

What is your number one focus in life?

Philippians 1:1-30

How do you handle a Halloween haunted house? Do you get scared or amused?

What Does The Bible Say?

I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons. 2 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. (Philippians 1:1–2)

True grace (favor or gifts in this life) and peace come from God.

9 I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing 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—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

(Philippians 1:9–11 ESV)

What matters to you? Is it to become more like Christ?

The more you hang out with Jesus, the more you become like Him. Your behavior changes as you become more obedient to Christ.

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, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear. (Philippians 1:12–14 NLT)

Pain is your platform to share Christ.

Using Your Pain is different than being a victim. A victim is someone who uses their pain to get something or pity.

Christians use their pain to point people to Christ.

How do you know if your pain is a platform for Christ:

- 1. It gives you contact with the lost.**
- 2. It gives courage to the saved.**

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 living for Christ, 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. (Philippians 1:20–23 NLT)

The selfish choice is to die for the follower of Christ. The selfish choice is to live when one is unsure if there is a heaven.

How Can You Obey?

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. (Philippians 1:24–26 NLT)

Our purpose for living is to be used by God.

This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 1:1 NLT)

Are you a slave to Christ, with no rights, only to please Him?

Only with that mindset can you have joy while sitting in a prison cell falsely accused of a crime.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Additional Notes:

This week's Insights To The Biblical World is inspired from Michael S. Heiser, Brief Insights on Mastering the Bible: 80 Expert Insights on the Bible, Explained in a Single Minute, The 60 Second Scholar (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 81.

Explore:

Verses in Insights To The Biblical World:

When the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

“Here I am!” Moses replied. 5 “Do not come any closer,” the Lord warned. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. Exodus 3: 4-5 NLT

17 “Then the Tabernacle, carried by the Levites, will set out from the middle of the camp. All the tribes are to travel in the same order that they camp, each in position under the appropriate family banner. Numbers 2:17 NLT

10 The other goat, the scapegoat chosen by lot to be sent away, will be kept alive, standing before the Lord. When it is sent away to Azazel in the wilderness, the people will be purified and made right with the Lord. Leviticus 16:10 NLT

17 Then Naaman said, “All right, but please allow me to load two of my mules with earth from this place, and I will take it back home with me. From now on I will never again offer burnt

offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the Lord. 2 Kings
5:17 NLT

20 Must I die on foreign soil, far from the presence of the Lord?
1 Samuel 26:20a NLT

17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in
him. Ephesians 3:17a NLT

Explore:

On his second missionary journey Paul visited Philippi. Through
his ministry there several people trusted Christ as their Savior.

Some of these were Lydia and her family and the Philippian jailer and his family (Acts 16:14–34).

Soon after Paul's visit a local church was established in Philippi.

The church helped the apostle in different ways so this epistle was written to acknowledge their help, as well as to help them.

Philippians is personal and practical in its tone and teaching.

Paul emphasized the need for believers to rejoice in Christ.

“Joy” (chara) is used four times (Phil. 1:4, 25; 2:2; 4:1);

“rejoice” (chairō) occurs eight times (1:18 [twice]; 2:17–18; 3:1, 4:4 [twice], 10); and “glad” occurs thrice (2:17–18, 28). (In 1:26

the word “joy” is a different Gr. word; there it is the word

“glad,” “boast,” or “glory,” [kauchēma], which also occurs in

2:16 and 3:3.) Paul wrote frequently in this epistle about the

mind of a child of God. One's manner of life is truly a reflection of what occupies his mind.

Robert P. Lightner, "Philippians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 646–647.

Explore:

The Date of the Epistle

Paul was in bondage when he wrote Philippians. But all do not agree which imprisonment he was experiencing when he wrote the book. Most believe he was in Rome at the time; some suggest he was in Caesarea; and a few argue for Ephesus.

The Scriptures give no clear indication of any imprisonment in Ephesus. As for Caesarea, Paul was confined there for two years, but imminent martyrdom is not suggested in the account which describes this confinement (Acts 23–24). His reference to the palace guard (Phil. 1:13) as well as his concern about facing

possible death (vv. 20–26) argue for his writing from Rome. The date of the writing would then be a.d. 61 or 62.

