

## **Read Philippians 2:12-18**

### To the church in Philippi

Through a short stay in Philippi, Paul founded this church, and was extremely fond of them. He deeply cared for this church and was being very positive about them doing well, yet he still needed to confront issues. All of which are about living the Christian life, individually and as a united church.

It's clear that some people in the church weren't living in a way that reflected their relationship with God. *Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling*: Paul's challenge was not to "figure out" their salvation, but to "out work" their faith in a way that showed others they were Christian. To fear God is to hate evil – it means to live according to his teachings (see *Prov 3:7, Psalm 25:12-14 & 33:8*) To fear the Lord means to have respect, and reverence for God, and to be in awe of his majesty and power.

*Shining like stars as you hold out the Word of life*: The "Word of life" is the gospel. Paul wants them to remember that Jesus died on the cross to take the blame for their sin, that Jesus was raised to life three days later and now sits in heaven. He wants to remind them that through Jesus' sacrifice, they are born again, a new creation, and are now set apart. Different to the darkness around them.

### To the Crown Church

*Therefore...* (verse 12): This passage is in response to the previous section that declares who Jesus is and what he accomplished in our lives (see Philippians 2:4-11). When we accept Jesus as the only way to be saved, our lives should be transformed. As a result, others will see our lives, and see the reason why we are different: Jesus. Without action, our faith is dead! (see James 2:17)

If Paul was writing to us, he might repeat himself: "Well done Crown Church, now continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, and shine like stars as you hold out the Word of life. You are doing well...now let's raise the bar – let's go further still. "

### To the men

It's not the manliest of things to aspire to - to shine like a star, but God does call us to be Godly men, different to worldly men. It's not always easy to be different amongst so many expectations of what it means to be a man. But we have Jesus as our example, and the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us.

### What can we learn from the stars?

#### **The light is already shining – be prepared**

Light from a star starts a long time before it's effects are seen. As men, we need to prepare for the future. Be now, the man you want to be in the future.

#### **Stars don't move - be consistent**

Stars are consistent – always in the same place. They don't move!

As men, we need to be consistent. To stand firm, for those who rely on us. To make time for our family. To be consistent in our character.

#### **Stars used for navigation – be a guide**

Celestial navigation: using the stars or the sun or moon to calculate your position and therefore plot your route.

As parents we are stars that point our children in the right direction to God.

#### **Lasting effects – be long term**

The effects of the sun have immeasurable impact on Earth.

We should have the biggest effect on our children, which could perhaps continue through generations (see Pslam 78:5-7)

*PJ Smyth: "Who is going to be the primary shaper of your kids? School friends? TV? Movies? Magazines? If you don't shape them someone else will."*

Please select from the questions below and do not try and answer all of them. Encourage honesty and leave some time for praying together.

Questions:

1. What did God say to you on Sunday and what are you going to do about it?
2. How well do you feel you shine like a star? In what areas could you shine brighter?
3. How do you "Fear the Lord?"
4. How do unbelievers see the church? Why?
5. In what areas of the church could the bar be raised? And how could you be involved?
6. What are the hardest things to live differently to in the world?
7. Pray that God would reveal any areas in your life that aren't allowing you to shine.
8. Pray, and invite the Holy Spirit to empower you in the roles that he has called you to, e.g. husband, mother, you job, etc.