

Philippians

WHAT'S THIS BOOK ABOUT? Paul thanks the church in Philippi for a gift they had sent him. He uses this opportunity to encourage them to remain true to God and to be joyful in every situation.

✦ **WHO WROTE IT?** The apostle Paul.

✦ **WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?** Around A.D. 60.

✦ **WHERE DOES THIS BOOK FIT?** Paul wrote Philippians from prison in Rome.

✦ THE BREAKDOWN

- Chapter 1: Paul rejoices in spite of his suffering
- Chapter 2: Serving as Jesus served
- Chapter 3: Warning against distorted teaching
- Chapter 4: Personal notes

✦ KEY CONCEPTS

- Thanks
- Joy
- Suffering

✦ SCORECARD

- **Paul:** The writer
- **Timothy:** A younger team member Paul is sending to Philippi
- **Epaphroditus:** Another team member who will accompany Timothy
- **Euodia and Syntyche:** Two Christian women in the church who aren't getting along

✦ READING TIME

IN HOURS	:30	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30
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WORTH MEMORIZING

- 1:6 God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.
- 3:13-14 I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.
- 4:4-5 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.
- 4:8-9 Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

THE MASCULINE PERSPECTIVE

- **FOCUSED ON NEEDS.** Notice the role models in this book. Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30) are totally focused on the needs of others, not their own desires. Notice Paul himself (3:12-17), who doesn't claim perfection but is definitely making the main thing the main thing—enough that he invites others to imitate him.



THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

PAUL WRITES A THANK-YOU NOTE to the believers at Philippi for their help in his hour of need, and he uses the occasion to send along some instruction on Christian unity. His central thought is simple: Only in Christ are real unity and joy possible. With Christ as your model of humility and service, you can enjoy a oneness of purpose, attitude, goal, and labor—a truth which Paul illustrates from his own life, and one the Philippians desperately need to hear. Within their own ranks, fellow workers in the Philippian church are at odds, hindering the work. In proclaiming new life in Christ. Because of this, Paul exhorts the church to “stand fast . . . be of the same mind . . . rejoice in the Lord always . . . in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God . . . and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (4:1, 2, 4, 6, 7). This epistle is called *Pros Philippesious*, “To the Philippians.” The church at Philippi was the first church Paul founded in Macedonia.

WATCH WORDS

- **selfish ambition** (self-promotion)—1:16 (also 2:3)
- **form** (the way that a thing exists and appears)—2:6 (also 2:7)
- **service** (work on behalf of another)—2:30
- **body** (the physical aspect of a person)—3:21



o church in the New Testament had a more dramatic beginning than the one in Philippi, as described in Acts 16. It involved a businesswoman, a fortuneteller, floggings, singing, and a midnight earthquake. In the midst of these events, Paul planted the Philippian church and watered it with his blood.

Years later during his first Roman imprisonment, Paul wrote this very personal letter to the church. They had a unique place in his heart. In these four chapters, Paul used the words *I*, *me*, and *my* over one hundred times as he expressed his love and gratitude for the faithful support of this beloved congregation.

It's no wonder, then, that contentment and joy are dominant themes of this letter, along with the Christ-like practice of humble service. In chapter 2, we have one of the most important passages about Christ in the Bible: "who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant" (Philippians 2:6-7). Therefore, said Paul, "God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow" (Philippians 2:9-10).

In keeping with His example, we too, then, should not look to our own interests but to the interests of others.

Joy, contentment, and humble service! As we internalize Philippians, we'll increasingly share these qualities exhibited by those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



KEY THOUGHT:

Despite persecution and problems, we can rejoice in the Lord always, not through selfish ambition, but through Him who strengthens us.



KEY VERSES:

"Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved . . . Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"
Philippians 4:1, 4



KEY ACTION:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."
Philippians 2:5



KEY PRAYER:

God, grant me joy, contentment, and peace, regardless of my circumstances.

BASIC SURVEY

PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION TO
PHILIPPIANS

BACKGROUND

Philippi was located in Macedonia (northern Greece). Philip II of Macedonia (the father of Alexander the Great) renamed this city after himself. Paul, Silas, and Timothy visited this city during Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:12-40). They met Lydia and others as they worshiped beside the river. (The city did not have enough Jewish men to have a synagogue.) There they cast a demon out of a slave girl, were thrown into prison, had an earthquake free them, and saw the conversion of the jailer and his family. Paul's authorship is confirmed in the first verse: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons..."

MESSAGE

Ironically, although the Epistle to the

OUTLINE

- I. Paul's Concern for the Believers
- II. The Joy of Serving
 - A. Helpfulness and humility
 - B. The attitude of Christ
 - C. Paul's fellow workers
- III. Look Ahead
- IV. Rejoice in the Lord
- V. The Philippians' Generosity

Philippians was written during Paul's imprisonment, it is known as the "joy letter," because he repeatedly refers to joy or rejoicing. Paul gives thanks for the generosity of the Philippian believers who have supported him financially at various hours of need, and he gives details of his current situation. Yet he is concerned that the work of Christ is being hindered by the lack of unity demonstrated within the church at Philippi. Paul wants the Philippian believers to imitate the humility of Christ. By humbling themselves, the believers will not only find unity within their ranks but also the complete joy that is found only in Christ.

TIME

Paul probably wrote the Epistle to the Philippians in A.D. 62 while imprisoned in Rome.

- 1:1-30
- 2:1-4
- 2:5-18
- 2:19-30
- 3:1-21
- 4:1-9
- 4:10-23

AUTHOR: The apostle Paul, along with Timothy (1:1).

DATE: Probably the early AD 60s.

IN TEN WORDS OR LESS

"Friendship letter" between the apostle Paul and a beloved church.

DETAILS, PLEASE

With sixteen references to "joy" and "rejoicing," Philippians is one of the apostle Paul's most upbeat letters—even though he wrote it in "bonds" (1:13 KJV). Paul thanks the church at Philippi for its support (1:5) and encourages its people to "rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice" (4:4 KJV).

QUOTABLE

- > For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (1:21 KJV).
- > I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (3:14 KJV).

> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God (4:6 NKJV).

UNIQUE AND UNUSUAL

Though unity is a common theme in Paul's letters, he singles out two Philippian women, Euodia and Syntyche, pleading that they "be of the same mind in the Lord" (4:2 KJV).

SO WHAT?

When you live in the joy of the Lord, "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (4:7 NKJV).

