

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

STUDY GUIDE

Philippians:

A Choice to Rejoice

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Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

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Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Introduction

Get ready to study the book of Philippians. Some people say Philippians is the happiest book in the Bible. You can decide for yourself after you study it!

This book is a letter to the Christians who lived in the city of Philippi in Greece. Paul started this church around the year 49 AD. It started as a small house church in the home of a woman named Lydia (see Acts 16:11-15, 40). Paul visited Philippi a few times during his mission trips. He had many friends in the Philippian church.

Paul wrote this letter to his friends for several reasons. He thanked them for their gifts. He told them of some things that happened to him in Rome. He wrote about choosing to work together in the church. He warned them against false teachers. Finally, he reminded them to choose joy even when their lives were less than joyful.

Paul knew what he was talking about because his life was hard. He wrote this letter to the Philippians while he was under arrest for preaching about Jesus. He was chained to a Roman soldier so he would not escape. Yet, Paul did not complain in his letter. He used the word *joy* nine times! Why did he have so

much joy? “I am happy, yes, and I will keep on being happy that Christ is preached” (Philippians 1:18).

Some of the most-loved verses of the Bible are found in Philippians. As you read through the verses in these 13 lessons, mark the verses you love most. Many of these verses will carry you through life’s hard times. Choose joy as you study Philippians!

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Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

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Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Word List

Lesson 1

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

Lesson 2

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

Lesson 3

determined: having a strong feeling that you are going to do something and that you will not allow anyone or anything to stop you

outcome: something that happens as a result of an activity or process

situation: all of the facts, conditions, and events that affect someone or something at a certain time and in a certain place

Lesson 4

consistently: always acting in the same way

hypocrisy: actions that do not agree with

what someone says they believe

hypocrite: someone whose actions do not agree with what they say they believe

integrity: strength and firmness of someone's actions and words; complete truth and honesty

Lesson 5

conflicts: strong disagreements between people or groups that often result in angry arguments

humble: not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people

united: working together to achieve the same purpose or goal

pandemic: an event in which a disease spreads very quickly and affects a large number of people over a wide area or throughout the world

Lesson 6

attitude: a feeling or way of thinking that affects the way someone acts

authority: the ability or right to control people or things

stubborn: refusing to change your ideas or refusing to stop doing something; difficult to deal with or to control

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Word List

Lesson 7

character: the way a person thinks, feels, and behaves; the qualities or characteristics that make a person who they are

mature: fully developed or formed; developed to a desired level

specific: special or particular; exact

tantrums: angry outbursts by a child or someone who is behaving like a child

Lesson 8

affirmed: said that something was true in a confident way

communicate: to get someone to understand your thoughts or feelings by talking, writing, or some other means

sacrifices: acts of giving up something you want to help someone else

prophet: one of the early preachers who spoke for God

Lesson 9

artificial: not natural or real; made or done to seem like something real, but still false

badge of honor: something worn to show that a person deserves respect

opinion: a belief, judgment, or way of thinking about something

substitute: a person or thing that takes the place of something else

Lesson 10

champion: someone who has won

compare: to look at two or more things closely in order to decide which one is better

unique: unlike anything or anyone else

Lesson 11

pattern: to try to be like something; to behave like a good example

perishing: those who are dying or being destroyed

standard: something that is good and that is used to determine the quality of other things

Lesson 12

book of life: the record of those who are right with God and will have life that lasts forever

Lesson 13

content: to feel peaceful happiness; to be pleased or satisfied with what one has

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Word List in Alphabetical Order

These vocabulary words can be found in the lesson listed in each definition; “L8” means Lesson 8.

affirmed: said that something was true in a confident way (L8)

artificial: not natural or real; made or done to seem like something real, but still false (L9)

attitude: a feeling or way of thinking that affects the way someone acts (L6)

authority: the ability or right to control people or things (L6)

badge of honor: something worn to show that a person deserves respect (L9)

book of life: the record of those who are right with God and will have life that lasts forever (L12)

brave: strong in heart and not showing fear (L2)

champion: someone who has won (L10)

character: the way a person thinks, feels, and behaves; the qualities or characteristics that make a person who they are (L7)

communicate: to get someone to understand your thoughts or feelings by talking, writing, or some other means (L8)

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 (L1)

compare: to look at two or more things closely in order to decide which one is better (L10)

conflicts: strong disagreements between people or groups that often result in angry arguments (L5)

consistently: always acting in the same way (L4)

content: to feel peaceful happiness; to be pleased or satisfied with what one has (L13)

determined: having a strong feeling that you are going to do something and that you will not allow anyone or anything to stop you (L3)

explain: to say what something means (L1)

humble: not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people (L5)

hypocrisy: actions that do not agree with what someone says they believe (L4)

hypocrite: someone whose actions do not agree with what they say they believe (L4)

integrity: strength and firmness of someone’s actions and words; complete truth and honesty (L4)

mature: fully developed or formed; developed to a desired level (L7)

opinion: a belief, judgment, or way of thinking about something (L9)

outcome: something that happens as a result of an activity or process (L3)

pandemic: a disease that spreads all over the world, making people sick with many dying (L2)

pandemic: an event in which a disease spreads very quickly and affects a large number of people over a wide area or throughout the world (L5)

pattern: to try to be like something; to behave like a good example (L11)

perishing: those who are dying or being destroyed (L11)

prophet: one of the early preachers who spoke for God (L8)

quarantined: staying alone in one place for a number of days or weeks to stop the spread of a disease (L2)

rejoice: to feel or show much happiness (L2)

sacrifices: acts of giving up something you want to help someone else (L8)

situation: all of the facts, conditions, and events that affect someone or something at a certain time and in a certain place (L3)

specific: special or particular; exact (L7)

standard: something that is good and that is used to determine the quality of other things (L11)

stubborn: refusing to change your ideas or refusing to stop doing something; difficult to deal with or to control (L6)

substitute: a person or thing that takes the place of something else (L9)

tantrums: angry outbursts by a child or someone who is behaving like a child (L7)

united: working together to achieve the same purpose or goal (L5)

unique: unlike anything or anyone else (L10)

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Memory Verses

Lesson 1

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

Lesson 2

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

Lesson 3

“Who can separate us from Christ’s love? Can trouble or hard times or harm or hunger? Can nakedness or danger or war? ... No! In all these things we are more than winners! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us.” (Romans 8:35, 37 NIRV)

Lesson 4

“For this reason, we always pray for you. We pray that our God will make you worth being chosen. We pray that His power will help you do the good things you want to do. We pray that your work of faith will be complete.”
(2 Thessalonians 1:11)

Lesson 5

“Nothing should be done because of pride or thinking about yourself. Think of other people as more important than yourself.”
(Philippians 2:3)

Lesson 6

“The person who thinks he is important will find out how little he is worth. The person who is not trying to honor himself will be made important.” (Matthew 23:12)

Lesson 7

“Do all things without arguing and talking about how you wish you did not have to do them.” (Philippians 2:14)

Lesson 8

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom should I send? Who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”
(Isaiah 6:8)

Lesson 9

“So now, my Christian brothers, be happy because you belong to Christ.” (Philippians 3:1a)

Lesson 10

“All these many people who have had faith in God are around us like a cloud. Let us put everything out of our lives that keeps us from doing what we should. Let us keep running in the race that God has planned for us.”
(Hebrews 12:1)

Lesson 11

“If we live in the light as He is in the light, we share what we have in God with each other. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, makes our lives clean from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

Lesson 12

“Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again, I say, be full of joy!”
(Philippians 4:4)

Lesson 13

“... I have learned to be happy with whatever I have ... I can do all things because Christ gives me the strength.” (Philippians 4:11b,13)

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

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?

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.

Philippians 1:1-11

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.

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.

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.

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.

....

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.

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!

Philippians 1:12-19

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

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.

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.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 3: A Win-Win Situation

Bible Text

Philippians 1:20-26

Memory Verse

“Who can separate us from Christ’s love? Can trouble or hard times or harm or hunger? Can nakedness or danger or war? ... No! In all these things we are more than winners! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us.” (Romans 8:35, 37 NIRV)

Word List

determined: having a strong feeling that you are going to do something and that you will not allow anyone or anything to stop you

outcome: something that happens as a result of an activity or process

situation: all of the facts, conditions, and events that affect someone or something at a certain time and in a certain place

Have you ever noticed how much we talk about sports? We even use the language of sports when we are not talking about sports. A person who is for us is “on our team” or “in our corner.” Someone might “hit a home run” by doing something well. Or we might “score” a new job or a first date.

We also talk a lot about winning and losing. We talk about winning when a person is successful. Or we describe failures as losses. Sometimes two different results might come out of a **situation**. We call it a “win-win situation” if both **outcomes** are good. This means that whatever happens will be a “win” in some way.

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from prison. We have already seen that Paul saw good things happening, even from jail. He knew that God can use bad things to bring good in our lives. And Paul was willing to go through bad things to help spread the Good News about Jesus.

Now as Paul sat in prison, he looked to the future. He did not know what was going to happen. But Paul saw his future as a “win-win” situation. How could he look so happily toward the future? He kept his eyes on his goal – Jesus. And in his eyes, the future looked good.

Two Strong Beliefs (Philippians 1:20)

20 I hope very much that I will have no reason to be ashamed. I hope to honor Christ with my body if it be by my life or by my death. I want to honor Him without fear, now and always.

Paul had lived through many troubles by the time he wrote this letter to the church

in Philippi. Now he wrote from prison. Many people would be ashamed to be in prison. But Paul was not ashamed of where he was. Most people are concerned with what others think of them. But Paul was not. In another letter, Paul wrote, “Do you think I am trying to get the favor of men, or of God? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant owned by Christ” (Galatians 1:10). Paul had one concern, and that was pleasing God. So Paul was not ashamed to be in prison for Christ.

And Paul hoped that he would never have a reason to be ashamed. He wanted to live fully for Christ. He chose to live without fear of what men might do to him. He saw no shame in suffering for Christ. But shame would come for Paul if he stopped serving Jesus and telling others about Him. So Paul was **determined** not to let anything stop him from his work of sharing the Good News.

How did Paul keep going so strongly? How did he stay so hopeful? How did he keep his focus? He had two strong beliefs that pushed him to keep going. First, he believed God’s promises of heaven. Paul’s life was changed completely when he met Jesus. Paul gave up many things like his reputation and his comfort. But what he gained was much more valuable. He gained life! Jesus held the hope of heaven. And Paul looked forward to this future with Jesus.

