

Week 5 Philippians 2.12-18
How Salvation is Worked Out

- I. Prayer
- II. Opening Question
What is the defining reality in your life at the moment? What is its ultimate importance?
How is this “reality” defining your relationship with God?
- III. Read N.T. Wright Commentary p.104-107
- IV. Scan Aesthetic Commentary p.109-132
- V. Discussion Questions
 - a. Do distractions keep you removed from the reality of the presence of God or do they simply keep you isolated from a deeper experience of being in God’s presence? What might you be missing?
 - b. How is God at work in your present reality to accomplish his will in your life? Where do you see potential for expressions of agape or an experience of God’s shalom?
 - c. What is God saying to you even in your most distracted moments?
 - d. *Read Philippians 2:12-18.* How does verse 13 make clear that the phrase “your own salvation” (v.12) isn’t meant to contrast the work of the Philippians with God’s work?
 - e. Whose work then is being contrasted with that of the Philippians?
 - f. When Paul uses the phrase “fear and trembling,” as it is often translated in verse 12, he means with “utter seriousness.” What would it mean for you to work out the practical implications of your salvation in this way?
Paul is telling the Philippians that they must grow into maturity and take responsibility for themselves. Paul isn’t there, and for all either of them know he may never be there again. He wants them to work out for themselves (on their own without him, but not without God) what this business of being saved will mean in practice. He stresses that the work of salvation is God’s work from start to finish.
 - g. Verse 14 offers what appears to be a simple command. How would the lives of churches be revolutionized if Christians lived by this?
 - h. When Paul speaks of them shining like lights (v. 15) he is quoting a passage from the book of Daniel (12:3) which speaks of “the wise”—meaning Israelites skilled in knowing and applying God’s law, not least in a time of persecution. Who comes to mind as examples of such lights?
 - i. The passage ends on a note of celebration (vv. 17-18). What gives Paul cause to celebrate?
 - j. Whose faith can you celebrate today?