READ PHILIPPIANS 1 AND ISAIAH 45:14-25.

- One-Month Course: your next reading is on page 235. →
- Three-Month Course: your next reading is on page 235. →
- Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 232. →

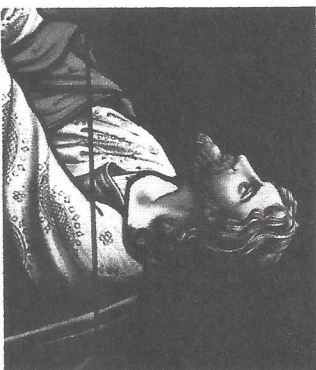
CLOSER LOOK

SETTING ASIDE DIVINE POWER

Jesus is the Son of God, and before being born as a human being, He shared all God's glory and power. When praying to His Father, Jesus mentioned "the glory I had with you before the world began" (John 17:5 NIV). So how could the omnipotent, omnipresent God become a mortal man? How could infinite deity be contained in a finite human body?

Paul tells us that Jesus had to empty Himself of His divine power and attributes. "Christ Jesus... although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped [held on to], but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:5-7 NASB).

After becoming a limited, mortal man, Jesus experienced hunger and thirst and weariness. He was subject to human limitations. God is all-present, but Jesus could only be in one place at a time. God is all-knowing, but Jesus could no longer know everything



Before Jesus could walk the earth as a human, He had to empty Himself of all divine power.

(Mark 13:32). God is all-powerful, but Jesus could no longer do everything (Mark 6:5-6). He only did miracles by the power of God's Holy Spirit. As He explained, "I can of Myself do nothing" (John 5:30 NKJV).

After Jesus resurrected from the dead, His body became powerful and eternal (Revelation 1:12-18). Only such a body could contain the full glory and power of God. Jesus was once again all-powerful and all-knowing. Paul declared, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9 NKJV).

READ PHILIPPIANS 2 AND PSALM 88.

● Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 235.



HIDDEN TREASURE

CHRISTIAN UNITY

In Philippians, Paul not only stressed the importance of Christian unity, but outlined practical steps we can take to make it happen. He wrote, "Make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too" (Philippians 2:2-4 NLT). That's already plenty to digest, but Paul also urged unity in Romans 12:16 (NIV), saying, "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited." (See also Romans 15:5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:10.)

READ PSALM 89 AND PROVERBS 30.

HIDDEN TREASURE

PRAISE GOD DESPITE DIFFICULTIES

It's only natural to complain when trouble hits, but the Bible gives a surprising alternative: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4 NIV). We can choose to be happy in Him in *all* circumstances. But it might take some doing. In Psalm 42:5 (NKJV) King David asked himself, "Why are you cast down, O my soul?" Then he commanded himself, "Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him." However, David acknowledged in the next verse that he *still* felt miserable, confessing, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me." David poured out his heartfelt complaint—to *God*, not people—then in verse 11 (NKJV) declared *again*, "Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him."

READ PHILIPPIANS 3 AND PSALM 42.

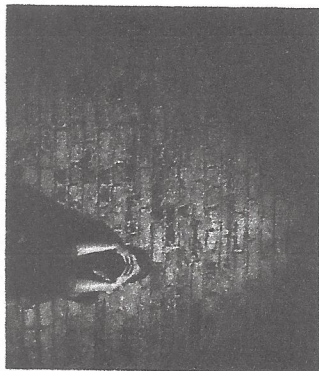
HIDDEN TREASURE

DON'T BE ANXIOUS

Paul was under house arrest in Rome, about to appear before Emperor Nero to face the charges against him. His future was uncertain, but at this very time Paul advised believers, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6 NIV). The NLT states it this way: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done." Church historians tell us that Paul was released, continued his missionary work, and was only rearrested and executed some years later. But *whatever* the outcome of that initial trial might have been, Paul refused to become anxious about it.

READ PHILIPPIANS 4 AND PSALMS 97-99.

Even when Paul was imprisoned, he encouraged believers to turn their worries over to God. Rather than dwelling on his fears, Paul prayed and thanked God.



HIDDEN TREASURE

FOCUSING ON VIRTUOUS THINGS

The Bible doesn't teach "the power of positive thinking." Rather, as we focus on our mighty God and pray for His help, *He* sends peace into our hearts and resolves our difficult situations (Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:7). But when it comes to moral issues, we *are* told to focus on positive, virtuous thoughts: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8 NKJV). It also helps to pray, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord" (Psalm 19:14 NKJV).

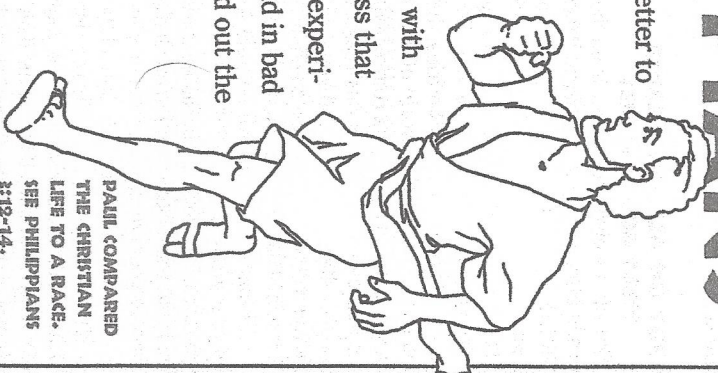
READ PSALM 19 AND ISAIAH 26.

AN INTRODUCTION TO

PHILIPPIANS

Paul wrote this personal letter to encourage the believers

in Philippi. Even though Paul wrote from prison, it is a letter about joy. Paul had a happiness he wanted to share with the Philippians. It's a happiness that we can know as well. We can experience this joy in good times and in bad times. Read Philippians to find out the secret of real joy!



PAUL COMPARED
THE CHRISTIAN
LIFE TO A RACE.
SEE PHILIPPIANS
3:13-14.

In It For Me?

I CAN HAVE JOY AND
CONTENTMENT . . .

IN ANY SITUATION.

WITH A LETTER OR A HOT,

BY NOT COMPLAINING

OR ARGUING.

BY TURNING MY NEEDS

OVER TO GOD.

BY GIVING THANKS

TO GOD.

BY LOOKING FORWARD

TO HEAVEN.

BY REJOICING IN

THE LORD!

