

2 March_ **Philippians 2:5–18_Unlocking Joy: Shining for Jesus in a self obsessed world.**

"We live in a world obsessed with being seen. Likes, shares, followers, and brand deals—these are the markers of success today. But what if chasing recognition actually leads to emptiness?"

Consider the story of Lee Tilghman, known as 'Lee From America.' She built a massive online following by promoting wellness, crafting a seemingly perfect life. But behind the scenes, she was exhausted, struggling with an eating disorder, and losing herself in the pressure to maintain an image. In 2019, she stepped away from social media, realizing that the pursuit of validation had taken a toll on her mental and spiritual well-being. She had to make a choice: keep striving for online applause or prioritize something greater—her real identity and well-being."

"Her struggle is a mirror of a larger issue: the world urges us to build ourselves up, chase recognition, and prove our worth. But Scripture calls us to something radically different. [Philippians 2:5-8](#) tells us that instead of exalting Himself, Jesus humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant—even to the point of death on a cross. He shows us a better way, a way that leads not to burnout, but to true fulfillment."

"So how do we shine for Jesus in a self-obsessed world? [Philippians 2](#) gives us four steps, starting with the first: Adopting Jesus' Attitude."

1. Adopt Jesus' Attitude – Think and live like Christ. v.5-8

Before we talk about Jesus' attitude, we first need to understand what adoption really means in this context. Adoption isn't just about joining a group or picking up a new habit. It's not like changing your hair color, switching your name, or dressing a certain way. No—adoption means becoming something you weren't before.

Before Christ, you belonged to yourself. You lived by the world's system, thinking you were in control, convinced you were living in the light—when in reality, you were walking in darkness. But through Christ, you were adopted. You became part of His body. And when God looks at you, He doesn't see a stepchild, a second-class member, or an outsider who barely made it in. No—He sees His child, fully accepted, with the same rights, privileges, and protection as every other believer.

That's why we're told to adopt the same attitude as Christ. This isn't just a list of traits to try when it's convenient. These attitudes should be part of who we are, flowing from our new identity in Him. Ignoring them wouldn't just mean we're falling short—it would be denying who we truly are.

To reject this mindset isn't just failing to act like Christ; it's refusing to live as who we were meant to be.

That being said, let's discuss what it means to "**Adopt Jesus attitude**" as it relates to shining for him in this self-obsessed world. For sake of clarity and simplicity I broke them down into several key attitudes. The first being Humility

Jesus was humble. v6

Jesus had every right to assert His power—He was God. But instead of flaunting it, He wrapped Himself in flesh and walked among us as a man. He never used His divine status for personal gain. In fact, He kept His full identity hidden until the Father's timing.

Think about how celebrities use their fame—getting VIP treatment, freebies, or even dodging consequences. Like when Justin Bieber reportedly got out of a speeding ticket by taking selfies with the cops. If Jesus, who truly deserved honor, rejected that kind of privilege, how much more should we?

And that brings us to the second attitude: **Selflessness. Jesus was selfless.**

Instead of receiving the worship He deserved, He **emptied Himself**—taking the form of a servant. He set aside His crown, laid down His kingly robes, and stepped off His throne. He left the glory of heaven to come to us, not as a ruler, but as a servant. He traded His royal garments for coveralls and work boots.

What an act of supreme selflessness. He knew what awaited Him—rejection, suffering, and ultimately, the cross. Yet, **He still chose to come.**

When I think of selflessness, Jesus is the first person who comes to mind. But I also wonder—**what if He had chosen differently?** What if Jesus had been selfish? Where would we be? I'll tell you—still lost. Still walking in darkness, searching for something to fill the ache in our souls. Still guilty, with no hope of salvation.

But thankfully, **Jesus obeyed His Father**. He came. And with Him, He brought the greatest gift—salvation.

As children of God, **blessings come to us so they can flow through us**. We are blessed **to be a blessing**. But if we lack a selfless spirit, our blessings will stop with us—never reaching those who need them most.

In addition...

