



**EVERLASTING JOY**  
**Book of Philippians**  
**Lesson One**

Hello ladies! Please read the whole Book of Philippians at least once before we begin to go chapter by chapter. It will really help you keep everything in context. Each chapter in the Book of Philippians reveals a different aspect of joy. Charles Swindoll makes a great observation in his book Maybe It's Time to Laugh Again. He said in chapter 1, we will learn there is joy in living. In chapter 2, we will learn there is joy in serving, beginning with the attitude of humility. In chapter 3, Paul points out that there is joy in sharing; and in chapter 4, we will learn there is joy in resting. Philippians is often called a "gem of joy." I need some joy, don't you? I'd like to start by giving you the **Memory Verse of the Week** right off the bat! It's **Philippians 1:21**, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Paul gives us several pictures of Christ throughout this book. Let's begin by taking a look.

1. In the following verses, how is Christ portrayed?
  - A. 1:21
  - B. 2:5
  - C. 3:21
  - D. 4:13

2. Read Philippians 1:1-30. Observe and list the facts you find. Ask yourself the questions Who? What? Where? When? Why? Find out all you can about this chapter.
  
3. What repeated words do you find? List them on your **Key Word** sheet. (Key words are words that are repeated or would change the meaning of the text if you took them out. They also can be significant words that are used to exemplify the meaning or value of a word.)
  
4. What is the main point of the chapter?
  
5. Whom does Paul include in his greeting? What do we know about him? Read the following verses and write a brief character sketch. Acts 16:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15; Acts 17:14, 18:1-5, 19:22; Philippians 2:22, 1 Timothy 1:2, 18; 1 Corinthians 4:17.
  
6. How does Paul explain his present circumstances? How would you describe his attitude?
  
7. How would you describe Paul's prayer in verses 1-11?
  
8. How does Paul refer to himself and Timothy?
  
9. What two words do you find in Paul's greeting that is common to his writings?

It was customary in Paul's day to begin a letter with a signature and a greeting, wishing them well. I wonder what the Philippians thought as soon as they read that first word ... Paul. How excited they must have been! He also mentions Timothy, who was loved by the Philippians. He was not the "co-author," but he was in full agreement with the letter. Paul was planning to send Timothy back to visit them soon (2:19-23). Paul is seen as a joyful servant of Christ, revealing his love for his friends. They had a great bond of fellowship.

**10.** Spend some extra time today praying for a friend that you are thankful for. Paul's prayers for his friends are so deep, aren't they? Pray that your friend will be "filled with the fruits of righteousness."

**11.** According to Philippians 1:1-11, why is Paul so thankful for them?

The phrase "every remembrance" means "my total recollection of you." Paul had great memories of being with them. God had done, and was still doing, a great work in their lives. It brought Paul great joy to bring his friends before the throne of God. Paul's prayers were certainly not self-centered.

**12.** What phrases reveal Paul's love for them?

**13.** According to verse 6, what was Paul confident about?

Paul wanted to see "agape" in the lives of the Philippians (1:9). This Greek word for love is the same word used to describe God's love. Stuart Briscoe said, "The essence of agape is giving. God's agape drove Him to give and give and go on giving."

- 14.** Paul prayed that their love would abound “more and more.” He didn’t want their love to have any boundaries and for them to keep on giving. What does that practically mean? How is this accomplished?
- 15.** Does this kind of love include those who are “unlovable”?
- 16.** What does it mean to love “with knowledge and discernment”?
- 17.** What does Paul pray for concerning their character in verse 10? (Do you pray for your friends’ character?)

The word “sincere” means unadulterated, pure, unmixed, and something that “can pass the test.” Do these words describe your character? Do you strive to remain unmixed from the world, seeking a pure and undefiled heart?

- 18.** He not only prays for their character, but for their service to the Lord. What does he pray they would be filled with? (Read Galatians 5:22-23, Romans 1:13, Romans 6:22, and Hebrews 13:15.)
- 19.** Let’s take a “joy test.” What kinds of things bring you joy? (Think about that for a while.) Does it bring you joy when you pray for your friends? Does it bring you joy to see God working in their lives? Does your fellowship with other believers create great joy in your heart?

Paul prays that the Philippians will be without offense until “the day of Christ.” Paul is referring to the day of triumph that we all look forward to. Stuart Briscoe puts it this way: “This is the day for which the risen Lord has waited at the Father’s right hand, the day for which the saints have labored, the day when the Church will be complete and Christ will come with great glory.” This thought brought Paul great joy.

**20.** Do you think much about the future? Does the thought of Jesus returning for His Church bring you great joy and gladness?

**21.** According to Philippians 1:12-18, what was happening as a result of Paul’s chains?

The phrase “furtherance of the Gospel” can also be translated “greater progress.” This Greek word “prokope” depicts a group of woodcutters clearing the way through a forest for an advancing army. Paul had been falsely accused, unlawfully arrested and unfairly imprisoned, but his circumstances had cleared the way for the Gospel to be preached.

