# The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians

## Introduction and Chapter 1

### Gospel Partnership and Courageous Faith



For to me to live is Christ,
and to die is gain.

**Philippians 1:21 • KJV**

Men's Bible Study

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# Introduction to the Epistle of Philippians



## Central Burden

Christ is the center of a life marked by joy, humble service, and courageous faith. Paul calls a beloved church to share in the gospel, stand together under pressure, and keep growing in love until the day of Jesus Christ.

## Why Philippians Matters

This personal pastoral letter comes from Paul's confinement. His circumstances bring the church's questions close to our own. How do we remain joyful under pressure? How do men serve together without rivalry? What gives life its purpose when the future is uncertain? Philippians answers these questions through Christ's example and Paul's lived partnership with the church.

# Background at a Glance

| Field | Study Overview |
|---|---|
| **Author** | Paul, with Timothy named in the greeting (1:1). |
| **Audience** | All the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons (1:1). |
| **Place and date** | Rome is the setting favored by the supplied sources. MacArthur dates the letter about AD 61, Companion about AD 62, and Dake about AD 64. |
| **Occasion** | The Philippians sent help through Epaphroditus. Paul responds with thanks, news, and pastoral instruction (2:25–30; 4:10–18). |
| **Purpose** | Strengthen gospel partnership, unity, endurance, and growth in Christ. |
| **Key passages** | 1:21; 2:5–11; 3:7–14; 4:4–9, 11–13. |

Scripture quotations use the King James Version.

## Where Paul Was When He Wrote

Paul wrote as a prisoner, probably in Rome, Italy. This traditional setting fits Acts 28:16–31 and the references to the guard and Caesar's household (Philippians 1:13; 4:22). The letter does not name his location; Ephesus and Caesarea have also been proposed.

Each place is labeled for both periods. "Then" gives the ancient name; "Today" gives its present name or surviving site. Teal rings identify ancient places with a present-day city or island. Uppercase labels identify all modern countries; italic names identify ancient regions.

# Paul and the Believers at Philippi



## A Church Born amid Prayer and Pressure

Philippi was a Roman colony in Macedonia. Its civic identity gives added force to Paul's language about gospel-worthy conduct and heavenly citizenship (1:27; 3:20). Acts 16:12–40 records the church's beginnings during Paul's second missionary journey.

At a riverside place of prayer, the Lord opened Lydia's heart to Paul's message. After Paul delivered a slave girl from an evil spirit, her owners brought Paul and Silas before the authorities. They were beaten and imprisoned. Their prayers and hymns, the earthquake, and their witness to the jailer formed part of the church's earliest experience of the gospel.

# Paul and the Believers — Continued

## A Partnership That Continued

The Philippians repeatedly supported Paul's ministry. Their recent gift came through Epaphroditus, whose serious illness and recovery explain Paul's concern to send him home with honor (2:25–30; 4:15–18). This letter grows out of years of shared service and affection.

| Person | Place in the Story |
| --- | --- |
| **Paul** | Founding missionary, imprisoned apostle, and affectionate teacher. He seeks the church's progress and joy (1:25). |
| **Timothy** | Named in the greeting. Paul commends his sincere concern for the believers and hopes to send him (2:19–24). |
| **Epaphroditus** | The church's messenger and Paul's fellow worker. He risked his life in service and is to be welcomed with joy (2:25–30). |
| **Lydia and the jailer** | Their households appear in Acts 16. Lydia's hospitality and the jailer's care show the gospel taking root in daily life. |

# Purpose and Central Themes



## Why Paul Wrote

Paul thanks the church for its gift, explains Epaphroditus's return, reports how his imprisonment has advanced the gospel, calls the believers to unity, and warns them against teaching and conduct that draw them away from Christ.

See 1:12–26; 2:1–2, 25–30; 3:1–4:1; 4:2, 10–18.

# Purpose and Central Themes — Continued

## Themes to Follow through the Letter

| Theme | Importance for Our Study |
|---|---|
| **Gospel partnership** | Prayer, giving, and shared labor join the church to Paul's work (1:3–7; 4:14–18). |
| **Joy in the Lord** | Joy accompanies hardship, service, faith, and generosity because Christ remains central (1:18; 2:17–18; 3:1; 4:4). |
| **Humility and unity** | Christ's self-giving example shapes how believers regard and serve one another (2:1–11; 4:2–3). |
| **Knowing Christ** | Paul counts his former advantages as loss and presses toward the goal of God's call in Christ (3:7–14). |
| **Faithful endurance** | Believers stand together, resist fear, and share in suffering for Christ (1:27–30). |
| **Peace and contentment** | Prayer, disciplined thinking, obedient practice, and Christ's strength shape life in changing circumstances (4:6–13). |

**Which of these stands out or speaks to you most?**

## Truth in Action through Philippians



Receiving the truth and putting it into practice

The following charts connect what Philippians teaches with a response in daily life. Follow four areas through the letter: growing in godliness, cultivating devotion, pursuing holiness, and walking in faith.