Headlines

FIGHTING ENCOURAGED

BY PAUL

Philippians 1:27-30, page 1600

TAKE AN INTEREST

IN OTHERS

Philippians 2:3-5, page 1600

PAUL RUNS AND

DOESN'T LOOK BACK

Philippians 3:12-14, page 1602

SOME THINGS TO

THINK ABOUT

Philippians 4:8, page 1603

PHILIPPIANS

- A. JOY IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES (1:1 - 3:0)
- B. THE SECRET OF VICTORIOUS LIVING (2:1 - 3:0)
- C. HAVING A VICTORIOUS FOCUS (3:1 - 4:1)
- D. FINDING A JOYFUL FELLOWSHIP (4:2 - 23)

THE BIG PICTURE

As a missionary and traveling pastor, Paul depended on others for financial support. Paul had planted the Philippian church during his second missionary journey. The believers in Philippi had supported him ever since—for almost ten years. They were compassionate people, and their commitment to Christ and support of Christ's work were well known.

Paul wrote this letter to thank the Philippians for their continued support. He also wanted to challenge them to remain true to Christ and to be joyful in their circumstances. Contentment in life, Paul reminded them, does not come from material things or pleasant circumstances. Genuine joy, meaning and satisfaction come as we follow Christ and help others grow spiritually.

Paul knew what he was talking about. He penned this encouraging letter while imprisoned in Rome, facing a trial that might lead to his execution. Throughout his life, Paul had been rich and poor, comfortable and in pain, healthy and sick, popular and the target of mobs. Yet in spite of everything, Paul had learned to be content, even joyful, no matter what the surrounding circumstances.

The letter to the Philippians has much to say to us about joy in the midst of our everyday life too. Though we may be pursuing spiritual renewal, seeking God and obeying him, we will still face frustration, anger and conflict daily. Yet when we encounter these painful occurrences, Christ can be our joy. Trials are rarely pleasant, but we need to remember that God is with us. Because of his presence, we can have joy. The secret of maintaining this joy centers on increasing our knowledge of Christ and making him a priority in our lives each day.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL THEMES

THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY

When we surrender our lives to God, we will experience his power at work within us. God changes us and conforms us to his image. But beware! Continued spiritual development may cause pride to surface in our lives. We may forget our source of power and view ourselves as self-sufficient. The letter to the Philippians reminds us to be humble, to adopt the attitude of Christ, "who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage" (Philippians 2:6). Our spiritual growth must always involve a spirit of humility.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL LEADS TO TRUE JOY

When we recognize our need for God and surrender our lives to him, we embark on a journey that will lead to true joy. We can possess deep-down joy even during the tough times, because joy does not come from outward circumstances. Joy radiates from the inward strength of knowing Christ personally and depending on his strength and power on a daily basis.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL REQUIRES SACRIFICE

A sure sign of progress in our own spiritual growth involves our increased concern for those around us who have not yet surrendered their lives to God. As Christ suffered and died so that we might have life, we must make it our goal to sacrifice for others if we would see growth in our own spiritual life. Spiritual maturity will look past our own interests and share the hope of spiritual renewal with others. If our spiritual growth is merely a selfish pursuit, we will be prone to pride and the eventual downfall it brings. When our spiritual growth is genuine, it causes us to care for others as God cares for them.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

Whatever you do, do it all to the Lord.

Athletes probably cite this verse more than any other, and Christians from every walk of life quote it when facing big challenges. While it may be a motivating verse for many believers, Paul is not claiming that Christians can do absolutely anything. After all, is it really possible to run a three-minute mile or bench press a thousand pounds? The context shows that Paul actually had Christian perseverance in mind. He wrote this letter from prison. Part of his emphasis was to commend the Philippians for their care and support of him in his tough circumstances (v. 10). Paul said that he had learned how to be content even in the midst of tribulations such as poverty and hunger (vv. 11-12). The secret to this contentment was trusting God's provisions and strength, which so often had enabled Paul to overcome hardships in his life as a missionary (v. 13). This is the meaning of Philippians 4:13. We can do all the things God calls us to in our *Christian walk* because God will strengthen us.

Essential Facts

PURPOSE:

To thank the Philippian believers for their support of Paul's ministry and to encourage them in their faith.

AUTHOR:

The apostle Paul.

AUDIENCE:

The believers in Philippi, a city in Macedonia.

DATE WRITTEN:

Around AD 61-62.

SETTING:

Paul, a prisoner in Rome, wrote this warm letter to the believers at Philippi after they had sent him a generous gift.

KEY VERSE:

"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (4:9).

KEY PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS:

Paul with Timothy, Epaphroditus and the Philippian believers.

Philippians

Behind prison bars is not the place you'd expect a person to find happiness. And yet Paul did. He was able to say, "Rejoice in the Lord always!" (4:4), even from prison. How could Paul—the world-traveling missionary who had been spreading Christianity throughout the Roman Empire—find joy and contentment stuck in prison? And why would God put him there? Wouldn't it have been far better to have Paul out there sharing the gospel message?

Yet Paul was both joyful and content. How could he do it? He gladly tells you. Read on.

The first chapter of this letter speaks about the joy we can experience in everyday life—no matter what troubles we're facing. To Paul, living was all about his relationship with Christ. Understand that Paul didn't know if this time in prison would end with his execution. To live is Christ, he says, but to die is gain (1:21). Whether he lived or died, Paul knew he would be right where God wanted him, and he was content with that. When you have that kind of attitude, you're not worrying, fretting, scheming, plotting, or feeling hopeless. You're free instead to "Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (1:27) because you know that God will take care of the rest.

Chapter 2 describes what Jesus did for us by coming to earth as a humble human being. Paul urges us to have a similar attitude that is always focused on gladly helping others. Paul tells us to "Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humbly consider others as more important" (2:3). It's as simple as putting others first and doing everything "without grumbling and arguing" (2:14). When you put others first, you become less selfish, less self-focused. That alone can make you more content and joyful.

Chapter 3 reminds us to "rejoice in the Lord" (3:1). That delight is worth sharing with others. To do that, we must keep our goal in mind: "to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings" (3:10). Instead of thinking only

of filling our stomachs or other worldly things, we need to remember that our "citizenship is in heaven" (3:20). Knowing that, how can we help but have a smile on our face? The journey may be rough, but we know the final destination!

Finally, chapter 4 teaches about being content. Paul wrote, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content . . . I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me" (4:11-13).