The other belief that strengthened Paul’s determination was his belief in his work. Jesus had given him the job of telling others the Good News. Paul knew how much the Good News had changed him. Now he wanted to share it with others so they could find the same hope, joy, and life in Christ. And Paul knew that his efforts were not wasted. He saw how God could use anything to bring good to people’s lives, even a letter written from a man in prison.

Two Ways to Win (Philippians 1:21)

21 To me, living means having Christ. To die means that I would have more of Him.

Paul knew that he would not always be in prison. He might be set free. Paul would be happy to go free so he could continue his work. Paul could go and see his brothers and sisters in places like Philippi. Freedom for Paul would be a win for Paul and for all those who loved him.

But Paul might not be set free from jail. He might be killed instead. Surely Paul’s friends worried about this. They did not want Paul to die! But Paul was not afraid to die. In fact, as he thought about it, dying did not sound too bad. He knew what would happen when he died. He would go to heaven to be with Jesus. Paul longed to be with Jesus. For Paul, death would be the bigger win.

Paul had given up his hold on life many years earlier. Paul did not just give part of his life to Christ; he gave it all. He once wrote, “I have been put up on the cross to die with Christ. I no longer live. Christ lives in me. The life I now live in this body, I live by putting my trust in the Son of God. He was the One Who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Paul did not need to hold on to his life because he trusted Jesus to take care of it for him.

Paul could not have known all the places that his life with Christ might take him. He had gone through many towns and met many people. He had been through many troubles too. Now he was in another prison, and he did not know when or if he would get out. But Paul knew how his story would end. He would see Jesus!

Paul once asked in another letter if troubles in our lives mean that Jesus no longer

loves us. Then he answered his own question: “No! In all these things we are more than winners! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us” (Romans 8:37 NIRV). Paul had joined the winning team when he gave his life to Christ.

Two Desires (Philippians 1:22-26)

22 If I keep on living here in this body, it means that I can lead more people to Christ. I do not know which is better.

23 There is a strong pull from both sides. I have a desire to leave this world to be with Christ, which is much better.

24 But it is more important for you that I stay.

25 I am sure I will live to help you grow and be happy in your faith.

26 This will give you reason to give more thanks to Christ Jesus when I come to visit you again.

Things to Think About

1. What do you know about heaven? How does the thought of heaven affect how you feel about dying?
2. Paul was changed by knowing Christ. How has Jesus changed your life? Is your life harder now? How is it better?
3. Have you ever felt a wish to die? Did it come from a sad, difficult time in your life? Where did you turn for help? How would you help someone who felt that way now?
4. How can life in Christ be compared to a race or a contest? What does it take to win?

Paul thought about the future, and he could not decide what he wanted to happen. He wanted both to go on living and to die. Paul’s wish to die was not a dark, ugly wish. This was not the same kind of feeling that pushes some people to take their own lives. No, it was a hopeful feeling. Paul looked forward to moving from this earthly life to a more joyful life with Jesus in heaven. For Paul, death meant more than being free from

the cares and troubles of this world. It meant leaving this world to be with Jesus forever!

But Paul also wanted to be set free from prison to go on living. Paul was willing to endure the troubles of this world for a while longer because of his love for others. He still had work he wanted to do. He longed to see his friends again. He desired to tell more people about Jesus. How could Paul choose between two such good outcomes? Paul gladly left the choice up to God. He would simply go where he was led and do what God had called him to do.

Things to Remember

Life is hard and full of troubles. Jesus said it would be this way (See John 16:33.) Jesus' life was hard. But He chose to come and live and die for us so that we could experience the joy and freedom of life with Him here on earth and eternity too.

We often use the language of sports to help us make sense of this life. Paul did it. And so do we. Paul knew that whether he lived or died, he would finally win. The same is true for us. If we have given our lives to Christ, we will win. Our future is safe with Him. We do not need to fear death because we have rest and rewards waiting for us in heaven. But until we get there, we have work to do. Let us be determined, as Paul was, to run and finish our race well.

Philippians 1:20-26

20 I hope very much that I will have no reason to be ashamed. I hope to honor Christ with my body if it be by my life or by my death. I want to honor Him without fear, now and always.

21 To me, living means having Christ. To die means that I would have more of Him.

22 If I keep on living here in this body, it means that I can lead more people to Christ. I do not know which is better.

23 There is a strong pull from both sides. I have a desire to leave this world to be with Christ, which is much better.

24 But it is more important for you that I stay.

25 I am sure I will live to help you grow and be happy in your faith.

26 This will give you reason to give more thanks to Christ Jesus when I come to visit you again.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 4: Stand for Your Faith

Bible Text

Philippians 1:27-30

Memory Verse

"For this reason, we always pray for you. We pray that our God will make you worth being chosen. We pray that His power will help you do the good things you want to do. We pray that your work of faith will be complete." (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

Word List

consistently: always acting in the same way

hypocrisy: actions that do not agree with what someone says they believe

hypocrite: someone whose actions do not agree with what they say they believe

integrity: strength and firmness of someone's actions and words; complete truth and honesty

hypocrisy in our own lives.

Jesus hated hypocrisy. He pointed it out in the religious leaders who argued with Him. He warned His followers not to be like the **hypocrites**. Paul was once a religious leader. He was the kind of leader that Jesus warned against. Then Jesus changed Paul. Now he was a different person. Now Paul worked hard to live a life of **integrity**. He understood the importance of making his words and actions match.

Other people are always watching what we do. They might want to know more about Jesus if they see His life in us. But sometimes people reject Jesus when they see hypocrisy in us. What we believe should change how we live. Our beliefs should direct our actions. Our love for Jesus should make us more like Him. As followers of Jesus, we must be people of integrity. Then the troubles of life will not break us. We can stand strong through any trouble if we stay true to Jesus.

Stand True (Philippians 1:27)

27 Live your lives as the Good News of Christ says you should. If I come to you or not, I want to hear that you are standing true as one. I want to hear that you are working together as one, preaching the Good News.

In Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, he wrote to his friends about his life

We all know **hypocrisy** when we see it. We see it in people whose actions do not match the words they say. It is the government leader making rules that he does not follow himself. It is the mother scolding her child for saying a word she often uses herself. Hypocrisy is ugly. We feel angry when we see it in others. Yet, we do not always see the

and about how to face trials. He was not ashamed to be writing from prison. He showed that he could find good even in his troubles. He shared how he trusted God with his future. Then he turned to write about life for his friends in Philippi. The believers there had troubles of their own.

Paul points to false teachers within the church who were pushing extra rules on Christians. They were teaching that believers had to follow all the rules of the Jewish faith, as well as follow the new teachings of Jesus. These false teachers made life hard for believers who were not Jewish first. They were dividing the church and causing trouble. Paul wrote that they should base their lives on the Good News of Christ and focus on preaching those truths.

The believers in Philippi had another problem as well. They were being treated badly by people outside the church. Other people did not like Christianity. They saw it as a threat to their businesses, their beliefs, and their own way of life. They tried to force Christians to worship pagan gods and follow their rules. Christians were then treated badly when they refused.

So, the church in Philippi had some troubles. The believers needed to come together to face these threats. They needed to be able to trust one another. Paul knew where to begin to build this trust. Each person

needed to live with integrity. They needed to stay true to Christ's teachings. And they needed to do this **consistently**. Trust would grow between the believers as they saw one another living for Christ day after day.

Stand Unafraid (Philippians 1:28)

28 Do not be afraid of those who hate you. Their hate for you proves they will be destroyed. It proves you have life from God that lasts forever.

Fear spreads easily. We have seen the fear of sickness spread across our whole world. It has caused some leaders to make harsh rules. Many people are afraid of being near other people. They fear getting sick. The fear of death is strong among people today.

But courage can also spread. One person's courage can help others grow unafraid. Paul understood that the church in Philippi needed courage to face their troubles together. He wrote, "Do not be afraid." Paul was not afraid as he wrote from prison. He knew that he would win whether he lived or died. The believers in Philippi were winners, too because of their faith in Jesus. They could have the same courage as Paul by trusting Jesus to give them strength.

The Philippian church probably felt afraid because they had enemies who hated them. The believers were hated because they

were followers of Jesus. Paul reminds them to always choose God's way of love. Hate does not come from God. Paul reminded the church that they were on the winning side. They could look forward to life with God forever. No matter what happened, good things were coming for those who stayed true to Jesus.

Stand in Suffering (Philippians 1:29)

29 You are not only to put your trust in Him, but you are to suffer for Him also.

No one wants to suffer. We all like to feel good and have an easy life. But Jesus said that we will have troubles in life. God uses those troubles to teach us and change us. And sometimes God uses our troubles to help others. Others may want what we have when they see how God helps us through our troubles.

Things to Think About

1. How do you feel when you see hypocrisy? What can you do to keep it out of your own life?
2. Do you know people of integrity that you trust? Do you think others see you as a person of integrity? Why or why not?
3. What fears are you fighting today? What teachings from the Bible give you courage and hope? How can you trust Jesus more?
4. How do people suffer for Christ today? How can you pray for believers who are suffering?
5. Have there been times in your life when others helped you through difficulties? What did they do that helped? What help can you offer someone else?

Paul learned to see the good that came from his troubles. And he wanted the believers in Philippi to learn this lesson, too. They could look at their problems and only see bad. Or they could see past their troubles to the good that God was doing. Paul said that the world's hate was proof that the believers were living for God.

Jesus said, "You will be hated by all people because of Me. But he who stays true to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22). Jesus even said that His followers should be happy to suffer for Him. He said, "You are happy when people act and talk in a bad way to you and make it very hard for you and tell bad things and lies about you because you trust in Me. Be glad and full of joy because your reward will be much in heaven" (Matthew 5:11-12a). Staying true to Jesus through suffering is hard. But believers can look forward to rewards that will last forever. We can learn to look at suffering as an honor. Suffering well makes us more like Jesus.

Stand Together (Philippians 1:30)

30 You know what the fight is like. Now it is time for you to have a part in it as I have.

During the time COVID-19 has spread through the world, we have seen a message that has also spread. People have shared the message: "We are all in this together." We do

not want to feel alone when we go through troubles. We feel stronger with other people.

Paul wrote to tell his friends that they were not alone. He knew that they were suffering. He was suffering as well. Paul's strength could help the church in Philippi stay strong. Together they could stay true to Jesus and win.

Things to Remember

The believers in Philippi needed to stand strong in their faith. They needed to trust one another to stay true. They needed to take hope and have courage. They needed to look for the good in their troubles. And they needed to stay strong together.

We can expect to have troubles, too. Our troubles may be different from what the Philippians had. But we will have troubles of our own. We can learn from Paul's message to the church. We, too, must stand for our faith. We must get rid of any hypocrisy in our lives. We must live like Jesus and stay true to His teachings. Then we can stand strong through any trouble.

