

12 Therefore, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose. 14 Do everything without grumbling and arguing, 15 so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world, 16 by holding firm to the word of life. Then I can boast in the day of Christ that I didn't run or labor for nothing. 17 But even if I am poured out as a drink offering on the sacrificial service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 In the same way you should also be glad and rejoice with me.

Once I become saved and am following Jesus, what am I supposed to do?

Let's say you're at school. Are you more likely to be quiet and obey when the teacher is around or when he or she steps out of the room for a moment? It's easy to misbehave and stop following the rules when the teacher leaves the room. This passage starts with a challenge to obey God's commands no matter if you're being watched or not.

12 Therefore, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

We are called to obey because Jesus obeyed. And we are called to do it even when our parents are not watching, or when our small group leader is not watching, or when Jodi or I are not watching. It's easy to follow Jesus when you're at church. This challenge is to do it when you're alone in your room, when you're with your thoughts, in the classroom at school, on the bus, surrounded by peers, etc.

We are called to work out our salvation with a sense of seriousness (v. 12). This does not mean you have work on improving your faith on your own. You get to do it in community with other people! Read the Bible together, share about life together, pray for one another, support one another when you struggle, confess your sins and offer forgiveness to one another, have fun together!

Good news is this is not dependent upon ourselves or upon our good behavior or self-discipline, because God is working in us to change our desires and give us the power to live obedient lives (v. 13). It's God and you. Without God, we can't change. Without us, God won't change us.

In order to do this, we must not "grumble and argue" (v. 14). Be careful about our relationships with one another. No gossip, harsh words, or complaining about other

people. This doesn't mean we never don't get along. It means we work together for unity among ourselves. Sometimes that means saying difficult things to one another, confessing, working through challenges together.

The result is then we can be "blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world." (v. 15)

By following Jesus together and becoming the people he calls us to be, we will shine a big, bright light to the world.

This is cool from a commentary I read: In any case, however the phrase is to be understood, one thing is clear: Paul did not intend his words to mean merely that the Philippians were "to stand out against" (Caird) the background of their society, so as to show it up by way of contrast. Rather, his words came as a challenge to change that society. As light dispels darkness, so Christians are to dispel the darkness of evil and ignorance that is everywhere around them.

v. 16 is a reminder that we do all this by learning and obeying God's word for us. His words give us the guidance and direction for how to live.

So, Once I become saved and am following Jesus, what am I supposed to do?

According to this passage, we are to follow Jesus and obey his commands within the support of a community of other believers, through God's strength, placing an emphasis on having strong, healthy relationships with one another and placing a special emphasis on learning and obeying what his Word teaches us. By doing that, you can impact, for good, the world around you.

At Valley Church we are about mobilizing your God-given potential to deeply love Christ and your neighbors. This passage gives us excellent guidance about how to do that!

Closing question: What's one thing I can do to improve my relationship with people in the Middle School Ministry?