



Small Group Study Guide

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE GOSPEL

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

## Model of Humility: Christ Jesus

This passage is one of the rich texts of the New Testament that proclaims great Christological doctrine. This passage teaches Christ's preexistence (2:6) incarnation (2:7), humiliation (2:8), crucifixion (2:8), ascension and exaltation (2:9-11). However, it is critical that one understand these truths in light of the context. The focus of this study is to see how Paul uses this phenomenal picture of the majesty of Christ to teach us how we are to exhibit humility.

1. The word "equality" (*isos*) means alike in quantity, quality, or essence. In what way did Jesus not regard equality with God something to be grasped?
  - What are the privileges, rights or status you tend to want to "grasp" for your own advantage?
  - In what way can you not regard these as something to take advantage of (grasp) for your own self promotion or benefit?
2. In what way did Jesus "empty" Himself? Many have made much of this single verse in trying to determine what Jesus emptied himself of, but the key interpretive clue is found right in the second half of this verse.
  - Based on what is being taught here about the mindset of Christ, and how he willingly "emptied Himself", in what way can you "empty" yourself in relationship with others?
  - This verse states that Jesus took the form of a servant. The word used here is "doulos," which literally means "bond-servant" or "slave". A bond-servant, among many other things, was one required to carry the burdens of others.<sup>1</sup> Based on this definition and the example Christ showed with His life, what does it mean to "empty oneself" and be a servant (*doulos*) of Christ Jesus?

<sup>1</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Philippians* ( Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 129.

Don't Forget:  
*Discuss the Sermon Notes from this week*

3. How did Jesus humble Himself (keep in mind the definition of humility that was given in 2:3)?
- Why, then, is it especially significant that He was willing to be obedient even to the point of death on a cross (Galatians 3:13)?
  - Remembering that this is to show us a model of the type of attitude we are to have in relationship with others in the body of Christ, in what ways can you show obedience to God “even to the point of death”? (There is no way we can duplicate the reconciling work of Christ on the cross, but what principle can be applied from this picture of Christ’s humility as seen in his obedience?).
4. What was bestowed upon Christ from God for his humility and obedience? How does this relate to what Jesus taught the disciples as recorded in Matthew 20:20-28?
5. Christ’s new name is “Lord.” This speaks to his sovereign authority and rule over all. In what ways does confessing (acknowledging and agreeing with) and bowing (surrendering and submitting) to Jesus as Lord affect:
- Your relationship to Christ?
  - Your approach to His Word?
  - Your perspective on “life goals”?
  - Your relationship with other believers?
6. Why is it important that Christians hold to the doctrine that Jesus was fully God and fully human?
- Many heresies have sprung out of what is known as the Arian heresy: a doctrine that rejects the truth of Jesus’ deity. What is lost if Jesus is not fully God (John 14:6-9; Galatians 4:5-6; Colossians 1:15-20)?
  - A heresy known as Docetism teaches that Jesus was not a man. What is lost if Jesus is not fully human (Hebrews 2:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6)?

### **BIBLE MEMORY:**

*At the name of Jesus,  
every knee will bow  
of those who are in  
heaven and on earth  
and under the earth,  
and that every tongue  
will confess that  
Jesus Christ is Lord..*

*Philippians 2:10*

**For the week of July 15:  
Prayerfully meditate and study the following: Philippians 2:12-18**