Philippians 1:27-30

27 Live your lives as the Good News of Christ says you should. If I come to you or not, I want to hear that you are standing true as one. I want to hear that you are working together as one, preaching the Good News.

28 Do not be afraid of those who hate you.

Their hate for you proves they will be destroyed. It proves you have life from God that lasts forever.

29 You are not only to put your trust in Him, but you are to suffer for Him also.

30 You know what the fight is like. Now it is time for you to have a part in it as I have.

2 Thessalonians 1:11

(New International Reader's Version)

11 Keeping this in mind, we never stop praying for you. Our God has chosen you. We pray that he will make you worthy of his choice. We pray that he will make every good thing you want to do come true. We pray that he will do this by his power. We pray that he will make perfect all that you have done by faith.

2 Thessalonians 1:11

(New Century Version)

11 That is why we always pray for you, asking our God to help you live the kind of life he called you to live. We pray that with his power God will help you do the good things you want and perform the works that come from your faith.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 5: United by God's Spirit

Bible Text

Philippians 2:1-4

Memory Verse

"Nothing should be done because of pride or thinking about yourself. Think of other people as more important than yourself." (Philippians 2:3)

Word List

conflicts: strong disagreements between people or groups that often result in angry arguments

humble: not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people

united: working together to achieve the same purpose or goal

pandemic: an event in which a disease spreads very quickly and affects a large number of people over a wide area or throughout the world

My children are growing up in a large family. My husband and I have six children. There are three boys and three girls in our family. There are many blessings that come from living in a large family. The children always have someone to play with. There is a sense of belonging that comes from being part

of a large group. A large family can provide a large support system. There are many people in our home to share the workload. We make a whole cheering section whenever the kids play sports or perform on stage. We have made many good memories together.

But living in a large family is not always easy. All eight of us are different. Sometimes we want different things. We do not always agree. Living in a large family means there are many chances for **conflicts**. For example, it can be difficult to get everyone to agree on a restaurant. It can be hard for us to find a movie that everyone will enjoy. It can be a challenge for everyone to follow the same schedule. It is not always easy for family members to show kindness and patience to each other. These are the kinds of conflict we face every day in our family.

In a large family, not every person can have what they want all the time. Family members often have to sacrifice what they want for the sake of the family group. This might mean sacrificing time or money. This might mean sacrificing something they want or need. It takes a lot of work for any family to stay **united**.

God's church is like a family. Families are a beautiful blessing. That does not mean that living in a family is always easy. Paul

understood this when he wrote to the church in Philippi. He knew it was important for the church to be united. And he offered wise advice to the Philippians about staying united through God's Spirit.

God Unites His Church (Philippians 2:1-2)

1 Are you strong because you belong to Christ? Does His love comfort you? Do you have joy by being as one in sharing the Holy Spirit? Do you have loving-kindness and pity for each other?

2 Then give me true joy by thinking the same thoughts. Keep having the same love. Be as one in thoughts and actions.

Paul started the church in Philippi with a small group of people in Lydia's home (Acts 16:40). He wrote this letter to the Philippian church about ten years later. The church was small when it first started. By the time Paul wrote this letter, it had grown. The church was bigger now. And the church faced new problems as it grew. In the first chapter of Philippians, Paul gave some important advice to this growing church. He said the Philippians should:

- work together as one to preach the Good News (Philippians 1:27).

- not be afraid of those who hate them (Philippians 1:28).
- trust God and be willing to suffer for Him (Philippians 1:30).

Paul asked the Philippians some important questions. These questions could only be answered with a *yes* or a *no*. Paul knew how the Philippians would answer these questions. He knew that the answer was a strong *yes*. He asked these questions to remind the Philippians about some important things they already knew:

- Christ made them strong and comforted them.
- God's Holy Spirit brought them joy.
- God wanted them to show kindness to each other.

These were things they did not argue about. These were things they all knew were true. These were important things that would keep them together.

Yes, these truths would keep the Philippian church united. These truths would help them to keep "thinking the same thoughts" and "having the same love" for each other (v. 2). Paul reminded them that God's church should "be as one in [their] thoughts and actions" (v. 2). The church is the family of God. Paul knew that the church could only stay together if it focused on God.

The people of God are members of His family, the church. People often want to do their own thing and go their own way. They often want to please themselves. When that happens in the church, God's family cannot stay together. When that happens, the church cannot stay strong. But God never changes. He is strong and steady. When God's church stays focused on Him, they stay strong together. God wants His church to act and think like He does. Then God's church will be united.

Being Humble Brings Unity (Philippians 2:3-4)

3 Nothing should be done because of pride or thinking about yourself. Think of other people as more important than yourself.

4 Do not always be thinking about your own plans only. Be happy to know what other people are doing.

Things to Think About

1. How is God's church like a family?
2. What do you think are some of the biggest challenges to unity in the church?
3. Have you ever known a person who showed true humility? Tell the class about that person
4. Have you ever known a deeply prideful person? Describe how you experienced this person.
5. What are some needs in your community that local churches could unite to meet?

What does it mean to be **humble**? Paul answered this question clearly. Being humble means that “nothing should be done because of pride or thinking about yourself” (v. 4). Pride makes a person focus only on himself or herself. Pride causes people to make their own needs more important than the needs of others. Pride makes people think they are better than other people. Pride takes the focus off God. Pride makes people place the focus on themselves. Sadly, pride keeps God's church from having unity.

People who focus only on themselves find it hard to get along with others. They fight for what they want. They argue when someone disagrees. They may even hurt others just to get their own way. Pride often causes division and pain. These things are not part of God's character. These things do not show the world what God is truly like. Paul knew these are not the things God wants for His church.

Even more, Paul knew that pride never brings joy. He knew that focusing on “other people” is the only way to really “be happy” (v. 4). Those who focus only on themselves are often the most unhappy people you will ever meet. A life of pride is not a life that honors God. When God's people live humble lives, they experience both unity and joy.

Things to Remember

Paul gave strong reminders and wise advice to the church in Philippi. His advice made the church strong. His advice helped the church minister to others. A humble church is a healthy church. A humble church has a better chance to see and meet the needs of others. Without unity, the church cannot reach the world. Without being humble, the church cannot have unity. Paul understood this was God's will for His church.

As this lesson is being written, there is a worldwide **pandemic** happening. Businesses have closed. Schools have closed. Events are cancelled. Laws are changing. Nothing seems safe or secure. People are sick. People are hurting. People are afraid. People are alone. People are in need.

Paul's advice to the Philippians is important for the church today. God wants to use His church to meet the needs of the world. Now is the time for God's people to be united. It is not the time for God's people to focus only on themselves. It is not the time to be selfish. It is time to be generous. It is time to meet the needs of others in the name of Jesus. May God strengthen and unite His church around the world through the power of His Holy Spirit!

Philippians 2:1-4

- 1 Are you strong because you belong to Christ? Does His love comfort you? Do you have joy by being as one in sharing the Holy Spirit? Do you have loving-kindness and pity for each other?**
- 2 Then give me true joy by thinking the same thoughts. Keep having the same love. Be as one in thoughts and actions.**
- 3 Nothing should be done because of pride or thinking about yourself. Think of other people as more important than yourself.**
- 4 Do not always be thinking about your own plans only. Be happy to know what other people are doing.**

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 6: Follow Jesus' Example

Bible Text

Philippians 2:5-11

Memory Verse

"The person who thinks he is important will find out how little he is worth. The person who is not trying to honor himself will be made important." (Matthew 23:12)

Word List

attitude: a feeling or way of thinking that affects the way someone acts

authority: the ability or right to control people or things

stubborn: refusing to change your ideas or refusing to stop doing something; difficult to deal with or to control

very badly. He yelled at the teacher. He fought with other students. Bill would not calm down. He would not stop his bad behavior. The teacher spent 30 minutes focusing on the problems Bill caused. The teacher could not teach the class. The other students could not work or learn during this time. Even the school principal could not correct Bill's behavior. It was a negative experience for the whole class.

After this problem, the teacher learned something about Bill. If Bill started the class with a good **attitude**, then class went well that day. If Bill started class with an angry attitude, problems lasted all class period.

Bill and his teachers took action to change and improve his attitude in the classroom. For example, the teacher began to talk and joke with Bill before class each day. This made Bill laugh and smile. Then things would go well during class that day. Another teacher took time to talk with Bill about his favorite sports team before class. This made a difference in Bill's attitude each day. These teachers helped Bill succeed by shaping his attitude in their classrooms.

A person's attitude can determine his or her success. The same thing is true for Christians. Paul understood this. He knew that a Christian's attitude in life is very important. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, Paul

A middle school teacher had a very challenging student in his class. We will call this student Bill. Bill was very **stubborn**. He was often angry. He rarely got along with the teacher. He often caused trouble with other students, too. He did not show respect to his teacher or his classmates.

During one class period, Bill behaved

encouraged each person to look at his or her own attitude. Paul encouraged members of the church to have the attitude of Christ.

Think Like Christ (Philippians 2:5-7)

5 Think as Christ Jesus thought.

6 Jesus has always been as God is. But He did not hold to His rights as God.

7 He put aside everything that belonged to Him and made Himself the same as a servant who is owned by someone. He became human by being born as a man.

Attitude begins with the mind and thoughts. The thoughts you think affect your attitude. Paul saw this truth clearly. He reminded the Philippians that their thoughts would determine their attitude. He pointed to Christ as an example. He commanded the Philippians to “think as Christ Jesus thought” (v. 5). This meant that the things that were important to Jesus should also be important to the Philippian Christians.

So what was important to Jesus? Jesus became a servant (v. 7). Even though Jesus was fully God, He gave up everything that belonged to Him. He left heaven and came to earth. He left the presence of God to enter this fallen world. Jesus was God, but He became a man. He experienced the same

things all people experience. Hebrews 4:15 states that He “understands how weak we are. [He] was tempted in every way we are tempted, but He did not sin.” When He became a man, Jesus gave up “everything that belonged to Him” (v. 7). This kind of sacrifice shows that Christ was a humble servant.

As a servant, Jesus thought of others. He thought of their needs. He thought of their problems. He thought of God’s love for them. He thought of God’s plans for them. Jesus put others before Himself. Paul knew that the Philippians must think of others, too. They must think this way in order to reflect the attitude and life of Christ.

Be Humble Like Christ (Philippians 2:8)

8 After He became a man, He gave up His important place and obeyed by dying on a cross.

As a servant, Jesus lived a humble life. Jesus dying on the cross is strongest proof of His humility. In choosing to die on the cross, Jesus obeyed God the Father. Jesus died on the cross to save people from the punishment of sin. Jesus never sinned. He did not deserve to be punished for other people’s sins. But Jesus did not focus on Himself. He did not focus on the honor and glory He deserved. Instead, He focused on others. He obeyed

God's plan. He died on the cross. He made a way for all people to be saved from the punishment of sin. Jesus was the humble servant of all mankind.