Jesus Was Obedient

Jesus didn't just leave His rightful place in heaven to live among us—He obeyed, all the way to the cross. At the appointed time, **"He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross."** ([Philippians 2:8](#))

He knew exactly what was coming—execution at the hands of those He came to serve and save. Still, before He even left heaven, Jesus said, *"Yes, Father. I'll obey. I'll go."* Then, after living as a man, gaining followers, enduring persecution, and experiencing the full weight of humanities hate, He followed through and submitted to the Father's will, allowing those who hated Him to execute Him in the most painful, humiliating way possible—hung on a Roman cross for all to see. And yet, He obeyed.

There's a difference between obeying God when your *know* it leads to blesses you per and obeying when it might lead to hardship and or persecution. Like a missionary trained for the risks of serving in a closed country—it's one thing to prepare for persecution, but another to endure it.

(Missionary) Take Dan Baumann, a missionary with Youth With A Mission (YWAM). In 1997, he traveled to Iran, a country hostile to Christians. When he tried to leave, he was arrested on charges of espionage and detained for nine weeks. He endured brutal interrogations and was sentenced to death—twice. But he clung to his faith, and God sustained him. After his release, he continued his missionary work, even writing about his experience.

Dan knew the risks but obeyed anyway. Not all of us will face that level of sacrifice, but we must be ready and willing to follow God, even when obedience puts us in the crosshairs of opposition. Our response should mirror Jesus': "Yes, Lord. I'll go. I'll obey."

If you're uncertain about what to do next, let me encourage you: *trust and obey God*. Blessings flow from obedience. It could be that your hesitation—your *noncompliance*—is what's holding up your blessing.

Like Jesus, *put on the identity of obedience*, and watch how God moves in your life.

And that brings us to our next attitude to adopt: **Jesus was Exalted**.

Jesus obeyed the Father's will, even to the point of execution. Because of that obedience, God's grace (forgiveness and salvation) was made available to countless souls.

"For this reason, God highly exalted Him..." ([Philippians 2:9](#)).

God didn't just lift Jesus up—He gave Him the highest honor possible. Jesus was exalted with the authority and glory that belong only to God. In other words, **God the Father exalted Jesus as God**.

Now, let's be clear: there's no one-to-one application here where we get exalted in the same way. No matter how faithful we are, we will never be God. God will never raise us to the level of His Son—that honor belongs to Jesus alone, the God-Man.

But that hasn't stopped some from teaching what's commonly called the **"little gods"** theology. This false teaching claims that humans can become divine. Mormonism explicitly teaches godhood for believers.

But this belief is most common in the **Word of Faith movement**, where people claim that because we're made in God's image, we are divine ourselves. Some go even further, saying our words have creative power and that our faith forces God to act.

That's not just dangerous—it's heresy. People who teach this often twist [Psalm 82:6](#) where it says ("You are gods") to support their claim. But the very next verse clarifies what's actually be discussed: "You will die like mere men" ([Psalm 82:7](#)). When Jesus referenced this passage in [John 10:34-36](#), He wasn't saying humans are gods—He was defending His own divinity.

The truth is simple: God alone is divine. [Isaiah 37:16](#) makes that clear. We are His creation, not little gods. Jesus, and Jesus alone, is fully God and fully man ([John 1:14](#), [Hebrews 2:14](#)). Any teaching that claims Christians are divine undermines who God is—and who we are in relation to Him.

So, how do we apply this truth? Here's how...

It reminds us that our faith in Jesus is not vain, we've put our faith and hope into the God of the universe the creator and sustainer of all things. Jesus wasn't just a man as some have supposed, rather he is and was God. Co-equal and Co-eternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was exalted by the Father to show forth his divinity and majesty to the world. We follow Him—not to become gods, but to live as those redeemed by the One True God. Amen!!

Jesus was Exalted, and he was revered.... That's the 4th thing we learn about Jesus. Fifth...

Jesus was **revered**.v10

You can't help but pause and say wow, when you read [Philippians 2:9&10](#)—

"God gave Jesus a name above every other name... so powerful that at the mere mention of it, every knee will bow—in heaven, on earth, and under the earth—and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

That's reverential power. Wherever Jesus' name is spoken, honor is demanded. Respect is not optional. That's what it means to *bow your knee*—to recognize that He is so awesome, so beyond us, that we dare not stand taller than Him.

