

Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Studies

Philippians

“Love Letter”

Bible Studies from Southside Bible Church
Discussion Questions and Notes by Kathleen Dalton

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This booklet has been put together for you to use either

- in your own personal Bible Study time,
- Or...
- to help you lead a Bible Study discussion group in your home, or at work.

It is divided into several lessons, usually covering a chapter of the book you are studying, or sometimes a portion of a chapter. Each lesson has questions for you to use as you read and think through the scripture.

If you are leading a discussion group, it will be helpful to be sure each member of your group has a copy of this booklet so that they can prepare in advance if they have time.

“Love Letter”

Philippians

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Love Letter
A Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Study of the Book of Philippians

Introduction To Philippians

As you begin your study of Philippians, I recommend:

- **Read Acts Chapter 16 for background information on the city of Philippi**
- **Read through the whole book of Philippians**
- **Read through my background notes for this lesson**

Background: Paul started this church on his 2nd Missionary Journey, after heeding the “Macedonian Vision”. **Acts 16.** His first convert was _____. After she responded to the Gospel, her first act was to _____, and then she _____.

Paul and _____ were imprisoned in Philippi, because they had commanded an evil spirit to come out of a woman, and her masters were angry that their source of _____ was gone. After they were imprisoned, about midnight, there was a great _____, and their chains were unfastened. But instead of running for their lives, Paul and Silas stayed, and witnessed to the jailer, who then _____ in Jesus. When they finally were released from prison the next day, they went to the house of _____ and **encouraged** all the believers who were at her house, then they left Philippi.

As Paul writes this letter, we see him in prison (or, actually, under “house arrest”) once again, this time in Rome, and he is still **encouraging** the believers in Philippi.

1. (:1-2) The Introduction

- Who was with Paul when he wrote this letter?
Timothy was with Paul in Rome when Paul wrote this letter to his friends in Philippi. He is with Paul....but not a co-author of the letter. The whole letter is from Paul himself. Who was Timothy?

From the NASB introduction to I Timothy, we learn these things about Timothy:

- He was a native of Lystra (in modern Turkey)
- His father was Greek, his mother was a Jewish Christian (Acts 16:1)
- He had been taught the Old Testament from childhood (II Tim. 1:5, 3:15)
- Paul called him “my true child in the faith” (I Tim 1:2), perhaps having led him to Christ during his first visit to Lystra.
- At the time of Paul’s second visit to Lystra, he invited Timothy to come with him on his missionary travels (Acts 16:3), and circumcised him so that he would not be a stumbling block as they ministered to Jews.
- Timothy traveled with Paul extensively in Macedonia, Achaia, Ephesus, Corinth, & Asia Minor (Acts. 17:14-15, Acts 18:5, Acts 19:22, Acts 20:1-6)
- And Timothy was with Paul during his first imprisonment (Phil 1:1, Col. 1:1, Philemon 1)
- Timothy stayed on in Ephesus at one point to Pastor the church there.
- Timothy was the co-sender with Paul for six of his letters (II Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thessalonians, and Philemon)
- At the end of Paul’s life he requested Timothy to join him at Rome (II Tim 4:9,21)
- According to Hebrews 12:23, Timothy was himself imprisoned and subsequently released.
- Timothy was not an apostle.

- Who is the letter written to?

To all the believers in the city of Philippi, and to all the leaders of that church. Why does Paul specifically address this letter to the leaders....the Pastors and deacons? Probably because they would keep this little church going...would be the ones least likely to cave in the despair or discouragement. They would be the shining light for the ones they were leading.

- How does Paul describe himself?

A bond-servant. One who has been set free, and then has willingly taken on the role of servant, wanting to serve his master more than have his freedom. This designation is particularly touching as we see in this first chapter the

imprisoned Paul, acting like a free man. The servant Paul was happy to be where his Master, Jesus, had put him.

- If Paul is a servant, how does that mean he regards his own needs & desires?

What is your opinion? Does a normal servant have worries about his own needs? Yes. There is no guarantee that an earthly master will always be fair or kind. But did Paul need to have such worries? What did Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 6:25-34). A servant of God is in the business of the Kingdom of God, and the rules in that Kingdom are different than the rules for any other business on earth. There is no reason to spend any time fretting about personal needs & desires. The master takes care of those, as his servants go about doing His will.

How do you measure up in this area? There are two questions you should honestly ask yourself as you start Philippians:

1. Am I a bond-servant? Have I chosen to serve Christ with the rest of my life?

2. If I have made this choice, then am I concentrating on the task at hand and letting Jesus take care of my needs?

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How to Pray

Philippians Chapter 1

2. (:2-8) Paul's relationship with the Philippians

- How does Paul feel about the Philippians?
- Why does he feel that way?
- Who do you pray for?
- Is there anyone you pray for who brings joy to you just at the thought of them?
- Do you feel that your prayer life is where you want it to be?
- What would you change?
- Who is on your regular prayer list?
- What do you pray for the people on your list?

3. (:9-11) What are the 4 things Paul prayed for the Philippians?

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-
-
-

4. (:12-18) Paul explains his current situation

- What has happened to Paul?
- What are the negatives from what has happened to Paul?
- How does Paul use his circumstances to encourage the Philippians?
- Is Paul using the “power of positive thinking”...or is he really rejoicing? Is there a difference?

5. (:19-20) What does Paul expect to happen?