Bring Honor to Christ (Philippians 2:9-11)

9 Because of this, God lifted Jesus high above everything else. He gave Him a name that is greater than any other name.

10 So when the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow down before Him.

11 And every tongue will say Jesus Christ is Lord. Everyone will give honor to God the Father.

God honored Jesus' obedience and sacrifice. God gave Jesus the honor and status that is above all others. Jesus is above all

Things to Think About

1. A person's attitude determines his or her success. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

2. How do we know that being a servant was important to Jesus?

3. Define *humility* in your own words.

4. Tell about a time that obedience to God brought you honor or reward.

5. Think about a struggle you are facing. What would it look like to follow Jesus' example in this struggle?

people of all time and every place. In all of history, there is no greater name than the name of Jesus (v. 9). Jesus' high honor will never end and will have no limits.

Paul stated that "everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow down before [Jesus]" (v. 10). The act of bowing shows an understanding of power and authority. The idea that all people will bow down before Jesus shows His power. It shows Jesus has the full **authority** of God. Because Jesus has God's strong authority, He is called "Lord" (v. 11). Other words for *Lord* are *master, boss, ruler, or king*. Jesus' obedience and suffering brought Him much honor, glory, and power. Even more, God the Father is honored when people see Jesus' power.

When Christians live humbly, they show the attitude of Christ. A Christian's acts of service point to Jesus' power in his or her life. When Christians show Jesus' great power, they bring honor to God Himself. Paul's words reminded the Philippians that this is God's will for all Christians.

Things to Remember

Paul's letter encouraged the church in Philippi by pointing them to Jesus. He urged them to follow Jesus's strong example. The church needed to grow in love, service, and humility. These things would make them stronger. These things would keep them

united. These things would help them to honor God.

Love, service, and humility are the marks of a person who follows Jesus. If Christians follow this example, they will find true joy. They will also bring joy to others. Paul knew this was true.

Paul experienced this joy in his own life. He experienced this joy even as he wrote this letter while he was a prisoner in Rome. As a Roman prisoner, Paul showed love to those who guarded him. He served the Christians in Philippi by praying for them and writing to encourage them. He did not think about his own troubles. Instead, he humbly served those around him. Paul followed the example of Christ even when things were hard in his life.

What hard things are you facing? In your troubles, are you following Jesus' example like Paul did? Are you thinking the way Jesus thought? Are you acting with humility instead of feeling sorry for yourself? Are you honoring Christ by obeying God in the middle of your suffering? Be encouraged by Jesus' example and live like He did. When you do, "you are standing under the powerful hand of God. At the right time He will lift you up" (1 Peter 5:6). Remember that God gave Jesus much honor and glory at the right time. He will reward you, too!

Philippians 2:5-11

5 Think as Christ Jesus thought.

6 Jesus has always been as God is. But He did not hold to His rights as God.

7 He put aside everything that belonged to Him and made Himself the same as a servant who is owned by someone. He became human by being born as a man.

8 After He became a man, He gave up His important place and obeyed by dying on a cross.

9 Because of this, God lifted Jesus high above everything else. He gave Him a name that is greater than any other name.

10 So when the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow down before Him.

11 And every tongue will say Jesus Christ is Lord. Everyone will give honor to God the Father.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 7: **Growing in Obedience**

Bible Text

Philippians 2:12-18

Memory Verse

"Do all things without arguing and talking about how you wish you did not have to do them." (Philippians 2:14)

Word List

character: the way a person thinks, feels, and behaves; the qualities or characteristics that make a person who they are

mature: fully developed or formed; developed to a desired level

specific: special or particular; exact

tantrums: angry outbursts by a child or someone who is behaving like a child

The days are long, but the years are short. When I was a young parent, a wise friend shared this statement with me. When she said this, I understood what she meant. My five oldest children are only six years apart in age. The daily work it took to parent my young children could be exhausting. Every day there were meals to cook. There were messes

to clean. There were diapers to change and laundry to do. There were cries to soothe and **tantrums** to calm. There were lessons to teach and games to play. There were errands to run and chores to do. These things kept me busy from early in the morning until late at night. Sometimes the days seemed very long and full of work. At the end of each day, I was tired!

But my friend's advice pointed out something else that was true. My children will only live in my house for a small portion of their lives. The time I have to parent them will pass by very quickly. The years will pass by quicker than I realize. I know that this is true. In fact, this fall we will drop off two of our children at college. And two more will graduate in the next two years. My college-aged children live away from home most of the year. Indeed, the years have gone by very quickly in my memory. To me, it seems like only a short time ago when these children were playing in my backyard.

Parents know they have a limited number of years to instruct and teach their children. As we launch our children into the adult world, I sometimes worry: *Have we taught them what they need to know? Have we trained them to have strong character? Have we shown them how to follow Jesus? Will they remember what we taught them?*

The church in Philippi was the first church Paul helped to start in Europe. Paul loved this church the way a parent loves a child. He helped formed this church from its beginning. He prayed for this church. He encouraged this church. He corrected the church when they made mistakes. As the church grew, Paul could not always be with them. His letter to the Philippians is full of advice. It is the kind of advice a parent gives a child who is growing up. Paul gave advice to help the Philippian church as it is grew up. It is the kind of advice that helped the Philippians become **mature** believers.

God Works In A Christian's Life (Philippians 2:12-13)

12 My Christian friends, you have obeyed me when I was with you. You have obeyed even more when I have been away. You must keep on working to show you have been saved from the punishment of sin. Be afraid that you may not please God.

13 He is working in you. God is helping you obey Him. God is doing what He wants done in you.

Following Jesus is like walking on a narrow path. Jesus said it like this in Matthew 7:13-14: “The door is wide and the road is easy that leads to hell. Many people

are going through that door. But the door is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life that lasts forever. Few people are finding it.” Paul knew it would be easy for the church to go away from Jesus’ teaching. It is very different from the way the world lives.

Paul encouraged the Philippians to keep following Jesus. He wanted them to keep growing. This is what he meant when he said “keep on working to show you have been saved from the punishment of sin” (v. 12). God’s work in a Christian’s life begins by saving them from the punishment of sin. But that is just the beginning. God keeps on working in a Christian’s life. God is not pleased when a Christian does not grow in faith (v. 12).

The Christian life begins with faith in Christ and continues with obedience to Christ. When a Christian grows in obedience to Christ, he shows that God has saved him from the punishment of sin. Christians only grow with God’s help. This is why a Christian must always depend on God. A Christian depends on God to save him from the punishment of sin. A Christian also depends on God to live a life of obedience. Paul reminded the Philippians that this is what God “wants done” in every Christian’s life (v. 13).

Obedience Shines Like a Light (Philippians 2:14-16)

14 Be glad you can do the things you should be doing. Do all things without arguing and talking about how you wish you did not have to do them.

15 In that way, you can prove yourselves to be without blame. You are God's children and no one can talk against you, even in a sin-loving and sin-sick world. You are to shine as lights among the sinful people of this world.

16 Take a strong hold on the Word of Life. Then when Christ comes again, I will be happy that I did not work with you for nothing.

The Philippians were already obeying the things they understood about Jesus' teaching. Paul wanted the Philippians to keep pleasing God. Paul knew that greater obedience would bring the Philippians greater

Things to Think About

1. What important advice did your parents or grandparents give you when you were growing up?
2. Why is it important for a Christian to keep growing in obedience?
3. What was Paul's specific advice to the Philippians?
4. How has obeying God brought you joy?
5. How are obedient Christians like lights shining in the darkness?

blessings. He encouraged them to grow in obedience. His advice was very **specific**.

Paul urged the church at Philippi to obey without complaining. He told them to obey "without arguing" (v. 14). This kind of cheerful obedience would honor God. With this kind of obedience, they would "shine as lights among the sinful people of this world" (v. 15). Not only would this honor God, it would draw others to Jesus. It would also bring Paul great happiness and joy.

Paul Rejoices in Gods Work (Philippians 2:17-18)

17 Even if I give my life as a gift on the altar to God for you, I am glad and share this joy with you.

18 You must be happy and share your joy with me also.

Paul gave His life to telling others about the Good News of Jesus. Even as Paul wrote to the Philippians, he was a Roman prisoner. He was in chains for preaching about Jesus. This was the kind of obedience that God worked in Paul's life. Most people do not take joy in suffering. But Paul was glad to suffer so that people could hear the Good News about Jesus.

God was at work in Paul's life. God was also at work in the lives of the Philippians. Paul wanted to rejoice with them

about all God was doing. God was working in their lives to make them more holy. God was working in their lives to make them more like Him. God was also working *through* their lives. He was working through them to bring other people to Himself. God's work brings joy. This is what mature Christians experience as they grow.

Things to Remember

The Christian life begins by faith when a person asks God to forgive him and save him from the punishment of sin. This is just the beginning of the Christian journey. God works to help Christians grow and mature in their faith. If Christians stop growing and maturing, it is a serious thing. The church suffers. People who need to know Jesus suffer. And God is not pleased.

Paul's advice to the church in Philippi is important to Christians today. Many Christians have lost the joy that comes with growing obedience. Many churches have lost opportunities to share the Good News about Jesus. The world needs strong, healthy churches. Strong, healthy churches are full of obedient, growing Christians. Ask God for grace and help to grow in obedience. Then you will "shine as lights" that shine bright "in a sin-loving and sin-sick world" (Philippians 1:15).

Philippians 2:12-18

12 My Christian friends, you have obeyed me when I was with you. You have obeyed even more when I have been away. You must keep on working to show you have been saved from the punishment of sin. Be afraid that you may not please God.

13 He is working in you. God is helping you obey Him. God is doing what He wants done in you.

14 Be glad you can do the things you should be doing. Do all things without arguing and talking about how you wish you did not have to do them.

15 In that way, you can prove yourselves to be without blame. You are God's children and no one can talk against you, even in a sin-loving and sin-sick world. You are to shine as lights among the sinful people of this world.

16 Take a strong hold on the Word of Life. Then when Christ comes again, I will be happy that I did not work with you for nothing.