As to the question about why God would put his #1 missionary in prison for awhile? It probably didn't make sense to Paul or any of the other believers of the day either. But we have the opportunity to see now that, without that time in prison, Paul would not have written several of these letters that now appear in our Bibles. What comfort we would miss if we didn't have these books to teach us about our faith! God had to slow down his missionary long enough to get him to write these important letters.

Want to find true joy and contentment? Read this little book. It will remind you of what Jesus did for you and how you can live for Him. When you practice the principles Paul gives, you will find the kind of joy and contentment that no one can take away.

Author: Paul (Saul of Tarsus)

Date: Written around A.D. 60 in Rome while imprisoned

What in the world is going on?

- 356 B.C. Philip II of Macedon renames the settlement of Crenides after himself (Philippi)
- A.D. 26-30 Years of Jesus' ministry
- A.D. 33 Saul of Tarsus converts and is later known as Paul
- ca A.D. 49-52 Paul has a vision of a man from Macedonia and visits there for the first time during his second missionary journey; Timothy travels with Paul and Silas

A.D. 50 Paul, Silas, and other missionaries land at Philippi; the church is established

ca A.D. 57-59 Paul is imprisoned in Caesarea

A.D. 59 The young Roman emperor, Nero, has his power-hungry mother, Agrippina, murdered

A.D. 59-62 Festus is the governor

ca A.D. 60-65 Matthew writes his Gospel

ca A.D. 60-63 Luke writes his Gospel and the book of Acts

A.D. 60 Paul defends himself before the Roman proconsul, Festus, and King Agrippa



Philippians

Timeline	359 BC Gold-mining town of Cremetes seized by Philip II of Macedonia and renamed Philippi	42 BC Battle of Philippi, a strategic turning point in Roman history	AD 49 Beginning of Paul's second missionary journey	AD 50 Paul plants the church in Philippi
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"Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus" (2:5).

Who wrote Philippians?
Paul named himself as the author of the letter (1:1).

Who were the recipients?
Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the city of Philippi. The Philippian church, founded by Paul on his second missionary journey in the early A.D. 50s, bears the distinction of being the first church in Europe.

When was Philippians written?
Clearly from the book itself one notes that Paul was in prison awaiting sentence when he wrote the letter (1:7, 13-14, 17, 20, 30, 2:17), and it was most likely written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome A.D. 60-62 (Ac 28:30-31).

Where did it happen?
While imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the church at Philippi, a cosmopolitan city located on the plain of eastern Macedonia, about 10 miles inland from Neapolis, an important seaport.

What is Philippians about?
Joy. The words "joy" and "rejoice" are found more times in this letter than in any other of Paul's letters. Paul discovered the true source of joy in Christ himself, and Christ enabled Paul to experience joy even in suffering.

Outline

- I. Introductory Matters (1:1-11)
 - A. Greeting (1:1-2)
 - B. Thanksgiving (1:3-8)
 - C. Intercession (1:9-11)
- II. The Present and Future of Paul's Imprisonment (1:12-26)
 - A. Paul's Present Joy: Good Outcomes of Imprisonment (1:12-18a)
 - B. Paul's Future Joy: Christ's Honor and the Philippians' Joy (1:18b-26)
- III. Commission and Follow-Up (1:27-2:30)
 - A. The Philippians' Commission (1:27-2:18)
 - B. Paul's Follow-Up (2:19-30)
- IV. The Essence of the Gospel and Life Itself (3:1-4:1)
 - A. The Inadequacy of the Flesh (3:1-7)
 - B. The Sufficiency of Christ (3:8-14)
 - C. The Appeal (3:15-4:1)
- V. Concluding Matters (4:2-23)
 - A. Reiterative Exhortations (4:2-9)
 - B. Appreciation (4:10-20)
 - C. Closing Greeting and Benediction (4:21-23)

Unity: Paul's emphasis on unity implies that the Philippian believers needed to be reminded that unity was essential for the church body and for the progress of the gospel in the world (1:27; 2:2-4, 14; 4:2).

Christ: The Christocentricity of the book is evident by the more than 50 references to Jesus, whom Paul calls "Lord," "Savior," and "Christ."

Why should women read Philippians?

When Paul arrived in Philippi, Paul found an assembly of God-fearing women, and among this group of women down by the riverside, the Philippian church was born. In this tender letter from the apostle Paul to the Philippian church, one sees Paul's heart as a mentor in the faith and as a father who deeply cared for his spiritual children. The Philippian church was beloved by Paul (1:3-8). They were a joying people (1:19), as well as loyal and liberal givers throughout Paul's ministry. Even when no one else supported him (4:15), they gave out of their own "deep poverty" (2Co 8:2) to further the gospel message. Paul yearned to see their spiritual growth; thus, he taught them the essence of the Christian life.

How do you read Philippians?

Paul's letter follows the form of ancient letters written and exchanged between friends in the Greco-Roman world. Although the letter is similar in form to ancient letters, the content is uniquely Christocentric and full of Paul's own articulation of the gospel message.

AD 52 Paul's return to Antioch, concluding his second missionary journey	AD 57 Paul's likely return to Philippi to take an offering for believers in Judea	AD 59 Paul's journey from Caesarea to Rome to appeal to Caesar	AD 60-62 Paul's house arrest in Rome	AD 62 Paul's letter to the Philippians
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Greeting (1:1-2)

1 Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus:

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving (1:3-8)

3 I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, ⁴ always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you ⁷ will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁸ It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, ⁹ and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and establishment of the gospel. ¹⁰ For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Intercession (1:9-11)

9 And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, ¹⁰ so that you can approve the things that are superior and can be pure and blameless in ¹¹ the day of Christ, ¹² filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Paul's Present Joy: Good Outcomes of Imprisonment (1:12-18a)

12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has actually resulted in the advance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, ¹⁴ and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is in the cause of Christ.

Believers and Christ (1:14-18a)
¹⁴ Most of the brothers in the Lord have gained confidence from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the message fearlessly.

