

PHILIPPIANS
(NLT and ADA, 3-21-2013)
Greetings from Paul

[the family has read this book in devotions]

CHAPTER 1

1 This letter is from Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to all the Christians in Philippi, including the elders and deacons.

2 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace — fill you with His life and the peace that comes from having Him live His life through you.

Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer

3-6 Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God's Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.

7-8 So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. Both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News, you share the grace of God with

me. God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.

9 I pray that your love will overflow more and more as you grow in knowledge and understanding. **10** For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. **11** May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ — so that God will receive much glory and praise.

Paul's Joy That Christ Is Preached

12 And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. **13** For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. **14** And because of my imprisonment, many of the believers here have gained confidence and now boldly proclaim God's message without fear.

15 It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others proclaim Christ with pure motives.

16 The one group preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. **17** The others preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News.

18 But it doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, Christ and his grace is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice. **19** For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance.

Paul's Life for Christ

20 For I fully expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but that I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past. And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die. **21** For to me, living means having Christ's life, and dying is even better.

22 But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. **23** I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. **24** But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live.

25 Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith. **26** And when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to take pride in Christ Jesus because of what he is doing through me.

Live as Citizens of Heaven

27 But be sure to live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, working together for the truth of the grace of God. **28** Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself.

29 For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. **30** We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.

PHILIPPIANS 2

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ?
Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate?

2 Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

3 Don't be selfish.

Don't try to impress others.

Be humble - treating others as better than yourselves.

4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

5 Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had:

6 Even though he was God,
he did not cling to his equality with God.

7 Instead, he gave up his divine prerogative,
took the position of a servant,
and was born as a human being.

And as a man,

8 he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal's death on a cross.

9 Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

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

Shine Brightly for Christ

12 Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to let the results of salvation show forth in your personal life - [the image of Christ in you, the life of Christ through you, obedience to God, alignment with God] - with deep reverence and respect toward God. **13** For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

14 Do everything without complaining and arguing, **15** so that no one can criticize you for your attitude or treatment of others. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of perverted and perverse people. **16** Hold firmly to the word of Life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work on your behalf was not wasted. **17** But we will rejoice even if I lose my life - pouring it out like an offering to God - to serve you in your newfound faith. **18** Truly, this is something we can both rejoice about.

Paul Commends Timothy

19 If the Lord Jesus is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon for a visit. Then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along. **20** I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. **21** All

the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. **22** But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News. **23** I hope to send him to you just as soon as I find out what is going to happen to me here. **24** And I hope that I myself will be able to visit you soon.

25 Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need. **26** I am sending him because he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill. **27** And he certainly was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have one sorrow after another.

28 So I am all the more eager to send him back to you, for I know you will be glad to see him, and then I will not be so worried about you. **29** Welcome him with Christian love and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve. **30** For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away.

PHILIPPIANS 3

(7-11-09; 3-11-2011)

1. My final admonition to you, brothers and sisters in Christ, is to remember that the way to be over-flowing with joy in the Christian life is to keep Christ at the center of it.

It doesn't bother me to say this repeatedly to you because it is something I know we all need to hear again and again.

2. Watch out for those despicable ones who are legalistic, flesh-centered, and works-oriented; who are always trying to find fault with you and want you to follow their long list of do's and don'ts, to measure up in their eyes.

3. For we have already been made right with God.

There are three things that characterize us:

A.) We know that true worship of God is not performing any external ritual but is an invisible attitude of the heart.

B.) We know that over-flowing joy is not to be found in anything we are doing, have done, or can do, but is found only in Christ Jesus - in what He is doing, can do, and has done.

C.) We have absolutely no confidence or pride in our own strength or abilities to merit God's favor or to please Him in ourselves.

4. Humanly speaking, I have good reason to have confidence in myself. If any of you think that you have good cause to trust in yourselves, and to trust in yourselves to live the Christian life, I have even more cause.

5. My pedigree? I am a pure-blooded Jew (one of God's chosen people!) through and through.

My credentials? I am a Pharisee: a position of highest esteem in the Jewish religion.

6. My piety? I did my best to wipe out Christianity which I considered heretical.

My reputation? I have never been accused of any fault under Jewish law.

7. But all these things of which I was so proud, and which I used to be so intent on attaining, I now realize to be worthless if I want Christ's life.