17 Even if I give my life as a gift on the altar to God for you, I am glad and share this joy with you.

18 You must be happy and share your joy with me also.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 8: Sent to Serve

Bible Text

Philippians 2:19-30

Memory Verse

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,
'Whom should I send? Who will go for Us?' Then
I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" (Isaiah 6:8)

Word List

affirmed: said that something was true in a confident way

communicate: to get someone to understand your thoughts or feelings by talking, writing, or some other means

sacrifices: acts of giving up something you want to help someone else

prophet: one of the early preachers who spoke for God

In college, I studied in Europe for a few months. It was a great experience for me. I travelled to several countries. I visited important places. I saw the Eiffel Tower. I saw the town where Shakespeare lived. I visited the battlefields of World War I. I learned a lot from my trip. I ate new foods and met new people. I had new experiences. The time I

spent studying abroad helped me grow in many ways.

To go on this trip, I had to leave my family and friends. At that time, there was little access to email. There were few cell phones. There was no texting. The only ways to keep in touch were phone calls or letters. International phone calls were very expensive. And letters or postcards took a long time to reach home. Things are quite different today. Text, email, and video calls can instantly connect people around the world. But those things did not exist 25 or 30 years ago. And they certainly did not exist during Bible times.

When the church at Philippi began, things were quite different than they are today. It was hard to **communicate** with people far away. This had to be done by writing letters. There were no computer printers or typewriters. These letters were handwritten. There were no cars or airplanes to carry mail. These letters were carried by hand from place to place.

Paul helped begin the church at Philippi. Then he did not see the Philippians for a very long time. It was many, many years. He could not call, email, or text them. But he wanted the church to know that he remembered them. He wanted to share words of encouragement with the church. He wanted

to remind the church that they were important to him. So he wrote a letter to them. He sent two special messengers to them. These messengers delivered Paul's letter. And Paul also wanted these messengers to minister to the Philippians.

A Friend to Paul (Philippians 2:19-23)

- 19 I hope by the help of the Lord Jesus that I can send Timothy to you soon. It will comfort me when he brings news about you.**
- 20 I have no one else who is as interested in you as Timothy.**
- 21 Everyone else thinks of himself instead of Jesus Christ.**
- 22 You know how Timothy proved to be such a true friend to me when we preached the Good News. He was like a son helping his father.**
- 23 I hope to send Timothy as soon as I know what they are going to do to me.**

Paul wanted to visit the Philippians himself. But Paul could not visit the Philippians because he was a prisoner in Rome. He was waiting for his trial to begin. He did not know how long he would remain a prisoner. He did not know if he would ever be able to visit Philippi again. Still, he wanted to know how things were going at the Philippians' church. So Paul made a plan.

Paul decided to send his friend Timothy to visit the Philippians. Paul trusted Timothy. Timothy cared deeply about the Philippians (v. 20). He would go to Philippi. He would learn what was happening in the church. He would take Paul's message. He would encourage them by preaching the Good News. Later, Timothy would return to Paul with news about the Philippian church. This would be a great comfort to Paul (v. 19).

A Faithful Servant (Philippians 2:24-27)

- 24 I hope by the help of the Lord that I can come soon also.**
- 25 I thought it was right that I send Epaphroditus back to you. You helped me by sending him to me. We have worked together like brothers. He was like a soldier fighting beside me.**
- 26 He has been wanting to see all of you and was troubled because you heard he was sick.**
- 27 It is true, he was sick. Yes, he almost died, but God showed loving-kindness to him and to me. If he had died, I would have had even more sorrow.**
- 28 This is all the more reason I have sent him to you. When you see him, you will be glad and I will have less sorrow.**

Paul planned for Epaphroditus to go to Philippi with Timothy. The Philippians sent Epaphroditus to Paul when they heard he was in prison. The Philippians loved Paul deeply. That is why they sent Epaphroditus to be Paul's helper. Epaphroditus became very sick on his visit to help Paul (v. 26). Epaphroditus did not want the Philippians to worry about him. He did not want them to doubt his faithfulness to ministry. Paul **affirmed** that Epaphroditus was healthy, well, and serving strongly alongside him.

Paul called Epaphroditus a "brother" (v. 25). Paul described him as "a soldier fighting beside [him]" (v. 25). Paul wanted the Philippians to understand that Epaphroditus was a faithful servant. "Working together" with Epaphroditus brought Paul much joy (v. 25). Even though he was sick and far from home, Epaphroditus served God by helping Paul. Both

Epaphroditus and Timothy set fine examples for Christians to follow.

A Joyful Welcome (Philippians 2:29-30)

29 Take him into your church with joy. Show respect for men like him.
30 He came close to death while working for Christ. He almost died doing things for me that you could not do.

Paul gave the Philippians a command concerning Epaphroditus. Paul told them to "take him into your church with joy" (v. 29). Paul wanted them to give Epaphroditus a warm welcome. He wanted the Philippians to show honor and "respect" to Epaphroditus (v. 29). They should embrace him when he returned.

Paul felt strongly about Epaphroditus. He shared these feelings with the Philippians. He wanted them to understand how Epaphroditus had risked his life. He wanted them to understand the **sacrifices** Epaphroditus made on their behalf. Paul's instructions remind all Christians to honor and respect those who minister to others.

Things to Think About

1. What are your favorite ways to communicate with friends and family who are far away?
2. What made Timothy a valuable friend to Paul?
3. Which of Epaphroditus' qualities do you most admire?
4. In what ways can you show honor, respect, and support for those who minister to others?
5. Where do you think God wants to send you to minister to others?

Things to Remember

Paul travelled to Philippi to help start a church there. Epaphroditus travelled from Philippi to Rome to minister to Paul. Timothy

would travel from Rome on Paul's behalf to minister to the Philippians. These are strong examples of ministry for Christians to follow today.

However, Christians today do not need to travel long distances to minister to others. Each day, Christians are surrounded by chances to encourage others and meet their needs. A Christian can simply walk next door or go across the street to share a meal or a kind word with someone. A Christian can just step into the office of a co-worker to listen or pray. A Christian does not even have to leave her house in order to engage in ministry. She can send a Bible verse to encourage someone via text, email, or direct message. She can pick up a cell phone and call to check on someone from her car. These are simple acts of ministry.

God wants to send Christians to minister everywhere. Are you looking for places to go in the name of Jesus? Are you willing to go? Ask God to give you a heart like the **prophet** Isaiah's. When God asks, be ready with Isaiah's reply: "Here I am. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8).

Philippians 2:19-30

19 I hope by the help of the Lord Jesus that I can send Timothy to you soon. It will comfort me when he brings news about you.

20 I have no one else who is as interested in you as Timothy.

21 Everyone else thinks of himself instead of Jesus Christ.

22 You know how Timothy proved to be such a true friend to me when we preached the Good News. He was like a son helping his father.

23 I hope to send Timothy as soon as I know what they are going to do to me.

24 I hope by the help of the Lord that I can come soon also.

25 I thought it was right that I send Epaphroditus back to you. You helped me by sending him to me. We have worked together like brothers. He was like a soldier fighting beside me.

26 He has been wanting to see all of you and was troubled because you heard he was sick.

27 It is true, he was sick. Yes, he almost died, but God showed loving-kindness to him and to me. If he had died, I would have had even more sorrow.

28 This is all the more reason I have sent him to you. When you see him, you will be glad and I will have less sorrow.

29 Take him into your church with joy. Show respect for men like him.

30 He came close to death while working for Christ. He almost died doing things for me that you could not do.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 9: Lose to Win

Bible Text

Philippians 3:1-11

Memory Verse

"So now, my Christian brothers, be happy because you belong to Christ." (Philippians 3:1a)

Word List

artificial: not natural or real; made or done to seem like something real, but still false

badge of honor: something worn to show that a person deserves respect

opinion: a belief, judgment, or way of thinking about something

substitute: a person or thing that takes the place of something else

My garden is never finished. I must work every day to have a beautiful garden. But I love doing it. There is always something new and exciting to see. I have some of my best prayer times with the Lord there. The garden is filled with joy. The butterflies and birds and bees love the flowers. I work to pull the weeds and water the plants. But this work is good for me. And it is good for the garden.

Sometimes I want an easier way to have a garden. **Artificial** flowers would be easier to use. They would never die. Maybe I could cover the ground with cement so the weeds could not grow through. Animals and insects would not bother an artificial garden.

But there is no **substitute** for real life. Artificial flowers never grow or change with the seasons. They do not have the smell of God's flowers. The butterflies would not come. The hummingbirds would not drink from them. Bees would not make honey. There would be no life in that garden.

Paul's letter to the church in Philippi is filled with joy. He used the words *joy*, *happy*, and *rejoice* nine times in the first two chapters. Paul told his readers again and again to find their joy in real life with God. He warned them to never trust in artificial things. Joy and life come from Christ alone. There is no substitute for a relationship with Christ.

How to Lose by Winning

(Philippians 3:1-6)

1 So now, my Christian brothers, be happy because you belong to Christ. It is not hard for me to write the same things to you. It is good for you.

2 Watch out for false teachers. Watch out for sinful men. They want you to depend on the religious act of becoming a Jew for your hope.

3 The act of becoming a Jew has nothing to do with us becoming Christians. We worship God through His Spirit and are proud of Jesus Christ. We have no faith in what we ourselves can do.

4 I could have reason to trust in the flesh. If anyone could feel that the flesh could do something for him, I could.

5 I went through the religious act of becoming a Jew when I was eight days old. I was born a Jew and came from the family group of Benjamin. I was a Jewish son of Jewish parents. I belonged to the group of the proud religious law-keepers.

6 I followed my religion with all my heart and did everything I could to make it hard for the church. No one could say anything against the way I obeyed the Law.

Paul used very strong words to describe the false teachers. In Greek, he called them dogs. These were not pets, but wild, dangerous animals. He said they were sinful men who do evil things.

The false teachers put their trust in the wrong things. They said that a person could only be a child of God if they became a Jew. That meant everyone would have to follow the laws the Jews had made. They said only Jews were true children of God. But “God

loved the *world* so much that He gave His only Son” (John 3:16). His love is for every person on earth. The real children of God worship God by His Holy Spirit.

The false teachers followed their rules to be seen by men. They wanted everyone to know how hard they worked at their religion. Their actions were like **badges of honor**. They trusted these things to make them right with God. Their lives looked good on the outside but did not lead to life with God. They were proud to prove in their bodies they were Jews. They depended on their family history and the religion of the Jews to make them right with God. The **opinions** of other people mattered more to them than what God said.

Paul said if anyone had a right to trust these things, he did. Paul would win if this was a contest. He was born a Jew in the nation of Jews. His family came from the faithful tribe of Benjamin. Paul belonged to the group of the best law-keepers. And no one worked harder at his religion than Paul. He put a lot of energy into his religion. He thought he was pleasing God when he put followers of Jesus in jail. No one could say anything against how well Paul followed the Law.

