

# Study Guide



## Working Out What God Works In

Philippians 2:12-13

### Main Idea

Your daily obedience ties into the larger picture of God's mission to bring himself glory. Trusting does not put an end to trying, but fuels it for the glory of God.

### Overview

#### **I. The Motivation for Obedience**

- “Therefore” – All obedience that is pleasing to God is rooted in this one word
  - “Therefore” looks back at verses 5-11
- “Therefore” looks in two directions: back in thanks and forward in trust
  - Thanks: Part of our motivation to obey God is looking back and what Christ has done for us and responding with thanksgiving
  - Trust: Obedience is also motivated by a trust of the superior worth of all that God is for us in Jesus.
- We obey not only because we are thankful for what God has done for us in Christ in the past, but also because we trust all that God is for us in Christ in the future

#### **II. The Act of Obedience**

- Obedience equates to “working out” our salvation
  - We are not working “for” our salvation (cf. Eph. 2:8-9)
- Grace is too amazing to save us from God's wrath and sin's guilt only to leave us under the cruel power of sin.
- We are saved for obedience/holiness (Eph. 2:10; 1:4; Titus 2:14; Mt. 28:19-20)
- Stressing the necessity of obedience should not undermine our confidence in salvation by grace alone through faith alone; faith and good works are both necessary – one is the root (faith) and the other is the root (works).
- Several Scriptures point to our need to exert effort (cf. Phil. 3:13-14; 1 Tim. 4:7, 10; 2 Peter 1:5, 10; Hb. 12:14)
- Trusting does not put an end to trying; savoring Jesus does not negate striving to look like Jesus

#### **III. The Enabling Factor in Obedience**

- We can only “work out” what God “works in”
  - Understanding this is the key that prevents a humble, God-dependent working out our salvation from becoming a prideful, God-ignoring working for our salvation.
- God “works in” our salvation in two ways
  - To Will: To will means God so works in the lives of his own, that they begin to will, to want, to desire the very same things he desires

- To Work: To work means that God gives us the power, the ability to carry out and fulfill those God pleasing desires.

### **III. The Result of Obedience**

- God works in us “for his good pleasure,” which is his own glory
- His glory is most vividly manifest in the exaltation of Jesus (cf. v.9-11)
- God exalts Jesus because it brings him glory, so we should exalt Jesus because it brings God glory
- We exalt Jesus by working out our salvation and increasingly looking like him
- The result of our obedience ties us into the one mission of God to bring himself glory.

### Questions

*Discussion Starter: When you hear the word “obey” what type of reactions do you have?*

1. What’s the danger in preaching as sermon on obedience?
2. Why is it necessary to preach on obedience?
3. In verse 12 Paul starts with “therefore.” Why is this important in understanding the motivation for obedience?
4. “Therefore” motivates us by looking back in thanksgiving and forward in trust. Why is it important to understand both aspects of “therefore?”
5. What are some specific ways that “thanks” and “trust” motivate you to obey God?
6. In verse 12 Paul says to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” What does this not mean? What does this mean?
7. What keeps us from “working out” our salvation?
8. Why is it important to realize we can only work out what God works in?
9. Verse 13 says all of this if “for God’s good pleasure.” What is God’s good pleasure and why is it important to keep this in mind for our obedience?
10. How/why does obedience bring joy while disobedience only brings temporary joy at best?

*Accountability Question: Is there an area of your life where you are not actively working out your salvation? If so, what’s preventing you from doing so?*