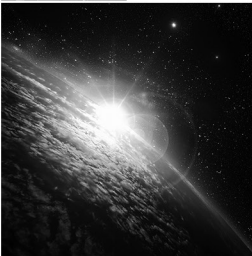
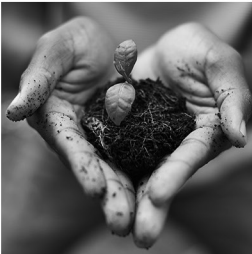


**INWORD**  
Barry Shafer  
Lora Barnes



PHILIPPIANS

# LEARNING TO BE LIKE CHRIST





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# LEARNING TO BE LIKE CHRIST GETTING STARTED



*If you have never fully read a set of instructions before diving in, make this your first time. It won't take long and it will greatly enhance your InWord experience.*

## WHAT IS INWORD?

InWord is a non-profit ministry dedicated to thoroughly equipping God's people with God's Word. Spiritual formation must include meaningful engagement in God's Word—engagement that leads to regular, consistent, Holy Wow. This is what builds a lasting, mature faith—a faith that will survive the tests of life and the assaults of the enemy.



## HOLY WOW

It can be elusive and hard to define, but you know it when you see it...or feel it...or touch it. It's those wow moments in Scripture that bring pause, when truth reaches past your protective shell and grabs your heart, leaving you better in any number of ways: more resolute, courageous, awakened, convicted, motivated, inspired. In short, better equipped to live life.

The Holy Wow is not found through a casual or haphazard approach. The words used throughout Scripture to describe how to engage God's Word drip with radical intentionality—earnestly seek, heed, meditate, grasp, understand. And then there are analogies: digging for hidden treasure, searching for silver, building a house on the rock. All of these descriptions point to the notion that the more we press in, the more we get back. The verses below give insight into Holy Wow Bible engagement.

Hebrews 11:6 | Psalm 119:15 | John 14:21 | Matthew 13:23 | Proverbs 2:4-5 | Matthew 7:24

## THE INWORD APPROACH

You will see hints of inductive Bible study, an approach that has proven to be one of the most effective tools available for discovering what the Bible says (observation), what it means (interpretation), and how it can be applied to real-life situations (application). Below is InWord's distilled version as you'll see it in the personal prep (Prep It) and session guides (Lead It).

### **Digging In (Observation)**

Here you will be asked to look for things ("wonderful things" to quote Psalm 119:18) using a variety of tools to increase your level of engagement: marking with symbols, highlighting with colors, underlining, circling, listing. This is the most important, yet most overlooked, step in meaningful Bible engagement. This is when we ask God to show us what He wants us to see, which sets up the next step, interpretation. The acts of observing and digging lay the foundation for the Holy Wow.

### **Cross-Checking (Observation/Interpretation)**

The best commentary on Scripture is Scripture. Occasionally you and your students will be asked to check out other passages that can shed light on the primary verses of your session.

### **Taking It Inward (Interpretation)**

It's here that we internalize what God shows us from the Digging In exercise. This is when the light bulb of the Holy Wow clicks on. You'll be asked to process your Digging In observations through ruminating, meditating and journaling your thoughts. Note: The more diligent our observation, the more accurate our interpretation.

### **Putting Into Practice (Application)**

This is when the Holy Wow leads to transformation, causing us to adjust an attitude, change behavior, worship out of gratitude, or to do a specific command such as take care of widows and orphans. A simple question to ask at this point: God, what do I need to do?

## PERSONAL PREP (PREP IT)

Because the best discipleship comes out of the overflow of the leader, we want to give you every opportunity to enjoy an overflow of Holy Wow. The book you currently hold in your hands is your personal study. Think of it as your personal time in God's Word that comes with a bonus: guides for leading others in Bible study.

**Scripture Sheets:** Scripture sheets for your Prep It personal study are in the back of this book. Many exercises call for marking and highlighting key observations. Of course, you can use your own Bible or an e-Bible for these exercises. You'll find Scripture sheets to print for your students online with your Lead It session guide at [www.inword.org/online-guides](http://www.inword.org/online-guides).

