

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Philippians:
A Choice to Rejoice*

Lesson 1: The Joy of Community

Bible Text

Philippians 1:1-11

Memory Verse

"I always have joy as I pray for all of you."
(Philippians 1:4)

Word List

community: a group of people who live in the same area or who have the same beliefs and interests; a feeling of caring about the other people in a group

explain: to say what something means

Everyone needs community. We live in neighborhoods, which we call communities. But many of us do not know our neighbors. We have communities through social media, but we do not always know the people who are online with us. Our churches are communities, but we may not know all the people in our churches.

What we really need is communities of people to do life with. We need people who know us and love us for who we are. We need a group of people who will help us when we need help. We need people who will pray for

us and pray with us. When we have a group like this, we have community.

God has given me loving community. I have a prayer group. It is a small group of women. We are all about the same age, and we all love Jesus. We share our problems and pray for each other. If anyone has a need, we find a way to help. We love and take care of each other. God works in all our lives to help us love and care for each other. There is so much joy in having community!

Paul's Joy (Philippians 1:1-2)

1 This letter is from Paul and Timothy. We are servants owned by Jesus Christ. This letter is to all who belong to Christ Jesus who are living in the city of Philippi and to the church leaders and their helpers also.

2 May you have loving-favor and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul had the joy of community with believers in the city of Philippi. This community of believers started in the home of Lydia. (See Acts 16:12-15, 40.) Paul wrote this letter to them from a prison in Rome. The community of believers in Philippi sent Paul gifts when they heard that he had been put in prison. Paul wrote them this letter to thank them. Paul felt joy because of their care for him. Paul also wrote this letter to believers in other churches, too.

Timothy had worked with Paul in Philippi. This community knew and loved Timothy. He knew and loved them. Now he was with Paul in Rome. He may have written the words for Paul as he spoke them. He did not write any of his own words. Timothy had joy in community by helping Paul in this way.

Together Paul and Timothy were servants owned by Jesus Christ. This is a wonderful way to tell about how believers are special followers of Jesus. It means that followers of Jesus obey Him because He is their owner. Many people would not like to be called a servant of anyone, but Paul was happy to call himself a servant of Jesus Christ.

Those of us who are believers are all servants owned by Jesus Christ. We serve each other, too. Jesus said, “If you love each other, all men will know you are My followers” (John 13:35). True servants of Jesus know the joy of community.

The Church’s Loving-Favor (Philippians 1:3-7)

3 I thank God for you whenever I think of you.

4 I always have joy as I pray for all of you.

5 It is because you have told others the Good News from the first day you heard it until now.

6 I am sure that God Who began the good work in you will keep on working in you until the day Jesus Christ comes again.

7 It is right for me to feel like this about all of you. It is because you are very dear to me. While I was in prison and when I was proving that the Good News is true, you all shared God’s loving-favor with me.

Paul knew the joy of community with the Philippians. He thanked God for them. He loved to pray for them. He was so happy that they were telling the Good News of Jesus Christ to everyone.

Paul’s faith grew from watching them. Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is being sure we will get what we hope for. It is being sure of what we cannot see.” Paul was sure that God would keep on working in their lives. He was sure that they would keep on sharing their faith with others. His faith grew because of this community of believers.

God’s Forever Plan (Philippians 1:8-11)

8 God knows what I am saying. He knows how much I love you all with a love that comes from Jesus Christ.

9 And this is my prayer: I pray that your love will grow more and more. I pray that you will have better understanding and be wise in all things.

10 I pray that you will know what is the very best. I pray that you will be true and without

blame until the day Christ comes again.

11 And I pray that you will be filled with the fruits of right living. These come from Jesus Christ, with honor and thanks to God.

Paul loved the believers in Philippi, and they loved him. He told them about Jesus. He prayed for them and helped them. And they prayed for him and helped him. His letters helped them grow. Their gifts helped him know how much they cared.

The love for others that comes from Jesus is not easy to **explain**. It is strong and deep. It is the best kind of love. The love of Jesus is much greater than we can understand. We can know how much Jesus loves us because he suffered and died on the cross for us. That is the best way to explain it, but it is still not enough.

Paul proved his love for the Philippian community by praying a beautiful prayer for them. He prayed that they would have more

love, understanding, and wisdom. He prayed that they would know and do what is best, true, and without blame. He prayed that they would be filled with fruits of right living that come from Jesus. These fruits start with fully trusting Jesus to save you.

Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God’s Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever” (John 3:16). This is God’s forever plan for everyone. Do you know that when you die you will be with God forever? If you are not sure, you can be sure today by believing and putting your trust in Jesus to save you.

Things to Remember

Do you have the joy that comes from Jesus? Do you have community with others? The kind of joy that Jesus gives us does not come from what happens to us. Pure joy comes from knowing that your future is in heaven with God and what you do here and now is important. It comes from having the love of Jesus and others in your life. Pure joy comes from loving and trusting the One who made you and loves you more than you can know. There is much joy in having community with others who also love Jesus. There is much joy in having a group of people that you can do life with.

Things to Think About

1. What do you need to have joy?
2. Who is in community with you? What kind of community is it?
3. If you do not have a community, what kind of community would you like?
4. What did Paul mean when he called himself and Timothy servants? Do you know any believers who think of themselves as servants? Who are they and how do you know?
5. What have you learned about community?

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Acts 16:12-15, 40

12 From there we went to the city of Philippi.

This was an important city in Macedonia. It was ruled by the leaders of the country of Rome. We stayed here for some days.

13 On the Day of Rest we went outside the city to a place down by the river. We thought people would be gathering there for prayer. Some women came and we sat down and talked to them.

14 One of the women who listened sold purple cloth. She was from the city of Thyatira. Her name was Lydia and she was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to hear what Paul said.

15 When she and her family had been baptized, she said to us, "If you think I am faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my house." She kept on asking. Then we went with her.

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40 Paul and Silas went to Lydia's house after they left the prison. They met with the Christians and gave them comfort. Then they went away from the city.