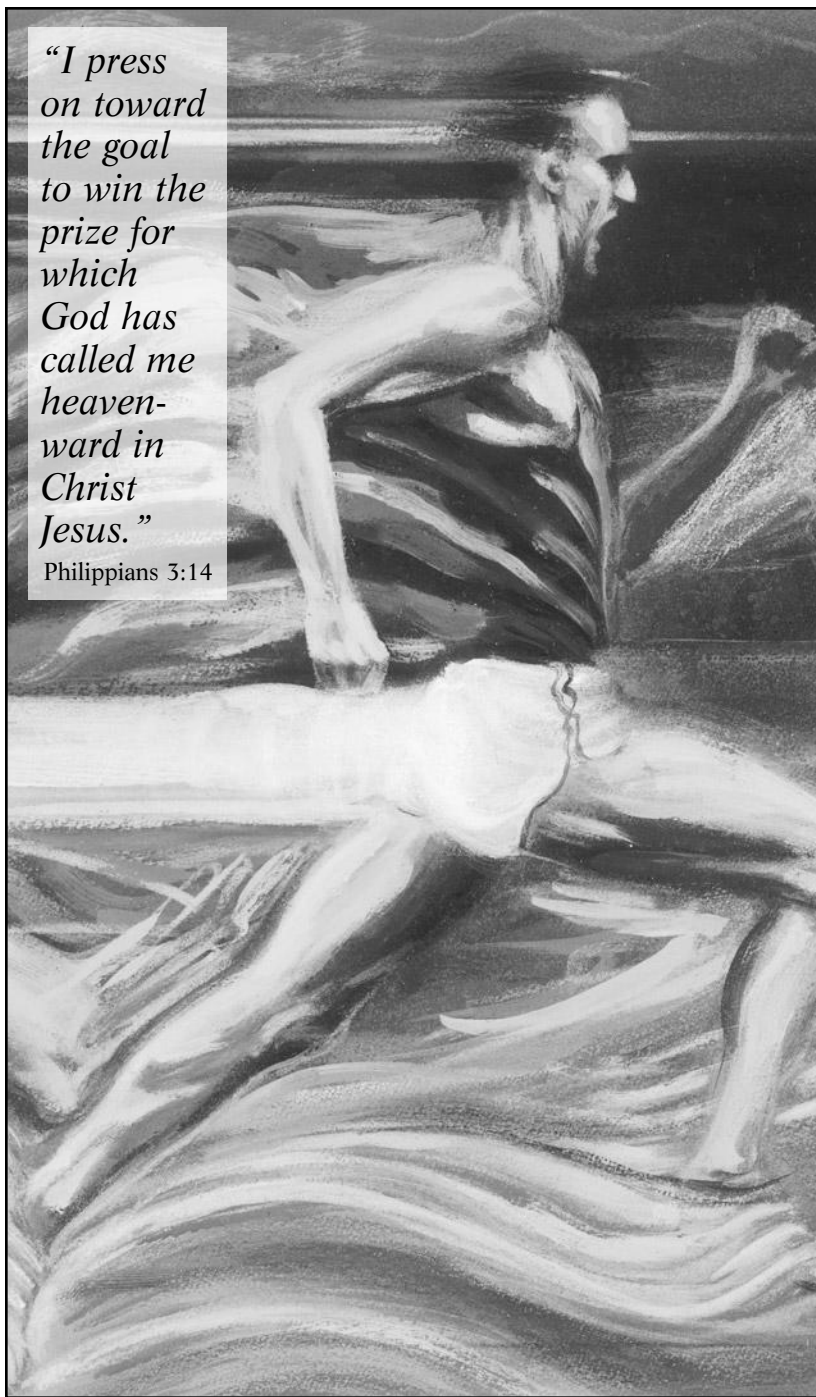
**2.** Are you a spiritual runner (Vs. 12-14)? How is your stride? Your pace? Your focus? Your energy?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*The Isthmian games were held close to Corinth every other year. Paul calls Christians to join him in the race of life—with singleness of purpose (v. 13), forgetting what is behind, striding forward, always pursuing the prize of eternal life (v. 14).*

*“I press  
on toward  
the goal  
to win the  
prize for  
which  
God has  
called me  
heaven-  
ward in  
Christ  
Jesus.”*

Philippians 3:14



Artwork by Kirk Botero

## Citizens of Heaven

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Philippians 3:15-21

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

What's the perfect belly? (a) Buddha-like, (b) ripples of muscles, (c) not too lean—not too fat.