**Read the passage, consider the truth, and choose one action to practice.**

# Truth in Action through Philippians

*Receiving the truth and putting it into practice*

| TRUTH | TEXT | ACTION |
|---|---|---|
| **1 Growing in Godliness**<br><br>Jesus shapes the life of His disciples. He took the servant's place, humbled Himself, and obeyed the Father to the point of death. Following Him changes how we regard others, use our freedom, and direct our thoughts. God works within us as we learn to serve and obey. | 2:1–4 | Seek unity with other believers. Listen to their concerns and place their good alongside your own. |
| | 2:5–11 | Follow Christ's humility. Serve without demanding recognition, and surrender personal advantage when love requires it. |
| | 2:12–13 | Respond to God's work in you with reverent obedience. Depend on Him for both the desire and the strength to obey. |
| | 2:20–21 | Show sincere concern for others. Let the interests of Jesus Christ shape your priorities. |
| | 4:8–9 | Give attention to what is true, pure, and worthy of praise. Put the teaching you have received into daily practice. |

Adapted from the NKJV Spirit Filled Life Bible. Summaries and applications are written for this study.

**Where can you practice Christ's humility in a relationship this week?**

# Truth in Action through Philippians

*Receiving the truth and putting it into practice*

| TRUTH | TEXT | ACTION |
|---|---|---|
| **2 Cultivating Dynamic Devotion**<br>Knowing Christ becomes the believer's greatest pursuit. Paul gives up confidence in his former advantages and keeps pressing toward God's call. Mature faith continues to seek Christ with a focused heart. | 3:7–11 | Value knowing Christ above status or achievement. Seek to know His resurrection power and share faithfully in His sufferings. |
| | 3:12–14 | Keep moving toward Christ. Do not let past success or failure replace the pursuit of God's call. |
| | 3:15 | Develop the outlook of a growing disciple. Stay teachable as God brings your thinking into line with His truth. |

| TRUTH | TEXT | ACTION |
|---|---|---|
| **3 Pursuing Holiness**<br>Believers share God's grace. Paul seeks the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ. We place our confidence in Him, rather than in our own religious achievements. | 1:7 | Recognize fellow believers as partners in grace. Share their burdens and stand with them in the work of the gospel. |
| | 3:9 | Rest your standing before God on Christ. Turn from self-righteousness and trust the righteousness God gives through faith. |

Adapted from the NKJV Spirit Filled Life Bible. Summaries and applications are written for this study.

**How do knowing Christ and sharing His grace shape your daily choices?**

# Truth in Action through Philippians

*Receiving the truth and putting it into practice*

| TRUTH | TEXT | ACTION |
|---|---|---|
| <br>**4 The Walk of Faith**<br>Faith views present circumstances in light of God's work and Christ's promised future. Paul can face uncertainty, suffering, plenty, and need because Christ remains the center of his life. We learn to pray, rejoice, and serve with confidence in Him. | 1:6 | Trust God to complete the good work He has begun. Let His faithfulness strengthen your perseverance. |
| | 1:21–24 | Make Christ the purpose of your life. Serve others fruitfully while holding to the hope of being with Him. |
| | 1:29–30 | Expect that faithfulness may bring suffering. Stand alongside believers who face hardship for Christ. |
| | 4:4–7 | Rejoice in the Lord and bring your concerns to God with thanksgiving. Entrust your heart and mind to His peace. |
| | 4:11–12 | Practice contentment in both abundance and need. Let changing circumstances teach you deeper dependence on Christ. |
| | 4:13 | Depend on Christ's strength to remain faithful in every circumstance, including the plenty and hunger described in the preceding verses. |

Adapted from the NKJV Spirit Filled Life Bible. Summaries and applications are written for this study.

**Which present circumstance calls you to depend more fully on Christ?**

# Philippians at a Glance

## Life Application Chapter Emphases

| Ch. | Source Heading | Focus for Our Group |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Joy in suffering | Gospel partnership and courageous faith. |
| **2** | Joy in serving | The mind of Christ in humility, service, and obedience. |
| **3** | Joy in believing | Knowing Christ and pressing toward the prize. |
| **4** | Joy in giving | Joy, peace, contentment, and steadfastness. |

Chapter headings from the Life Application Study Bible. The final column is our teaching summary.

## The Movement of the Letter

Chapter 1 shows Paul's gratitude, prayer, and confidence as the gospel advances through hardship. Chapter 2 turns the church toward Christ's humility and the faithful service of Timothy and Epaphroditus. Chapter 3 calls believers to know Christ and pursue the heavenly goal. Chapter 4 brings the appeal into relationships, prayer, thought, contentment, and generous partnership.

## Dake's Emphasis on Rejoicing

Dake's summary follows rejoicing through fellowship, affliction, ministry, faithful coworkers, life in the Lord, unity, and the circumstances of daily life. This helps us trace joy as a response to Christ throughout the letter.

**Where do you most need to grow in joy, service, faith, or generosity?**

## Outline of Philippians

The NKJV Spirit Filled Life Bible presents the letter in six major sections. Its divisions help us follow Paul's argument from greeting to final blessing.

| Part | Passage | Outline and Main Content |
|---|---|---|
| **I** | 1:1–11 | Introduction<br>Salutation 1:1–2; thanksgiving 1:3–8; prayer 1:9–11. |
| **II** | 1:12–26 | Circumstances of Paul's Imprisonment<br>Gospel advance 1:12–18; assurance of blessing 1:19–21; Paul's dilemma 1:22–26. |
| **III** | 1:27–2:18 | Exhortations<br>Live worthily 1:27–2:4; the mind of Christ 2:5–11; spiritual life 2:12–13; cease murmuring and questioning 2:14–18. |
| **IV** | 2:19–30 | Commendation of and Plans for Paul's Companions<br>Timothy 2:19–24; Epaphroditus 2:25–30. |
| **V** | 3:1–21 | Warnings against Error<br>Against the Judaizers 3:1–16; against sensualism 3:17–21. |
| **VI** | 4:1–23 | Conclusion<br>Final appeals 4:1–9; acknowledgment of the gift 4:10–20; greetings 4:21–22; benediction 4:23. |

Outline from the NKJV Spirit Filled Life Bible, with condensed subheadings.

