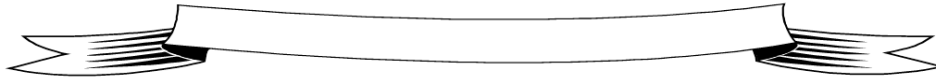


# Philippians



## Philippians Ch.1

### **Introduction to the Book:**

The book of Philippians was written by Paul to the believers in Philippi while he was imprisoned in Rome around 61-62 AD. It was basically a “thank you” letter for all of their support during some of Paul’s most difficult trials as a disciple for Christ.

He had gone to Macedonia to establish the church of Philippi as a result of a vision the Lord had given him. (Acts 16:9-10) Philippi was a city controlled by Rome, and oddly, Philippi was a Roman colony in Greece. The people living there were mostly Italian and Greek but proud to be considered Romans citizens and to claim the great name of Rome. It was a military colony with only a few Jews present, which is why there was no synagogue when Paul arrived.

Instead of the usual synagogue, there was a designated place by the river for Christians to gather and worship. This is where Paul and Timothy met Lydia, the first convert of that fledgling church that met by the edge of the sea. (See her story in Acts 16:11-15.)

After Lydia’s conversion another woman emerges upon the scene and becomes a very important part of the early history of the church in Philippi. This woman was a slave-girl who was possessed with the “Spirit of Pytho”. “Pytho” means divination. This gal was influenced by Satan as a sorcerer or priestess who spoke prophecies and fortunes over people’s lives. She would be considered a Python priestess or sooth-sayer. She was paid a lot of money, along with her business partners, for her fortune-telling. (Acts 16:16) This misled young woman followed Paul and Silas around during their ministry times. Although she was influenced by the dark side of satanic allegiance and worship, she was intuitive enough to recognize them as “servants of the most high God”. (Acts 16:17) Paul cast out the demon from the “Python Priestess” which brought an end to her fortune telling, and her business partners were outraged over the loss of their future income. Their anger turned to Paul, the one who had cast out the demon they relied on for their fortune business, and this, in turn, led to Paul’s first beating and first imprisonment.

Through a miracle in prison the jailer, and later all his household, gave his life to Christ. And the first church in Philippi was born! Two women, a Roman jailer and his family were the core foundation of the early Philippian church! Isn’t it awesome that our Lord will take “whosoever will come” to use for greatness in His kingdom? Through the obedience of Paul, responding to the command of Jesus “to preach the gospel throughout the world”, a church in Philippi was born and many would know the Savior, Jesus Christ!

## **Day 1**

We are starting a new book together... it is so appropriate that before we begin to feast in the truth of the Scriptures, we bow our hearts before the Author of them.  
Will you pray with me?

### **Prayer:**

“Lord Jesus, we are about to begin this new Book of Philippians. Before we begin reading with our eyes, we open our hearts before you. We start by asking you to remove the sin in our lives and cast it far from us, so that we can better hear from You. Cleanse us from every wrong-doing. We thank you that Jesus’ blood washes us clean and makes us “righteous” (in “right-standing”) before You, no matter how dark or devious the sin. That amazing truth will cause us to praise You until we meet You face to face!

As we gaze into your Word now, Lord, anoint our minds to receive the truths found in the scriptures. Cause us to see the meaning and intent of the words written on these pages of our Bibles. We don’t want to leave this time without a new “revelation” from You. Your Word is life to us! Feed us now – we are the sheep of Your pasture – lead us to feed on the richness of the fullness of Your Scriptures. Make them real – Lord, make them personal.”

Amen

### **Please read Philippians 1:1-3.**

1. Who is the author of this book? \_\_\_\_\_

Find Philippi on your Bible maps. Mark it in some way. Make a mental note where it is in comparison to some other cities you may be familiar with like Ephesus, Corinth or Athens. As you find its location, can you understand why Philippi would be a main thoroughfare between Europe and Asia?

Paul founded the church at Philippi in the early 50s as the first church on European soil.

10 years have passed since Paul had met Lydia and others by the river for worship. Now Paul sits in prison and writes this sweet letter to the church members in Philippi that he grew to love so much when he was there with them in Philippi. How much the church had grown... how many people had given their lives to Jesus...! Paul was a part of that beginning, and now he must wonder was his ministry over? Was God done with him? He had no way of knowing. All he knew to do was be thankful and trust God hard every day in every situation.

