

Philippians

verse by verse



*Finding Joy
in Difficult
Times*

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LESSON 1

Introduction

The author of this letter is Paul, although he includes Timothy in the salutation. Philippians, along with Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon are called the "prison" epistles because they were written by Paul during his first imprisonment mentioned in Acts 28. In this letter to the Philippians, Paul emphasizes that true joy comes from Jesus Christ alone.

1:1

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

- 1) Who sent this letter?
- 2) Who is the letter sent to?
- 3) What is the meaning of the following terms?
 - Saints –
 - Overseers –
 - Deacons –
- 4) How do Paul and Timothy describe themselves in vs. 1?

1:2

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

- 5) Paul uses the salutation, "grace and peace to you." What is the meaning of "grace" in this context? What is the meaning of "peace" in this context? Do you think it is possible to have peace without grace? Why or why not?
- 6) What is the source of "grace and peace"?

1:3-5

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

- 7) Why is Paul thankful to God?
The word "thank" is εὐχαριστέω, *eucharisteo* in the Greek. It is the word from which the English word "Eucharist" (another name for the Lord's Supper) comes.
- 8) What is the source of his joy?
- 9) In what way were the believers at Philippi "partners" in the Gospel?

1:6

6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- 10) Paul claims to have confidence. How is this different from presumption?
- 11) What is Paul confident about?
- 12) He doesn't define "a good work" nor does he say who "he" is who began it. How do you understand this?
- 13) When will this "good work" be completed?

1:7-8

7 ¶ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

- 14) Paul's feelings for these believers are thankfulness and joy (vv. 3-4). Why does he say this is the right way for him to feel?
- 15) In vs. 7b Paul talks about being in chains and about defending the gospel. Does either condition nullify the grace of God? Why or why not?
- 16) What is the source of Paul's affection for these people?

LESSON 2

1:9

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, . . .

- 1) Notice that Paul doesn't pray that the church's prosperity or growth or even faith would abound; he prays that their LOVE might abound. Why do you think this is so?
- 2) What is "knowledge"? What is "depth of insight"? How do they differ?

1:10

. . . so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, . . .

- 3) You sometimes hear about the "gift of discernment." What is it? Is that what Paul is talking about here?
- 4) How does discerning what is best keep one pure and blameless?
- 5) Both vs. 6 (in the previous lesson) and this verse refer to the "day of Christ." Compare and contrast the two verses.

1:11a

. . . filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ . . .

- 6) What is the "fruit of righteousness"?
- 7) According to this verse, what is the source of this fruit?
- 8) Do you think it is related to the "fruit of the Spirit" that Paul writes about in Eph. 5:22? If so, are they the same thing?

1:11b

. . . to the glory and praise of God.

- 9) What is the ultimate purpose of Paul's prayer?
- 10) How might the things Paul prays for in these verses lead to God being glorified and praised?

1:12-13

¹² ¶ Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

- 11) What event is Paul referring to in vs. 12 when he says: "what has happened to me . . .?" (Read Acts 28).
- 12) Do you think the believers at Philippi would relate to his situation? Why? (Consider Acts 16:11-34).
- 13) What does Paul mean when he says: "I am in chains for Christ?"
- 14) In what sense can a person or the church "advance the gospel?"

1:14

¹⁴ Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

- 15) Why do you think it is so important to Paul that the church have this information about him?
- 16) How could Paul's situation encourage others to speak about their faith?

LESSON 3

1:15-18

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But 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 . . .

1) In what ways might the gospel be preached out of envy and rivalry? Do you think this is common?

2) How can Paul claim that the heart attitude of the "preacher" doesn't matter? Do you agree or disagree?

1:19

. . . 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

3) What outcome is Paul expecting?

4) What are the means by which this outcome will come about?

5) Does God use these same means to work His will in our lives? (Consider Jn. 14:26, 16:13-14; Eph. 1:13).

1:20

20 I 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.

6) The word "ashamed" in vs. 20 means "dishonored" or "disgraced." Compare Rom. 1:16 and 2 Tim. 1:8-12.

7) What did Jesus say regarding those who do not share Paul's attitude? (See Mk. 8:38).

