

# Midweek Study

Dr. Josh Franklin • Senior Pastor

## *in pursuit of* **HAPPINESS** Through Philippians



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## **Who Do You Think You Are?**

**Philippians 1:1-2**

**Romans 12:2** - This means you should not let people squeeze you into their molds. If you don't **know who you are** and **what you want to accomplish**, other people will squeeze you and make you fit into a mold of their liking. Then, you can't be yourself, and that leads to all kinds of stress. **If you want to take a lot of stress out of your life, just be the person God created you to be.** God doesn't want you to be like anyone else. He just wants you to be the unique person he created you to be, and He will help you be that person.

**Ephesians 2:10** - The word translated *workmanship (poiēma)* is the word from which we get our word "poem" and refers to a work of art in the making. What an awesome description of who we are in Christ! You and I are God's unique works of art; we are His masterpieces. Therefore, we are not to be copies of anyone else. Just being the masterpiece God created you to be will take all kinds of stress out of your life.

### **1. ARE YOU A SLAVE OF THE WORLD OR A SLAVE OF THE LORD?**

The word "servant" is the word bond-slave in Greek. There is a distinct difference between a servant and a slave. A servant is free to work for whomever he wishes; a slave is bought and purchased—completely and totally owned by a master. A slave is bound by law to his master. Paul calls himself and Timothy the slaves of Jesus Christ. A look at the slave market of Paul's day shows more clearly what Paul meant when he said he was a "slave of Jesus Christ." (see Gal. 1:10)

- 1. The slave was owned and totally possessed by his master.**
- 2. The slave existed for his master and no other reason.**
- 3. The slave served his master and existed only for the purpose of service.**
- 4. The slave's will belonged to his master.**
- 5. There is a fifth and most precious thing that Paul meant by his being "a slave of Jesus Christ." He meant that he had the highest and most honored and kingly profession in all the world.**

APPLICATION: The great need today is for men and women to become slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must become His slaves and do what He says. **Then and only then will we experience the kind of joy that Paul experienced on a daily basis, no matter what our conditions.**

## 2. HOW GODLY DO I HAVE TO BE TO BE A SAINT?

The word translated *saints* (*hagios*) means "set apart ones." Few words are as misunderstood today as the word "saint." The Bible never uses the word *saint* to refer to a few people in the church who have achieved unusual spiritual maturity. Every Christian is a "saint," which means "set apart" from the world to be used by God. "Saint" basically means "different." It means we are non-conformists; we don't give in to peer pressure; and we don't go along with the crowd when we know the crowd is wrong.

There are three stages of sanctification

1. **There is initial or positional sanctification** (Hebrews 10:10).
2. **There is progressive sanctification.** (2 Cor. 3:18).
3. **There is eternal sanctification.** (Ephes. 5:27).

**APPLICATION:** In light of all that God has done for us, how can we do anything less than to live a sanctified, holy life before God? How can we be lethargic and complacent, sleepy-eyed, and unmotivated? How can we allow ourselves to live lives of routine and unconcern? How can we live lives of indulgence, license, selfishness, immorality, perversion, wickedness, and evil?

## 3. AM I OVERSEEING THE LORD'S CHURCH, OR AM I CONTROLLING MY CHURCH?

Note that both bishops and deacons are mentioned as being in the Philippian church. What Paul is doing is addressing the leaders of the church and setting them apart from the membership whom he addressed as "saints." **The point to see in this passage is that believers organize for ministry.**

**The bishops were apparently the same as pastors or ministers of a church.** The two words are used interchangeably to refer to the same men and women. The bishops were in charge of overseeing the spiritual needs of the church. They were to watch over, nourish, and protect the church through teaching and preaching. How are the duties of bishops (also called overseers) described in Acts 20:28?

## 4. DO I SERVE PEOPLE, OR AM I USING PEOPLE TO SERVE MYSELF?

**The word translated deacons (diakonos) means "attendants or servants."** Deacons are not a board of directors but people who minister to the needs of people within the church. The office arose in response to a need in the church in Jerusalem. There was a complaint the Greek-speaking widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Therefore, what do the apostles say to the church in Acts 6:3?

**The deacons were spiritually minded men and women who had dedicated their lives to the Lord to minister to the *saints* of God.** They were persons who were chosen to **minister to the widows and widowers and to the poor and sick of a church in order to free the minister to concentrate on prayer and preaching.**

**CONCLUSION:** **In life, you will be guided either by priorities or pressures. Priorities are what God wants you to do, and pressures are what everyone else wants you to do.** The only way Paul was able to experience the joy that God promises his children is to live by priorities, not pressures. We must know who we are, and what our purpose is.