There’s something very important here that we need to remember. Years earlier, Paul had made plans to take Rome by storm! He probably dreamed of leading many to Christ, starting churches for the new believers, and sending out missionaries to spread the Good News. Rome was the most important city in the world. If he won Rome for Christ, what a victory that would be! Maybe he could even visit the synagogues and start a revival among the Jews. From there he wanted to go to Spain, continuing the work of the Lord. But ... he was in prison. No longer could he freely move about, sharing Christ with those he encountered. So what was Paul’s attitude? Did he question God’s plan? Did he sink into depression? Heavens no! Instead, he writes this letter that is bubbling over with joy. How could Paul have such an incredible attitude? Simple. It’s all about perspective.

**22.** Explain how Paul saw disappointments as **His**-appointments.

Paul was chained 24 hours a day to a guard. Verse 13 is most likely referring to the headquarters built by Tiberius for the powerful Praetorian guard. Every time the changing of the guard occurred, I'm sure Paul took the opportunity to share the Gospel with them. I read that there were more than 9,000 men on this force. I wonder how many of them Paul got to talk to! The Gospel was being spread through the whole barracks! As the guard sat, chained to Paul, he was forced to listen to him share, listen to him pray, hear him dictate letters, watch his incredible attitude, and hear him preach to the people who came to see him from all over the world. Did God have a great plan, or what? Even though it wasn't Paul's plan, he accepted his circumstances, knowing that it was God's will for him. Paul made the choice to rejoice.

- 23.** Are you in the middle of difficult or trying circumstances? How does your perspective need to change? (Can you look at your situation as His-appointment for you?)
- 24.** Has God ever allowed something to come into your life that was totally opposite of what you had planned? As you look back, can you see how God's plan was perfect? Will you share it with your group?
- 25.** Is it easy or difficult for you to change your perspective when things get crazy? What steps can you take to "make the choice to rejoice"?

In verse 18, Paul says that even if some are preaching with wrong motives, at least Jesus Christ was being preached. Remember in Galatians 1:6-9, Paul said that those who were trying to change the Gospel of grace into a Gospel of works should be accursed. In Galatians he was denouncing the false teaching, and here he's rejoicing that the truth is at least being proclaimed correctly. He didn't let their impure motives rob him of his joy. Knowing that Jesus was being preached brought Paul great joy (vs. 18). He knew the secret of joy was not pursuing happiness but having the mind of Christ.

**26.** According to verses 19-21, what was Paul's prayer for himself?

**27.** Explain Paul's statement in verse 21.

This statement is translated many ways. The Living Bible says, "For to me, living means opportunities for Christ, and dying – well, that's better yet!" Phillips translates it, "For living, to me, means simply 'Christ' and if I die, I should merely gain more of Him." Paul wasn't pursuing anything, but Christ.

**28.** How would you fill in these blanks? For me, to live is \_\_\_\_\_, and to die is \_\_\_\_\_. (Some may say, to live is money, to die is to leave it all behind. To live is fame, to die is to be forgotten)

Happiness depends on circumstances, or on "happenings." Because of that, happiness can disappear as quickly as it came. But joy defies circumstances. Tim Hansel, in his book Holy Sweat, points out that "Joy can coexist with doubt, ambiguity, and pain. It is a contentedness beyond circumstances, an indestructible kind of confidence."

**29.** In verses:21-30. Does Paul desire to live or die? What seems to be his dilemma?

**30.** How was death a "gain" for Paul? How would Christ be exalted in Paul's death? (vs. 20) Why would his death be loss to the Philippians?

The word “worthy” in verse 27 means “to be of equal weight.” It means our actions should be consistent with the Gospel of Christ. The phrase “striving together” is an athletic term used to describe “laboring together vigorously” or “wrestling.” He wanted them to work hard at being faithful and fearless.

Paul tells them not to be terrified or alarmed by their enemies. This word literally means “a horse shying away from the battlefield.” In other words, don’t look for trouble, but don’t run away from it.

