

**LESSON SIX**  
**SHINING FOR CHRIST**  
**(Philippians 2:14-15 NKJV)**

### REFLECTION

Like snowflakes and fingerprints, no two Christians are alike. God is working in each of our lives in varied ways and according to a unique blueprint. What are the areas of your life in which you see tangible growth and progress? What are the areas in which you long for change?

### DRAWING NEAR

Many Christians report “growth spurts” in their spiritual lives, when God has really worked in their lives. If you have had seasons of growth like this, circle when they were.

- Childhood, early adolescence, high-school years, college years, young adulthood, middle age, empty nest, golden years/retirement.
- What kind of life events or situations did God use to prompt this growth? (Example: a spiritual mentor, financial problems, physical illness, a Bible study group, becoming a parent, a shattering crisis, and so on.)

### SITUATION

Paul has now called the believers in Philippi to put aside their petty differences with one another and look to the example of Christ as their model for how to regard one another. As they consider the depths of Jesus’ obedience to the Father for their sake, it should compel them—with “fear and trembling” (**Philippians 2:12**)—to model a similar type of obedience to God. Just as Christ obeyed, they are to obey without grumbling or arguing. As they do, they will prove themselves to be a light for Jesus to a dark and hurting world.

### OBSERVATION

Read **Philippians 2:12-18** (New King James Version).

### EXPLORATION

1. What kind of response should believers have when they consider what Jesus did for them?

**Answer:** Not only should believers have a response of gratitude when they consider what Jesus has done for them, they should have a response of obedience to serve or live for Him.

2. Go through this brief passage and look at the number of verbs that Paul uses. What particular actions does he expect believers in Christ to do?

**Answer:** Paul expects believers in Christ to obey (the Word) in his absence; work out their own salvation; do all things without murmurings and disputing; be blameless and harmless; shine as lights; hold firmly to the word of life; and to be glad and rejoice with him.

3. There is a common tendency for younger Christians to rely on the faith and presence of other believers (see **Philippians 2:12**). When does spiritual dependence become unhealthy?

**Answer:** Spiritual dependence becomes unhealthy when a Christian can only obey Christ in the presence of other Christians.

4. What is the difference between the biblical command to *work out* your salvation and the misguided attempt to *work for* your salvation?

**Answer:** One can't work for their salvation; it can only be received through faith in Christ (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). To work out your salvation means to cultivate it, to bring it to full effect. It means to actively pursue spiritual maturity.

5. How can you live out "the joy of your salvation" (**Psalms 51:12**) if you are expected to work out your salvation "with fear and trembling"? (**Philippians 2:12**)

**Answer:** To work out your salvation "with fear and trembling" means to have an attitude of using serious caution and critical self-evaluation to avoid anything that might offend God or discredit the name of Christ. One can still live with joy about their salvation.

6. How can you avoid the ever-present danger of trying to live an exemplary life so you will get the attention and admiration of others?

**Answer:** One should remember that it is God who is, through the Holy Spirit, giving us the will (desire) and power to do good. The focus of the good we do should be Christ.

## INSPIRATION

We applause-aholics have done it all: dropped names, sung loudly, dressed up to look classy, dressed down to look cool, quoted authors we've never read, spouted Greek we've never studied.

For the life of me, I believe Satan trains battalions of demons to whisper one question in our ears: "What are people thinking of you?"

A deadly query. What they think of us matters not. What they think of God matters all. God will not share his glory with another (see **Isaiah 42:8**). Next time you need a nudge away from the spotlight, remember, *You are simply one link in a chain...an unimportant link at that.*

Don't agree? Take it up with the apostle Paul. "So, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow" (**1 Corinthians 3:7**).

Remember the other messengers God has used? A donkey to speak to Balaam (see **Numbers 22:28**). A staff-turned snake to stir Pharaoh (see **Exodus 7:10**). He even used stubborn oxen to

make a point about reverence and a big fish to make a point about reluctant preachers (see **1 Samuel 6:1-12 and Jonah 1:1-17**).

God doesn't need you and me to do his work. We are expedient messengers, ambassadors by his kindness, not by our cleverness. It's not about us, and it angers him when we think it is (From *It's Not About Me* by Max Lucado.)

## REACTION

7. As you do good works for Christ, what are some signs you might have crossed the line from dwelling on what people are thinking of *your Savior* to what people are thinking of you?
8. What qualities do you see in the Bible of the people God used to do great things for him?
9. Why do you think Paul stresses the importance of doing everything without grumbling or arguing? How will you put that into effect in your life this week?
10. What are some of the ways "God is working in you to help you want to do and be able to do what pleases him" (**Philippians 2:13** NCV)?
11. What are some actions that would result in your shining more brightly for Christ?
12. What are some ways this week you can "hold firmly to the word of life" (**verse 16**)—both clinging to it and also offering it to others?

## LIFE LESSONS

What does the moon do? It generates no light. Contrary to the lyrics of the old song, the moon cannot "shine on, shine on...up in the sky." Apart from the sun, the moon is nothing more than a gray pockmarked rock. But properly positioned, the moon beams. Let it do what it was made to do, and a clod of dirt becomes a source of inspiration and a symbol of romance. The moon reflects the greater light of the sun. What would happen if we also accepted our place as Sun reflectors? What if we made it our goal to shine with all the brightness of Christ?

## DEVOTION

*Lord, we want to make progress in our faith not so that people will notice us but that they will marvel at you. We offer you our wills today—make them yours. We offer our weaknesses and request your infinite strength. Shine through us today.*

## JOURNALING

How have you nurtured a deep sense of reverence for God as you lived your life for Christ?

**Next Week:** Lesson Seven: Role Models—**Philippians 2:19-30**

Life Lessons from Philippians, Max Lucado, Author, Thomas Nelson, Inc; Philippians, MacArthur Bible Studies, John MacArthur, Author, Thomas Nelson, Inc; King James Open Bible, Thomas Nelson, Inc.

## FOR FURTHER READING

For more Bible passages on shining the light of Christ, read **Isaiah 49:5-6; Daniel 12:1-3; Matthew 5:13-16; John 5:33-36; 8:12-20; Acts 6:12-15; 2 Corinthians 3:12-18;** and **Ephesians 5:6-10**

## DRAWING NEAR

In this passage Paul talks about not complaining, but living blameless lives. Use the chart below to gauge how you typically respond to life's unpleasant situations. Put a check mark in all appropriate columns.

	Petty annoyances or irritations	Chronic Ongoing trials	Major crises or tragedies
Cry			
Curse			
Complain			
Pray			
Get angry or resentful			
Rejoice			
Seek some kind of escape			
Go into "denial mode"			
Determine to honor God			