

Book of Philippians

Synopsis



Introduction

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| Book No | 50 |
| Name | Philippians |
| Written By | Paul |
| Testament | New |
| Category | Epistles |
| Date Written | Approx. 61 A.D |
| Place Written | Rome |
| Audience | Church in Philippi |
| Purpose | To thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent Paul and to strengthen these believers by showing them that true joy comes from Jesus Christ alone |
| History Covered | NA |
| Chapters | 4 |
| Verses | 104 |
| Key Verse | Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. (4:4) |
| Key People | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Paul ❖ Timothy ❖ Epaphroditus ❖ Euodia ❖ Syntyche |
| Key Places | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Philippi |

Purpose of the Book

In many respects, this is the most beautiful of Paul's letters, full of tenderness, warmth, and affection. His style is spontaneous, personal, and informal, presenting us with an intimate diary of Paul's own spiritual experiences.

The dominant note throughout the letter is that of triumphant joy. Paul, though a prisoner, was exultantly happy, and called upon his readers to rejoice in Christ always. It is an ethical and practical letter in its emphasis and centers on Jesus Christ. To Paul, Christ was more than an example; He was the apostle's very life.

In contrast to happiness stands joy. Running deeper and stronger, joy is the quiet, confident assurance of God's love and work in our life—that he will be there no matter what! Happiness depends on happenings, but joy depends on Christ.

Philippians is Paul's joy letter. The church in that Macedonian city had been a great encouragement to Paul. The Philippian believers had enjoyed a very special relationship with Paul, so he wrote them a personal expression of his love and affection. They had brought him great joy (4:1).

Philippians is also a joyful book because it emphasizes the real joy of the Christian life. The concept of rejoicing or joy appears sixteen times in four chapters, and the pages radiate this positive message, culminating in the exhortation to "always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!" (4:4).

In a life dedicated to serving Christ, Paul had faced excruciating poverty, abundant wealth, and everything in between. He even wrote this joyful letter from prison. Whatever the circumstances, Paul had learned to be content (4:11-12), finding real joy as he focused all of his attention and energy on knowing Christ (3:8) and obeying him (3:12-13).

Paul's desire to know Christ above all else is wonderfully expressed in the following words: "Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and become one with him. . . . As a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead.

I can learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death" (3:8-10). May we share Paul's aspiration and seek to know Jesus Christ more and more. Rejoice with Paul in Philippians, and rededicate yourself to finding joy in Christ.

This letter reveals the timeless message that true joy is to be found only in a dynamic personal relationship with Jesus Christ and in the assurance that God is able to turn adverse circumstances to our good and His glory. Because he was united to Christ by a living faith, Paul could claim contentment in all circumstances. His unadorned testimony was “I rejoice . . . and will rejoice” (1:18), and his unqualified command was, “Rejoice . . . again I will say, rejoice!” (4:4).

Overview

- ❖ 50th book of the BIBLE, 11th in the New Testament, 6th of the 21 epistles and 6th of the 14 epistles written by Paul
- ❖ Philippians is the most unusual letter Paul wrote. Instead of writing to correct doctrinal matters, he writes a “thank you” letter to the church at Philippi that had been so generous in supporting him over the years.
- ❖ Paul, Timothy, Luke, and Silas first came to Philippi in A.D. 51, eleven years before he wrote the Book of Philippians.
- ❖ The words “joy,” and “rejoice” occur some 16 times in the Book of Philippians.
- ❖ Epaphroditus carried the Philippian letter from Rome back to Philippi.
- ❖ Paul’s “Macedonian Call” in Troas during his 2nd missionary journey led him to his work in Philippi.
- ❖ The Book of Ephesians is one of four “Prison Epistles,” so titled because they were written by the apostle while he was a Roman prisoner in Rome at the time they were written. The four “Prison Epistles are:
 - Ephesians
 - Colossians
 - Philippians
 - Philemon
- ❖ Macedonia was in northern Greece.
- ❖ The first converts on the continent of Europe were Lydia and her household.
- ❖ The church at Philippi was the first congregation Paul established on the continent of Europe.
- ❖ Paul visited Philippi again on his 3rd missionary journey.
- ❖ The city of Philippi:
 - In 356 B.C. King Philip of Macedonia (father of Alexander the Great) took the city and renamed it Philippi.