Today, we still struggle with these same kinds of false beliefs. Today some churches believe that one must do certain things to be a true believer. These things we do with our bodies cannot make us right with God. Some

people depend on their family history to make them right with God. Even the best family cannot pass down a relationship with Christ. We all must choose to follow Christ for ourselves. We even think our church is the best and other churches are wrong. It is Jesus that makes people and churches right with God. Then some of us believe we are surely God's true children if we work hard in the church. We can be like Paul and put a lot of energy into the wrong things. We can win the good opinions of other people and lose a relationship with God. We lose when our hearts are full of sin and pride. Paul said, "Watch out!"

How to Win by Losing (Philippians 3:7-11)

- 7 But I gave up those things that were so important to me for Christ.**
- 8 Even more than that, I think of everything as worth nothing. It is so much better to know Christ Jesus my Lord. I have lost everything for**

Things to Think About

1. Are there worthless things in your life that you trust to give you a relationship with Christ?
2. Have you experienced the joy and peace of Christ for yourself?
3. What have you given up to gain God's forgiveness, peace, and joy?
4. How are you growing in Christ every day?

Him. And I think of these things as worth nothing so that I can have Christ.

9 I want to be as one with Him. I could not be right with God by what the Law said I must do.

I was made right with God by faith in Christ.

10 I want to know Him. I want to have the same power in my life that raised Jesus from the dead. I want to understand and have a share in His sufferings and be like Christ in His death.

11 Then I may be raised up from among the dead.

At one time, Paul thought his actions were badges of honor, too. He was proud. But all these efforts could not bring him into a relationship with God. He was at war with God. He won peace and joy only in Christ. Paul walked away from that old life. He buried it like trash. He counted it all as a loss. Then Paul spent his life seeking to know Christ more and more.

Paul said, "I want to be as one with Him." He was willing and eager to be one with Christ even if it meant suffering. He wanted to be like Christ even in His death. Paul wanted to be raised from the dead works of the flesh to win life in Christ forever. What peace comes when we give up what is worthless and simply trust what Christ has done. What joy comes from living with Jesus every day.

Things to Remember

Today people are looking for joy and peace in all the wrong places. We can lose our joy over things that really do not count. Our religion, nation, family, and work can keep us busy. But those things cannot make us happy. What other people think about us will not get us to heaven. When we come to Christ, we lose everything we have. We lose worry, guilt, pride, and work. We give up our opinions and agree with God. Then He gives us peace, joy, forgiveness, and a life full of God's purposes.

Philippians 3:1-11

- 1 So now, my Christian brothers, be happy because you belong to Christ. It is not hard for me to write the same things to you. It is good for you.**
- 2 Watch out for false teachers. Watch out for sinful men. They want you to depend on the religious act of becoming a Jew for your hope.**
- 3 The act of becoming a Jew has nothing to do with us becoming Christians. We worship God through His Spirit and are proud of Jesus Christ. We have no faith in what we ourselves can do.**
- 4 I could have reason to trust in the flesh. If anyone could feel that the flesh could do something for him, I could.**

5 I went through the religious act of becoming a Jew when I was eight days old. I was born a Jew and came from the family group of Benjamin. I was a Jewish son of Jewish parents. I belonged to the group of the proud religious law-keepers.

6 I followed my religion with all my heart and did everything I could to make it hard for the church. No one could say anything against the way I obeyed the Law.

7 But I gave up those things that were so important to me for Christ.

8 Even more than that, I think of everything as worth nothing. It is so much better to know Christ Jesus my Lord. I have lost everything for Him. And I think of these things as worth nothing so that I can have Christ.

9 I want to be as one with Him. I could not be right with God by what the Law said I must do. I was made right with God by faith in Christ.

10 I want to know Him. I want to have the same power in my life that raised Jesus from the dead. I want to understand and have a share in His sufferings and be like Christ in His death.

11 Then I may be raised up from among the dead.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 10: Keep Going

Bible Text

Philippians 3:12-16

Memory Verse

"All these many people who have had faith in God are around us like a cloud. Let us put everything out of our lives that keeps us from doing what we should. Let us keep running in the race that God has planned for us." (Hebrews 12:1)

Word List

champion: someone who has won

compare: to look at two or more things closely in order to decide which one is better

unique: unlike anything or anyone else

Derek Redmond was expected to win a medal in the Olympic Games in 1992. He needed to win three races to win a medal. He was the fastest runner in the first race. But in the second race, a muscle in the back of his leg tore, and he fell to the ground in great pain. The other runners ran past him. Some officials tried to make him get off the track. He was in terrible pain. But Derek had worked hard to get to the Olympic games. He did not want to quit. So, he pulled himself up and began to

limp one painful step at a time. Then he heard his father's voice. Jim Redmond left the crowd in the stands and ran to the side of his son. Derek wept over the race he knew he had lost. But the father put his arms around his son and said, "Derek, you are a **champion**." Together they began to press on to the finish line. The crowd of 65,000 people stood to their feet and cheered father and son for their courage and love.

The officials said that Derek's race did not count. He could not have the help of his father. He could not win a medal. But Derek won far more than a medal that day. He would never forget how brave and loving his father was. He would never forget those people who encouraged him to keep running.

As followers of Christ, we are running a race. Our race is not about medals. We run to please our Father. We all face problems and hard times along the way. Some people will tell us to quit. But our Father walks beside us. He holds us in His mighty hands. We know His love for us. He finished His work to save our souls through His Son, Jesus Christ. Our goal is to be like Jesus and please our Father. We have a great crowd of people who have run the race before us. They encourage us to keep running the race that God has planned for us (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Keep Going (Philippians 3:12)

12 I do not say that I have received this or have already become perfect. But I keep going on to make that life my own as Christ Jesus made me His own.

In verse 8 of this chapter, we learned that Paul's goal in life was "to know Christ Jesus my Lord." Jesus became Paul's Lord the day Paul gave his heart to Christ. God took hold of Paul that day. As God's hand reached down to grasp him, Paul reached up to take hold of all God had to offer him. He kicked off the old life and became the man God wanted him to be. He did not lose any of his energy the day he met Jesus. He began reaching up to God with all his strength and energy. God began a good work in Paul's life that day.

And Paul's energy did not stop. Paul had been following Christ for many years by the time he wrote this letter. But Paul was not willing to stop growing in Christ. He wanted a growing relationship with Christ more than anything else in his life. All the things he had been proud of were nothing to him now.

Paul made it clear in verse 12 that he had not arrived at the finish line yet. He was not perfect. He was still growing as an example his readers should follow. Paul's best example was that he did not quit. He

kept going no matter what hard times came. He did not listen to people who tried to discourage him. He would never quit trying to take hold of everything God could give Him.

Every believer is given this growing relationship with God. Paul said, "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" (Philippians 1:6). Our journey with God will go on until the day Christ Jesus comes again.

Keep Looking Forward (Philippians 3:13-14)

13 No, Christian brothers, I do not have that life yet. But I do one thing. I forget everything that is behind me and look forward to that which is ahead of me.

14 My eyes are on the crown. I want to win the race and get the crown of God's call from heaven through Christ Jesus.

Every runner knows that looking back loses the race. When we look back to see what other runners are doing, we slow down. We stumble and fall. We should never compare ourselves to others. We cannot listen to the voices of those who tell us to give up and stop running. We are surrounded by a crowd cheering us on.

We might become discouraged if we

look back at our past sins. God forgets what we remember. He forgets our sin. And God remembers what we forget. He has made us completely clean in Christ. We forget that He has set before each of us a **unique** race to run. We are not all alike. We do not all run the same. The hardships we endure are unique to each of us. The struggles are longer for some. The valleys are darker for some. But our Father is always with us. He walks the dark valleys with us. If we listen, we can hear the voice of our Father.

We cannot rest on races we have won in the past. All of us have had moments when we knew we were exactly where God wanted us to be. We have said just the right word. We have known we were serving God well. We can never stop running because of those sweet times with God. Those are opportunities that may not come again. We cherish those times but strain to keep looking ahead.

We always have more ahead of us. God is not finished with us yet. Our Father tells us we are champions. He has a crown for us. We put our eyes on the crown because we want

Things to Think About

1. How did Jesus “take hold” of you?
2. What failures in your past still trouble you?
3. Are there victories in Jesus that you are proud of?
4. How should you respond to believers who have not grown up enough to have Paul’s attitude?

what our Father offers more than anything else. We use all our energy and strength to reach up to God’s call from heaven. We remember all He has done in Christ Jesus and claim Him as our prize.

Keep Growing Up (Philippians 3:15-16)

15 All of us who are full-grown Christians should think this way. If you do not think this way, God will show it to you.

16 So let us keep on obeying the same truth we have already been following.

God’s call from heaven is for all people. One day we will all stand in a crowd of people no one can count. We will see people from every nation who are speaking every language. They will be from every tribe. And we will all together be praising God for the race He has set before us. None of us will compare ourselves to others. We will all see that God’s plan for our lives was exactly right.

But not all of us are that grown up yet, are we? Some of us disagree with the things Paul taught. We want to argue a little and say surely God is wrong about the hardships we endure. We might even think He does not love us as much as He loves others we see along the way.

Paul does not argue or scold his readers who have not yet grown up. He reminds us one more time that God is not finished with us yet. He trusts God to do the changing of minds. We will one day understand if we keep running the race and keep looking forward to Christ. God will show us the truth as we walk with Him.

Things to Remember

God's love for us is not just something that happened when Jesus died. It is not something that will be real to us one day in heaven. No, God's love is real every day of our lives. We keep going forward loving God and doing what He calls us to do. Every Christian has a unique race to run. There are ups and down. Hardships and blessings enter every race. We can lose our focus on Jesus if we are not careful. Some people tell us to quit, and others encourage us to keep going and growing.

But rejoice! Every believer receives a reward. There is a crown waiting for everyone who runs the race God has planned. By faith we trust God with our past. In hope we look forward to the reward He has for each of us. And day by day we reach out with all our energy and strength to the Lord who took hold of us. We share His love with those around us. One day we will all stand together in that great crowd in heaven. On

that day we will fully know Christ as we meet Him face to face.

Philippians 3:12-16

12 I do not say that I have received this or have already become perfect. But I keep going on to make that life my own as Christ Jesus made me His own.

13 No, Christian brothers, I do not have that life yet. But I do one thing. I forget everything that is behind me and look forward to that which is ahead of me.