^{A13} Or for your every remembrance of me
^{B16} Or work among you
^{D1-10} Or until
^{E1-13} Lit praetorium, a Lat word that can also refer to a military headquarters, to the governor's palace, or to Herod's palace.
^{F1-10} Other mss add of God



BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD Praying for Your Children

In Php 1:3-11, one gets a glimpse of the deep love Paul had for the Philippian believers, whom he considered to be his spiritual children. Paul thought of them often, for they were in his heart (v. 7). And yet, Paul did not spend time merely thinking of his spiritual children; he spent time praying for them. Intercession was a natural by-product of his Godward focus, which constantly nurtured and to care for their children. To think about your children is easy; this process is what it means to be a mother! Paul's example, however, causes you to ask yourself: Do I spend as much time praying for my children as I do thinking about them? And do I pray with an eye toward what God's purposes are for them (vv. 9-11)? And how often do you make your children aware of what you are praying for them (which encourages them to act on what you are praying)? Paul's example is a reminder that caring for your children means offering up fervent, visionary prayers on their behalf.

¹¹11 While Paul is clearly the author of the letter, he chose to include Timothy (Gk *Timotheos*, combining *time*, "honor," and *theo*, "God," "honored of God") in the greeting as well. Timothy had a vested interest in the church as its co-founder (Ac 16-18) and was presently with Paul (Php 2:19).

The term *saints* (Gk *hagiois*, "holy or set apart ones") indicates the privileged banding recipients of Christ's saving work and a responsibility to live holy lives, set apart for His use (1Pt 1:15-16). The inclusion of the overseers (Gk *epistatous*, source of the English words "episcopate" and "episcopal") and deacons (Gk *diakonoi*) in the greeting occurs only here in Paul's letters. See Doornik, p. 1545, n. 1557, and note on 1Pt 5:1-4.

Philippi was a cosmopolitan city founded in 359 B.C. by Philip of Macedonia (the father of Alexander the Great) and then made into a Roman military colony in 42 B.C. When Paul arrived in Philippi, he saw a miniature Rome, "made up of privileged people who were diverse in nationality and social position" (see Ac 16:13-40).

¹³13-19 Paul saw a beneficial outcome of his imprisonment: the opportunity to testify of the gospel of Jesus Christ in Rome. The whole imperial guard and everyone else knew why he was in chains.

Philippians

BOOK INTRODUCTION

The psalmist wrote that “the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord” (Ps. 37:23). But someone has wisely observed that God not only lovingly orders our steps but also our *stops*.

At one point in his second missionary journey, the apostle Paul experienced successive divine “stops” within Asia Minor (known then as “Asia”): The first time, the Holy Spirit prevented him and his missionary team from pushing on to its western reaches—the coastal area north of the city of Ephesus. The second time, they tried to go north into Bithynia, “but the Spirit did not permit them” (Acts 16:6, 7). Finally, Paul looked to the northwest—to Troas—a seaport just across the Aegean Sea from Macedonia. Given the roadblocks of previous days, he may have turned toward Troas somewhat tentatively. But whatever uncertainty he arrived with was quickly dispelled. God met him there with unmistakable instructions sometime in the night: Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man pleading with him, “Come and help us” (Acts 16:8, 9).

Suddenly all those stops made sense! God wanted them to bring the message of Christ to Macedonia. Paul and his missionary team were so certain that God had made Philippi their top priority that Luke writes: “Immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them” (Acts 16:10).

Leaving Troas on a ship, they docked overnight on the island of Samothrace and landed at the coastal city of Neapolis the next day. As always, Paul wanted to get to work quickly, which in this case meant traveling to Philippi, the leading city of the region.

The one thing lacking in Philippi at that time was a Jewish sanctuary. Consequently, the Jews who wanted to gather on the Sabbath did so on the banks of the Gangites River—a source of fresh water necessary for ritual cleansings. So that’s where Paul and his companions went, finding a group of women assembled for prayers. One was named Lydia, an apparently prosperous Gentile businesswoman who worshipped the God of the Jews but who knew nothing of their Messiah, Jesus Christ (Acts 16:14). When Paul spoke to the group about Jesus, Lydia responded with faith. Afterwards, her home became the gathering place for all the early converts in Philippi (Acts 16:40).

Thus the church in Philippi was planted, and Philippi became the first European city to receive the gospel of Christ from Paul.

WHAT IT SAYS | *Joy and Hope . . . in the Midst of Everything*

As with so many other places where Paul preached, persecution followed close behind the founding of the church in Philippi. But not even persecution and imprisonment could taint his memories of ministry to that city—a ministry that was sparked by a vision in the night and launched on the side of a river with a group of godly women.

Some years later, during his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul thought about and prayed for the church he had established there, writing those believers perhaps his most intimate and personal letter. By then Paul had spiritual children across much of the Roman world, but the Philippians had a unique place in his heart. In just four chapters, he uses *I, me*, and *my* over 100 times, with the word *I* appearing 52 times. In this spirit of constant gratitude, Paul expresses his heartfelt affection: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you” (1:3), “I have you in my heart” (1:7), and “I long for you all” (1:8). This is a book about fellowship from the hand of a man who intimately loved his brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Imprisoned, not knowing his fate, Paul nevertheless wanted to express his love for this group of believers, along with the deep satisfaction and pleasure he gained from their fellowship and their progress in the Lord. Well aware of their concern for him, Paul longed for them to look at his difficult circumstances in a positive, hopeful way—understanding that God could use these events to advance the gospel and reach people Paul might not have otherwise reached. He strongly urged them to refocus their gaze on Christ, strive for unity, and be on guard against the false teachers who had shipped in among them.

When the Philippian church learned that Paul was imprisoned in Rome (around AD 60–62), they sent him a gift by way of an emissary, Epaphroditus. (4:18). While serving the Philippian church in this way, Epaphroditus fell ill. It appears as though this illness was a source of distress for Epaphroditus, and Paul felt it necessary to pave the way for this faithful servant’s return to the church (2:25–30). In this instance and throughout the letter, Paul’s correspondence is marked by love and joy, from a spiritual father to his beloved children in the faith.

WHAT IT MEANS | *Keeping an Eye on the Highest Prize*

Joy is the dominant theme of Philippians (1:18, 25; 2:2, 17, 18, 28, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 4). And this joy—even in prison while under threat of execution—was possible because Paul had learned contentment and how to maintain a proper perspective (4:12–14).

