

LESSON 1

Philippians 1:1-2



ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

AUTHOR, DATE, AND RECIPIENTS

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Philippi, probably from Rome c. A.D. 62.

THEME

Paul encourages the Philippians to live as citizens of a heavenly city, growing in their commitment to serve God and one another. Jesus is the supreme example of this way of life. Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus try to be good examples as well.

PURPOSE

Paul wrote to the Philippians from prison. He had several purposes in mind: (1) to tell them that Epaphroditus had recovered from a serious illness; (2) to encourage them in their faith; (3) to assure them that he was still in good spirits; and (4) to thank them for their continued support.

OUTLINE

- I. Greeting and Prayer (1:1-11)
- II. Paul's Reflections on His Imprisonment (1:12-30)
- III. Encouragement to Humble Service (2:1-30)
- IV. Opponents of the Gospel: Where Does Righteousness Come From? (3:1-21)
- V. Concluding Encouragement and Thanksgiving (4:1-23)

THE SETTING OF PHILIPPIANS

A.D. 62

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians while in prison, probably in Rome. Philippi was the site of a key military victory by Augustus Caesar, and as a result it was made a Roman colony. Philippi was the first city in present-day Europe where Paul established a church.

OPEN IT

1. What things bring you the most joy and happiness in your life?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Philippians 1:1-2

2. Who wrote this letter?
3. Who was with Paul when he wrote this letter?
4. Who was this letter written to?
5. What does Paul wish for his readers based on his greeting?

Day 2

“Let us be servants in order to be leaders.”

Read Philippians 1:1a

Paul introduces himself and Timothy in this letter as servants of Christ Jesus. We don't often talk like that today. We say things more like “Children of God” or simply “Christians.” So what does Paul mean when he says they are servants of Christ Jesus and why does he say that?

The word that we translate there as servant is the Greek word *doulos*, which literally means slave. The word slave carries some pretty negative connotations with it in our day and age. When you read the word slave, the first thing you probably think of is the slavery in our nation's history—the mistreatment and abuse of African-American people as slaves. But that's not the slavery that Paul is talking about here.

What Paul is referring to is “someone who is totally and solely committed to another person.” In Paul's day, being someone's slave did mean that you belonged to them, but often was viewed as a very good thing, even like having a job and provision for your family. At the bottom line, the idea of what Paul is communicating is that they were fully owned and controlled by God— completely sold out for Him! As Christians today, we ought to be servants of Christ as well— completely sold out for Jesus and His Kingdom!

6. What are your thoughts about being a “slave of Christ”? What do you think causes you to feel or think that way?

7. Read Galatians 2:20. The lives we live (as Christians) are no longer our own lives, but Christ living through us. What are different ways we see Christ living through us?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

Lord, You have paid the highest price to redeem my life for Yourself by sending Jesus to die on the cross and rise from the dead. My desire is that my life would show Christ living through me, that I am at heart a servant of Jesus Christ. Help me to die to myself today and live for Christ in all things. Thank You, Jesus! Amen.

Day 3

“Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.”

Read Philippians 1:1b

Saints. You might think of the NFL team from New Orleans. Or you might think of religious legends like Peter, John, and Paul. I can't knock you for either. But in this greeting Paul calls the Christians in Philippi "saints." He considers them all saints, not just the pastors or elders, but all the saints in Philippi—all the believers.


Did you know that the word for saint is also the same word we use for being holy. What that means is that inherent in the word for saint is to be holy. To be holy is to be set apart. So Paul is calling all the Christians in Philippi holy people or those who are set apart.


Sometimes when we think of holy people or saints, we think of "really good Christians." You know, the kind of people that never do anything wrong. But that's not what the Bible says about being holy. The Bible teaches that we are holy not because of how "good" we are, but because God has set us apart from the world to be the light of the world, to be His witnesses in the world.

Just like all the Christians in the Bible were saints, if you are a follower of Christ today, you are also a saint—someone who is set apart from the rest of the world for God's work and God's glory!

8. What kinds of things do we set apart in our lives? Are there any days that are set apart or things you have that are more special or significant to you?

9. How should our lives as Christians be set apart from those who are not believers? What are different things that can prevent us from being set apart for God?

I HAVE A QUESTION!  Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE  Here are some things you could pray for today:

Lord, you have set my life apart to be used for Your kingdom and Your glory. There is so much about this world that seems so appealing at times that draws me away from living a life set apart to You. Give me wisdom and the strength to live my life for You even when everything else is telling me to do something different. Amen.

Day 4

“We wish you a merry ... life.”

Read Philippians 1:2


We say all kinds of different things to wish others well. At Christmas time we wish others a merry Christmas, when people sneeze we say “God bless you.” In Paul’s greeting he says, “*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” Paul’s greeting here is for the overall wellbeing of the church in Philippi. His desire is to see them grow in their walk with God, live in unity with each other, and experience the great blessings from God.

While it can be easy to skip over a greeting like this at the beginning of Paul’s letters, there is a valuable relationship and bond that we get to see between Paul and his friends in Philippi. Truly his love and care for these believers becomes evident in a greeting like this.

Our love for other believers should cause us to seek their best interests and blessings. Too often we can find ourselves divided by our own pride, but our heart’s desire should be for our brothers and sisters in Christ to grow in their faith and live in peaceful unity with each other.

10. What are some of the great blessings of living a life in relationship with other Christians and a life sold out for God?

11. This life is threatened sometimes. What can cause disunity between Christians? What things can rob us of the deep joy that God desires for us to have as His children?

I HAVE A QUESTION!  Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

Lord help me to seek unity and peace with other Christians around me. Help me to be a blessing to them and to seek their wellbeing. Amen.