

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Philippians:  
A Choice to Rejoice*

## Lesson 2: A Choice to Rejoice

### Bible Text

Philippians 1:12-19

### Memory Verse

"Because of your prayers and the help the Holy Spirit gives me, all of this will turn out for good."  
(Philippians 1:19)

### Word List

**brave:** strong in heart and not showing fear

**pandemic:** a disease that spreads all over the world, making people sick with many dying

**quarantined:** staying alone in one place for a number of days or weeks to stop the spread of a disease

**rejoice:** to feel or show much happiness

Pain, change, and hard questions are part of living in this world. While I am writing this lesson, there is a **pandemic** that is bringing pain and death. This pandemic is also causing change. It is causing all of us to ask hard questions. Why is this happening? Who can stop it? How long do we have to stay home? How many will die before it ends? When will it end? What should we do? Where is God?

Paul also had pain in his life. He was in prison and had chains on him. It was not easy to be in chains and not be free. But God had a plan for Paul. And Paul trusted God's plan. He found joy in sharing it with his community in Philippi. He made a choice to not be sad or angry. He made a choice to **rejoice**!

### Choosing to Trust God's Plan (Philippians 1:12)

**12 Christian brothers, I want you to know that what has happened to me has helped spread the Good News.**

How could Paul rejoice in prison? He could not go anywhere. He always had a soldier watching him. Maybe he was in pain. He was not free to do what he wanted to do. But he could still make choices. He chose to look at the good, not the bad. He chose to use his time to tell the Good News of Jesus Christ. The pain of prison was part of God's plan for Paul.

I have never been in prison. But I have been **quarantined** because of the pandemic. I was in France teaching English when it started. I had to stay away from everyone for two weeks. Both being in prison and being in quarantine mean a loss of freedom. That brings pain. But there are many differences. Here are three important differences.

First, I could spend my time doing whatever I wanted to do. Paul did not have many choices. He was being watched. He did not have a television or telephone. He did not have puzzles or many things to read.

Secondly, I was alone at all times. I could not be near anyone else. Paul was always with someone. His soldiers were sometimes chained to him. He was not alone. That is another kind of pain. This pain was also part of God's plan. Paul chose to make this a good thing. He chose to talk to these soldiers. They did not know about Jesus.

Third, I had a lot of time and was able to talk to anyone through my cell phone and computer. Paul had a lot of time, too. But he had no choice about when he could see others. Timothy came to visit him when he could. But Paul was able to write letters. Some became part of our Bible, like this one. Paul's pain did not stop him. He chose to rejoice and use his time well. God helped him to tell the Good News of Jesus to those who had power. How did God use Paul's time in prison for good?

### **Choosing to Be Changed (Philippians 1:13-14)**

**13** Everyone around here knows why I am in prison. It is because I preached about Jesus Christ. All the soldiers who work for the leader of the country know why I am here.

**14** Because of this, most of my Christian brothers have had their faith in the Lord made stronger. They have more power to preach the Word of God without fear.

Paul was doing well. He was doing God's work right where he was. Everyone around him knew why he was in prison because he told them. He was not there because he was a thief or a murderer. He could easily start talking to soldiers by telling them the story of why he was in prison. He could tell them the Good News that Jesus loves them and died for them. He could help them to become believers. This was good.

Paul's example of doing well in prison made his Christian brothers **brave**. They knew that if they went to prison for talking about Jesus, God could still do good things in their lives. Most people try not to go to prison. But these followers of Jesus learned to tell the Good News without fear. Paul was an example to them of how God could use all things for good, even prison.

### **Choosing to Ask Questions (Philippians 1:15-19)**

**15** Some are preaching because they are jealous and want to make trouble. Others are doing it for the right reason.

**16 These do it because of love. They know that I am put here to prove the Good News is true.**

**17 The others preach about Christ for what they get out of it. Their hearts are not right. They want to make me suffer while I am in prison.**

**18 What difference does it make if they pretend or if they are true? I am happy, yes, and I will keep on being happy that Christ is preached.**

**19 Because of your prayers and the help the Holy Spirit gives me, all of this will turn out for good.**

Paul was very happy that the Good News of Jesus was being preached. Some of Paul's believing friends were not happy. They thought it was bad that people were preaching when their hearts were not right. Paul had a very important question for the community in Philippi.

### Things to Think About

1. Why do you think the soldiers listened to Paul and some of them trusted in Jesus?
2. Have you ever met someone who said the right things for the wrong reasons? What happened?
3. Have you ever seen good things come from hard times? How did God make good come from bad?
4. If you are a follower of Jesus, when have you told others your story? Did they want to become a follower of Jesus after hearing your story?
5. If you are not a follower of Jesus, has anyone ever told you how they became a follower? What did you think? What do you think now?

“What difference does it make if they pretend or if they are true?” he asked (1:18). Some of those preaching were saying the right things for the wrong reasons. Both groups were telling the truth and people were trusting Jesus. This was good. This was the most important thing. We cannot know why a person is doing something good. Only God knows if their reason is good or bad. We only need to know one thing—is the Good News being preached? If it is, it is a good thing.

### Things to Remember

Paul wrote, “We know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him and are chosen to be a part of His plan” (Romans 8:28). Paul wrote these words because it was a truth that he learned when he had many things that caused him pain. He was beaten and left to die. He was on a ship that wrecked on an island. His enemies made plans to kill him. He was beaten and put in chains in prison. He saw how God used all these things in his life for good. They were for the good of others, too.

Paul wrote those words because he knew that the good and the bad were all a part of God's good plan. The pain, hard changes, and questions were needed for some to trust in Jesus. They also helped other believers to do more to preach about Jesus. This is why Paul made the choice to rejoice while in prison.

When we go through times that are hard, we can read and believe what God said through the writings of Paul. It may not be easy to see the good in what happens. We can ask God to show us the good when we cannot see it. We should ask ourselves if what is happening can help others to see and trust in Jesus. We can ask if it helps other believers to grow and be brave. If these things are true, then we can make the choice to rejoice in God's good plan!

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