- The Romans captured it in 168 B.C.
- ❖ Octavian turned Philippi into:
 - A Roman colony.
 - A military outpost.
- ❖ Philippians has four chapters, and each chapter has a major theme, and each theme has a specific text.
 - Chapter 1 - Christ is our LIFE. 1:21
 - Chapter 2 - Christ is our EXAMPLE. 2:5
 - Chapter 3 - Christ is our HOPE. 3:7
 - Chapter 4 - Christ is our STRENGTH AND SOURCE OF SUPPLY. 4:13

Hebrew Names of GOD used in Philippians

NA

Revelation of JESUS CHRIST

For Paul, Christ is the sum and substance of life. To preach Christ was his consuming passion; to know Him was his highest aspiration; and to suffer for Him was a privilege. His chief desire for his readers was that they might have the mind of Christ. To support his exhortation for self-forgetting humility, the apostle describes the attitude of Christ that moved Him to renounce the glory of heaven and suffer and die for our salvation (2:5–11). In doing so, he presents the most concise statement in the New Testament concerning the preexistence, the incarnation, and the exaltation of Christ. Both the deity and the humanity of Christ are stressed

Work of THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Spirit's work in three areas is mentioned in the letter. First, Paul declares that the Spirit of Jesus Christ will direct the accomplishment of God's purpose in his own experience (1:19). The Holy Spirit also promotes unity and fellowship in the body of Christ (2:1). Common participation in Him breeds singleness of purpose and maintains a community of love. Then, in contrast to the lifeless ritual observance of formalists, the Holy Spirit inspires and directs the worship of true believers (3:3).

Mega Themes of Philippians

HUMILITY

Christ showed true humility when he laid aside his rights and privileges as God to become human. He poured out his life to pay the penalty we deserve. Laying aside self-interest is essential to all our relationships.

We are to take Christ's attitude in serving others. We must renounce personal recognition and merit. When we give up our self-interest, we can serve with joy, love, and kindness.

SELF-SACRIFICE

Christ suffered and died so we might have eternal life. With courage and faithfulness, Paul sacrificed himself for the ministry. He preached the gospel even while he was in prison.

Christ gives us power to lay aside our personal needs and concerns. To utilize his power, we must imitate those leaders who show self-denying concern for others. We dare not be self-centered.

UNITY

In every church, in every generation, there are divisive influences (issues, loyalties, and conflicts). In the midst of hardships, it is easy to turn on one another. Paul encouraged the Philippians to agree with one another, stop complaining, and work together.

As believers, we should not contend with one another but unite against a mutual enemy. When we are unified in love, Christ's strength is most abundant. Keep before you the ideals of teamwork, consideration of others, and unselfishness.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Paul shows us how to live successful Christian lives. We can become mature by being so identified with Christ that his attitude of humility and self-sacrifice becomes ours. Christ is both our source of power and our guide.

Developing our character begins with God's work in us. But growth also requires self-discipline, obedience to God's Word, and concentration on our part.

JOY

Believers can have profound contentment, serenity, and peace no matter what

happens. This joy comes from knowing Christ personally and from depending on his strength rather than our own.

We can have joy, even in hardship. Joy does not come from outward circumstances but from inward strength. As Christians, we must not rely on what we have or what we experience to give us joy but on Christ within us.