14 My eyes are on the crown. I want to win the race and get the crown of God's call from heaven through Christ Jesus.

15 All of us who are full-grown Christians should think this way. If you do not think this way, God will show it to you.

16 So let us keep on obeying the same truth we have already been following.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 11: Living for Jesus

Bible Text

Philippians 3:17-21

Memory Verse

"If we live in the light as He is in the light, we share what we have in God with each other. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, makes our lives clean from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

Word List

pattern: to try to be like something; to behave like a good example

perishing: those who are dying or being destroyed

standard: something that is good and that is used to determine the quality of other things

Fanny Crosby was born blind. But she lived a full, rich life. She was a teacher for the blind. She played many musical instruments. She wrote over 8,000 songs that praise God. She lived over 200 years ago, but her songs are still sung in churches around the world. Her positive attitude is one we could all copy.

Someone once told Fanny that it was a shame that she was born blind. But Fanny

disagreed. She said that she would have wished to be born blind if she had been given the choice. This seems strange, but Fanny had a good reason for such a wish. She said that the first face she would ever see would be the face of her Savior in heaven. We could all follow Fanny's example of faith.

Living for Jesus

(Philippians 3:17)

17 Christian brothers, live your lives as I have lived mine. Watch those who live as I have taught you to live.

"Do what I say, but not what I do."

This sentence means the speaker does not live up to the **standards** he or she sets for others. Paul was a good teacher who lived every day for Jesus. He could say, "Do what I say *and* what I do." The reason Paul could be so bold was that he copied Jesus in the way he lived. He taught that believers should **pattern** themselves after Christ. That is exactly what Jesus said, too (Matthew 5:48, 11:29).

Paul knew that he was not the only good example. The believers could watch for other good examples and follow them. But sometimes it is easy to be fooled. We might be tempted to follow a bad example. Paul said to measure all examples by what he had taught. Paul lived what he taught others to do.

He told the believers to copy God. In Philippians 2:5, Paul said, “Think as Christ Jesus thought.”

We can do the same in our lives today. Every good example must match the Word of God. People are watching us all the time. We are examples to others. Other people see Jesus in the way we live. Maybe the example that means the most is how we respond to suffering. Can we be content even when we are suffering? How do we react when we see others suffering?

Rescue the Perishing (Philippians 3:18-19)

18 There are many whose lives show they hate the cross of Christ. I have told you this before. Now I tell you again with tears in my eyes.

19 Their god is their stomach. They take pride in things they should be ashamed of. All they think about are the things of this world. In the end they will be destroyed.

The believers in Philippi lived in a very wicked world. We can understand the pull of sin because we live in a very sinful world, too. When we see these sin-filled lives, do we judge them as evil? Or are we concerned because they are **perishing**? Do we give up on them or try to rescue them from sin and death?

There were some people in the church in Philippi who lived like enemies of Christ. The cross had not made a difference in how they lived. In fact, their sinful lives made it harder for others to find Jesus. Paul could have been angry at these sinful people. He could have ignored them. But these sinful lives broke the heart of Paul. He knew they would be destroyed by their sin. Paul wanted to lead them to Christ who could rescue them and give them life that lasts forever.

In Philippians 3:10, Paul said that he wanted to understand and have a share in the sufferings of Christ. How would Jesus react to sinful people? In the last week of His life, as Jesus came near the city of Jerusalem, He wept for it. He knew the sinful lives of the people. He knew their hard hearts. He could see how they hated and hurt other people. But what broke Jesus’ heart was the price they would pay for their sin. Jesus knew that sin always leads to death, and it broke His heart (Luke 19:41-44).

Paul felt the same way. He shared in the broken heart of Christ. He knew that some people in Philippi lived very sinful and selfish lives. Some people said they wanted to experience everything this world offers. There are people who say that today, too. But they really only want to experience what is fun and what makes their bodies feel good. They do not want to suffer or die or be destroyed.

These men and women said that Christ came to save only their souls. So, they decided it did not matter what they did with their bodies. They lived to please their own desires. And they were proud of the sinful things they did. They even said that living sinful lives made God's grace clearer!

This makes no sense at all. The only thing sin leads to is death. It never brings glory to God or makes Him clearer for others to see. True children of God are dead to sin (Romans 6:1-2).

This World Is Not My Home (Philippians 3:20-21)

20 But we are citizens of heaven. Christ, the One Who saves from the punishment of sin, will be coming down from heaven again. We are waiting for Him to return.

21 He will change these bodies of ours of the earth and make them new. He will make them like His body of shining-greatness. He has the power to do this because He can make all things obey Him.

Things to Think About

1. What in your life proves you are living for Jesus?
2. How do you measure the examples you follow?
3. How concerned are you about those around you who do not know Christ?
4. What will you do this week to lead others to belief in Christ?

God cares about how we think. What we think controls how we live. Those men could live such sin-filled lives because they were not thinking about God's call from heaven. They were thinking only of this world. They were not reaching up to God's standards. They had let their own desires become their gods. They did not care about leading others to Jesus. They did not believe that they would die for their sins.

Jesus said that when we think like man thinks, we stand in the way of God (Matthew 16:23). When we think only of this world, we become enemies of Christ. We live like Jesus only when we live in the light of heaven. God's thoughts help us understand the high price of sin. It is easy to be a good citizen and to live by the low standards of right and wrong. Believers live by the higher standards of heaven. This world is not our home. We are just passing through on our way to heaven. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts. His ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8). We must always be reaching up to the high calling of God.

The Roman leaders called themselves "savior." They said they were doing good for the people. Many leaders today say that they are doing good for the people, too. But the leaders of this world can never save our souls. They can never bring life to dead bodies. We have a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is

coming again. Would you want Jesus to find you thinking or acting like His enemy when He returns? Our bodies can tempt us to do things that do not please God. Our minds can tell us that it does not matter how we live. But one day, Christ will change these weak and ugly bodies into strong and beautiful ones. He has the power to change wrong thinking to righteous thinking. He has the power to change death to life. Praise God, we have a Savior!

Things to Remember

There are good examples of living for Jesus all around us. We can recognize those as good because they match the standard of God's Word. Their lives follow the pattern of Christ Jesus. But there are also bad examples all around us. We can recognize these examples because they stand in the way of God's call to all people to come into a relationship with Him.

We can only rescue those who are perishing if we are living for Jesus. We must remember that this world is not our home. We belong to a higher standard in Christ Jesus. We must pattern our lives, our bodies, and our minds after Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Philippians 3:17-21

17 Christian brothers, live your lives as I have lived mine. Watch those who live as I have taught you to live.

18 There are many whose lives show they hate the cross of Christ. I have told you this before. Now I tell you again with tears in my eyes.

19 Their god is their stomach. They take pride in things they should be ashamed of. All they think about are the things of this world. In the end they will be destroyed.

20 But we are citizens of heaven. Christ, the One Who saves from the punishment of sin, will be coming down from heaven again. We are waiting for Him to return.

21 He will change these bodies of ours of the earth and make them new. He will make them like His body of shining-greatness. He has the power to do this because He can make all things obey Him.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 12: Be Full of Joy Always

Bible Text

Philippians 4:1-9

Memory Verse

“Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again, I say, be full of joy!” (Philippians 4:4)

Word List

book of life: the record of those who are right with God and will have life that lasts forever

One of my favorite stores sells many kinds of ice cream. Sometimes it is hard to choose just one. The person at the store will hand you small spoons, each with a different kind of ice cream to try. What fun.

Philippians is called the “Book of Joy.” Chapter 4 is full of many ways to have joy. It is as if Paul is giving us spoons filled with teachings. We learn how to have the peace with Christ that brings true joy.

Stay True (Philippians 4:1)

1 So, my dear Christian brothers, you are my joy and prize. I want to see you. Keep on staying true to the Lord, my dear friends.

Paul loved the believers in Philippi. They were his joy. He called them both family and friends. He begged them to stay true to Jesus and not give up. He told many ways to do this in the verses in this lesson.

Agree with One Another

(Philippians 4:2-3)

2 I ask Euodias and Syntyche to agree as Christians should.

3 My true helper, I ask you to help these women who have worked with me so much in preaching the Good News to others. Clement helped also. There are others who worked with me. Their names are in the book of life.

Two believers had worked to preach the Good News. They were now having a problem with each other. Paul reminded them that they should agree with one another. They should have one mind. He had asked someone to help them. Paul is grateful for those who worked with him in this church. All of God’s children are written in the **book of life**.

When we do not agree we take time away from telling others about the Good News of Jesus. Telling others is the best way to spend our time.

Be Full of Joy (Philippians 4:4)

4 Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again I say, be full of joy.

Paul tells us the reason we can be full of joy. It is because we belong to God. Paul tells us to be full of joy two times because once is not enough. This is a command, not just good advice. Joy comes from loving God and loving others.

Lessons for Joy (Philippians 4:5-7)

5 Let all people see how gentle you are. The Lord is coming again soon.

6 Do not worry. Learn to pray about everything. Give thanks to God as you ask Him for what you need.

7 The peace of God is much greater than the human mind can understand. This peace will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Christians should treat all people with patience, with understanding, and with love. If we must disagree, we should do it in a kind and gentle way.

It would be easier for us if the word “all” was not in verse 5. But we cannot choose to treat some well and others not. I once learned a poem that says, “To love the whole world for me is no chore. The problem for me is the person next door.” We are to be nice to everyone.

Paul reminds the Philippians that the Lord is coming soon. We need to live every day ready for Jesus to come again.

Next we are told not to worry. Worry is when we imagine the future in a terrible way. Sometimes we cannot keep worries from coming to our minds. Yet Paul tells us not to worry about anything. It should not be a part of our lives.

Have you ever ridden in a car that seems to be going too fast? You are not the driver. But your foot still goes down on the floor as if it would help make the car stop. It does no good. Worry does no good either.

Worry means that we are putting something else in the place of God. We must learn to trust that God is in control and will help us stand firm. Worry is the opposite of peace. Worry says that you do not trust God to take care of you. Satan wants us to worry.

Paul tells us what to do instead of worry. He said to pray about everything. This is a command: Pray, and know God’s peace! When we pray, we talk to God. We give thanks, and we ask God for what we need.

Prayer brings God’s peace to our hearts. God’s peace will be like a soldier who guards our hearts. The peace that God gives will protect our thoughts and desires. God’s peace is greater than our minds can understand.

Think and Do What Is Right

(Philippians 4:8-9)

8 Christian brothers, keep your minds thinking about whatever is true, whatever is respected, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever can be loved, and whatever is well thought of. If there is anything good and worth giving thanks for, think about these things.

9 Keep on doing all the things you learned and received and heard from me. Do the things you saw me do. Then the God Who gives peace will be with you.