## ONLINE LEADER GUIDE (LEAD IT)

[www.inword.org/online-guides](http://www.inword.org/online-guides)

Once you've completed your personal prep, you'll want to choose the guide that best fits your setting. You'll find these online. Go to [www.inword.org](http://www.inword.org) where you'll see the menu button "online guides." After clicking "online guides" enter password information noted below. The guides follow the approach outlined above, giving students ample opportunity for personal solitude as well as invigorating community processing and application.

**Password:** [password not available for this preview session]

Guides to choose from:

- MS** **Middle School:** This session is intended for grades six through eight. The session covers less material and contains more activities.
- HS** **High School:** This session is intended for the high school student who is looking for depth and has perhaps "signed up" for a deeper experience.
- CA** **College Age:** This session is geared for young adults, whether in college or working a job. The content does assume some spiritual initiative or curiosity on the part of the students and asks questions that may not resolve.
- CH** **Coffee House:** Just what it says—a lighter approach for the coffee house or McDonalds setting. The most appropriate age group would be high school or college age. Be sure to tip well.
- SO** **Social Media:** Want to lead a virtual small group? Or support your in-real-life small group with social media posts? Each session comes with 3-4, ready-made posts for you to use with your favorite social media app.

## STUDENT PAGES

You'll find student pages and Scripture sheets with your online guide. You have permission to reproduce as many student pages as you need. We call them "journal pages" in that these pages become a "journal" of your students' experience in this study. Recommendation: Give your students a way to collect their journal pages and Scripture sheets from week to week with something like a notebook or a folder.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

For every session you'll need the same basic materials: Bibles, pens, colored pencils, a whiteboard and markers. Obviously the coffee house session will be different—we won't be asking you to take a whiteboard into Starbucks. You'll need to print out Scripture sheets and journal pages for each student. It would be helpful to provide your students

with a tool for keeping their sheets together such as a folder or three-ring notebook. This tool will then become a personal journal of their experience in this study.

Some sessions, especially middle school, have options that require a few other supplies.

## STEPS AT A GLANCE

STEP	TASK	TIME
1	<b>DO YOUR PREP</b> Use the Prep It in this book as your personal study prior to your session.	30-60 minutes
2	<b>CHOOSE YOUR GUIDE</b> Go to <a href="http://www.inword.org/online-guides">www.inword.org/online-guides</a> to download/print the Lead It guide appropriate for your group.	5 minutes
3	<b>PRINT YOUR SHEETS</b> Along with your Lead It guide, print student pages for your students.	5 minutes
4	<b>REVIEW YOUR SESSION</b> Review the Lead It guide to be sure you're familiar with the exercises; collect any materials called for.	10 minutes

## INNERgized WEB SUPPORT

If multiple session guides for you to choose from aren't enough, there's more! You can find additional resources and tie-ins for each session at [www.inword.org/innergized](http://www.inword.org/innergized). Here you'll find up-to-date media suggestions, additional study background, and more session ideas to help you customize the Bible study experience for your students. Enter the following access information for *Learning To Be Like Christ* when prompted.

**Password:** [password not available for this preview session]

## PRAYER EFFORT

The purpose of this study isn't to simply fill up the next few Wednesday nights in your student ministry schedule. It's an opportunity for God to speak to your students through His Word. Therefore, the most important component of your preparation is prayer. We suggest that you organize a group of prayer partners who will pray specifically for your group's experience in this study.

**PHILIPPIANS: A MESSAGE FOR NOW!**

School violence is up. School prayer is down. Evolution is in. The Ten Commandments are out. But believe it or not, hostility from popular culture toward the gospel has been around ever since a threatened King Herod asked some wise men to “go and search carefully for the young Child.”

Just after Jesus’ earthly ministry, it became the assignment of the apostle Paul to encourage and instruct the world’s new Christians regarding how to live out the gospel in a world that was hostile to their faith. The book of Philippians, a letter written from Paul to a church barely ten years old, is an exhortation for today’s Christians living in antagonistic surroundings . . . Learn to be like Christ!