2. Paul and Timothy were “ministry partners”, one young and inspirational, the other wise and long-suffering. Both considered themselves “bond-servants” of the Lord Jesus Christ! (v.1)

As believers in Jesus Christ – we should also see ourselves as “bond-servants” of our Lord Jesus Christ. He rescued us from our destructive sinful past and made a way for us to live with Him in

righteousness for eternity! God is our “Father”, but He is also our “Master”, and because He is our sweet Master, we should relinquish full control of our lives to Him!

Do you know what a “bond-servant” is?

A “bond-servant” in Roman times was a permanent position of servitude. A bond-servant would never be freed. Roman slaves had no rights. They were bought with a price and were property of their owner.

The Greek word for “slave” or “bond-servant” is the word “doulos”.

Below you can read the definition of what a true “doulos” slave was:

Definition of slave (doulos) in the Greek = servant who held a permanent position of servitude and had no personal rights.

The Hebrew word for slave was “ebed”. It has a little different definition than the word “doulos”.

Definition of slave (ebed) in the Hebrew = a servant under the Mosaic Law able to become a bondservant voluntarily. If this was accepted, they would become slaves to their owners for life, by their own choice. (Many slaves who had good, gracious Masters would voluntarily do this and be very well taken care of for the rest of their life). If this agreement was reached, the owner of the slave would drive an “ahl” into the earlobe of the slave, signifying lifetime ownership that was voluntary.

Metaphorically scripture calls believers to serve Christ their whole life and obey Him as their sweet Master. In scripture Jesus continuously used the illustration of slave/master because slavery was part of the culture they lived in and each person would have a personal experience with it and the ability to understand it well. Each of us is called to be Christ’s “bond-servant”, one who gives himself up to Christ to use as He chooses, in order to help Christ in extending and advancing His cause among men.

The wonderful thing about our service to Christ is that it is voluntary! Metaphorically we are “ebeds” (bond-servants) for life – voluntarily! We willingly submit our lives to the God of the universe Who is good, Who we can trust fully, Who has our personal best interest in mind, Who pardons our failures, and provides for our future! True Christians, who understand the work of the cross in their lives, offer their lives to Jesus to do with what He wishes and relinquish control of their own lives to Him. Their desires fit under God’s desires. We follow our Master; we don’t approach our Master and ask that He follow and bless us.

a. In Scripture – God speaks of His followers as “servants”.

What Old/New Testament saints did God refer to as His servants?

Genesis 26:24 \_\_\_\_\_

Joshua 24:29 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_

Paul . . . Timothy . . . Peter . . . Jude

All these men devoted their lives to be slaves for Christ.

Would Jesus consider you to be wholly devoted to Him, too?

Do you see yourself as an “ebed” - voluntarily given over to Jesus?

Down through the ages your name could be added to the list of bond-servants of Christ!

b. Let’s talk about “on the job service” as bond-servants of Christ!

Read Ephesians 6:5-7 and Ephesians 4:29.

Sometimes serving Jesus is awesome, exciting and adventurous, but sometimes God will allow you to serve Him in a difficult place for awhile. If we are in a difficult place, what should our attitudes be in this time? Who are we ultimately serving in that difficult place, in that dirty job/unappreciated job/in that uneventful everyday duty?

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c. What will be the slave's (ebed’s) reward? Romans 6:22

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d. What other truth can you find in scripture reflecting the idea of being rewarded by God?

Romans 2:6-8

1 Corinthians 3:8-9

2 Chronicles 15:7

Paul began the introduction to the Book of Philippians in this way, “We are “ebed’s” for Christ! We voluntarily serve Jesus Christ with all that we have, and we put nothing else in this world above pleasing Him and serving Christ! (Philippians 1:1)

**WE ARE CONTENT TO BE BONDSERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD!!!**

Let’s close this day with a quick story.

**P.U.S.H.**  
**Author Unknown**

A man was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light, and God appeared. The Lord told the man he had work for him to do and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The Lord explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. So, this the man did, day after day.

For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all of his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin, sore and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain. Since the man was showing discouragement, the Adversary (Satan) decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the weary mind: "You have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't moved."

Thus, he gave the man the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure. These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man.

Satan said, "Why kill yourself over this? Just put in your time, giving just the minimum effort; that will be good enough."

That's what the weary man planned to do but decided to make it a matter of prayer and to take his troubled thoughts to the Lord. "Lord," he said, "I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?"

The Lord responded compassionately, "My friend, when I asked you to serve Me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all of your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push.

And now you come to Me with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown; your hands are callused from constant pressure; your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much, and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. True, you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. That you have done. Now I, my friend, will move the rock."