### Reading across the Chapter Break

The appeal beginning at 1:27 continues into chapter 2. Read the call to stand together alongside the call to humility and Christ's example. The chapter numbers help us locate a passage, while the argument carries us from courage into shared service.

**How does Christ's example in chapter 2 shape the courage called for in 1:27–30?**

## Companion Bible Structure

The Companion Bible calls this pattern “Introversion.” Matching letters show related themes in reverse order—A B C D / D C B A.

| Label | Passage | Companion Bible Heading |
|---|---|---|
| **A** | 1:1–2 | Epistolary, and Salutation. “Grace” to Them. |
| **B** | 1:3–26 | Paul’s Solicitude for the Philippians. |
| **C** | 1:27–2:18 | Exhortation, and Example of CHRIST. |
| **D** | 2:19–24 | The Example of TIMOTHY. |
| **D** | 2:25–30 | The Example of EPAPHRODITUS. |
| **C** | 3:1–4:9 | Exhortation and Example of PAUL. |
| **B** | 4:10–20 | The Philippians’ Solicitude for PAUL. |
| **A** | 4:21–23 | Epistolary, and Doxology. “Grace” to Them. |

Companion Bible structure. The explanations below are written for our study.

### The Labels in Plain Language

Epistolary refers to a letter. Salutation means greeting. Solicitude means loving concern. Exhortation means an appeal to faithful living. Doxology means praise to God. The letter closes with greetings and a grace blessing.

The opening and closing grace frame reciprocal care. Paul’s concern for the church answers the church’s concern for him. Christ’s example and Paul’s example surround the faithful service of Timothy and Epaphroditus.

**How does this structure help us see partnership throughout the letter?**

# Companion Bible Structure for Chapter 1

After the greeting (1:1–2), the Companion Bible traces Paul's concern in an alternating pattern—A B A B.

| Label | Passage | Source Movement |
|---|---|---|
| **A** | 1:3–5 | Thanksgiving. |
| **B** | 1:6–7 | Confidence with reference to the Philippians. |
| **A** | 1:8–11 | Prayer. |
| **B** | 1:12–26 | Confidence with reference to himself. |

## Confidence with Reference to Himself

| Label | Passage | Source Movement |
|---|---|---|
| **a** | 1:12–13 | What Paul would have them know. |
| **b** | 1:14–18a | Christ preached. |
| **c** | 1:18b | Paul's rejoicing. |
| **a** | 1:19 | What Paul knew. |
| **b** | 1:20–25 | Christ magnified. |
| **c** | 1:26 | Their rejoicing. |

In verse 18, 18a ends with Christ being preached. Paul's rejoicing begins 18b.

## The Transition at 1:27

Verses 1:27–30 begin the larger 1:27–2:18 unit. Its pattern is exhortation (1:27–2:4), Christ's humiliation (2:5–8), Christ's exaltation (2:9–11), and exhortation (2:12–18).

The Companion includes 1:8 with prayer. Our teaching map groups 1:3–8 together.

**What connects Paul's confidence with his concern for the church?**

## Chapter 1 Study Map

This teaching map follows gospel partnership and courageous faith through Chapter 1.

| # | Passage | Study Focus |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | 1:1–2 | Servants and saints<br>Paul and Timothy greet the church with grace and peace. |
| **2** | 1:3–8 | Gratitude and partnership<br>Paul remembers their shared gospel work and expresses confidence and affection. |
| **3** | 1:9–11 | Love that grows in discernment<br>Prayer connects increasing love, wise judgment, and righteous fruit. |
| **4** | 1:12–14 | The gospel advances through hardship<br>Paul's chains become an opportunity for witness and encourage others to speak. |
| **5** | 1:15–18 | Christ proclaimed amid mixed motives<br>Paul rejoices that Christ is preached while recognizing rivalry and goodwill. |
| **6** | 1:19–21 | Christ magnified in life or death<br>Prayer and the Spirit's help sustain Paul's desire to honor Christ. |
| **7** | 1:22–26 | Fruitful service for others<br>Paul weighs his desire to be with Christ alongside the church's need. |
| **8** | 1:27–30 | One spirit and courageous faith<br>The church is called to gospel-worthy conduct, united effort, and endurance. |

**Which of these stands out or speaks to you most?**

## Word Notes and Cross-References — Companion Bible

Companion notes appear in the middle column. The final column gives explanations written for our study.

| Ref. | Companion Bible Note | Plain-Language Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| **1:1** | “Bishops” is episkopos. See Acts 20:28. | The greeting includes the congregation’s overseers alongside the deacons. |
| **1:6** | “Perform” means complete, epiteleo. See Luke 13:32. | Paul expresses confidence that God brings His work to completion. |
| **1:7** | “Defence” is apologia (Acts 22:1). “Confirmation” is bebaiosis (Hebrews 6:16). | Paul’s language includes the defense and firm establishment of the gospel. |
| **1:12** | “Furtherance” is prokope. Compare 1:25 and 1 Timothy 4:15. | Look for progress in the gospel and in the believers’ faith. |
| **1:13** | “Palace” is praitorion, identified here as the Praetorian guard. See Acts 28:30. | Paul’s imprisonment brings his witness into contact with those guarding him. |
| **1:27** | “Conversation” means behaving as citizens, politeuomai. See Acts 23:1 and Philippians 3:20. | The appeal concerns our whole manner of life as people belonging to Christ. |
| **1:27** | “Striving together” is sunathleo, also in 4:3. Compare 2 Timothy 2:5. | Believers share the effort of serving and defending the gospel. |

Companion Bible notes. Greek words are shown in English letters.