What would happen if all your thoughts could be seen in a sign over your head? I am happy they are not. But God knows our thoughts. Paul says our thoughts can change our actions. We must train our minds to think

Things to Think About

1. What things about living with others give joy? What things make it hard?
2. What are the most important things about faith that keep us together? How do we keep from letting what is not important divide us?
3. Name some times when it is difficult for you to have joy. How do you rejoice in the Lord even in hard times?
4. When we pray we ask God for what we need and we also give Him thanks. Why are both necessary to find the peace of God?
5. Which of the parts of our thought life seem most important to you in verse 8? What do you do to replace bad thoughts with healthy ones?

thoughts that are true and right.

It is said that the average person has over 10,000 separate thoughts each day. That could be 3.5 million thoughts a year. If you live to be 75, you could have over 26 million different thoughts.

The believers in Philippi were told to learn to pray and think the right things. Paul's body was in prison, but his mind was not. Paul gave a list of things to think about. Some people think only of bad things. Sin always begins in the mind.

Paul writes that we should think about what is true, respected, and right. Think about what is true, not false. Think about what is pure, not impure. Think about what we should love, not what is unlovely. Think about what is good, not what is wrong. Think about that which is worth giving thanks for, not that which is shameful. If we do this, it will change us.

We are to do the things learned from Paul. He told the believers to do whatever they heard from him or saw him do. Few would be bold enough to say others should be like them.

Paul's life was the Bible that the new believers knew, saw, and heard. Paul said that they should do these things. They needed to put them into practice. They could put them into practice by following Paul's teaching and his example.

Hopefully, many will want to know God because of what they see or “read” in us. Paul knew that the only way to have the peace of God was to know the God of peace.

A friend in our International Bible study always ends her letters with: “Thank you and God be with you.” This is what Paul said. The God Who gives peace is with you. That is the way to pure joy.

Things to Remember

Paul loved his brothers and sisters in Christ. He wanted them to stay true to the Lord and get along with one another.

Two times Paul reminds us to be full of joy. He could say this because even though he was in prison, he was full of joy. We can be full of joy because we belong to Jesus and have life that lasts forever.

We should learn to be gentle and not worry about anything. We can pray about everything. This takes the worry away and gives us God’s peace.

When Jesus Christ is in your heart, you will love the good and hate the bad. You will love the truth and hate the falsehood. You will love the lovely and hate the ugly. You will love the pure and hate the dirty. Jesus changes your life from the inside out.

We need to follow the right leader. Paul teaches us what we should do. Remember, God will be with you!

Philippians 4:1-9

1 So, my dear Christian brothers, you are my joy and prize. I want to see you. Keep on staying true to the Lord, my dear friends.

2 I ask Euodias and Syntyche to agree as Christians should.

3 My true helper, I ask you to help these women who have worked with me so much in preaching the Good News to others. Clement helped also. There are others who worked with me. Their names are in the book of life.

4 Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again I say, be full of joy.

5 Let all people see how gentle you are. The Lord is coming again soon.

6 Do not worry. Learn to pray about everything. Give thanks to God as you ask Him for what you need.

7 The peace of God is much greater than the human mind can understand. This peace will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Christian brothers, keep your minds thinking about whatever is true, whatever is respected, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever can be loved, and whatever is well thought of. If there is anything good and worth giving thanks for, think about these things.

9 Keep on doing all the things you learned and received and heard from me. Do the things you saw me do. Then the God Who gives peace will be with you.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice

Lesson 13: It Is Well With My Soul

Bible Text

Philippians 4:10-23

Memory Verse

“... I have learned to be happy with whatever I have ... I can do all things because Christ gives me the strength.” (Philippians 4:11b,13)

Word List

content: to feel peaceful happiness; to be pleased or satisfied with what one has

How do you look at life? Are you a glass half full or a glass half empty person? Some see a glass half filled with water. They say, “Oh good, it is still half full of water.” Others see the same glass and say, “Oh no, it is already half empty.” The lesson today tells how Paul saw life. He was happy and full of joy because of his faith in Jesus.

Learn to be Happy (Philippians 4:10-12)

**10 The Lord gives me a reason to be full of joy.
It is because you are able to care for me again. I
know you wanted to before but you did not have**

a way to help me.

11 I am not saying I need anything. I have learned to be happy with whatever I have.

12 I know how to get along with little and how to live when I have much. I have learned the secret of being happy at all times. If I am full of food and have all I need, I am happy. If I am hungry and need more, I am happy.

Paul is full of joy because of God. He knows that God gives everything he needs and he is thankful to God that the believers in Philippi have helped him.

We remember that Paul is writing that he is happy and full of joy even as he is writing from inside a jail in Rome. Paul had learned how to be happy. He did not spend his time worrying about what he did or did not have. He had seen God working in his life in the past and he had faith God would help him in the future. Paul knew that to be happy or **content** was a gift from God.

Paul was happy with his life. He did not spend his time writing about how bad things were. He wrote about how God cared for him and how the believers in Philippi helped as they could. This gave him joy.

Learn Where to Find Strength

(Philippians 4:13-17)

13 I can do all things because Christ gives me the strength.

14 It was kind of you to help me when I was in trouble.

15 You Philippians also know that when I first preached the Good News, you were the only church that helped me. It was when I left for the country of Macedonia.

16 Even while I was in the city of Thessalonica you helped me more than once.

17 It is not that I want to receive the gift. I want you to get the pay that is coming to you later.

Many people know verse 13. Paul did not say that he could do anything he wanted to do. He did not write of his own power.

Everything that made him happy came because he knew Jesus. God is the One Who has power. He is the one who gave Paul strength to do all things.

Paul depended on Jesus. He did not think about what he did not have. Paul kept thinking about what he did have in Christ. Paul knew he should have death because of his sin. He was grateful that Christ forgave him and gave life that lasts forever. He had no fear. We should think this same way. We are not the ones with power. We do what we can do for God because it is Jesus Who gives us strength.

Paul was also happy that the believers in Philippi helped him with what he needed. He did not have to do God's work alone. When new believers helped, it showed that they were growing in their faith. We too can

help others who are telling the Good News of Jesus.

Paul remembered past times when the church in Philippi had been the only church helping him. He said they would receive a reward for sharing as they told others about Jesus. The believers were partners with Paul in his work. They would receive pay for their kindness when Jesus comes again. We can either build up wealth here for our own comfort and security. Or we can build up treasure in heaven. Faith in Jesus will bring true wealth because of knowing God's great love.

Learn to Give (Philippians 4:18-20)

18 I have everything I need and more than enough. I am taken care of because Epaphroditus brought your gift. It is a sweet gift. It is a gift that cost you something. It is the kind of gift God is so pleased with.

19 And my God will give you everything you need because of His great riches in Christ Jesus.

20 Now may our God and Father be honored forever. Let it be so.

The gift of this church to Paul was really a gift to God. Paul said it was a sweet gift, a gift with a pleasing smell. Some people "re-gift" something they do not want and give it to someone else. This gift was not like that. This gift cost the believers in Philippi

something. God was pleased with them.

Paul promised God would give them everything they needed. This would include their physical needs, financial needs, and spiritual needs. Perhaps the greatest need God would give the believers was the ability to be happy whatever happened to them.

Verse 20 is a song of praise to God.

The reason Paul did everything he did was all for the glory of God. That is the same reason the believers in Philippi gave to help Paul's work. It was for the glory of God. Praising God puts everything in order. We put God first. He gives us His strength. We can then tell the Good News without fear.

Things to Think About

1. What did Paul mean when he said he had learned to be happy with whatever he had? Is this hard?
2. At times, how have we used Philippians 4:13 for selfish reasons?
3. Think of a recent time when you found joy as you shared someone else's troubles. What gave you joy?
4. What is the difference between needs and wants. Why does God give us what we "need" but not always what we want?
5. Do you think Paul found it hard to be full of joy when he was in prison?
6. Even though it was not an easy time for him, Paul kept in touch with other believers. Can you think of some that God wants you to reach out to?

A Final Greeting (Philippians 4:21-23)

21 Greet all those who belong to Christ Jesus. The Christian brothers here with me greet you.

22 All those who belong to Christ greet you, and most of all, those who live in Caesar's house.

23 May your spirit have the loving-favor of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul ended this letter by sending his greetings to "all who belong to God." The brothers with him sent greetings. Those who were in Caesar's house sent greetings. This means members of Caesar's house had become believers. Not even Rome and all its power could stop the spread of the Good News.

Paul began his letter by praying that his friends at Philippi will have loving-favor and peace from God (Philippians 1:2). He ends by sending them his blessing. Loving-favor comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. God's love is a generous free gift. God's love is given to us. It is something we do not deserve and cannot earn. All spiritual blessings come because of God's love. The whole letter gives honor to Christ who is 'Lord' of all believers.

Things to Remember

It is wonderful to be full of joy. Paul's friends from the church in Philippi brought him joy when they helped him with gifts of money. He had helped them learn how to live as a Christian.

Paul had learned he could be happy with little or much because it was God Who gave him strength. God was on his side. It did not matter that he was in jail.

We sing a song today with the words, "It is well with my soul." Paul had learned that all was well because his hope came from God.

Our gifts to God are given when we help others hear the Good News about Jesus. God will give us what we need. More than anything we need God's love which He gives to us freely.

When we think about God's great love we give honor to Him. God is the Father of all who trust His Son, Jesus. Paul could write "my" God and "our" God and Father.

Paul gives us words of blessing. We have the loving-favor of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can be happy with whatever we have. We can do all things because Christ gives us His strength.

Philippians 4:10-23

10 The Lord gives me a reason to be full of joy. It is because you are able to care for me again. I know you wanted to before but you did not have a way to help me.

11 I am not saying I need anything. I have learned to be happy with whatever I have.

12 I know how to get along with little and how to live when I have much. I have learned the secret of being happy at all times. If I am full

of food and have all I need, I am happy. If I am hungry and need more, I am happy.

13 I can do all things because Christ gives me the strength.

14 It was kind of you to help me when I was in trouble.

15 You Philippians also know that when I first preached the Good News, you were the only church that helped me. It was when I left for the country of Macedonia.

16 Even while I was in the city of Thessalonica you helped me more than once.
17 It is not that I want to receive the gift. I want you to get the pay that is coming to you later.

18 I have everything I need and more than enough. I am taken care of because Epaphroditus brought your gift. It is a sweet gift. It is a gift that cost you something. It is the kind of gift God is so pleased with.

19 And my God will give you everything you need because of His great riches in Christ Jesus.

20 Now may our God and Father be honored forever. Let it be so.

21 Greet all those who belong to Christ Jesus. The Christian brothers here with me greet you.

22 All those who belong to Christ greet you, and most of all, those who live in Caesar's house.

23 May your spirit have the loving-favor of the Lord Jesus Christ.