

# A Guided Circle of 4 Study – Philippians 2:1-11

As you begin, take a few moments to **quiet your mind** and **let your body relax** so that you **feel no stress or muscle tension**; find an **easy rhythm** of **slower, deeper breathing**, and the **awareness** that your **thoughts and emotions** are moving toward a **focus on one thing** - your **Circle of 4**.

Do your best to **visualize** in **whatever way is suitable** to you, the heavenly **Father, Jesus** the Son, and the **Holy Spirit** with you in a **quiet, comfortable space**. Begin the conversation by **acknowledging the presence** of each and **thanking them** for being with you in this special way. **Pause and listen** for anything they might **say back to you in your thoughts**. Then ask for **help** with **hearing** from them **anything** they want you to **receive** from this experience.

When you are ready, turn to the scripture passage and **begin working your way through the questions**. For each question **first ask your Circle of 4** what *they want you to know about the question*, **listen** to what they are saying **in your spirit** through the **still, small voice**, and then **write down your thoughts**.

## Philippians 2:1-11

Philippians is a **letter from Paul to the church at Philippi**, an inland city just north of the Aegean Sea, a northern part of the Mediterranean Sea. The **believers** in the church were **strong in their faith** and **dearly loved** by Paul. The **theme** of the letter is joy in living the Christian life. **Read the entire passage** and then **pause to ask your Circle of 4 what they want you to know** about these verses.

**What are your initial thoughts after reading all 11 verses?** (*Don't forget to ask your Circle of 4 for their input before answering*)

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In other writings of Paul in the New Testament, he mentions believers **having the mind of Christ** (*1 Corinthians 2:14-16; Romans 12:1-2*). This passage in Philippians 2 **reveals** quite a bit about **what was going on in the mind of Christ**. Read vs 1-2 a few times and **ask your Circle of 4** what is important for you to know.

The **four "If" clauses** in vs 1 are in Greek grammar *first-class conditions that speak of certainties and not questionable possibilities*. What this means is they are **better translated "Since"** and not **"If"**. Read vs 1 again and **replace "If" with "Since"**. Ask your Circle of 4 how this **changes the meaning** and **what you should know** about it. Then write your thoughts.

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Talk to your **Circle of 4** about each phrase **one at a time** and after a **time of reflection** write your thoughts about **what they mean**, and to what extent you are **experiencing them**.

**Encouragement** (*courage*) **from being united with Christ:**

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**Comfort from Christ's love:**

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**Fellowship** (*side by side partnership*) **with the Spirit:**

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**Tenderness & Compassion** (*Christlike character on the inside with fruit showing in your life*):

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In vs 2 Paul is saying that since these four characteristics **are our experience**, there should be a **unity** developing in **how Christian believers think and act**, as if they were all **patterned** after the same person, **Jesus the Son**. Read vs 2 and **ask your Circle of 4** what **change** should be **evident** in you, and what they want **you specifically** to **know** about the **extent** to which these things **are** or **are not true** about you.

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Read vs 3-4 and **ask your Circle of 4** what **you should know** about Paul's instructions.

**"Vain conceit"** is an **empty pride**; an **inflated self-image** inflated with **air** and not **anything of real substance**. Read vs 3-4 again and **ask your Circle of 4** to **lovingly** point out what they think you should know about **any selfishness** or **empty pride** in your life, and **how much of your life** is focused on **taking care of yourself** as opposed to **unselfishly caring for the needs** of others. After time to listen and reflect, write your thoughts.

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In verse 5 the word *"attitude"* is the **same word** in the Greek as **the word translated** *"being like-minded"* in vs 2. **Having the mind of Christ includes** having the same **images, ideas**, and way of **processing** our thoughts as **Jesus had in his mind**; having an **awareness** of our **emotions** and the **role** we allow them to play in **decisions we make** or how we **relate** to others, and **what Jesus did with his emotions**; the way the **urges, sensations** and **needs our body** wants to be **satisfied** influences **our mind** and how **Jesus controlled his body's influence on his mind**. Ask your **Circle of 4** the question, **"To what extent do I have the mind of Christ?"** and then write your thoughts.

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**Vs. 6-8** describe **ways Jesus humbled himself** to do **his Kingdom work**. Read the verses several times and **ask your Circle of 4** to **point out** as many as you can find. Write them down below:

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Look at the list you made above and **ask your Circle of 4** to show you a **similar list** in your own life of **examples** of how **you have humbled yourself** to do **your Kingdom work**. Reflect on this for a while and then write your thoughts.

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**Vs. 9-11** describe the **response of God** to Jesus **humbling** himself. Because of Jesus' **humble attitude** and willingness to **lower himself**, his **heart of service** and **love for people**, and his **selfless, sacrificial act of suffering a humiliating death**, God reacted. **Ask your Circle of 4** what you should know about **God's response to Jesus**, listen carefully, and then write your thoughts.

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What **changes** in your **way of doing life** would help you live a more **Kingdom way of life** having the **mind of Christ**, and what would help you **hear the still, small voice of God** better in your inner person?

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