

*"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."
Philippians 4:13*

Book of Philippians

Ch. 1 of 4. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: ²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel

¹²Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear. ¹⁵It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²²If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

Notes:

60-62 A.D. Letter written by Paul to the Church in Philippi while in Roman prison approximately 10 years after it was established as described in Acts 16.

Greetings

Paul prays for Church growth

Imprisonment helped in spreading the Word

Whoever preaches Christ, whether bad or good intentions advances the Gospel

No matter what Paul's fate, Christ is exalted

To live is Christ and to die is gain

The Life Worthy of the Gospel

²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Imitating Christ's Humility

Ch. 2 of 4. Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Do Everything Without Grumbling

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Notes:

Living a righteous life, no matter what stands in your way, provides a sign to those that would oppose you that they are doomed and you are saved.

Make Paul happy by being unselfish and unified in mind

Look out for each other

God humbled himself to be a man who was prepared to die for humanity because he loved us so much.

God submitted himself to be tortured, degraded, and humiliated all in order to sort out the morally upstanding among us.

Revere God and continue his good works in order to work out your salvation.

¹⁴Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. ¹⁷But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. ²¹For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²²But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. ²³I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. ²⁴And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

²⁵But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. ²⁶For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. ²⁹So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, ³⁰because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

No Confidence in the Flesh

Ch. 3 of 4. Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. ²Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. ³For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

⁷But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Notes:

Live as lights in this corrupt and crooked world holding firm to the Word of life. Maintain joy in all kinds of situations

Paul commends Timothy and explains how Epaphroditus risked his life to save Paul.

Paul continues to warn about Judaizers

Paul makes a point that his Jewish accomplishments and pedigree far exceeds those that persecute them.

He says all that training in the old law is worthless. His worth now is 100% based on faith in Christ.

¹²Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

¹³Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Following Paul's Example

¹⁵All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. ¹⁶Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

¹⁷Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. ¹⁸For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Closing Appeal for Steadfastness and Unity

Ch. 4 of 4. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

²I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

³Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Final Exhortations

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever 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.

Thanks for Their Gifts

¹⁰I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

Notes:

Look forward not back.

Keep your eye on the prize and join in Paul's example of living a righteous life.

Paul reminds them that they are not citizens of Rome but rather citizens of Heaven

This first verse is the last sentence to the previous passage.

Paul asks two women to "agree in the lord"

You do not need to be anxious or fearful in any situation because God is near. Be gentle and kind and demonstrate how the peace of God transcends all knowledge. Our God is a God of Peace.

¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

²¹ Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. ²² All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Context and Observations

- 1) **The theme of this letter is Joy; finding Joy in both the good and the bad.**
- 2) **Paul doesn't mention Lydia** (The Purple Lady) of Thyatira whose house he stayed at when he started the Philippian Church 10 years earlier. It is likely that she may have returned home and had something to do with the establishment of the Church in Thyatira mentioned in Revelation 2:18.
- 3) In 360 BC the city of Philippi in Macedonia was founded as Crenides by settlers from Thasos, but only a few years later, Philip II of Macedonia conquered the city and renamed it Philippi in honor of himself. **In 42 BC Philippi was designated as a military colony with special privileges of citizenship. Proud of their citizenship, its inhabitants called themselves "Romans"** (Acts 16:21). In chapter 3 Paul reminds them that they are citizens of heaven.

Our Response to reading Paul's Letter

Paul says a Christian's thinking and attitude affects how we experience the world around us. He explains how humility, hope, and a focus on Christ, will guard our hearts and minds from anxiety and unreasonableness. Our positive attitudes lead to beneficial thinking and confidence which is observed by others in the world around us.

In (James 1:19) Jesus' brother makes it clear that its all about listening and doing, and that we all should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. Our peace comes from knowing that God transcends all understanding.

God gave the human race the sense that we are tethered to a higher power. The world around us taps into this urge to connect in every way imaginable. The Truth in the world becomes clear to those who hear the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (Romans 10:17) The Truth is: God loves this world. (John 3:16)

Notes:

Paul leads by example and demonstrates how in abundance, or in need, he is content.

Only the Church in Philippi financially supported Paul

How I study

I Discover Something Interesting

Remember what it was so that you can research about what you found interesting.

Use as Many Sources as You Think Necessary to Define the Topic

If you're into numerology you'll find the number (3) is a magic number for getting at the truth of what something is or should be. If what you are defining is going to be the basis for greater research then go ahead and find a couple more unrelated sources.

Critics of What Interests You are Often a Good Source of Balance

You don't want to devote a lot of time building up your perspective to only find that you've heard one side of the story. Remember, a text, taken out of context, is pretext¹.

Top-Down vs Bottom-Up Approaches to Study

In the top-down model, an *overview* of a complex topic is formulated without going into detail for any specific part of it. In bottom-up design *individual pieces* or components are identified in specific detail. These individual parts are then assembled into a whole to form the completed overview.

Depending on what we want to learn about we might employ Top-down, Bottom-up, or both techniques to most efficiently add to our personal knowledge. For example: If we wanted to start a farming operation, we might gather information about each of the individual disciplines that go into creating a successful agriculturally based business. (A Bottom-up technique.) But on the other hand, if we wanted to write a book about farming, we might first make a list of all the kinds of farms and then add details as necessary down to a level that was appropriate for the audience of our book. (This would be a Top-down approach.)

How I Study the Bible

The whole Truth is in the whole council of God's Word, not just a sound bite of the Bible. Reverend **Matthew Henry** has wisely commentated that although it is God's delight to bless, **'both the promises and the threatenings are designed to bring and hold us to our duty.'** Johnny Ramsey and many other preachers of the Truth describe a common axiom in hermeneutics² that "a text without a context is a pretext."³

When a verse in the Bible strikes me. I immediately must ask, "what is the context for this statement?" If I was reading, I search the Internet for commentary on the topic. I then change my scope by backing out to the Chapter, then Book level, then to other Bible references to the same subject, then to contemporary information of the time and place of the verse. I am terrible at organization, so much of what I learn gets misplaced and I have to re-learn it. :) There are some really good 21st Century people that have created websites that are really nice research resources. I've found that the really good ones can be critical without being offensive. There are many prolific internet writers who provide a (free) diverse interpretation without unnecessary hyperbole. The rule of (3) applies.

¹ Def: A pretext is an excuse to do something or say something that is not accurate.

² Methodology of interpreting bible texts.

³ Kaiser and Silva argue in *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* that the context and meaning of a passage is unchanging, yet the significance of the passage changes based on culture and time.