**Which word helps you hear this chapter more clearly?**

# Chapter 1 in Its Geographical Setting



The main map follows Paul's earlier journey to Philippi (Acts 16:11–12). The inset locates Rome, his probable place of writing.




| Place | What Exists Today |
|---|---|
| **Rome** | Rome, Italy — city today; probable writing location. |
| **Troas** | Alexandria Troas ruins near Dalyan, Çanakkale, Türkiye. |
| **Samothrace** | Samothraki, Greece — an inhabited island today. |
| **Neapolis** | Kavala, Greece — a city today with a different name. |
| **Philippi** | Archaeological site near Krinides, Greece. |

**How does the distance between Paul and the church deepen our understanding of their partnership?**

# Philippians Chapter 1

| Lectio Divina | Verses 1–6 • KJV |
|---|---|

## Grace, Gratitude, and Gospel Partnership

**1** Paul and Timotheus,
- ✝ the servants of Jesus Christ,
- ✝ to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi,
- ✝ with the bishops and deacons:

**2** Grace be unto you, and peace,
- ✝ from God our Father,
- ✝ and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3** I thank my God
- ✝ upon every remembrance of you,

**4** Always in every prayer of mine for you all
- ✝ making request with joy,

**5** For your fellowship in the gospel
- ✝ from the first day until now;

**6** Being confident of this very thing,
- ✝ that he which hath begun a good work in you
- ✝ will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

# Philippians Chapter 1

| Lectio Divina | Verses 7–11 • KJV |
|---|---|

## Shared Grace and Discerning Love

**7** Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all,
- ✝ because I have you in my heart;
- ✝ inasmuch as both in my bonds,
- ✝ and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel,
- ✝ ye all are partakers of my grace.

**8** For God is my record,
- ✝ how greatly I long after you all
- ✝ in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

**9** And this I pray,
- ✝ that your love may abound yet more and more
- ✝ in knowledge and in all judgment;

**10** That ye may approve things that are excellent;
- ✝ that ye may be sincere and without offence
- ✝ till the day of Christ;

**11** Being filled with the fruits of righteousness,
- ✝ which are by Jesus Christ,
- ✝ unto the glory and praise of God.

# Philippians Chapter 1

| Lectio Divina | Verses 12–17 • KJV |
|---|---|

## The Gospel Advances through Hardship

**12** But I would ye should understand, brethren,
- that the things which happened unto me
- have fallen out rather
- unto the furtherance of the gospel;

**13** So that my bonds in Christ are manifest
- in all the palace,
- and in all other places;

**14** And many of the brethren in the Lord,
- waxing confident by my bonds,
- are much more bold
- to speak the word without fear.

**15** Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife;
- and some also of good will:

**16** The one preach Christ of contention,
- not sincerely,
- supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

**17** But the other of love,
- knowing that I am set
- for the defence of the gospel.

# Philippians Chapter 1

| Lectio Divina | Verses 18–21 • KJV |
|---|---|

## Christ Proclaimed and Magnified

**18** What then? notwithstanding, every way,
- whether in pretence, or in truth,
- Christ is preached;
- and I therein do rejoice,
- yea, and will rejoice.

**19** For I know that this shall turn to my salvation
- through your prayer,
- and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

**20** According to my earnest expectation and my hope,
- that in nothing I shall be ashamed,
- but that with all boldness,
- as always, so now also
- Christ shall be magnified in my body,
- whether it be by life, or by death.

**21** For to me to live is Christ,
- and to die is gain.

# Philippians Chapter 1

| Lectio Divina | Verses 22–26 • KJV |
|---|---|

## Fruitful Service for Others

**22** But if I live in the flesh,
- ✝ this is the fruit of my labour:
- ✝ yet what I shall choose I wot not.

**23** For I am in a strait betwixt two,
- ✝ having a desire to depart,
- ✝ and to be with Christ;
- ✝ which is far better:

**24** Nevertheless to abide in the flesh
- ✝ is more needful for you.

**25** And having this confidence,
- ✝ I know that I shall abide and continue with you all
- ✝ for your furtherance and joy of faith;

**26** That your rejoicing may be more abundant
- ✝ in Jesus Christ for me
- ✝ by my coming to you again.

# Philippians Chapter 1

| Lectio Divina | Verses 27–30 • KJV |
|---|---|

## Standing Together in Courageous Faith

**27** Only let your conversation be
- ✝ as it becometh the gospel of Christ:
- ✝ that whether I come and see you, or else be absent,
- ✝ I may hear of your affairs,
- ✝ that ye stand fast in one spirit,
- ✝ with one mind striving together
- ✝ for the faith of the gospel;

**28** And in nothing terrified by your adversaries:
- ✝ which is to them an evident token of perdition,
- ✝ but to you of salvation,
- ✝ and that of God.