Life Lessons in Philippians

| Truth | Lesson |
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| <p>Growing in Godliness</p> <p>Jesus is our mentor and our model. He chose to empty Himself, laying down His reputation and rights. In taking the form of a man, He did not choose wealth and power, but came as a bondservant, dying a criminal's death. In everything, Jesus humbled Himself; therefore, God highly exalted Him.</p> <p>The call to godliness is a call to discipleship. As Jesus' disciples, we have the opportunity to lay down our rights and reputations and to give our lives in service to others for the sake of the gospel and the glory of God.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Consider others more important than yourself. ❖ Diligently seek unity with other believers in your thoughts, attitudes, love, spirit, and purpose. ❖ Be concerned about the things that are important to others. ❖ Follow Jesus' example of humility. Be willing to lay down your rights and reputation for the sake of the gospel. Humble yourself, and serve others as a bondservant of Christ. ❖ Express God's gracious work of salvation in you through your obedience to Him. Recognize that God gives you the desire and ability to do what pleases Him. ❖ Be willing to lay down selfish desires. ❖ Learn to control your thought life. Practice focusing your thoughts on things that are pure, lovely, virtuous, and praiseworthy. ❖ Conduct your life as a gospel sermon for observers of your life ❖ Develop the heart attitude of unity |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Live unselfishly turn away from any selfish ambition or conceited attitudes. ❖ Esteem others as being more important and more worthy than you are |
| <p>Cultivating Dynamic Devotion</p> <p>Seek to be a man or woman “after God’s own heart,” devoting yourself to the pursuit of intimacy with God.</p> <p>Ask the Holy Spirit to birth in you a deep hunger and longing for more of Jesus. Ask Him to place in your heart a burning desire to know God in a greater way than ever before. Seek Him with all of your heart and soul, and you will find Him (Deut. 4:29).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Consider everything loss compared to knowing Jesus. Being in Christ through faith enables you to know Him in His resurrection power and in “the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” ❖ Forget the past, and reach for those things still ahead. Earnestly pursue the goal of the heavenly call of God in Christ. Seek to know Him. ❖ Recognize that wholehearted, focused pursuit of Jesus is a mark of mature Christianity and devotion. |
| <p>Pursuing Holiness</p> <p>Philippians teaches that righteousness, holiness, and purity of any kind can come only through faith in Jesus Christ. We are all partakers of this grace.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Recognize that every believer can partake of grace. It is by grace that we are saved (Eph. 2:8). ❖ Acknowledge that righteousness and holiness do not come from the law or by following a code of ethics. Righteousness comes through faith in Christ Jesus alone. |
| <p>The Walk of Faith</p> <p>As we walk in faith, we must learn to see our present circumstances in light of the future promises of God. Though we are works in progress now, we have hope knowing that</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Believe with confidence that God will accomplish the good work He started in you. ❖ Do not fear death because being in heaven with Jesus will be wonderful. Seek to live each day on Earth for the purposes and glory of our Lord Jesus. |

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| <p>God will complete the work He is doing in us.</p> <p>We can endure suffering now because we know that it is momentary compared to the eternity we will spend in the glorious presence of Jesus. We can be content in every circumstance now, knowing that we will have all of God's riches in glory. Walk by faith and set your eyes on Jesus until you see Him face to face.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Recognize and embrace the truth that the life of faith often involves suffering for Jesus' sake. ❖ Know with confidence that Jesus is present with you amid suffering. ❖ Rejoice always and pray continuously. Consciously practice responding to various circumstances with joy and prayer instead of anxiety and worry. Ask the Lord to help you. ❖ Learn to be content in all circumstances. Contentment will bring great freedom to your life. ❖ Believe that when God asks you to do something, He is able to provide the strength you need to do it |
| <p>How to develop dynamic discipleship</p> <p>Discipleship is apprenticeship to the life of JESUS. Focusing on CHRIST as mentor and model. JESUS chose to lay aside HIS divine form and adopt the lowly form of man. Even as a man HE did not choose wealth, power or worldly position but came as a servant and died the death of a criminal. In everything HE humbled Himself trusting GOD to exalt and establish HIS name. Discipleship may call the Christian to choose to lay aside rights much valued in our culture</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ seek to maintain unity with other believers in your thoughts, attitudes, love, Spirit and purpose ❖ recognize that a separatist right to one's own opinion is not a biblical teaching ❖ repent and surrender such arrogance for the sake of unity in the body of CHRIST ❖ adopt CHRIST's attitude of unselfishness, servanthood, humility and obedience ❖ commit yourself to obedience ❖ allow GOD's work of salvation to have its full work in you ❖ recognize that your whole Christian life from being willing to doing it is all GOD's work ❖ understand that being concerned for the interests of JESUS CHRIST means being |

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| <p>and to accept the life role assigned by GOD. This role may not appear to be a place of acknowledgement but trust GOD to choose how to establish and promote you</p> | <p>concerned selflessly for the welfare of others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ determine your own thought life. do not let others do it for you ❖ cause your mind to dwell on those things that bring peace to your and glory to GOD ❖ follow holy leadership as a pattern for life and faith |
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Praise Points in Philippians