And look at *who* will bow.

Every knee in heaven—angels, the saints, those who already know He is Lord of all. No surprise there. They worship Him now and forever.

Every knee on earth—those who refused to acknowledge Him and believe that he is divine. They may reject Him now, but the day is coming when they *will* bow. Instead bowing to him willingly when they had a chance like we have, they will be made to bow.

Every knee under the earth—satan, his demons, those who died without Christ who are in hell already. Even they will be forced to bow, not in love, but in recognition of the inescapable truth—Jesus is Lord.

Jesus is not just a big deal—He *is* the deal. The pivot of history. The One who split time in half—B.C. and A.D.—reminding humanity that *everything* changed when He stepped into the world.

You could take every genius, philosopher, scientist, and ruler who ever lived, stack them on top of each other, and they still wouldn't reach high enough to touch the hem of His majesty.

Jesus didn't *influence* history. He *defines* it. He is the King of kings. The Lord of lords. The Alpha and the Omega. The Beginning and the End. His authority is unmatched. His name is above all others. His reign is not up for debate.

And one day, every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess.

The question is—what are *your* knees and tongue doing right now?

Do your knees bow in surrender, or do they stand in defiance? Do they hit the floor daily, or only in desperation?

Does your tongue boldly confess His name, or does it stay silent when it matters? Do you praise Him in public, or only in private?

Because what your knees and tongue do *now* will determine where and how they do it in eternity.

Jesus is to be revered. Let reverence for Him shape your life. That's the 5th thing we learn about Jesus. Sixth...

Jesus Was God's Glory – [John 17:11b](#)

Jesus glorified God by the way He lived and what He did. He was the perfect example of what it means to glorify God. His attitude, His actions—everything He did pointed back to the Father.

And because of that, God was glorified. Even though Jesus was the one doing the work, it all pointed to a bigger truth: there is a God, and He is in control—of creation, of His will, and of His plan.

Like Jesus, our desire should be to glorify God, although not perfectly at least not in this life.

But for now, our motivation should be simple - to make God more known in the world.

And our heart's cry should be: "God, I want to make much of You. I want people to see how amazing You are through me. I want You to delight in me as Your child."

So, take on the attitude of Jesus—live for God's glory.

That's the first step to shining for Jesus in a self-obsessed world? **Adopt Jesus' Attitude.**

The second step is to...

Live Out What God Works In You. Well according to v12-13 it means to "Align your actions with God's transformative work".

As the redeemed—set apart for God's glory—we don't just obey when others are watching. We don't put on our faith for Sunday and take it off when we leave the church. We live it out every day, in every place.

Some religions believe righteousness is tied to what they wear. They act devout while dressed the part, but when the gathering ends, and the robe comes off, so does the godly behavior. As if faith is just a uniform—something worn on the clock but irrelevant when their shit is up.

Paul is saying: It doesn't matter where you are, who you're with, or what you're wearing. We are to live like Jesus. He never put on and took off His obedience to the Father. He remained true—always.

But let's be real: it's not easy. Living out our faith is a grind. To "**Work out your own salvation**" means continually doing the next right thing. And some days, it feels like an uphill battle. There are moments when you just want to say, "Lord, I give up. Take me now." I've had those days. And I'm sure you do too.

But what keeps us going? What motivates us to keep pressing forward?

Is our deep reverence for God—our desire to please Him. That's the "fear and trembling" in verse 12. We long to hear Him say:

"Good job, daughter. Keep going—I'm with you."

"Press on, my son. I'm right beside you."

Paul makes it clear: we're to work out our salvation, to live holy—no matter who's around or status of our personal lives. But if it were entirely up to us we would fail miserably. God knows that under enough pressure, given the right temptation, we will falter. That's why He didn't leave us to figure it out alone.

Verse 13 says, "**For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**"

We know the Holy Spirit leads, convicts, protects, sanctifies, empowers, and draws us closer to God. But do we realize He also transforms our desires? He's not just working to change our actions—He's changing our hearts. He wants us to not only obey but to *delight* in our service to Him.