**29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,
- ✝ not only to believe on him,
- ✝ but also to suffer for his sake;

**30** Having the same conflict
- ✝ which ye saw in me,
- ✝ and now hear to be in me.

# Biblical Observations

Observation 1

### Servants Together in Christ

**Philippians 1:1–2 • KJV**

**1** Paul and Timotheus,
- ✝ the servants of Jesus Christ,
- ✝ to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi,
- ✝ with the bishops and deacons:

**2** Grace be unto you, and peace,
- ✝ from God our Father,
- ✝ and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

- *…the servants of Jesus Christ…* Paul places himself and Timothy under Christ's authority. Their calling begins with belonging to Him and serving His people. Christian leadership takes its character from the Lord we serve, and every responsibility becomes an opportunity to seek His purposes.
- *…all the saints in Christ Jesus…* The greeting embraces the whole congregation, including its overseers and deacons. Their shared identity is found in Christ. Men with different gifts and responsibilities belong to the same people and need one another's faithful service.
- *…Grace be unto you, and peace…* Paul directs the church toward God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. God's grace sustains the relationship from which peace grows. We begin our study by receiving His gifts and considering how that grace should shape our treatment of others.

## Personal Application

**Where has Christ given you an opportunity to serve someone this week?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 2

## Gratitude for Gospel Partnership

**Philippians 1:3–5 • KJV**

**3** I thank my God
✝ upon every remembrance of you,

**4** Always in every prayer of mine for you all
✝ making request with joy,

**5** For your fellowship in the gospel
✝ from the first day until now;

- *…I thank my God upon every remembrance of you…* Remembering the Philippians moves Paul toward gratitude to God. Their history includes costly ministry and suffering, yet he sees God's grace in their continued faithfulness. Gratitude helps us recognize what God has done through the people He has placed beside us.
- *…making request with joy…* Paul's affection becomes intercession. He regularly carries these believers before God, and their partnership gives him joy. We strengthen fellowship when we learn to pray specifically for one another's faith, families, work, and service.
- *…your fellowship in the gospel…* Fellowship includes active participation in the gospel. The Philippians shared in Paul's ministry through practical help and generous giving (4:14–18). Their commitment continued from the beginning, giving us a pattern of dependable partnership over time.

### Personal Application

**Whom can you thank God for by name, and how can you strengthen your partnership with that person?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 3

### Confidence in God's Continuing Work

**Philippians 1:6 • KJV**

**6** Being confident of this very thing,
- ✝ that he which hath begun a good work in you
- ✝ will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

- *…he which hath begun a good work in you…* Paul recognizes God's initiative in the Philippians' life together. Their faith and gospel partnership give him reason to thank God for the work already underway. Remembering that beginning directs our confidence toward God when growth seems slow or difficult.
- *…will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ…* The word translated perform carries the sense of bringing to completion. Paul looks ahead to Christ's day and trusts God's faithfulness across the whole course of their growth. This confidence encourages patient obedience, prayer, and dependence on the God who works in His people (2:12–13).

## Personal Application

**Where can you recognize God's continuing work in your life, and what faithful response does that call for?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 4

### Shared Grace and Deep Affection

**Philippians 1:7–8 • KJV**

**7** Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all,
- ✝ because I have you in my heart;
- ✝ inasmuch as both in my bonds,
- ✝ and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel,
- ✝ ye all are partakers of my grace.

**8** For God is my record,
- ✝ how greatly I long after you all
- ✝ in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

- *…ye all are partakers of my grace…* Paul connects their partnership with both his imprisonment and the defense of the gospel. They continue to stand with him when ministry becomes costly. Grace draws believers into shared responsibility, including practical care for those bearing difficult burdens.
- *…I have you in my heart…* Paul's concern is personal. Their lives matter to him, and he regards their faithfulness with affection. Men grow in fellowship when they move beyond general goodwill to knowing one another's needs, remembering them, and responding with care.
- *…in the bowels of Jesus Christ…* This older expression describes deep inward affection. Paul calls God as witness to the love with which he longs for them. Christ shapes both the strength and the tenderness of Christian concern, teaching us to remain present to one another through hardship.

## Personal Application

**Who needs to experience your steady care during a difficult season?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 5

### Love That Grows in Discernment

**Philippians 1:9–11 • KJV**

**9** And this I pray,
- ✝ that your love may abound yet more and more
- ✝ in knowledge and in all judgment;

**10** That ye may approve things that are excellent;
- ✝ that ye may be sincere and without offence
- ✝ till the day of Christ;

**11** Being filled with the fruits of righteousness,
- ✝ which are by Jesus Christ,
- ✝ unto the glory and praise of God.

- *…your love may abound yet more and more…* Paul prays for an increase of love shaped by knowledge and judgment. As we understand God's truth and learn to discern His will, love becomes wiser in its decisions and more faithful in its actions. This is a prayer we can pray for one another.
- *…approve things that are excellent…* Growing love learns to recognize what matters and choose it. Paul connects discernment with sincerity and conduct that avoids causing offense. Our choices about time, speech, responsibilities, and relationships reveal the priorities taking shape within us.
- *…the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ…* The life Paul seeks bears fruit through Jesus Christ and brings glory to God. Growth depends on remaining in Christ and responding to His work (John 15:4–5). The goal of maturity is a life through which others can see and praise God's goodness.

