

Before you begin, you will need to get ready...

Bible. It would be helpful, but not necessary, for you to read the Letter to Philippi in one setting. If you have a hard copy of a bible, underline words that pop out at you. On another day, read the letter from a different translation of the bible. There are many translations. My favorites include Good News and the NIV. Note any difference in the use of words and phrasing.

Cross reference. Having two bibles on hand will allow you to cross reference passages. Why do you want to cross reference? Cross reference verses can add to meaning to a Bible verse by giving further explanation of context. For example, in [Acts 16](#) Lydia is described as follows:

A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of [purple](#), of the city of [Thyatira](#), one who worshiped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened to listen to the things which were spoken by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and stay." So she persuaded us.

Bible Dictionaries. A bible dictionary is a quick way to explore persons, places, and things. If we looked up Lydia, this is what you may find.

Lydia was most likely a Greek even though she lived in a Roman settlement. She was evidently a well-to-do agent of a [purple-dye](#) firm in Thyatira, a city

southeast of Pergamum and approximately 40 miles inland, across the Aegean Sea from Athens. Lydia insisted on giving hospitality to [Saint Paul](#) and his companions in [Philippi](#). They stayed with her until their departure,

You don't need to purchase any of these books. Bible dictionaries and bibles are plentiful on the internet. Using these aids will enhance your study.

Lesson Two: Chapter One

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons^[a]:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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, 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.

⁷ It 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. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Paul begins the letter with his typical greeting, grace and peace to you. The word, grace, in Greek is *charios*. We see this Greek derivative in words, such as charisma or Eucharist. It means power and strength.

Questions:

1. Our problems seem to drain us of joy. Paul is in prison. How did he remain so cheerful?
2. How many times do the words joy, thanks, rejoice occur?
3. Why did Paul give thanks to the Philippians? (3-5)
4. Why was Paul so confident of them? (vs.6)
5. What is Paul's pray for the Philippians? (vs. 9-11)

Reflection:

1. What difficult circumstance are you facing? How difficult is it to pray joyfully?
2. How does pray change you?

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,^[b] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard^[c] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And 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.

¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of 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.

Question:

1. What has happened because of Paul's imprisonment? (12-14)
2. Should we worry about other people's motive? (15-18) Why?

Reflection:

In the circumstance you identified in the above question, how can Christ be glorified?

Galatians 2:20
New International Version
(NIV)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for 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.^[d] 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. ²¹ For to me, **to live is Christ and to die is gain.** (see side bar). 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. 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 boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

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,^[e] striving together as one for the faith of the gospel²⁸ 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.

Questions:

1. What was Paul attempting to express in verse 21: “to live for Christ, to die is gain?”
2. In vs.27-29 Paul is encouraging unity. We can find comfort in unity in times of trouble when we stand together. Can you think of a time when you were strengthened by the support of others?

Reflection:

1. As Christians, what is our responsibility to the larger community? Why?
2. Is it possible to feel uncertain about the future, but certain about joy?