In this book you will discover together the power we can have in this fallen world when we press on (Paul’s words) to be like Christ.

**You’ll discover practical instructions:**

*Be one in spirit and purpose.*

*Do everything without complaining or arguing.*

**You’ll find life-changing encouragement:**

*God will complete the work He began in you.*

*You can do all things through Christ.*

**And you WILL be challenged:**

*To imitate Christ’s attitude of broken humility.*

*To forget past failures and accomplishments, and seek to know Christ now!*





PHILIPPIANS

# SESSION 2





### SETTING THE HEART

It's easy to be busy for God. But it might be pretty scary if we listed all of our spiritual activities, and then tracked the amount of time we've spent praying about those activities. So often, prayer is an afterthought rather than the starting point. Even the phrase "I'll pray for you" has become a cliché—a phrase used to say "I care" rather than an actual promise of prayer.

Perhaps in the early days of the church, the struggle for spiritual survival seemed more desperate than it seems today. Without the support of a church on every corner—not to mention the proliferation of Christian books, music, and resources we enjoy today—first-century Christians were often isolated and easily enticed by false doctrines. Maybe that's why in his letters, Paul not only told his readers that he was praying for them, but he often described specifically *how* he was praying for them.

Don't be misled; the immense support that Christians can enjoy today is no substitute for prayer and its power! Read one of Paul's descriptions of prayer below. Then evaluate your prayer life against the standard of this prayer.

*Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.*

—Colossians 4:12

Are you praying for those entrusted to your ministry—that they may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured? Do you have people praying these prayers for you? The book of Philippians is best known for its theme of joy and for the deep friendship expressed between the letter's author and its recipients. But as we'll see in this session, this level of intimacy didn't "just happen." It came about through one of God's favorite foundations for relationships—prayer.

### DIGGING IN

We discovered in Session 1 that Philippians is a letter, written by Paul and Timothy to the saints, overseers, and deacons in the city of Philippi. To understand any letter in Scripture, it helps to start by collecting as much information as possible about the author of the letter and its recipients. Let's start with the author. Read Philippians 1 using your Scripture sheets in the back of this book. As you read, mark—either by underlining or circling with

a colored pencil—every mention of Paul, the primary writer. Look for pronouns like “I,” “me,” “my,” and so forth.

When you’ve finished, look over what you’ve marked, and list below everything you learn about Paul, his circumstances, his thought processes, even his feelings toward the Philippians.

### **Paul**

Now read over your list, and circle the items that describe Paul’s life circumstances. Can you tell where Paul was writing from? Can you tell whether he wrote this letter early or late in his missionary career? What clues do you see? Write your observations here.

Read for a second time the information you listed about Paul. Draw a box around any items that describe his relationship with the Philippians. Then take a few minutes to respond to these questions:

**How would you describe the relationship between Paul and the Philippians?**

**Paul tells the Philippians that he’s praying for them. What does he say he’s specifically praying for?**

**Can you determine why Paul is praying for these things? Here's a hint: To answer the question why when studying Scripture, look for terms of conclusion such as "therefore," "so that," and "that." These words give a clue that some key information is about to follow. Look for a concluding phrase in verses 9–11, and list the three reasons Paul gives for his prayers.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **TAKING IT INWARD**

What a prayer! And how it must have encouraged the Philippians to know that the apostle Paul was praying for them in this way. Think about those who are a part of this Bible study with you. You may even want to grab (or create) a roster.

Now take a moment to meditate on the specific elements of Paul's prayer. For example, think about the potential power of a group whose love is abounding more and more in knowledge and depth of insight. Think about how little impact peer pressure will have on teens who are able to discern what is best. Consider how little heartache will be suffered by the teen who is able to be pure and blameless until the day of Christ. And don't forget to ponder the impact on society of teens who are filled with the fruit of righteousness. As Paul wrote, this will give glory and praise to God!

Use the space below or a separate sheet of paper to list the names of your group members. Then jot your thoughts as you pray for them.