## Personal Application

**Which part of Paul's prayer would most strengthen your life and relationships right now?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 5 — Continued

## Five Requests in Paul's Prayer

**Philippians 1:9–11 • KJV**

**9** And this I pray,
- ✝ that your love may abound yet more and more
- ✝ in knowledge and in all judgment;

**10** That ye may approve things that are excellent;
- ✝ that ye may be sincere and without offence
- ✝ till the day of Christ;

**11** Being filled with the fruits of righteousness,
- ✝ which are by Jesus Christ,
- ✝ unto the glory and praise of God.

| # | Request | Direction for Our Prayer |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Growing love | Ask for love that increases in knowledge and judgment (1:9). |
| **2** | Wise discernment | Ask for wisdom to recognize and choose what is excellent (1:10). |
| **3** | Sincere character | Ask for integrity before the day of Christ (1:10). |
| **4** | Blameless conduct | Ask for a life that avoids giving offense and harming others (1:10). |
| **5** | Righteous fruit | Ask for fruitful obedience through Jesus Christ, bringing glory to God (1:11). |

Study summary of the passage

## Personal Application

**Which of these stands out or speaks to you most?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 6

### The Gospel Advances through Hardship

**Philippians 1:12–14 • KJV**

**12** But I would ye should understand, brethren,
- ✝ that the things which happened unto me
- ✝ have fallen out rather
- ✝ unto the furtherance of the gospel;

**13** So that my bonds in Christ are manifest
- ✝ in all the palace,
- ✝ and in all other places;

**14** And many of the brethren in the Lord,
- ✝ waxing confident by my bonds,
- ✝ are much more bold
- ✝ to speak the word without fear.

- *…the furtherance of the gospel…* Paul reports what God is doing through his circumstances. Imprisonment has opened opportunities for the gospel to advance. His example invites us to seek faithful service within the circumstances we presently face.
- *…my bonds in Christ are manifest…* Those around Paul understand that his chains are connected with Christ. Confinement brings his witness before the imperial guard and others. People observing our endurance may also have opportunities to hear why Christ matters to us.
- *…much more bold to speak the word without fear…* Paul's endurance strengthens other believers' confidence in the Lord. Courage spreads as they see faithful witness under pressure. God may use your obedience to encourage someone else to speak, serve, or stand firm.

## Personal Application

**What opportunity for gospel witness is present within a circumstance you would like to change?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 6 — Continued

## Three Results of Paul's Imprisonment

**Philippians 1:12–14 • KJV**

**12** But I would ye should understand, brethren,
- ✝ that the things which happened unto me
- ✝ have fallen out rather
- ✝ unto the furtherance of the gospel;

**13** So that my bonds in Christ are manifest
- ✝ in all the palace,
- ✝ and in all other places;

**14** And many of the brethren in the Lord,
- ✝ waxing confident by my bonds,
- ✝ are much more bold
- ✝ to speak the word without fear.

| # | Result | What We See in the Passage |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | The gospel advances | Paul's circumstances create opportunities for the message to spread (1:12). |
| **2** | Christ becomes known | The guard and others recognize that Paul's chains are connected with Christ (1:13). |
| **3** | Believers gain courage | Many become more confident in the Lord and speak the word without fear (1:14). |

Study summary of the passage

## Personal Application

**Which of these stands out or speaks to you most?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 7

## The Motives beneath Our Service

**Philippians 1:15–17 • KJV**

**15** Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife;
- ✝ and some also of good will:

**16** The one preach Christ of contention,
- ✝ not sincerely,
- ✝ supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

**17** But the other of love,
- ✝ knowing that I am set
- ✝ for the defence of the gospel.

- *…of envy and strife…* Paul recognizes that rivalry can enter religious work. Some who preach Christ regard his imprisonment as an opportunity to advance themselves and increase his distress. The passage calls us to examine the motives beneath our service, especially when another person receives attention or influence.
- *…of good will…* Others preach with goodwill toward Paul and commitment to the gospel. Their service grows from love and an understanding of his calling. We can strengthen another worker through encouragement, prayer, practical support, and a willingness to celebrate the good God accomplishes through him.
- *…I am set for the defence of the gospel…* Paul understands his responsibility as a calling from God. Loving coworkers recognize that calling and stand beside him. Shared purpose helps a church pursue the gospel with integrity when personalities, preferences, and personal ambitions threaten its fellowship.

### Personal Application

**How do you respond when God uses another person in a way you had hoped to be used?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 8

### Rejoicing That Christ Is Preached

**Philippians 1:18 • KJV**

**18** What then? notwithstanding, every way,
- ✝ whether in pretence, or in truth,
- ✝ Christ is preached;
- ✝ and I therein do rejoice,
- ✝ yea, and will rejoice.

- *…Christ is preached…* Paul keeps the proclamation of Christ at the center of his response. He has named the wrong motives plainly, yet he can still recognize the good accomplished as people hear of Christ. His gospel concern gives him freedom from being governed by personal injury.
- *…I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice…* Paul expresses both present joy and a resolve to continue rejoicing. His joy grows from Christ's work even while his own situation remains difficult. We learn this posture as we notice where the gospel is bearing fruit and thank God for it.

## Personal Application

**Where can you rejoice in Christ's work even while carrying a personal disappointment?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 9

### Prayer and the Spirit's Supply

**Philippians 1:19–20 • KJV**

**19** For I know that this shall turn to my salvation
- through your prayer,
- and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

**20** According to my earnest expectation and my hope,
- that in nothing I shall be ashamed,
- but that with all boldness,
- as always, so now also
- Christ shall be magnified in my body,
- whether it be by life, or by death.