At times, when we hear a word from God, we tend to use our own intellect to decipher what He wants when actually what God wants is just a simple obedience and faith in Him. By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but know that it is still God who moves mountains.

**\*When everything seems to go wrong ... just P.U.S.H.!**

**\* When the job gets you down ... just P.U.S.H.!**

**\* When people don't react the way you think they should ... just P.U.S.H.!**

**\* When your money is "gone" and the bills are due....just P.U.S.H.!**

**\* When people just don't understand you, just P.U.S.H.**

**P= Pray**  
**U= Until**  
**S= Something**  
**H= Happens**

## **Day 2**

**Please pray and read the text for today.**  
**Philippians 1:4-6.**

Good friends are a gift from God. Lifetime friends are rare and a true treasure.

One person said it like this, “When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth.”

Paul LOVED his Christian friends in Philippi. He had a special, deep love for them and missed them greatly. As Paul sat in prison, he longed for another time to be with them.

1. Why was Paul so appreciative of the believers in Philippi?  
See Philippians 4:10-19.

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Scripture tells us in the fourth chapter of Philippians that Paul was taken care of by the believers in Philippi. His brothers and sisters from Philippi sent him aid when he was in Thessalonica and Corinth. They were continuing to send him goods and money while he was in prison in Rome. For 10 years they were faithful friends, and Paul was floored by their continued, faithful giving! This was one of the secrets to the power in the church of Philippi.

My husband has a saying he often quotes, “If you want to experience the power of God, meet a need”!

So true!!!! We can mistakenly sit back and wallow in our poor me pity-party or decide to rise up and meet a need of someone less fortunate than ourselves, and there is ALWAYS someone less fortunate than ourselves! Force yourself to look outward and upward!

Mature believers live this way. It is one of the marks of a spiritual giant! The great ones among us have learned to rise above their personal distresses and serve God in every situation by the power of God. Eyes on self makes “self” the object of all affection.

a. Let’s look into Scripture briefly and see what it can tell us about our duty to give to others. God cares about the needy, and He expects us that have plenty to share with those who don’t. God uses us as His arms of provision to the less fortunate.

Acts 20:35 – Write out this most important command and promise.

Deuteronomy 16:17 – Is anyone excluded from this command to be a “giver”?

God institutes the principle of a “tithe” in scripture. A “tithe” is a portion of our wealth we hold and keep from spending on ourselves so that we can give it to the Lord to use for His Kingdom work. In the Old Testament days, God instituted a “tithe”, a portion of wealth set aside from every individual to provide for the needy, the outsider (like the Levites), the widow, and the orphans. In other words they were to plan ahead and provide for those who would come across their paths that couldn’t provide for themselves.

Read God’s plan to care for the needy in that day.

Read Deuteronomy 14:22-29. Then read on – Deuteronomy 15:7-11.

Write your thoughts below regarding your willingness to be a giver. Did the Holy Spirit challenge you through those Scriptures today? How?

Is God making you aware of an attitude or posture toward the poor that needs to change?

Ask yourself probing questions like:

If someone is poor and dirty, is it hard for me to get close to them?

Do I make a conscious effort/plan to give to the poor either in this country or another?

Have I asked the Lord how I am to tithe to the poor around me?

Don’t hurriedly skip through this section. Pause and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart in quiet thought.

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The Christians in Philippi were obedient to be givers in Paul’s life for over 10 years!!!! God supplied Paul’s needs as His disciple through that faithful church! They gave beyond a one-time gift that’s easy; they gave consistently for years!

b. Can you describe a time when you were needy and God met that need in a miraculous way?

It’s good to give testimony about the graciousness of our Lord – share with your group!

Write about that time and thank God again for a time you will never forget!

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As Paul reflected upon his relationship with these dear Christians in Philippi, it caused him to look to God and thank Him for wonderful, giving friends!

2. Write out Philippians 1:6 on the space below.

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If you haven't already committed this verse to memory – this is a good week for that! Make it your goal!

Let's dissect v.6.                   DIG...DIG...DIG INTO SCRIPTURE!

- a. The NKJ version of the Bible says Paul was “confident” that God would complete His work in us.
  - b. Find some other versions of this verse and tell us what word was used in place of the word “confident”.
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(Comparing words from different versions of the Bible can give you a fuller meaning of that scripture).

c. According to v.6 who began the work in you? \_\_\_\_\_

d. To what “good work” is Paul referring?  
For the answer to this question look up these verses.

Read through Ephesians 2:4-10.

Notice – Does scripture say salvation is earned by good works, or is it a gift from God?

