

LAUGH AGAIN: Experience Outrageous Joy

STUDY THIRTEEN

Don't Forget to Have Fun as You Grow Up

Philippians 4:10–19

Now, once again I want to tell you something that I think is true of you even though you may not think I know it. I think you want to be mature. I can hardly remember meeting anyone in my life who made plans each day to stay immature.

—Charles R. Swindoll

GOD'S goal for His people is growth—in other words, pressing on toward spiritual maturity! Though aging may be automatic, growing up spiritually is something we must accomplish choice by choice. Sadly, too often, Christians mistake being older for godly maturity. Nothing could be further from the truth. Thankfully, God gives us excellent examples of spiritual maturity, like the apostle Paul, who we follow in our own quest to grow up in the Lord.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

One mark of a desire to grow spiritually is being willing to pause from the busy pace of life in order to seek the Lord. Take a few moments now to ask the Lord to quiet your heart and focus your mind on Him. Perhaps turn to your favorite passage of Scripture or listen to a worship song. God promises He will draw close to you as you draw near to Him (James 4:8).



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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Philippians 4:10–19



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

The New Testament letter to the Philippians is not the only place where spiritual maturity is encouraged. Below are a few examples of other passages in the New Testament that emphasize this principle. Read each one and make some notes about what each passage teaches about the importance of growing in the Lord.

Ephesians 4:14–15:

Hebrews 5:14–6:1:

1 Peter 2:1–2:

In one sentence, how would you summarize what these three passages teach about spiritual maturity?



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4. *Paul is confident.* Read Philippians 4:13. What is the basis of Paul's confidence?

Maturity of the Philippians—Philippians 4:14–19

By mentioning the Philippians' care and concern, Paul revealed three traits of maturity in their lives.

1. *The Philippian believers showed personal compassion.* Read Philippians 4:14–15. What did Paul commend the Philippian believers for in this passage?

What made the Philippians' actions unique, according to Paul (Philippians 4:15)?

2. *The Philippians showed financial generosity.* Read Philippians 4:15–17. What did Paul mention here that indicates the Philippians were generous givers?



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3. *The Philippian believers made a sacrificial commitment.* Read Philippians 4:18. What expressions did Paul use to describe the financial gift from the Philippians?

Based on what you have observed in these verses, how would you summarize the main idea Paul intended to convey?



Interpretation: Learning Generosity—Philippians 4:19

Interpretation involves a process that helps answer the question, *What does the text mean?* Bursting with joy and gratitude for the way God had met his needs through the Philippians, Paul encouraged them with this magnificent promise:

And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

Paul went to great lengths to commend the Philippian Christians for their sacrificial generosity as a mark of their spiritual maturity. And he wanted them to understand that in response to their generosity toward him and on behalf of the cause of the gospel, God promised to be generous in return.



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On what does God base His generosity, according to Paul (Philippians 4:19)?

When Paul referred to the “needs” of the Philippians, what was he referring to? Explain your answer by referencing this passage.

That's what we need guarded: our hearts and minds! We don't need our homes guarded as much as we need our hearts and minds protected. It's my heart that gets me into my day. It's my mind that gets me into my study. My passion flows from that. And His peace surrounds that and frees me from the agitation and the horror of worry. Rejoice! —Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: An Age-Old Principle

Correlation compares passages of Scripture to help interpret the passage in view. Paul emphasized that God's desire to be generous in supplying for our needs is based on His faithful character. Paul no doubt learned this principle from his study of the Old Testament, perhaps even the Psalms.

Read Psalm 121, a psalm of David. In what ways do David's words about God's faithfulness support Paul's teaching in Philippians 4?



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Application: Taking Truth to Heart

Application moves us from maintaining a mere intellectual understanding of a passage to allowing truth to penetrate the heart. In other words, how can you develop the marks of maturity evidenced by Paul and the Philippians? Here are three places to look in your life that will enable you to grow up in your relationship with the Lord.

1. *Look within . . . and release.* Is there something inside your heart that's stunting your spiritual growth? Something other than Christ that you're grasping too tightly? Let it go.
2. *Look around . . . and respond.* Don't assume others will cover the need that is presented. Act on your own. The Philippians saw Paul's need and responded generously.
3. *Look up . . . and rejoice.* Take time to look up and survey all that God has done for you. Consider the riches He has provided through His Son. Reflect on your faithfulness in giving to the Lord in response to all God has done for you in Christ. Are you giving accordingly?

Can you add a principle of your own? What do you learn from Paul's modeling and the Philippians' example of maturity that you can apply to your life?



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I've read and studied this passage many times. But now I see in new ways the connection between Your abundant grace to me in Christ and my joyful response in giving back to You. May You be glorified in all I do. Make me a conduit of generosity and grace to others as You have been to me. In Jesus' gracious name, amen.



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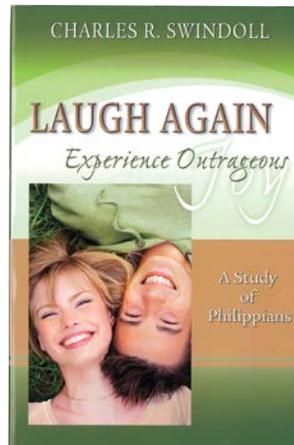
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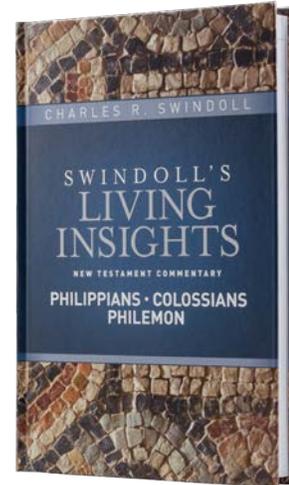
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.

