

Monday, January 2

Paul followed the form of a typical Greek letter of his time; a greeting, followed by a prayer for his recipients. Paul gave thanks for the long partnership and friendship he had with the Philippians. As he did so, he introduced the primary theme of joy.

Philippians 1:1-11

- The word "partnership" comes from the Greek "koinonia" and reflects a community sharing a common focus, with each member contributing what her or she can. Identify the ways Paul thanked and encouraged his partners in Philippi.
- List practical ways a person could love others "with the affection of Christ" (1:8). Choose one of those ways to act upon this week.

Tuesday, January 3

Paul was incarcerated in a house where he could have visitors and receive mail and gifts. However, he was chained 24/7 to one of the elite members of the Roman army. This provided Paul with a rotating captive audience with whom he could share Christ. Paul not only affected Roman soldiers with the good news of Jesus, but his courageous witness also encouraged other Christians to be bold, and the gospel to spread even further.

Philippians 1:12-26

- In verses 18-26, what insights do you have into Paul's philosophy of life?
- Paul said, "For to me, to live is Christ." Based on your investment of time, energy, and money, how would you answer, "For to me, to live is _____?" What will you do to make Jesus a greater priority in your life?

Wednesday, January 4

Paul shifted from his own circumstances and attitudes to the Philippians'. One of the most beautiful statements about Christ in all of Scripture is the centerpiece of these verses. Paul stated the foundational truth of Jesus—who he was and why he came—to motivate the Philippians to proper behavior towards each other.

Philippians 1:27—2:18

- In 2:5-8, what did Jesus the Son chose to do in obedience to God the Father? What was the Father's response in verses 9-11?
- When our behavior lines up with God's instructions, our witness for Jesus shines in a dark world (2:14-16). In what ways are you shining brightly? What part of your behavior do you need to line up more closely with God's word?

Thursday, January 5

After teaching the Philippians about honoring the gospel by working together selflessly, Paul gave three examples. He pointed to himself, Timothy (a long time coworker and friend who was with him when he founded the church in Philippi), and Epaphroditus (the representative send by the Philippian church with a financial gift to support Paul).

Philippians 2:19-30; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- Make three lists: things Paul said about himself, things he said about Timothy, and things he said about Epaphroditus.
- Choose one attitude from your lists to work on this week. What will you do?