- **Citizenship:** Because Philippi was a prominent Roman city, Paul reminds the members of the church that they are citizens of heaven first and Rome second. They need to stand firm in Christ as they await His appearing (3:20–4:1)
- **Humility and Service:** Humble service is a dominant theme in Philippians. Paul uses the term *bondservant* as a title of dignity and humility to begin the letter—his highest aspiration is to be a humble servant of the triune God. In a very important passage on the incarnation of Christ, Paul establishes the humility of Christ as the benchmark for the attitudes of Christians toward one another (2:1–11). Servanthood is upheld throughout this epistle as the privilege and responsibility of every believer.
- **Priorities:** Warning the Philippians against their prideful opponents in Philippi, Paul exhorts those believers to avoid putting confidence in the flesh. Instead, they should have the same priority as Paul: pressing on toward the prize God has for all who are in Christ (3:1–14). He also rejoiced that those with impure motives were preaching the gospel, for at least it *was* being preached (1:12–19).

- **Contentment and Joy:** Paul’s joy—the kind that could not be snuffed out by legalism or circumstances—came from his trust in God’s provision; he could be happy in abundance or in scarcity, for he knew that Christ was his ultimate strength and resource (4:10–13).

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU | *How to Be an Encourager*

Even though Paul was suffering a Roman imprisonment with no idea of its duration or his ultimate fate, his letter brought encouragement and joy to the church in Philippi (and brings it to us!). How did he do that? How do you lift the hearts of fellow believers who might be feeling discouraged and overwhelmed? We can follow Paul's example in Philippians:

- Pray specific, detailed prayers for them, and let them know what you have prayed.
- No matter your own situation, you must stay positive, confident, hopeful, and encouraged in the Lord.
- Through the Word of Truth and God's wisdom, help your friends see their circumstances from a wider perspective.
- Remind them of what they already know but may have forgotten: life is about today, not yesterday, and refocusing on Jesus Christ will make all the difference.

Risking It All

"IF YOU'RE NOT LIVING ON THE EDGE, you're taking up too much space."

So goes an anonymous quote about risk taking. It speaks real truth, relevant to today's Christian men sitting in comfortable church pews. Yet its wise message often gets drowned out in the hum of a safety-obsessed, security-demanding world.

A man named Epaphroditus took chances for the sake of Christ. This member of the church in ancient Philippi delivered some funds and supplies to Paul while the apostle languished in a Roman jail. So far as we know, Epaphroditus did no preaching or teaching, no public evangelizing, no high-profile ministry during his trip to Rome. Yet he was committed to the work of Christ, and he expended a great deal of energy trying to meet the apostle's needs. In the process, he came down with a serious illness. "In fact," Paul wrote to the man's home church, "he almost died"

God calls us to
put our trust
in him and
take a risk for
his Kingdom.

(Philippians 2:27).
If you had been Epaphroditus, would you have risked your life to become Paul's errand-boy? Would you have chosen the dangers of a long and arduous trip merely to deliver some much-needed supplies? Or would you have stayed home and prayed that Paul's stomach wouldn't growl too loudly?

The apostle praised Epaphroditus to his friends and told them to "welcome him in the Lord's love and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve." Why? Because "he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away" (2:29-30, emphasis added).

Risk occurs only when the outcome remains in doubt, so the danger of an undesirable result always exists. Just ask Epaphroditus, who almost died because of his risk taking. Not all risks bring honor to God. We need to take risks wisely. But God knows the end from the beginning, and he calls us to put our trust in him and take a risk for his Kingdom.

What risk are you taking? What risks do you plan to take? When?

"Don't be afraid to take a big step," said David Lloyd George, courageous prime minister of Great Britain through World War I. "You can't cross a chasm in two small jumps." Epaphroditus would have agreed.

THE POINT: God rejoices when godly men take risks for him.

Someone you
should know:

Epaphroditus

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MEN'S World

The Greeks and
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more than the
itself!

Paul thought
a lot from athle
verses and see
1 Corinthians 9
14; 1 Timothy 4

We are fascinated by fictional superheroes who display supernatural powers and yet at times fall victim to human weaknesses. Superman can fly and stop bullets with his bare hands, yet a piece of kryptonite can bring him to his knees.

When we look at the real Jesus, we first see a man who has human characteristics like us, and yet one who also claimed equality with God (e.g., Jn 5:18; 10:30; 20:28). So how can Jesus be fully God and fully human? *Fully human*, that is, not like the mutant human X-Men or humanoid like Superman, but a real human like you and me. Jesus was born as an infant who needed to be breast fed. As an adult carpenter, He likely had body odor at times. He was sometimes hungry (Lk 4:2), got tired (Jn 4:6), and needed sleep (Lk 8:23). He cried when His friend Lazarus died (Jn 11:35). He suffered excruciating physical and emotional pain before and while He was crucified (Mt 27:27-50).

Yet Jesus was *fully God*. He could calm a raging storm (Mk 4:39). He could multiply a little food to feed over 5,000 people (Mt 14:13-21). He could raise people from the dead (Mk 5:35-43; Lk 7:11-17; Jn 11). The answer to our question is that Jesus has two natures.

Jesus has always existed as God. He eternally existed before He was conceived in His mother, Mary. Christ existed as God, in perfect relationship with the Holy Spirit and the Father, sharing the same essence while being distinct in personhood. Scripture tells us about Jesus: "For everything was created by Him, in heaven and on earth. . . . He is before all things, and by Him all things hold together" (Col 1:16-17). Now, if God is all-powerful, then He can do anything that is possible—including coming to earth as a full human being born in a mother's womb. When Christ came to earth, He took a second nature of humanity.

Although Jesus, was fully divine, He laid aside some of His *privileges of deity*. Jesus, "who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of slave, taking on the likeness of men. And when He had come as a man in His external form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross" (Php 2:6-8). Jesus as a human could fully relate to us—to feel what we feel, to suffer what we suffer, and to experience great injustice in His death. Leading up to His death, Jesus was put through six trials, all of which had elements of injustice, and a completely innocent man died a most horrible death. But, if Jesus had not suffered as He did as a *man*, then He would not be fit to sympathize with us as high priest (Heb 2:17-18). And, because He knows injustice firsthand, Jesus *the man* is fully qualified to be the judge of all men (Ac 17:31).

Though it may be difficult for us to ever fully grasp how almighty God could come to earth and take on the nature of humanity, it's not logically impossible. Since God is all-powerful, He can do things that we don't fully understand. God reminds us through the writings of the prophet Jeremiah, "I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too difficult for Me?" (Jr 32:27).

BEING A DOORWAY, NOT A DOORMAT

Philippians 2:1-11

Service grows out of the soil of humility. Too often, however, humility has been misunderstood as a negative character trait. Biblical humility does not consist in thinking less of yourself, but rather in thinking more of God and of others. In other words, humility is not about putting ourselves down; humility involves glorifying God and affirming others.