8) Compare this verse with Rom. 12:1.

1:21

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

9) What does "to live is Christ" mean? (Read Jn. 11:25; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:4; 1 Jn. 1:2).

10) How can death be considered gain? (Consider Lk. 17:32-33; Ps. 116:15).

1:22-24

22 If 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! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

11) In vs. 22 Paul writes "yet what shall I choose . . ." The NASB similarly puts it: "I do not know which to choose." GWV is somewhat different in translating the phrase: "I don't know which I would prefer." When it comes to life and death, do you think we really have a choice?

12) What do you think he means by "fruitful labor?" (Read Jn. 15:2, 16; Rom. 7:4)

13) When a friend dies we often say, "Well, (s)he is in a better place." That is essentially what Paul says in vs. 23. On what basis can a person make such a statement? (Consider Ps. 16:10; Rev. 7:15-17).

14) In vs. 24 Paul says that "it is more necessary for you." What does he mean by this? Should we think of our life and ministry in this way? Why or why not?

1:25-26

25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

15) Read Acts 20:24. This verse speaks of finishing the race. Do you think some people give up before the "race" is over? Why might this happen?

16) Vs. 26 starts with "so that," which nearly always introduces a statement of purpose. What is the stated purpose of Paul's desire to remain?

LESSON 4

1:27a

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

1) READ and discuss Mic. 4:5; Eph. 4:1; 1 Thess. 4:1

2) CONSIDER Col. 1:10-11a. How does Paul explain the meaning of "live a life worthy of the Lord"?

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3) The word translated "conduct yourselves" (πολιτευομαι, *politeuomai* – the source of the English word "politics") means "be a good citizen" in Greek. Why do you think that particular word is used here?

1:27b-28a

Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

4) What does Paul assume will be the result of their "worth" conduct?

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5) READ 1 Cor. 1:10, 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:3-6; 2 Chron. 5:13. Do you think unity is important to the spread of the Gospel? Why?

6) Where might a Christian expect to find opposition?

- Acts 6:9 –
- 1 Thess 2:2 –
- Isa. 3:10 -

1:28b

This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved— and that by God.

7) What is the "sign" to those who oppose the Gospel? CONSIDER Jn. 13:35, 17:20-21.

1:29-30

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

8) READ Eph. 2:8. We understand that faith is a gift of God, but it is a little harder to see suffering as a gift of God. How do you understand these verses?

9) READ and discuss Acts 5:41; 1 Peter 4:13.

LESSON 5

CHAPTER 2

2:1

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion . . .

Paul doesn't use the word "if" in this verse to imply that these believers might be lacking in these areas; he is developing a logical argument: if this is the situation, then that should be the result.

- 1) What does it mean to be "united with Christ?"
- 2) Why might this bring encouragement?
- 3) Does the love of Christ bring comfort to a believer? If so, how?
- 4) How do Christians have "fellowship" with the Spirit?
- 5) The "tenderness" and "compassion" described are emotions that flow from the heart; they are deeply felt responses to the situations of others. Do you think these are Christ-like emotions? Explain your answer.

2:2

. . . then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

The word "complete" in vs. 2 means "full" i.e., Paul is saying: "make me joyful". This would be the opposite of what we sometimes call "mixed emotions." Paul is asking them to act and react in such a way to Christ in their lives that Paul's *only* response can be joy!

- 6) What four acts of unity is Paul is expecting to see?
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- 7) Do you think that we should exhibit these same characteristics? If so why?

2:3

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

- 8) Define "selfish ambition" and "vain conceit."
- 9) What alternative to ambition and conceit does Paul suggest?
- 10) KJV says "esteem others better than yourselves." Read Luke 14:8-11. Compare Jesus' parable to what Paul says in vs. 3.

2:4

⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

READ Rom. 12:15 & 14:19

- 11) How might your interests differ from the interests of others?
- 12) Does this verse say that we should not take care of things that are of special concert to us personally?
- 13) What can you do to "look out for" the interests of others?

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. . .