### **DIGGING DEEPER**

Another fundamental step of effective Bible study is to keep on the lookout for any information about God—His nature, His ways, and His attributes. Let's see what we can learn about God from the opening of Paul's letter. Reread Philippians 1:1–8 using your Scripture sheet. Mark with a colored pencil every mention of God (perhaps with a cloud). Don't forget to mark pronouns like "He."

After you've read and marked the passage, make a list of everything you learn about God.

**God**

Now read over your list, and circle anything that refers to God's activity in the lives of the Philippians.

**TAKING IT INWARD**

One of the items you should have circled is that God began a good work in the Philippians—a work God Himself would carry to completion until the day of Christ. Wow! What a deal! Take a few moments to prayerfully consider the work that God has begun in your life. Read the passages below from your Bible. Write beneath each Scripture reference what you learn about God's activity in your spiritual formation.

**Philippians 2:12–13**

**Titus 3:4–7**

**Hebrews 13:20–21**

**Ephesians 2:4–10**

**In these verses, who is the subject—the one doing the action?**

**Who is the one being acted upon?**

Many times we seek to grow spiritually—to overcome temptation and spiritual weakness—by our own power. We make rules for ourselves—or try techniques and programs that have worked for others. Do you have a spiritual “thorn in the flesh” . . . something you haven't been able to overcome. . . perhaps a nagging temptation,

a destructive habit, guilt, bitterness, or even a grudge? What is God saying to you in the passages you've studied today? What role can He play in helping you overcome your spiritual "thorns"? (You can read about Paul's thorn in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10.)

If God Himself wants to work in you, to bring you to spiritual completion and maturity, what adjustments do you need to make in order for His work to take place? Is your schedule too full? Do you allow time to listen to God's voice? What must you change to give God the time He needs to equip you?

Have you ever been on the job or doing a repair project at home—and you got frustrated with the task? Then you called in an expert, and he or she finished the task. Not only was the task completed for you, it was done in a manner that was better than even your best effort! Compare this situation with the promises you saw in Hebrews 13:20–21. Have you ever been frustrated in trying to please God? How does this passage speak to that situation?

### **PUTTING INTO PRACTICE**

The fact that *God works His will in us* is a foundational truth of the Christian experience. Yet our level of spiritual activity seldom reflects this precept. For a teen, the cycle of failed spiritual commitments (commit-fail, commit-fail, commit-fail, and so on) can be handcuffing; it can cause teens to swear off making commitments to the Lord—commitments they feel they can't keep. Therefore, the knowledge that God promises to work in them to bring them to maturity can be freeing!

Pray for your group members between now and the group session. Use Paul's prayer in Philippians 1:9–11 as a guide. Also pray that the eyes of your group members will be opened by God's Word and that they'll see how much God wants to help them mature spiritually. Be assured that part of the work God has begun in your group is this: *helping their love to abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.*



### Philippians 1

- <sup>1</sup> Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,  
To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with  
the overseers and deacons:  
<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- <sup>3</sup> I thank my God every time I remember you.  
<sup>4</sup> In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy  
<sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,  
<sup>6</sup> being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion  
until the day of Christ Jesus.  
<sup>7</sup> It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether  
I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.  
<sup>8</sup> God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.  
<sup>9</sup> And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of  
insight,  
<sup>10</sup> so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of  
Christ,  
<sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise  
of God.  
<sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually  
served to advance the gospel.  
<sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I  
am in chains for Christ.  
<sup>14</sup> And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord  
and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.  
<sup>15</sup> It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.  
<sup>16</sup> The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.  
<sup>17</sup> The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up  
trouble for me while I am in chains.  
<sup>18</sup> But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives  
or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.  
Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,  
<sup>19</sup> for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has  
happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.  
<sup>20</sup> I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so  
that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.  
<sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

- <sup>22</sup> If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!
- <sup>23</sup> I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;
- <sup>24</sup> but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.
- <sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith,
- <sup>26</sup> so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.
- <sup>27</sup> Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel
- <sup>28</sup> without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.
- <sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him,
- <sup>30</sup> since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.