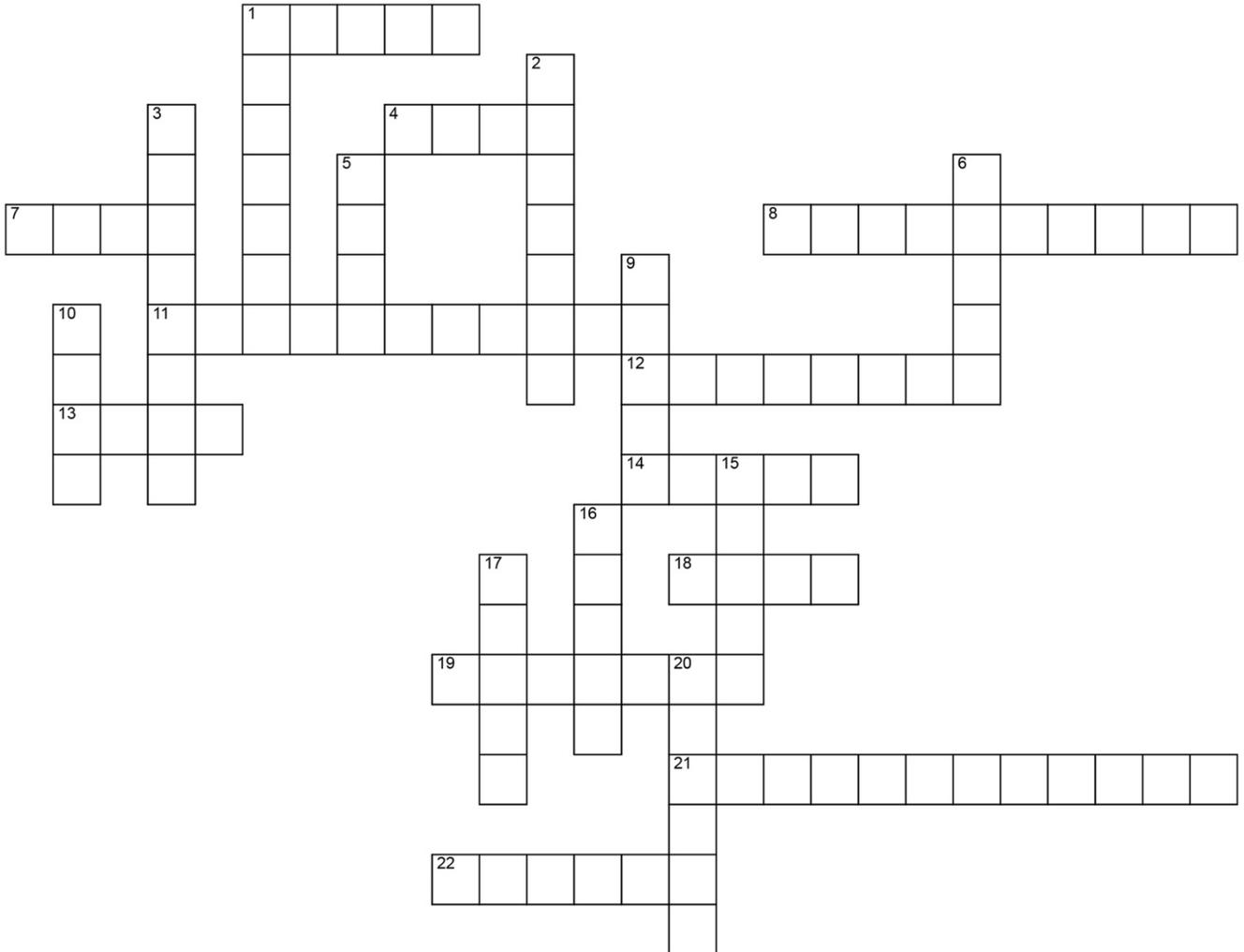
**31.** Are you afraid of your adversaries? Do you run, or do you stand fast? How does standing together with other believers help us in the battle?

**32.** How should knowing that opposition will come help calm our fears?

Remember ... it’s all about perspective. Keep your eyes on Jesus, not on your problems. Some people worship their problems more regularly than God. Don’t allow them to govern your behavior or allow your life to revolve around them. It’s all about Him. To live is Christ, to die is gain. God bless you!

**God is the author of the Gospel: those who defend it may therefore expect deliverance and victory from Him as surely as those who resist it may expect to incur His judgment.”**

**F.F. Bruce**

**Philippians 1**

**Across:**

1. Having the same conflict \_\_\_\_\_ ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.
4. I thank my God \_\_\_\_\_ every remembrance of you,
7. What \_\_\_\_\_? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.
8. For your \_\_\_\_\_ in the gospel from the first day until now;
11. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel;
12. Paul and Timotheus, the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:
13. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but \_\_\_\_\_ to suffer for his sake;
14. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I \_\_\_\_\_ choose I wot not.
18. Always in every prayer of \_\_\_\_\_ for you all making request with joy,
19. That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be \_\_\_\_\_ and without offence till the day of Christ.
21. 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 \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.
22. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your \_\_\_\_\_, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

**Down:**

1. 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, \_\_\_\_\_ it be by life, or by death.
2. But the other of love, \_\_\_\_\_ that I am set for the defence of the gospel.
3. So that my bonds in Christ are \_\_\_\_\_ in all the palace, and in all other places;
5. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be \_\_\_\_\_ Christ; which is far better:
6. And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my \_\_\_\_\_, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.
9. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by \_\_\_\_\_ Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.
10. 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 \_\_\_\_\_ of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
15. Nevertheless to \_\_\_\_\_ in the flesh is more needful for you.
16. Grace be unto you, and \_\_\_\_\_, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
17. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of \_\_\_\_\_;
20. For God is my \_\_\_\_\_, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.