

Thrive with us by following on Instagram and YouTube  
@FlagNazChurch, @FlagNazYouth and FlagNaz.org



# BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Think of someone difficult in your life. What is something about them for which you are grateful?

What memories come up that exhibit this characteristic?

How would your relationships be different if you practiced this regularly?

**Philippians 1:3-5** – <sup>3</sup>I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup>constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup>because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.

## I) **A Selective Memory...**

Our minds are incredible. The more we recall a memory, the stronger it is lodged into our mind. Things we ignore fade away. Just as Jesus liberated us from programmatic emotional reactions, we are free to use our selective memory. We can exercise good memories to cause positive feelings and actions. Memories that make us smile, chuckle, perhaps call someone. The Bible teaches us to focus our thoughts on that which is good. This is especially valuable in our relationships. Joy requires social interactions, but they are imperfect. Exercising the right memories strengthens our affinity for each other.

**JULY 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2025**

♦**Choose gratitude**: One avenue to selecting useful memories is to start with gratitude. Our mind naturally orients itself to good recollections when we prompt it to find things for which to be thankful. “I thank my God (Philippians 1:3),” guides our mind toward recollections of joy, truth, beauty. This stimulates positive emotions now and reinforces good memories for the future. When we sow gratitude, we harvest hope and joy. It is a gift that returns to us many times over.

♦**Emphasize good times**: God’s presence is healthy, but He made us to need society to be our best. We need the opportunity to serve and the encouragement of others shining God’s light onto us. Yet, as noted above, our social interactions are imperfect. Our memories of others are potent. In an environment in which we sense danger, our mind naturally recalls threats for our safety. Unless we are intentional, our view of one another will be poor. We can choose to emphasize good times “every time I remember you (v3).” This decision provides the courage and desire to reconnect.

## II) Shifts Our View...

Central to our understanding of the Bible is its message that life is what we perceive it to be. Our perspective determines how we interpret the events we experience. A godly perspective shifts our view such that we see His creative mind at work in every event, even those involving evil. From this point of view, we can see the good in each other and gain compassion for the aspects that we find distasteful. This activates our intent to nurture the good blossoming into the other’s best.

♦**Cultivate joy**: Beginning with gratitude while thinking of another surfaces good memories that cultivate joy. That joy attaches to our idea of each other. Practicing this, we find ourselves “constantly praying with joy (v4),” for each other. Unconsciously, we are strengthening our idea of God’s image in others. We cannot help but want to be with others who remind us of Jesus. Wisely employed selective memory builds the atmosphere in which we enjoy powerful fellowship.

♦**Refine the gold**: This is not deception. It is the choice to emphasize the characteristics that we believe the Holy Spirit is building up in each other. It is not unlike how we imagine great futures for young children. We see what is true now and will be truer later. As Christians, we have a responsibility to actively refine the gold in each other. Grateful thoughts provoke us to pile up “every one of my prayers for all of you (v4).” We plead with God to build each other into their best, which causes us to act in accordance with those prayers.

## III) Of Each Other...

We need each other to see the reality of Jesus. We need the opportunities to act like Jesus toward each other. We need the collective to fully present Jesus to the world, each of us containing a partial representation of God’s image. These blessings of each other are the purpose of the church in our lives. It is another dimension of the virtuous cycle of following Jesus. We are blessed by God comforting and producing joy in us, which overflows as we promote the best in each other and rejoice in the effect.

♦**Best supporting actor**: Jesus came to serve, not be served. By being the best supporting actor He could be, He became the leading man in God’s story. Sinful humanity lusts for the best leading actor award. That’s not the way things are in the kingdom of heaven. You are your best “because of your sharing (v5),” the bits of God’s goodness you reap in yourself for the benefit of others. Selecting good memories promotes our desire to share goodness with each other.

♦**BFFs**: The gospel liberates us to think and feel differently about each other. We are free to be attracted to the qualities of others that reflect what we want to be. Those of us wanting to fulfill our original purpose, we are attracted to Christlikeness. Our greatest joy comes from “sharing in the gospel from the first day until now (v5),” because it cannot be separated from us building up each other. We become BFFs because the time we spend together is when we are most pleasing to God. Those are the most joyful moments in life. Thinking well leads to feeling well leads to being well together. Full joy is shared joy.

JULY 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2025