- *…through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ…* Paul depends on God's help through the church's prayers and the Spirit's provision. Even an experienced apostle welcomes the intercession of fellow believers. Asking others to pray is one way we acknowledge our dependence on God and our place within His people.
- *…with all boldness…* Paul hopes to meet what lies ahead with courage and without shame. His immediate concern is faithfulness before an uncertain outcome. We can ask for the Spirit's help to speak truth, endure pressure, and act with integrity in the responsibilities before us.
- *…Christ shall be magnified in my body…* Paul's aim is that Christ's greatness will be evident through his bodily life, whether the outcome is continued life or death. His hope gives direction to his conduct today. Our ordinary actions, words, and responses to hardship can also honor the Lord we confess.

## Personal Application

**What specific prayer could you ask the men to pray so that Christ is honored in your present circumstances?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 10

## To Live Is Christ

**Philippians 1:21 • KJV**

**21** For to me to live is Christ,
✝ and to die is gain.

- *…For to me to live is Christ…* Paul states the purpose that orders his life. Christ gives direction to his work, relationships, suffering, and hopes. This verse invites us to consider what our schedules, priorities, spending, and private choices reveal about the person or purpose at the center of our lives.
- *…and to die is gain…* Paul's hope reaches beyond death because his future belongs to Christ. Verse 23 explains his desire to be with the Lord. That hope strengthens his willingness to serve faithfully for as long as God gives him life.

### Personal Application

**What practical decision would look different this week if 'to live is Christ' directed it?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 11

### The Desire for Christ and the Call to Serve

**Philippians 1:22–24 • KJV**

**22** But if I live in the flesh,
- ✝ this is the fruit of my labour:
- ✝ yet what I shall choose I wot not.

**23** For I am in a strait betwixt two,
- ✝ having a desire to depart,
- ✝ and to be with Christ;
- ✝ which is far better:

**24** Nevertheless to abide in the flesh
- ✝ is more needful for you.

- *…this is the fruit of my labour…* For Paul, continued bodily life means further fruitful service. He evaluates the future in terms of what Christ may accomplish through him. As long as we have opportunity, we can ask how our remaining strength, experience, and time may benefit others.
- *…to be with Christ; which is far better…* Paul's desire centers on fellowship with Christ. His longing reveals how deeply he loves the Lord whose gospel he proclaims. Christian hope teaches us to value the presence of Christ while receiving each day as an opportunity to serve Him.
- *…to abide in the flesh is more needful for you…* Paul brings the church's needs into his consideration of the future. Love makes him willing to continue costly labor for their good. His example challenges us to consider who depends on our presence, encouragement, instruction, or practical help.

## Personal Application

**Who would benefit from your continued, intentional investment in their growth?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 12

### Serving for Another Person's Progress and Joy

**Philippians 1:25–26 • KJV**

**25** And having this confidence,
- ✝ I know that I shall abide and continue with you all
- ✝ for your furtherance and joy of faith;

**26** That your rejoicing may be more abundant
- ✝ in Jesus Christ for me
- ✝ by my coming to you again.

- *…for your furtherance and joy of faith…* Paul expects his continued ministry to help the Philippians grow in faith and joy. Mature service seeks the spiritual good of others. We can measure our investment by whether it helps someone trust Christ more deeply, understand His Word, and obey Him with greater courage.
- *…your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ…* Paul anticipates that being reunited will give them fresh reason to rejoice in Christ. Their affection for their teacher points toward the Lord working through him. Christian friendship becomes fruitful as gratitude for one another leads to greater gratitude to God.

## Personal Application

**What would progress and joy in faith look like for someone you are helping?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 13

### A Life Worthy of the Gospel

**Philippians 1:27 • KJV**

**27** Only let your conversation be
- ✝ as it becometh the gospel of Christ:
- ✝ that whether I come and see you, or else be absent,
- ✝ I may hear of your affairs,
- ✝ that ye stand fast in one spirit,
- ✝ with one mind striving together
- ✝ for the faith of the gospel;

- *…let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ…* Conversation here concerns the whole conduct of life. The Companion Bible notes the language of citizenship, which connects with Paul's later statement that our citizenship is in heaven (3:20). The gospel calls for integrity that reaches into work, home, church, and private decisions.
- *…whether I come and see you, or else be absent…* Paul desires their faithfulness in every circumstance. Their obedience should continue through changes in leaders, supervision, and personal support. Spiritual maturity grows as we take responsibility for walking faithfully before God each day.
- *…with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel…* The church is called to stand and labor together. Shared commitment to the gospel requires humility, cooperation, and a willingness to carry burdens alongside others. Paul develops this unity through Christ's example in chapter 2.

## Personal Application

**What action would help our group stand and serve more faithfully together?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 14

## Courage in the Face of Opposition

**Philippians 1:28 • KJV**

**28** And in nothing terrified by your adversaries:
- ✝ which is to them an evident token of perdition,
- ✝ but to you of salvation,
- ✝ and that of God.

- *…in nothing terrified by your adversaries…* Paul calls the believers to remain steady when opposition threatens to unsettle them. The command follows his appeal for united gospel service. Believers help one another face pressure with prayer, truthful encouragement, and a shared determination to follow Christ.
- *…to you of salvation, and that of God…* Paul places their conflict within the larger reality of God's judgment and salvation. Their opponents cannot determine the final outcome. Confidence in God's saving work gives the church reason to persevere and entrust the future to Him.