- ❖ The grace and peace that flow from his presence (1:2)
- ❖ The fact that what he has begun in us will be completed (1:6)
- ❖ The fruit of salvation guaranteed by a relationship with Jesus Christ (1:11)
- ❖ The example of Jesus' humility (2:7)
- ❖ The motivation and ability to live as he desires (2:13)
- ❖ The fact that our citizenship is in heaven (3:20)
- ❖ The promise that Jesus will return for those who love him (3:20)
- ❖ The peace that guards our heart and mind as we seek him in prayer (4:7)
- ❖ His strength that enables us to face our challenges (4:13)
- ❖ The riches he makes available to us in Christ (4:19).

Worship Insights in Philippians

In Paul's testimony to God's faithfulness in his life, the posture of worship is unmistakable. We visualize the intrepid apostle on his knees, fearing no one but God. In a fleeting glimpse of eternity, we see all humanity on its knees before the Lord. In Paul's words we hear the echoing splendor of praise, joy, and honor "forever and ever." Clearly, the language of worship is uttered from a heart filled with thanksgiving.

Often we treat worship as a noun. We speak of worship as an event we attend or as a portion of the church service prior to the sermon during which hymns or choruses are sung. Sometimes the concept of "worship" becomes so broad that it encompasses the whole of the Christian life, including our inner thoughts and motivations.

In biblical usage, however, the words translated "worship" are usually verbs, describing visible acts. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul referred to several such

actions: praying and giving thanks, rejoicing, providing sacrificially for the work of God, bowing the knee, vocally affirming that Jesus Christ is Lord.

While our uplifting thoughts and thankful attitudes are important aspects of the Christian life, these come to expression through acts of obedience and specifically through actions of worship. Referring to his own conduct, Paul did not ask his readers simply to consider or discuss his deeds. Instead, he said, “Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and heard from me and saw me doing” (4:9). It is by the action of bowing down before Christ and uttering a covenantal vow of loyalty to him that all humanity, in Paul’s vision, will someday bring glory to God the Father (2:10-11). Worship is not something we contemplate but something we do.

- ❖ Our love for fellow believers ignites our gratitude to God (1:3).
- ❖ God’s promise to be actively involved in our life is a source of great joy and thanksgiving (1:6).
- ❖ Jesus Christ is exalted by our obedience to him in life or death (1:20).
- ❖ God highly exalted Christ so that every knee must bow before him (2:9-10).
- ❖ It is God’s plan that all people bow in worship before his Son and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord (2:10-11).
- ❖ All our concerns are insignificant compared to knowing Christ (3:8).
- ❖ Worship is an attitude, not just an event (4:4).
- ❖ Our gifts to others are sweet-smelling sacrifices to God (4:18).

An Outline of Philippians

I. Partnership in the Gospel: [Php_1:1-30](#)

- A. Participants in the Gospel: [Php_1:1-11](#)
- B. Proclaimers of the Gospel: [Php_1:12-18](#)
- C. The Gospel Through the Person: [Php_1:19-30](#)

II. Servants of the Servant Who Is Lord: [Php. 2:1-3:1](#)

- A. Our Common Life in Christ: [Php_2:1-4](#)
- B. The Servant Who is Lord: [Php_2:5-11](#)
- C. Working Out Our Salvation: [Php_2:12-18](#)
- D. The Fellowship of Servants: [Php. 2:19-3:1](#)

III. What Really Matters: [Php_3:2-19](#)

A. Knowing Christ: [Php_3:2-11](#)

B. The Prize of the High Calling: [Php_3:12-14](#)

C. Conduct Consistent with Commitment: [Php_3:15-16](#)

D. Judgment: [Php_3:17-19](#)

IV. Citizens of Heaven: [Php. 3:20-4:23](#)

A. In the Kingdom Now: [Php. 3:20-4:3](#)

B. Living While You Wait: [Php_4:4-7](#)

C. You are What You Think: [Php_4:8-9](#)

D. The Sufficiency of Christ and the Support of His People: [Php_4:10-23](#)