Jesus Christ is the greatest example of humility. He left his place of honor in heaven in order to become God's servant on earth. In the process, however, he didn't tear himself down or deny his value. He lifted others up through his humility and showed them how valuable they were. Jonathan's attitude toward David also provides a vivid example of humility (see 1 Samuel 23). Jonathan counseled David better than himself without thinking less of himself in the process.

With these thoughts in mind, we can see that Biblical humility doesn't call us to be a doormat. Humility calls us to be a doorway, through which others enter into the presence and the power of God. By focusing on building others up and helping them along the way, we show them the love of God, who desires the best for them.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Reflect on the ways you can strive to put others' interests ahead of your own. In what ways can you show others how much you (and God) value them? How would Christ make himself "nothing" if he were in your place (see Philippians 2:7)?

For more on service, turn to Mark 10.

TV The Truth About Worry • 4:6

These are the facts about worrying:

- 40% of the things people worry about never happen.
- 30% of our worries are related to past matters, which are now beyond our control.
- 12% of our worries have to do with our health, even when we are not actually ill.
- 10% of our worries are about friends and neighbors and are not based in evidence or fact.
- Only 8% of our worries have some basis in reality, which means that over 90% of the things we worry about never happen.

With that information in mind, try picturing the Christian prayer life in this way: The Christian prayer life is composed of three circles. The first is the Worry Circle, in which the word *nothing* is written because the Bible says, "Be anxious about nothing." The second is the Prayer Circle, with the word *everything* written inside because the Bible says, "In everything let your prayers be known to God." The third is the Thanksgiving Circle, with the word *anything* written inside because the Bible says "be thankful for anything." When we live within those three circles, we overcome the stress that comes into our lives.

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Philippians 1:2-11

There is a blessing that comes from giving (see Acts 20:35). Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of prayer. God renews our spirits as we pray for others. Our love and compassion grow along with our faith when we come before God on behalf of others. As we pray, God often brings to mind specific ideas of ways we can support and help them as well. To paraphrase a great principle of prayer: We can do a great deal for people after we pray for them but little of lasting value until we pray for them.

We can pray specifically for others if we know their needs. But we can also request common-place things for all people, regardless of whether we know them or not. A good example of a general request is found at the beginning of Paul's letters, including this letter to the Philippians. Paul's letters often begin with a blessing of grace and peace. Grace is the reason for our salvation; peace is the result of it. God's grace in Jesus Christ brings us new life and peace, both with ourselves and with others. Paul never tired of reminding people of the root and fruit of their faith in Christ.

Paul then gave thanks to God for the Philippian believers. The evidence of changed lives never ceased to stir gratitude and awe in Paul's heart. He cherished God's work in and through others. Paul affirmed their partnership in Christ and consistently emphasized mutuality rather than condescension in his relationships.

Paul also expressed his confidence that God would complete the work of spiritual transformation he had begun in the Philippians. This inspiring promise encourages us to press on in our journey of faith as well. Paul exhorted the Philippians to keep their eyes on the goal in spite of the fluctuations and discouragements in their walk with Christ.

Paul's prayer for the Philippians included a blessing for grace and peace and a recognition of thanksgiving and affirmation. These qualities are the essential elements of the great keys to the spiritual life—faith, hope and love. Paul then prayed for additional requests that would aid the spiritual growth of his friends. He prayed that their love would grow within the community. He also prayed for them to grow in knowledge and understanding of Christ. And Paul also prayed that they would behave in a manner that honored God in light of the coming judgment. This is not a fear or guilt tactic. Rather it was Paul's reminder to live for the ultimate goal of heaven, not the short-term rewards of comfort or pleasure.

Paul had a lot to say to his friends, and he rooted those thoughts in loving prayer. What an ideal way to open people's hearts to teaching and ministry.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Select one person that God has placed on your heart. Write a prayer for them that includes the elements of Paul's prayer for the Philippians. Though not all of Paul's comments will be appropriate (such as having shared in ministry together), be as specific as possible for each element. Also study Paul's opening prayers in his other letters. What are his consistent requests? What are his different requests? How do these apply to the particular people to whom Paul is writing? Use these reflections to help you pray for others as well.

For more on prayer, turn to Genesis 18.

SEEK GOD AND SURRENDER TO HIM

Our Prime Example of Humility

Philippians 2:5-9

Our prime example for surrender to God is Jesus Christ. Christ's humility can be seen as he continually sought his heavenly Father in prayer and relinquished his will to him.

The apostle Paul wrote,

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:5-9).

In a similar vein, the author of Hebrews wrote, "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Note the progression in these verses: Jesus humbled himself, yet it was because of this that God raised him up to the heights of heaven. Humility was a key element in Jesus' life as he accomplished God's plan for fallen humanity. When we surrender to God and his will for us, we need to be humble as well. Jesus did not pray solely for his own will. He humbly prayed for his Father's will to be done. We, too, ought to pray, "Father, I want your will, not mine." This is the mark of true humility and the beginning of spiritual renewal.

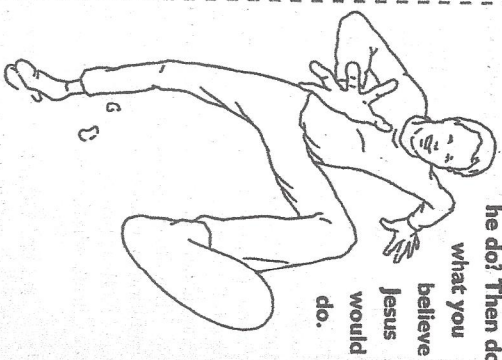
Turn to Titus 2.

Following in Jesus' Footsteps

Philippians 2:3-5

all you can be

Sometimes it's hard to know the right thing to do. When you don't have time to talk over with someone else what you should do, try this. Think about Jesus. What would



3 Ideas for Becoming More Humble

Read: **Philippians 2** | Habit: **Character Formation**

In the mountains of Vietnam and Laos lives the Saola, one of the rarest animals in the world. A forest-dwelling cousin to cows, the species was discovered in 1992 based on finding three skulls with unusual, long, straight horns. Researchers searched for 20 years but never saw the animal in the wild. It was only after a motion-sensitive camera captured its image on film that scientists caught a glimpse of one alive in nature.

If virtues were animals, humility would be the Saola. Like the Saola, humility is rarely found in nature—and nearly impossible to catch by searching for it directly.