### Personal Application

**Where does fear make faithfulness difficult, and what support would help you stand firm?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 15

### Sharing in the Suffering of Christ's People

**Philippians 1:29–30 • KJV**

**29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,
- ✝ not only to believe on him,
- ✝ but also to suffer for his sake;

**30** Having the same conflict
- ✝ which ye saw in me,
- ✝ and now hear to be in me.

- *…unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ…* Paul speaks of both faith in Christ and suffering for His sake as graciously granted. Following Jesus may bring costly opposition because of our allegiance to Him. The church can help its members endure that cost with hope and a sense of shared belonging.
- *…also to suffer for his sake…* The phrase directs our attention to suffering connected with Christ. In such hardship, believers can seek His strength and remember His example of faithful endurance (1 Peter 2:19–23). God's grace supports obedient witness through real pain and difficulty.
- *…the same conflict which ye saw in me…* The Philippians had witnessed Paul's suffering in their own city and now hear of his continuing struggle. Acts 16:19–40 supplies the background. Their experience joins them to a wider fellowship of believers who endure for the gospel, and that fellowship calls for sustained care and prayer.

## Personal Application

**How can we strengthen believers who are facing a real cost for following Christ?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 15 — Continued

## Standing Together for the Gospel

**Philippians 1:27 • KJV**

**27** Only let your conversation be

- ✝ as it becometh the gospel of Christ:
- ✝ that whether I come and see you, or else be absent,
- ✝ I may hear of your affairs,
- ✝ that ye stand fast in one spirit,
- ✝ with one mind striving together
- ✝ for the faith of the gospel;

| # | Call | A Response to Consider |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Live worthily | Bring daily conduct into agreement with the gospel (1:27). |
| **2** | Stand in one spirit | Strengthen unity through humility, prayer, and dependable care (1:27). |
| **3** | Strive together | Share the work of gospel witness and service (1:27). |

Study summary of the passage

## Personal Application

**Which of these stands out or speaks to you most?**

# Biblical Observations

Observation 15 — Continued

## Courage and Shared Endurance

**Philippians 1:28–30 • KJV**

**28** And in nothing terrified by your adversaries:
- ✝ which is to them an evident token of perdition,
- ✝ but to you of salvation,
- ✝ and that of God.

**29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,
- ✝ not only to believe on him,
- ✝ but also to suffer for his sake;

**30** Having the same conflict
- ✝ which ye saw in me,
- ✝ and now hear to be in me.

| # | Call | A Response to Consider |
|---|---|---|
| **4** | Face opposition with courage | Entrust the outcome to God and encourage one another (1:28). |
| **5** | Endure as fellow believers | Support those bearing a cost for following Christ (1:29–30). |

Study summary of the passage

## Personal Application

**Which of these stands out or speaks to you most?**

# Chapter 1 Review

## Gospel Partnership and Courageous Faith



Paul begins with gratitude for a church that has shared in the gospel from the first day. He prays for their love to grow in knowledge, discernment, and righteous fruit. His imprisonment has opened opportunities for witness and strengthened other believers' courage. Even amid rivalry, he rejoices that Christ is preached. With his future uncertain, Paul wants Christ to be honored in his life or death. His concern for the church shapes his desire for continued service. He closes by calling the believers to conduct worthy of the gospel, united effort, and courage in suffering.

**Where have you seen God use a difficult circumstance to strengthen faith or open a door for witness?**

## Key Movements in the Text

| Passage | Movement | What Paul Emphasizes |
|---|---|---|
| **1:1–8** | Grace and gospel partnership | Paul greets the church, gives thanks, and expresses confidence and affection. |
| **1:9–11** | Love that grows in discernment | Prayer seeks wise love and righteous fruit through Jesus Christ. |
| **1:12–18** | Gospel progress through hardship | Paul's chains encourage witness, and he rejoices that Christ is preached. |
| **1:19–21** | Christ honored in life and death | Prayer and the Spirit's help sustain Paul's hope and boldness. |
| **1:22–26** | Fruitful service for the church | Paul considers the believers' growth and joy as he weighs his future. |
| **1:27–30** | United courage under pressure | Believers stand together and endure opposition for Christ's sake. |

**Which movement of the chapter speaks most directly to your present season?**

Read Philippians 1:27–30 again and then 2:1–5. Notice how standing together leads into the appeal for humility and the mind of Christ.

## Questions for Reflection



1. Who has shared in your spiritual growth, and how can you thank God for that person and encourage him this week?

2. Where does your love need greater knowledge and discernment before you act?

3. What present limitation could become an opportunity to speak of Christ or strengthen another believer?

4. How can the words ‘to live is Christ’ shape one decision about your time, work, relationships, or possessions?

5. What practical step will help our group stand together in faith when someone faces opposition or suffering?

### Memory Verse

For to me to live is Christ,
and to die is gain.

**Philippians 1:21 • KJV**

Read the verse aloud together. Then repeat it from memory and name one way you can live for Christ this week.

## Closing Prayer



Father, thank You for the grace that joins us to Jesus Christ and to one another. Deepen our love and give us wisdom to choose what pleases You. Bear righteous fruit in our lives through Your Son. When we face hardship, help us recognize opportunities to witness and serve. Guard our hearts from envy and selfish ambition. Supply courage through Your Spirit so that Christ is honored in our words, our work, and our response to pressure. Make us faithful partners who pray, give, and stand together. Help us use the days You give us for the growth and joy of others. In Jesus' name, amen.