The actual meaning of Verse 5 is actually a little stronger than "attitude;" it is more like "principle." It refers to a motivating point of view or a perspective on things.

- 14) Is Paul saying that Jesus IS God or that he is LIKE God?

2:7-8

⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

The word "nothing" is "to make empty" or "to make of no reputation." The KJV translates it well when it says: "he emptied himself." Regardless of how it is translated, the important thing is that it was Christ's doing, it was not imposed upon Him! The same thing is clear in vs. 8 with regard to his obedience.

- 15) What is the significance of God the Son taking the "nature of a servant."

2:9-10

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,

16) Verse 9 says that God exalted Christ to the highest place. Should we do likewise?

17) What is "the highest place?"

18) The NIV and KJV say "every knee *should* bow. . ." Several other translations say, "every knee *will* bow." Is there a significant difference? Is it important?

2:11

11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

19) What do each of these mean?

Jesus =

Christ =

Lord =

20) Do you think that Christians AND non-Christians will eventually make this confession? Explain your answer.

LESSON 6

2:12

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,

- 1) How much does the company you keep effect the life you live?
- 2) What does “work out your salvation” mean in vs. 12?

2:13

13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

- 3) How does God work in us?
- 4) What is the result of God working in us?

2:14-15a

14 ¶ Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation

...

- 5) Unity of spirit has been a major theme of this book. Complaining and arguing is a symptom of a lack of unity. How do you think it affects the ministry of the church?
- 6) According to vs. 14 how does unity effect character?

2:15b-16a

. . . in which you shine like stars in the universe 16 as you hold out the word of life—

- 7) In general conversation, what does it mean for someone to be a “star”? Do you think that idea applies here at all? How?
- 8) What is the “word of life”?

2:16b

in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

- 9) Is there wasted labor in the kingdom of God? If not, why not? If so, give examples.

2:17-18

But 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. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

10) What is a "drink offering"? How could Paul be like that?

2:19

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.

11) We all make plans. Paul planned to send Timothy to Philippi. But he says: "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you . . ." Why do you think he put it this way? (Consider James 4:13-15).

12) What is Paul's motive for sending Timothy?

2:20-21

20 I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But 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.

13) The phrase "no one else like him" literally means: "for I have no one like-minded." When verse 20 is taken as a whole, it is a statement of Paul and Timothy's unity in ministry. (Note how he describes their relationship in vs. 22). How helpful do you think it is for ministers to have such partnerships? Why?

14) How does Paul describe "everyone else" in vs. 21?

15) Do you think this is applicable to church leaders today? How so?

2:23-24

23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

16) What is Paul waiting on?

2:15-28

25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26 For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27 Indeed 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. 28 Therefore 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.

17) Who was Epaphroditus, where did he come from, why does Paul think it is important to send him home?

18) The word "messenger" in vs. 25 is *αποστολος* (apostle). Why do you think Paul used this word here?

2:29-30

29 Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

19) Paul encourages the Philippians to "honor" men like Epaphroditus. Why?

LESSON 7

CHAPTER 3

3:1a

¹ *Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!*

1) Review Php. 1:18, 2:17, & look ahead to 4:4. What do these verses have in common with 3:1?

2) Why do you think Paul keeps repeating himself about his particular issue?

3) What is the difference between "having fun together" and "rejoicing in the Lord"? (Consider Ps. 32:11, 64:10; Joel 2:23; & Hab. 3:17-18).

3:1b

It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

4) The Gk. word for "safeguard" is ασφαλής, *asphales*. It is a compound word which joins the word for "fail" with the negative prefix. In other words, to make you "not fail," or "to keep you from failing." How might rejoicing keep one from failing? (Consider Neh. 8:10).

3:2-3a

² *Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.* ³ *For it is we who are the circumcision,*

5) The use of the word "dogs" here is clearly an insult. Who is Paul talking about and why might he use this derogatory term? (Consider Matt. 7:6; Rev. 22:15; 2 Cor. 11:13; Rom. 16:18).

6) Paul calls the evil people "mutilators of the flesh" and then claims "we are the circumcision." How do you understand the use of "circumcision" here? (Read Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 3:3; Col. 2:11-12).