You can be sure, then, that any religion that says you have to DO anything in order to be saved other than accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is full of heresy.

Even though we have been saved by grace and it is gifted to us, what does God use us for after salvation? \_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 2:12 is another verse that confirms the idea of Christians doing “good works” for God's pleasure.

After a soul is converted, God's plan is to build, mature and develop the Christian into a powerful force He can use for His Kingdom's work!

We are called to be God's laborers – although His yoke for us is not to be heavy.  
We don't labor for the Lord in order for Him to be pleased with us. He is already pleased with



you because of Christ's blood covering your soul.

We serve the Lord, so that many more will be able to see this God of heaven and understand the invitation He extends to them for real relationship and eternity in heaven!

Ok, then – what we just described is the “good work” scripture talks about in v.6.

Now – Paul says, “God will complete this work in us until Jesus returns.” (v.6b)

There's a little more digging to do on this verse!

e. What do you assume the word “complete” (NKJ) means?

Some of your translations may say something different – can you find some others words used instead of the word “complete”?

(If you have the ability to get online, you can go to [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com)  
There you will find many Bible translations, commentaries, dictionaries etc.)

God is a finisher of what He starts. When we come to salvation by grace, it is just the beginning of our new life in Christ from that point on; He begins a transformation in us with the goal being to make us like His Son Jesus. He changes motives, attitudes, beliefs and desires – all as we live on this earth and serve Him. As time passes and we endure trials with His grace and power, we begin to develop the godly character traits of Jesus. That is why it is possible for the sinner to be a completely different person years after their conversion experience!

Praise God He doesn't leave us half-done! No matter how many set-backs there seem to be because of our failures, He continues to shape, contour and mold us into the image of Christ!

Many of us start things we never finish. That is impossible with God! He NEVER started anything He didn't finish! That is true of creation all the way through to the end of time as we know it! That is a good word for us today...wherever you find yourself today...if you are still breathing, it isn't the end of the story!

God says, “I know what I have in store for you and I will see it through!! I was not only interested in your birth, I am interested in your daily struggles and in your maturity, and I will work with you until the end!”

God is our example in the character trait of persistence and perseverance!

### **Day 3**

**Pray, and then read the text for today – Philippians 1:7-11.**

As he sits in prison, Paul is reflecting on his ministry, and he acknowledges that his friends in Philippi were a big part of the growth of the gospel in that present day. He says in verse 7, “I have you in my heart and you were partakers with me in the defense of the gospel and of grace!” (NKJ)

The fellowship they had together describes the word “koinonia” used often in the New Testament. The preposition of the word “koinonia” describes the thought of being all wrapped up together. I imagine a twisted vine - I like that word picture!

Christians that battle together in the ranks of the Lord’s army have a special bond with one another. They should be “all wrapped up” with each other’s lives, praying through struggles together, rejoicing in each other’s victories and praising God for the miracles He allows each one to experience. Prison put a distance between Paul and his friends, but his heart was infinitely knit together with theirs.

1. God had Paul in a solitary place. He sat in prison chained to a man he didn’t know, at least at the beginning. I’m sure they knew each other pretty well after time marched on and the dutiful guard surrendered to Christ! Intimacy would come quickly, though, wouldn’t it, with a chain linking your leg with another’s?

a. Solitary places..... Why does God allow us to be there at times? Any thoughts?

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Has God ever put you in a solitary place either by geography, or religious beliefs or code of conduct? \_\_\_\_\_

There is a difference between being alone and loneliness. To get away from others at times and be quiet and alone should be the “habit” of every believer.

Jesus often retreated away from the crowds to get alone and pray. (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16)

Are you alone now as you are doing this study? 😊

**Here are some benefits from time spent alone:**

1. The ability to tone down noise and hear God more clearly.
2. The chance to be in a place with less clutter and fewer distractions, thereby seeing God in ways you would otherwise miss.
3. An opportunity to commune with God in order to reevaluate situations/life/priorities/our focus.
4. More opportunity for personal growth that comes from reading, reflection and prayer.

Some things God wants you to experience with HIM and you alone!

Paul was in prison by the hand of God.

Moses went with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy elders of Israel to Mt. Sinai to receive the

Covenant of the people, but Moses was commanded to come alone to receive the commands of the Lord as God revealed Himself as a consuming fire. (Ex. Ch.24)

Elijah was alone when God met him and ministered to him in a very personal way. Elijah was so discouraged – he expressed to the Lord a desire to die. God met him there alone and in a quiet way. When God could not be found in an earthquake or a hot blazing fire or anything obvious, Elijah heard God in the quiet recesses of a dark cave. At that moment God spoke, and Elijah heard and was comforted! He went on from there to find a kindred spirit in the man, Elisha, and God continued to minister in mighty ways through these two Old Testament Saints!