Loved ones, God is at work deep inside us—changing, enabling, encouraging, and empowering us. Let's submit to Him, depend on Him, and...

Live out what He's working in us. Our actions should align with the new person He's creating in us.

And as you begin to see the new you emerge, the more bold, tougher, more focused you. Don't hide the new you. Instead...

3. **Shine Brightly in a Dark World** – *Stand out and draw others in.v.14-16a*

That's the third step to shining for Jesus in a self-obsessed world.

Isn't it interesting that after Paul tells the Philippians to obey God and live righteously, he immediately says:

"Do everything without grumbling or arguing..."

In other words—do the work assigned to you without complaining or fighting with fellow believers.

Nothing is more frustrating than someone who complains about everything. And it's even worse when that person is a Christian—especially one who constantly complains about their life and their church.

Why? Because it sends mixed signals.

On one hand, they claim to be loving, helpful, and committed to Christ and their church. But their constant negativity tells a different story. It's confusing. It's a turn-off.

No one wants to be part of a messy, divided church. No one is drawn to a faith that seems full of drama. And no one wants to hear about your God and His Gospel if all they hear from you is how much you wish you could sleep in on Sundays or how unhappy you are.

When we grumble and argue, we push people away from Jesus instead of drawing them in. We blend into the world, rather than standing out from it. And that's the exact opposite of what we're called to do.

Paul says we are supposed to **shine like stars** in a crooked and perverted world (v. 15). But how can we shine when instead of radiating **Jesus' joy, love, and selflessness**, we pull people into a black hole of negativity?

We can't. Instead of attracting people to Christ, we repel them.

So, what's the solution?

"Hold firm to the word of life" (v. 16).

That means:

- Read your Bible.
- Study God's Word for yourself.
- Submit to it.
- Be transformed by it.
- Prioritize your personal discipleship and being disciplined in a group setting.
- Make living according to a Biblical World View your top priority

Be a star. Let your light in Christ shine. Help people see their need for the Gospel and the beauty of a church family that loves them.

This world desperately needs the light of the Gospel. Live it out. Do your part. Draw people in—not push them away.

And as you take these steps to shine for Jesus, be mindful to...

4. Rejoice in Being Poured Out for God – Seeing service as a privilege, not a burden. v. 16b-18

Paraphrasing v16b-18, Paul says...

As you, my brothers and sisters, shine for Jesus—giving everything for His glory—I rejoice. Because your faithfulness proves my labor wasn't wasted. That makes whatever happens to me worth it. If Jesus returns while I'm still here, I'll celebrate all the more.

Your growth and perseverance in the faith, is what matters. Not my circumstances. Not my comfort. Not even my suffering. Not the prison cell. Not those who turned their backs on me. Not my hardship, or my looming execution.

My life is being poured out like a drink offering for your sake—and I count it a privilege.

Paul is rejoicing in being poured out for God on behalf of the Philippians.

And that's the heart I pray we have. That, like Paul, we see serving others as something we *get* to do, not something we *have* to do. That we would delight in helping others get ahead in Jesus. Helping others navigate life in a godly way. Helping others to trust God more. Walking along side of others in times of loss and extreme challenges. Being that listening ear that knows how to pray.

Because if Philippians has taught us anything, it's this:

True joy isn't found in what we do for ourselves. And it's certainly not found in what others do for us.

It's found in getting to serve other people.

Conclusion

We don't need to be convinced that this world is consumed with itself. But what we might need to realize is that the way to bring healing isn't through more self-focus—it's through service, shining the love of Christ. And that starts with us.

It means:

1. Having the attitude of Jesus.
2. Living out the work God has done in us.
3. Shining brightly in a dark world.
4. Rejoicing in being poured out for God in service to others.

Until we, as the church, fully commit to this, darkness will keep spreading like the cancer that it is. But here at BFC, we choose to shine. Right here in South Raleigh, we will be a light for Jesus that transforms this community for His glory and their good.

Closing

Q/A/Prayer, CC, LGLP