**[NOTE: WHAT FOLLOWS IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE FAITH
AND PRACTICES OF THE TRUE CHURCH . . .]**

3:3b

we who worship by the Spirit of God,

7) Read Jn. 4:23-24. "Spirit and truth" could be understood to mean by the direction of God's Spirit and His Word.

8) The word "worship" in this verse means "service rendered unto God." It applies to one's acts of worship. How are those things done "by the Spirit"? What would be the alternative?

3:3c

who glory in Christ Jesus,

9) The normal understanding of the word "glory" is "significance" or "weight." Can the church be the church without Jesus Christ? Why or why not?

10) The word "glory" can also mean "boast" or "rejoice." Compare 1 Cor. 1:31. Again, what would be the alternative to boasting in Christ Jesus?

3:3d

and who put no confidence in the flesh.

11) Paul is talking about "works of the flesh" here. With what does Paul consistently contrast the flesh? (Ex.: Rom. 8:5-6, Gal. 5:16-17).

12) What is the outcome of putting one's confidence in the flesh?

LESSON 8

3:4

4 ¶ though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:

1) Compare this statement with 1 Tim. 1:15-16 & Eph. 3:8-9. Why do you think Paul's evaluations of himself are so different?

2) What does it mean to "put confidence in the flesh"?

3:5-6

5 circumcised 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; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

3) What is the significance of this resume?

4) The KJV translates "legalistic righteousness," "the righteousness which is in the law." In what way(s) might righteousness be in the law?

3:7-9a

7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 ¶ and be found in him . . .

5) How do you understand Paul's "profit and loss" analogy?

6) How does he now regard those things listed in vv. 5-6?

7) What does he now consider profit/gain?

3:9b

. . . 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 and is by faith.

8) Does Paul still claim to be righteous?

9) Is his righteous the result of his law-keeping?

10) What is the source of Paul's righteousness?

11) What things in your life might be credited to you as righteousness by others or even by yourself?

12) Is Paul teaching that such things are bad or evil? What is the practical application of this passage?

LESSON 9

3:10-11

10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- 1) What does it mean to know Christ? How does it differ from knowing about Christ?
- 2) Describe the power of his resurrection.
- 3) Describe the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings
- 4) In what ways should we hope to be like Jesus in His death?

3:12-14

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, 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, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- 5) In verses 12-15 Paul uses a footrace as an illustration. The word "obtained" (KJV "attained") refers to the finish line and/or the prize. How does Paul see himself in this race?
- 6) Notice the three steps in the end of 13 and the beginning of 14:
 - Forgetting what is behind
 - Straining toward what is ahead
 - I press onHow do you think these three things apply to our Christian lives?

3:15a

15 ¶ All of us who are mature should take such a view of things.

- 7) What do you think Paul means when he uses the word "mature"?
- 8) What do you think Christian maturity is?

3:15b-16

And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

- 9) How should we react to those who disagree on theological issues?
- 10) Do you think doctrine is important? Why or why not?

3:17-19

17 ¶ Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.

11) Recall the three characteristics of the true church a previous lesson: 1) Worship by the Spirit, 2) Glory in Christ Jesus, 3) Put no confidence in the flesh. This is the "pattern" Paul is talking about here. This is the example we should follow. READ and discuss 1 Cor. 11:1 and Eph. 5:1.

12) What characteristics does Paul give of those who are enemies of the cross?

3:20-21

20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, 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.

13) You may have heard someone describe a Christian as being "to heavenly minded to be of any earthly good." What is your reaction to such a statement?

14) What does Paul mean in telling the Philippian believers that their "citizenship is in heaven?" Should we think of ourselves that way? How would that affect our lives?

LESSON 10

CHAPTER 4

4:1

1 ¶ Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

1. How does Paul describe the church in this verse?

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2. In what ways do you find these phrases significant?

3. When Paul writes “that is how you should stand firm in the Lord” he is referring back to vs 17 which, in turn, refers back to Php. 3:3. Take a moment to review these passages.

4:2-3

2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4. Euodia and Syntyche were probably deacons or ministry leaders in the church. Why do you think Paul addresses his plea for unity to each of the women?