8. In fact, there's no doubt about it: everything is worthless if it gets in the way of the supreme superiority of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and having His life - for whom I have discarded my reliance in everything else, and consider it all garbage, so that I can focus on having Christ's life

9. and becoming one with Him. I no longer work to create my own "righteousness" by keeping the Jewish law, because I now have the righteousness which comes by believing in Christ - the righteousness which God imputes to those who put their faith in Christ.

10. My primary focus from now on is to truly, absolutely, and intimately know Jesus! To experience the power of His resurrection life over self, sin, and satan! To suffer whatever He suffered, if need be, in order to be conformed to His death to sin and self!

11. My ultimate objective, by any means, is to have Christ's resurrection life and to stop living in the 'deadness' of self and sin!

12. I'm not saying that I have already fully obtained this objective - I'm not perfectly mature in Christ yet! But I am chasing after Him until I fully get hold of His life - which is why Christ got hold of me in the first place!

13. No, brothers and sisters, I know I haven't fully "arrived" yet at the place where Christ's life is always my life - to the place where I am fully yielded to Him all the time, but I have this one single consuming goal in life: forgetting about all my past achievements, failures, and self-effort; and reaching toward the life of Christ God has in store for me,

14. I strain toward the goal for the prize of this very highest invitation of God: TO BE FULLY GROWN UP INTO CHRIST!

[An alternate - and perhaps more accurate - understanding of verses 7-14 would place the emphasis on our final objective - Heaven: making sure that, no matter what it costs, we remain true to Christ until we "make it" to Heaven. Not that we are saved by works, nor kept saved by works; but we certainly ought to take our salvation seriously. And I'm afraid, first, that we don't take it as seriously as we ought, and, second, that many people are only fooling themselves in thinking they are saved. In these verses, Paul is emphasizing his earnest desire not to be one of these people.]

15. So then, let all of us who are mature in Christ have this grace-filled perspective on life. If any of you don't yet think this way, I know God will one day cause you to understand what I'm saying and to agree.

16. Just the same, as much as we all can understand, let us all live by this same principle (that Christianity is Christ living His life through us, not us trying to live like Christ by our own efforts); let us all agree on this.

17. Brothers and sisters, mimic the way I am letting Christ live His life through me, and model your lives after any others you know who live this way.

18. (For there are many in the church - of whom I have often spoken, and now speak of with tears - whose lives are in opposition to this doctrine of self-denial and of having Christ's life.

19. I weep for them because their lives are heading for ruin because SELF is their god. They live to satisfy their immediate passions; they are proud of things of which they should be ashamed; their focus is entirely on the base, temporal things of this earth.

20. But as Christians, we do not think of ourselves as being citizens of this earth, and our devotion is not to our earthly bodies. Our citizenship is in Heaven, which is where our Lord Jesus Christ presently is and from where we are expectantly waiting for Him to return. And the good news is that, when He does return, we will no longer have this struggle with self-centeredness because He will change our present lowly, self-centered bodies, and will reshape them to be just like His perfect, honorable, God-centered body using the same mighty energy with which He is able to bring all things everywhere into subjection to Himself.

PHILIPPIANS 4

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and a crowning triumph of my work.

2 Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, since you are both Christians, settle your disagreement. **3** And I ask you, my true partners, to help the women who worked hard with me in telling others the Good News. This includes Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are written in the Book of Life.

4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—be full of joy in the Lord!

5 Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray - in faith - about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done and all He is going to do. **7** Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand [and which goes far beyond our understanding of the situation, and the 'natural' emotional response the situation would normally call for]. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you stay in faith in Christ Jesus.

8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on things that are true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

9 Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

10 How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. **11** Not that I need anything, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. **12** I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. **13** For I can manage in any situation through Christ, who gives me strength. **14** Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty.

15 As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other home group did this. **16** Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once. **17** I don't say this because I want another gift from you for my own sake. Rather, I want you to receive abundant credit for the fruitfulness that results from your kindnesses to me.

18 At the moment I have all I need—and more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. **19** And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

20 Now, all praise be given to God our Father forever and ever! Amen.

21 Give my greetings to every Christian. The brethren who are with me send you their greetings. **22** And all the rest of God's people send you greetings, too, especially those in Caesar's household.

23 May you all experience more and more of Christ living His life through you.

Sincerely,

Paul