6. (:21-26)

- Even though Paul is rejoicing, where would he rather be?
- Why is he convinced that he will be staying around for awhile?
- Are our lives well-spent if others benefit from our life...but it seems that we don't?

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7. (:27-30)

- Does Paul assure them that they will not have to suffer as he has?

- What is Paul's heart's desire for them?

- Why is Paul's suffering an encouragement to the Philippians?

8. In what way should your prayer life change as a result of Philippians chapter 1?

9. Make a prayer list. Divide it into 2 columns. What did this chapter teach you about how to pray for the people God has placed in your life?

Those who don't know Christ personally	Those who do know Christ personally
Names	Names
How to pray for them:	How to pray for them:

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How to Get Along

Philippians Chapter 2

1. (:1) In verse 1, Paul assumes the Philippians already have 4 very important things happening in their relationship to Jesus. What are they?
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 -
 -
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2. (:2a) And since these 4 things are already in their lives, what one other characteristic does Paul want to see them display?
3. (:2b-5) He goes on to explain what that means....he mentions 6 things which are a part of being "like-minded"....what are they?
 -
 -
 -
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 -
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4. (:3) How is it possible to consider others better than myself when it seems obvious they aren't?
5. (:4) Does this verse mean that I should always put everyone else's needs ahead of mine? Is that even possible?
6. (:5-8) When Jesus became a servant...and died a humiliating and horrible death...did He put everyone else's needs ahead of His?

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- ❑ What about when He drove the moneychangers out of the temple? John 2:13-21
- ❑ What about when He left the crowds who were asking for Him so that He could be alone? John 6:15
- ❑ What about when He made people mad at Him when He got in their face with the truth? John 8:48-59

7. (:9-11) What was the end result of Jesus' humility?

8. (:12-13) What if I find it impossible to do this?

9. (:14-16) What is one sure way I can be visible to the world as a believer?

10. (:17-30) Paul closes this chapter with a few comments about 2 fellow-servants who are close friends of his. What do you see in these verses which indicate Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditis are "walking the talk"?

What's Most Important?

Philippians Chapter 3:1-11

If any Christians ever lived in a time where people put “confidence in the flesh” more than we do in America, I’d like to know when that time would have been!!!

- Lose weight
- Dress right
- Have lots of friends
- Be in good physical shape
- Be able to retire someday
- Live in the right neighborhood
- Drive the right car
- Kids in the right schools
- Have the right job
- Keep your job
- Eat right
- Exercise right
- Vacation
- Relax – don’t have stress

But look at Ephesians 4:17-19...the culture that is telling us to put confidence in these things has:

- Futile thinking
- Darkened understanding
- Separation from true life
- Ignorance
- Hardened hearts
- No sensitivity
- Sensuality
- Impurity
- Lust for more

We’re supposed to be different!!! What’s really most important in life?

Let's see what Paul told the Philippians about putting confidence in the flesh...

1. (:1-6) What did Paul used to have confidence in?

2. (:7-8) How does he look at these things now?

3. (:9) What does Paul put his confidence in?

4. (:10) What did Paul know would be a part of this different way of thinking and living?

5. (:11) What was Paul looking forward to – stretching towards – his goal?

6. What is your goal in life?
 If you could ask for anything from the Lord, what would it be?
 How hard are you willing to work to get that thing?
 What will you do with it once you get it?

7. How are you trying to get there? (next week)

What if I'm Not Perfect?

Philippians Chapter 3:12-4:1

Some questions to get your thoughts moving...

- a. As a Christian, are you everything you want to be?
- b. What would you like to see change?
- c. Kids in a classroom: What does the teacher want to see change by the end of the school year?

Paul has told us he has no confidence in his flesh...now let's continue....

:12-14

1. Does he consider himself to have "arrived" as a believer?
2. If not, then how does he deal with his shortcomings?
3. What goal is Paul heading toward?

:15-16

4. What does Paul think "mature" Christians will do?
5. What do you think of when you think of a "mature" Christian?

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:17-4:1

6. What are the three things Paul tells them to do, as believers who are pressing toward a goal?

1. Follow _____
2. Take note of _____
3. Stand _____

Final Words of Love

Philippians Chapter 4

After all Paul has told the Philippians so that they may be encouraged in the midst of difficult, insurmountable circumstances, he winds up by urging them to “stand firm” in verse 1 of chapter 4. And then he gives his closing “list” of final instructions...instructions for an excellent church...not just a mediocre church...in the midst of insurmountable odds.

What is in his list?

1. (:2&3)
 - How does “harmony” differ from “unison”?
 - What is the “book of life”? Ps. 69:28, Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 17:8

2. (:4)
 - What is the key to rejoicing when things are not going well?

3. (:5)
 - Why should we be gentle?

4. (:6)
 - What keeps us from being anxious?

5. (:7)
 - Can we experience God’s peace even when we don’t understand it?

6. (:8)
 - What does it mean to “dwell” on something?
 - What should I dwell on?

7. (:9)

- Is Paul saying: “I’m perfect, so just follow my example and you’ll be perfect, too.”?

8. (:10-19)

- What was Paul rejoicing about?
- Is Paul mostly glad because he needed something and got it?
- What is the secret of being filled or going hungry?
- Who profits the most from giving?
- Is Paul satisfied with his life?
- Will God provide for our needs from the scrapings at the bottom of the barrel?

And now he says his good-byes. (:20-23). What are the three parts of his good-byes?

1. A prayer for the _____ of God.
2. Greetings from one _____ to another.
3. A prayer for the _____ of God