5. Is there a difference between agreeing “in the Lord” and ordinary agreement? Explain.

6. What role is the reader to play in re-establishing unity? Do you think this is an important role? Is it your role?

4:4-5

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

7. The call to “rejoice in the Lord” is hardly unique to Paul. This exact phrase appears in Scripture 12 times. The instruction to “rejoice” appears by itself, however, 112 more times. And STILL the Spirit led Paul to repeat it. Why is it so hard for Christians to rejoice?

8. Paul exposes conflict and then immediately points the people toward joy and gentleness. Do you think that joy and gentleness (both part of the fruit of the Spirit) can be the antidote to strife? Why or why not?

4:6-7

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

9. Define anxiety. Does verse 6 leave any door open even a crack for anxiety or is to be completely ruled out in the Christian life? How is that working in your life?

10. What should replace anxiety in the Christian's life?

11. What does God promise in vs. 7?

12. How can peace "guard your mind"?

LESSON 11

4:8

8 Finally, brothers, 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.

1. What is true?
2. What is noble?
3. What is right?
4. What is pure?
5. What is lovely?
6. What is admirable?
7. What is excellent?
8. What is praiseworthy?
9. What is the benefit or purpose in fixing our minds on these things?

4:9

9 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.

10. If you consider your own lifestyle; your commitment to Christ; His mission, His Word, His body; the fruit, spiritual and material, that has been produced through your obedience; would you be comfortable saying this? Why or why not?

4:10

10 ¶ I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

11. What is the difference between "having concern" and "showing concern"?

4:11-14

11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 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 everything through him who gives me strength. 14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

12. Is Paul's concern focused on himself or on the church to which he is writing?

13. How do you define contentment?

14. What is the "secret of being content"?

LESSON 12

4:15-16

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 again and again when I was in need.

1. Paul is expressing his gratitude to the Philippian church here. Why?
2. Lot's of people are willing to "jump on the bandwagon." What do you do if you see a need but don't see a bandwagon?
3. READ and discuss Acts 17:1-10.
4. What happened to (and through) Paul and Silas in Thessalonica? What was the complaint against them? (vv. 6-7)

4:17-18

17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and even more; 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.

5. In verse 17 the Gk. For "gift" has a definite article. It is, therefore, "the gift" rather than "a gift." Paul is saying that his primary interest is not in the gift they have given, but in the blessing he believes they will receive due to their obedience. The NASB renders it this way: "*Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.*" GWV says: "*It's not that I'm looking for a gift. The opposite is true. I'm looking for your resources to increase.*"

6. READ Heb. 13:15-16; 1 Pet. 2:5; Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:2; Prov. 21:3. What kind of gifts do you think are pleasing to God?

4:19

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

7. GWV says: "*My God will richly fill your every need in a glorious way through Christ Jesus.*" A literal translation of the Gk. reads, "*And the God of me will fill all the needs of you . . .*"

8. Is this a promise that can be applied to everyone? Why or why not?

4:20

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

9. It is interesting that in vs. 19 Paul says "my God" and in vs. 20 he says "our God." Is there a distinction to be drawn?

10. Church people sometimes make reference to "THE doxology." This is one of a multitude of doxologies in the Bible. What is a doxology?

New Testament doxologies: Romans 11:36, Romans 16:27, Galatians 1:5, Ephesians 3:21, Philippians 4:20, 1 Timothy 1:17, 1 Timothy 6:16, 2 Timothy 4:18, Hebrews 13:21, 1 Peter 4:11, 1 Peter 5:11, 2 Pet. 3:18, Jude 25, Revelation 1:6, Revelation 5:13, Revelation 7:12

--- Compiled by B.F. Westcott

4:21-23

21 *Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings. 22 All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

11. to say "greet all the saints . . ." is to say: "tell everybody in the church there I said, 'hi.' And the guys with me, especially the ones from Rome, say 'hi' as well. God bless y'all." Why do you think such a personal closing is included in Holy Scripture?

12. Paul's closing prayer refers to the "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." How do you understand this phrase?