

PHILIPPIANS 1

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

BEFORE YOU START

If you haven't already, make sure to read and watch the located under "Before For You Start" at www.thriveyouthministry.com/philippians. These will help give you some background information about Philippians.

CONTEXT

- Before we start reading a new book of the Bible, it's important for us to understand **what** we're reading. Paul is writing a personal letter to the Christians living in Philippi, some of whom he met on a previous trip. Scan over chapter 1 again. What parts of a typical letter can you identify?
- Reading Philippians is like reading someone else's mail. So we have to keep a few things in mind while we're reading:
 - What is Paul's situation as he is writing this letter?
 - What is the Philippian church's situation when the receive this letter?
 - What was the purpose (or purposes) of Paul's letter?
 - What did Paul want the Philippians to do after reading this letter?
- Once we understand the original context of this letter, then we can start to apply it to our own situation:
 - What is similar to your situation and the situation of Paul or the Philippian church?
 - What is different?
 - How will those similarities and differences influence the way you read this letter?

VERSES 1-18

- When someone repeats words or phrases, it usually means they are trying to help us focus on them as themes. Can you identify any repeated words or phrases in this section?
- Look at verse 7 and verses 12-13. What is Paul's situation as he is writing this letter?
- Verse 6 is a favorite for many Christians. Why do you think its message is so popular?
- In verse 6 Paul says that God is completing a "good work" in the Philippians, and also in us. According to the rest of this passage, what is this "good work"?
- In verses 15-18, Paul tells us that not all of his fellow Christians support him. How does Paul respond to the way they "afflict" him? Does his reaction surprise you?

- Paul's life is full of trials and persecution, but he doesn't focus on that. What does he focus all of his prayer, energy, and emotion on instead?

VERSES 19–30

- These verses can seem pretty morbid at first glance, but Paul isn't obsessing over death. Remember, he's writing from prison and he doesn't know if he'll get out alive. He's evaluating the benefits of whether or not he'll live through this trial. To help make sense of his reasoning, fill in the blanks below as to how Paul defines the benefits of life and death...

v.21(a) Life is _____.
 v.21(b) Death is _____.
 v.22 Life is _____.
 v. 23 Death is to be with _____.
 v. 24 Life is for the benefit of _____.

- Whether in his life or in his death, what does Paul most care about?
- In verse 27 Paul tells the Christians in Philippi to "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." But a more literal translation is to "***behave as citizens*** worthy of the gospel of Christ." What does it mean to be a citizen, and what sort of behavior is expected of a citizen?
- Philippi was a very patriotic and loyal colony to the Roman Empire, but Roman culture had a lot of problems. Watch this video by The Bible Project to learn about what some of those problems were: <https://youtu.be/GZuceW7eh5M>. What sort of behavior would be expected of a Roman citizen?
- Paul is telling the Philippian Christians to behave as citizens of Jesus' kingdom. How would a citizen of Jesus' kingdom behave differently?
- Paul says in verse 29 that the Philippian Christians might have to suffer as they follow Jesus. Is this a new concept for you?
- What do you think it would look like to behave as citizens of Jesus' kingdom as you suffer?

APPLICATION

- What was the most encouraging message in chapter 1 for you?
- What was the most challenging message in chapter 1 for you?

- We are not being persecuted for our faith like Paul and the Philippian Christians, but we are still experiencing hardship in this COVID-19 pandemic. How is their situation similar to ours?
- When you experience hardship, what is your natural response?
- According to verse 6, where do we find our comfort even in times of hardship?
- No matter how hard life gets, Paul's focus is always on being a faithful witness and full of love. What would it look like for you to live like this right now?
 - To God?
 - To others?
 - To myself?

PRAYER

Close in a time of conversation with God about the things that challenged you, and ask that he would complete the good work he began in you by filling you with his love and strength. You may use the passage below from Isaiah 40 to help guide your prayer. Also remember to keep up with your Philippians 2:4 Challenge by calling 2 people per day to check-in and encourage them, and pray for 4 others.

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
 The Lord is the everlasting God,
 the Creator of the ends of the earth.
 He does not faint or grow weary;
 his understanding is unsearchable.
 He gives power to the faint,
 and to him who has no might he increases strength.
 Even youths shall faint and be weary,
 and young men shall fall exhausted;
 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
 they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
 they shall run and not be weary;
 they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31)