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. How would Paul expect others to imitate him (v. 17)? In personality? In choice of clothes? Or in commitment to Christ (vs. 18-19)?
2. What is the ultimate outcome for enemies of the cross of Christ (vs. 18-19)?
3. Do all Christians hold dual passports (v. 20)? See 1:27. What is our primary focus—physical or spiritual (3:21)?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Have you asked God to reveal to you any spiritual immaturity you possess (v. 15)?
2. Do you want your friends and/or children to imitate you as they could Paul (v. 17)?
3. Is your belly your god? How might this idiom be understood?
4. List evidence of your citizenship, both physical and spiritual.

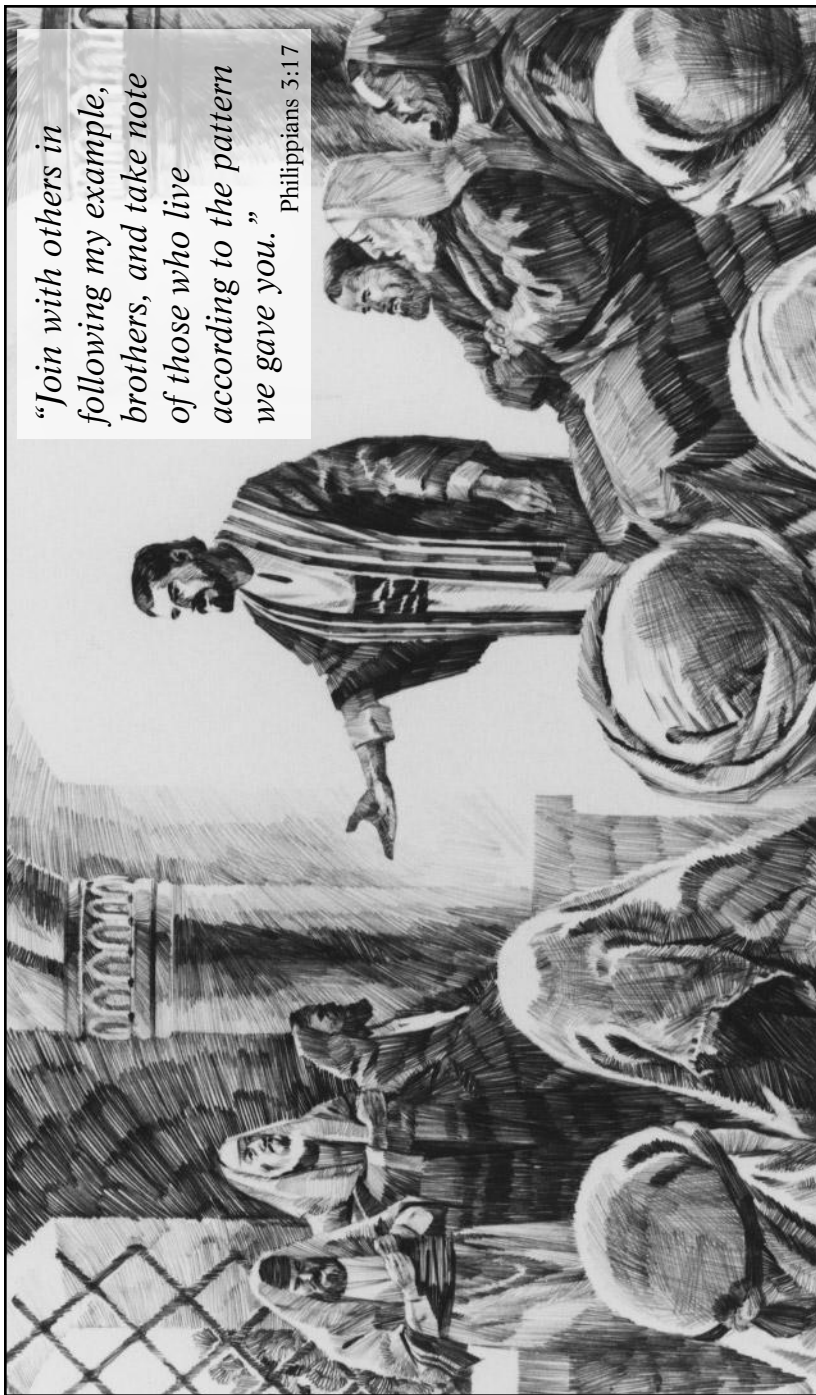
**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Paul knew something about the **rights and benefits of citizenship**. When imprisoned, he called on the rights of his Roman citizenship (Ac 16:37-39). To avoid a flogging, Paul again called on those rights (22:23-29). Though born a Roman citizen (22:28), he had to be struck down by Jesus before accepting his heavenly citizenship (9:3-9, 17-18).*



*“Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.”*

Philippians 3:17



## Guard the Crown

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Philippians 4:1-7

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

If you could have one crown, which would you choose? (a) the British monarchy, (b) Jill's, not Jack's, (c) Burger King, (d) U.S. Open, (e) the crown God alone can give.