So how do we become humble? In **Philippians 2:3–4** Paul provides the key. Humility is a virtue acquired by repeatedly putting aside our sinful nature—selfish ambition and vain conceit—and valuing others above ourselves by putting the interests of others ahead of our own.

Of course developing humility is about as easy as corralling a herd of Saola. But acquiring humility can—and must—be done if we want to grow closer to God. Here are three suggestions for developing humility:

1. **Recognize sin**—Even as followers of Christ, we continue to sin. “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn 1:8). Recognizing our sinfulness increases our dependence on God and makes us more forgiving of others.
2. **Look to Jesus**—Paul tells us that in our relationships with one another we must have the same mindset as Christ Jesus (see **Php 2:5**). Jesus’ meekness and gentleness is our model for how we should engage our neighbor. We need to consider how Jesus would treat someone—and then treat them that way.
3. **Put others first in prayer**—One key test of humility is to examine the focus of our prayers. When we talk to God, do the needs and concerns of others take priority, or do we start with our own interests and requests? We can change this by rearranging our prayers so that we make a habit of praying for others first.

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY: Humility is developed by setting aside our sinful nature and putting the needs of others first.

Like the Saola, humility is rarely found in nature—and nearly impossible to catch by searching for it directly.

The Method for Overcoming Sin

Read: **Philippians 4:13** | Habit: **Overcoming Sin and Temptation**

Now that we’ve examined what it means to overcome sin and the steps to prepare our hearts and conscience for the task (see “9 Steps to Overcoming Sin” on page 375 and “What It Means to Overcome Sin” on page 1418), we can turn our attention to the method by which it occurs. As John Owen explains, the means are few, requiring only two broad instructions: Put your faith in Christ and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit.¹

Step #1: Put your faith in Christ—By this Owen means we must exercise our existing faith to believe that Christ has died not only for our salvation, but also for our sanctification.² To practice this kind of faith, Owen suggests, you need to trust in your heart that Christ will, in time, help you to overcome your sin:

The Holy Spirit plays the essential role in helping us to overcome sin.

Though it may seem somewhat long to you, while you are under your trouble and perplexity, yet it shall surely come in the appointed time of the Lord Jesus; which is the best season.³

Remember that Jesus is always faithful and will fulfill his promises. Our expectation that Christ will help us overcome our sin, however, does not cause us to be passive, but leads us to pursue every means available (i.e., through spiritual disciplines) to destroy its power over us. As Paul said, “I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (**Php 4:13**).

Step #2: Rely on the power of the Holy Spirit—The Holy Spirit plays the essential role in helping us to overcome sin. To paraphrase Owen,

- ▶ The Spirit alone clearly and fully convinces the heart of the evil and guilt and danger of the sin to be overcome.
- ▶ The Spirit alone reveals to us the fullness of Christ’s power to overcome our sin.
- ▶ The Spirit alone establishes in our hearts the expectation that Christ will provide us relief from sin.
- ▶ The Spirit alone brings the cross of Christ into our hearts with its sin-killing power.
- ▶ The Spirit is the author and finisher of our sanctification.

When we pray to the Father to help us overcome sin, we are being supported by the Spirit.

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY: The methods for overcoming sin are simple to state but difficult to apply.

What's in a Name?

Paul wrote to the church in the city of Philippi, which got its name from King Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great.

PHILIPPIANS

AUTHOR: AUTHOR!

Although traditionally Paul has been considered the author, Philippians is addressed to the church as from both Paul and Timothy. It becomes clear through the text, however, that the author is indeed Paul.

LOOKING UP

In spite of his prison chains, Paul wrote this book with a theme of joyfulness, using the word joy (or rejoice) 13 times.

DID YOU KNOW?

▶ Paul originally arrived in Philippi as a result of a dream he had been given, where a man from Macedonia spoke to him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). Paul immediately left Troas and went to Philippi, a leading city of that region of Macedonia.

BY THE NUMBERS

4 CHAPTERS
104 VERSES
2,294 WORDS

KEY PASSAGE

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (4:4-7)."

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW PHILIPPIANS?

PHILIPPIANS IN REVIEW

Q WHO SAID IT?

1. Paul said that we are to be "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation," which is a quote from an Old Testament book. Who originally said it?

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

2. What does Paul say he did every time he remembered God's people in Philippi?
- A. Grieved
B. Fasted for a day
C. Thanked God
D. Rejoiced

TIME TRAVELER

3. Paul says you were ill and almost died but then God had mercy on you. Who are you?
- A. Epaphroditus
B. Timothy
C. Silas
D. Demas

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

4. How many times does Paul quote the Old Testament in the book of Philippians?
- "?"
- ### CRYPTIC PHRASES
5. What is Stryche?

- A. Name of a woman who Paul pleads with to be of the same mind
B. The lake from which the guards got the water for the prisoners
C. The doctrine of the Roman religion that Paul denounces in chapter 5
D. A guard who had converted to Christianity

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

6. What did Paul say had become "clear throughout the whole palace guard"?
- A. That Paul appeared to be a fool
B. That Paul was in chains for Christ
C. That Paul was severely lacking in nutrition
D. That Paul's presence brought unexplainable peace to them

HOT SEAT

7. Paul describes me as one who will show "genuine concern" for the believers' welfare. Who am I?

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

8. What does Paul say we should "live up to"?
- A. What we've already attained
B. What God has shown us through the Philippian church
C. What our ancestors have done before us
D. What Paul expects for church attendance

"?"

9. Who is Paul talking about when he says, "Their god is their stomach"?

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

10. What does Paul say we should make "evident to all"?

TIME TRAVELER

11. God's people in your household sent greetings to the Philippians through Paul's letter. Who are you?

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

12. What does Paul say we should do with everything we have heard, learned or received from him?

ANSWERS:

1. Moses (2:15); see Deuteronomy 32:2, 3, A (2:25-30), 4, only once; see Deuteronomy 32:6, A (4:2-3), 6, B (1:13), 7, Timothy (2:20), 8, A (3:16), 9, members of the cross of Christ (3:18-19), 10, our gentleness (4:5), 11, Caesar (4:22), 12, put it into practice (4:9).

LIFE LESSONS: God's strength gives you power to do the unimaginable (4:13). Respect your family members (6:1-4).

LIFE LESSONS: God has an amazing plan for your life (1:6). Be content (4:12).