If God has you in a place in life where you seem to be alone a lot, embrace that time with godly purpose. I'm sure David wrote most of his Psalms and songs when there was no one else, just himself and a worn harp and the God of heaven.

At one point in time he wrote, "I lie awake and am like a sparrow alone on the housetop." (Ps. 102:7)

This scripture reveals even David – the King – had days when he was alone and feeling it.

Do you need a touch from God, friend? Try being alone – take the word of God and sit with God alone, and you will be amazed how refreshed you become with just a little bit of time alone with God!

2. What was Paul's prayer for his dear friends? Paul stated in v.4 that in every prayer he made requests to God on their behalf. Well, these four things is what He was asking God to do in their lives!

Review v.9-11.

I found four things Paul prayed for concerning them – can you list them?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Those are awesome!!! We could pray for these four things to happen in our friends' lives, and God would explode upon their lives with more love, desire for sterling integrity, excellent purity, a deeper faith and evidence of growth for all to see!

a. Take a moment in your time alone and ask the God of Heaven to bring these same things into your life right now!

## **Day 4**

### **Pray – please read Philippians 1:12-30.**

Paul ends the first chapter reassuring his friends in Philippi that even though he is still in prison as they received this letter, God is using his imprisonment and their combined work to spread the gospel. Paul's maturity shows through the words on the page as he, being the prisoner, is writing to encourage those who are still living in freedom - great evidence that Paul was truly a disciple of God and father of the faith! Can you see Paul's mature nature of thinking about others rather than himself?

1. Paul's afflictions promote the spread of the gospel instead of hinder it. Isn't that just the way the Lord works in our lives? He consistently takes something that is a difficulty and, in the end, turns it into something that brings glory to His name. We might say, "I would never want to go through that again except that what it taught me as a Christian made it worth it!"

a. What two positives came from Paul being kept prisoner? See Philippians 1:13-14.

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b. Were some people preaching the gospel with the wrong motives? \_\_\_\_\_ v.15-18

c. Did that bother Paul? Why? V.18

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d. Of what was Paul convinced? V.19-20

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2. In v.21, we see what we could call Paul's motto. In one sentence Paul tells us his "code of ethics", you could say, about how to live the Christian life! I love it! In a nutshell Paul gives us his Biblical theology on the attitude we should take when it comes to holding tightly to anything worldly!

Write out Philippians 1:21 below.

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3. Why did Paul hesitate with this statement? Paul seemed to feel pulled in two different directions on the topic of death and dying. Why?

Philippians 1:22-26

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Do you know what I discovered in reading this passage today? For the Christian, the choice of

which is better - to live or to die - is the choice between a blessing and a blessing! To live on this earth is Christ in us .... the wonder of being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and being a vessel for the Lord. On the other hand death would mean the shedding away of this weary, worn "tent" and enjoying the rest with Christ in heaven where the long spiritual battle is over. Paul declares, "To live is Christ! (gain) and to die is heaven (gain)!!!! To the believer – any way you cut it – it's ALL gain!!!

4. To close this chapter, Paul turns to some encouraging words for the afflicted.  
Please re-read v.27-30.

a. Paul addresses the conduct of the Christian enduring trials.

What does Paul admonish all of us to do as we endure difficulties?  
v.27-28

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b. Paul is reminding the church of the importance of unity in the Spirit. There are so many ways Satan would love to get the body of believers to rise up and take arms against one another. A divided church isn't a loving church, and a loveless church has no power to minister to the non-believer – which is precisely what Satan would love!

Paul understands that people problems will come, but his instruction is what? V.27

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c. To show the importance of unity let's see what Jesus said about it. Read John 17:20-21.

What was Jesus' prayer to the Father? \_\_\_\_\_

What testimony goes out to the world when we stand together in love and unity? V.21b

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The world will believe Jesus loves them when they see us loving one another!

What binds us together as Christians is not our common nationality or economic status or job, or hobbies or children. What binds us together as Christians is that we have all been loved by the same sweet Jesus! The love we have experienced by Him should rally over to our love and mercy for one another, and when the world sees that kind of love, they cannot help but wonder who the Source of that love is! Love is our greatest testimony of who Jesus is to a dying world!

Have a blessed week!