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** How were the Philippians Paul's "joy and crown" (v. 1)? What is Paul's exhortation to these brothers and sisters?

**2.** What was the problem between Euodia and Syntyche (v. 2-3)? Did they imitate Clement and other coworkers?

**3.** What positive attitudes and actions does Paul advocate (v. 4-6)? Do you feel Paul's emphasis here reflects hardship endured by Christians at that time?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** Have you shared in the struggles of anyone? Are you a loyal companion?

**2.** Is your gentleness known to everyone? (a) no way! (b) I don't know, (c) when others are nice first, (d) when pigs fly, (e) generally.

**3.** Do you experience the peace of God (v. 7)? How so?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Notice how concerned Paul is that Christ-followers **place the control of their minds in the hands of God** (vs. 2, 7). Paul calls Christ-followers to have the "mind" (NRSV) or the "attitude" (NIV) as that of Jesus Christ (2:5). In contrast, enemies of the cross focus on selfish, earthly things (3:19).*

# WOMEN IN THE EARLY CHURCH

*Euodia and Syntyche are mentioned in Philippians 4:2 among the many women who helped proclaim the gospel in the early years of Christianity. Other examples of women's service for the kingdom are shown here.*

Prayed	Acts 1:14
Received the Spirit	2:17
Were converted	2:41
Hosted the church in their homes	Col. 4:15
Received help	Acts 6:1-2
Were thrown in prison	8:3
Helped those in need	9:39
Were raised from the dead	9:40
Aided Paul and his companions	16:15
Were freed from evil spirits	16:18
Were often the first converts in a city	17:34
Traveled with Paul	18:18
Taught others	18:26
Served as couriers for Paul's letters	Rom. 16:1
Worked alongside men in proclaiming the gospel	Phil. 4:3

## The Mind Game

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Philippians 4:8-13

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Which of Plato's four cardinal virtues do you think are most vital for civilization? (a) prudence, (b) justice, (c) temperance, (d) courage.

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. List Paul's eight virtues (v. 8). How are they put into one's life (vs. 8-9)?
2. How does Paul define contentment (vs. 10-13)? In poverty? In wealth?
3. Who does Paul credit for his spiritual strength (v. 13)?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Are you positive? Positively negative? Optimistic? Or purely pessimistic? Consider Paul's eight virtues—do they dominate your life?
2. How content are you? Are you happy with what God has given you? Do you take the opportunity to show it?
3. Take a minute to memorize Philippians 4:13. How does God strengthen you? Does he strengthen you, as he did Paul, to be content in poverty? Is the strength of Christ given so that we always succeed, or so that we can cope with difficulties?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Paul calls Christians to **contentment** in verse 11, using the word autarkes, which can mean "resourceful," "satisfied," or "self-sufficient." The Stoics used it to describe the ideal state of mind of self-sufficiency, competency, and independence. For Paul, all Christians find contentment in accepting their dependence in Jesus Christ.*

# The Secret of Contentment

*“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

Philippians 4:11-13

Reading this passage, one might think that Paul was comfortable and prosperous at this time. In fact, just the opposite is true. As he writes, Paul is in “chains” (1:12-14). He may have been moved from his rented house in Rome (Ac 28:30) to a prison cell as his life-or-death trial proceeded.

But Paul had suffered much greater hardships (2Co 11:23-33). He had been jailed, beaten, stoned and shipwrecked in the course of his ministry. He had also enjoyed the benefits of wealth, power, Roman citizenship and prominence in the Jewish community. These ups and downs would test the sanity of most people. Yet Paul remained constant and content. What was his secret? “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” He did not look to physical circumstances or material possessions, but rather looked to Christ.

The culture in which most of us live is focussed on material possessions and circumstances. The loss or gain of property, the loss of a job or promotion, changes in living circumstances and even changes in health—each of these things can be a source of soaring elation or profound depression. But Jesus offers us true contentment and peace when we focus on him.