Robert P. Lightner, “Philippians,” in *The Bible Knowledge*

Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F.

Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985),

646–647.

Explore:

Since Ephesians gives no hint of his release from prison, as do Philippians (1:19–26) and Philemon (v. 22), it is reasonable to think that he wrote it in the early part of his stay, or about a.d. 60. This would have been when Paul was kept under guard in rental quarters (Acts 28:30). Following his release he traveled, wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and was martyred in Rome.

Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 614.

Explore:

The word fellowship simply means "to have in common." But true Christian fellowship is really much deeper than sharing coffee and pie, or even enjoying a golf game together. Too often what we think is "fellowship" is really only acquaintanceship or friendship. You cannot have fellowship with someone unless you have something in common; and for Christian fellowship, this means the possessing of eternal life within the heart. Unless a person has trusted Christ as his Savior, he knows nothing of "the fellowship of the Gospel." In Philippians 2:1, Paul writes about "the fellowship of the Spirit," because when a person is born

again he receives the gift of the Spirit (Rom. 8:9). There is also “the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil. 3:10). When we share what we have with others, this is also fellowship (Phil. 4:15, translated “communicate” in kjv).

So, true Christian fellowship is much more than having a name on a church roll or being present at a meeting. It is possible to be close to people physically and miles away from them spiritually. One of the sources of Christian joy is this fellowship that believers have in Jesus Christ. Paul was in Rome, his friends were miles away in Philippi, but their spiritual fellowship was real and satisfying. When you have the single mind, you will not complain about circumstances because you know that difficult circumstances will result in the strengthening of the fellowship of the Gospel.

Paul uses three thoughts in Philippians 1:1–11 that describe true Christian fellowship: I have you in my mind (Phil. 1:3–6), I have

you in my heart (Phil. 1:7–8), I have you in my prayers (Phil. 1:9–11).

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 64.

Explore:

Believers Find Joy in Loving One Another, Partnering to Spread the Gospel, and Growing in Christ (Philippians 1:1-11)

The apostle Paul, who was accompanied by Timothy, opened the epistle to the Philippians with a customary greeting (verse 1).

While Timothy was not a co-author of the epistle, he was a frequent companion of the apostle and was with Paul when he first preached the gospel message in Philippi (Acts 16). Timothy cared deeply for the congregation at Philippi (Philippians

2:19-23). Here, both Paul and Timothy are described as servants or slaves of Jesus Christ.

As he often did in his letters, Paul opened with words of greeting, commendation, and praise. The apostle offered personal thanksgiving for those in the church at Philippi due to their love for Christ and His people, and their faithful partnership and participation with him in the gospel ministry. The term literally speaks of a joint participation in a common interest. This partnership gave Paul joy as he prayed for them (verses 4-5).

Paul was confident God would complete His sanctifying work in them upon the day of Christ. What God begins, He finishes (verse 6). In light of this, Paul encouraged these believers to continue their partnership in the advancement of the gospel and to allow their love to continually grow so they would continue to mature in faith and holiness and bear fruit for God's glory.

Verse 7 provides the reason Paul cared so deeply for these believers. Paul viewed them as partakers or co-sharers with him in the grace of God. This partnership was demonstrated during his time in prison and when he defended the gospel. Their support could have cost them their own lives or freedom. Yet, their mutual love for one another drove the Philippians to faithfully stand with him and by him.

Verses 9-11 reveal what Paul prayed for them. First, he prayed they would grow more and more in self-sacrificial, Christ-like love. While scholars are divided over whether this is love for God or love for one another, it is the effects of this maturing love that Paul was seeking. When Christian love increases, so does knowledge and discernment. This would include sensitivity to the truth of God and to the needs and situations of those around them.

Paul also prayed that these young believers would be able to approve or discern what was best or excellent (verse 10). The word used here was a term that spoke of the testing of metals and coins to determine value and whether or not they met specific standards. Finally, Paul's prayer was that these Philippian Christians would be blameless at the day of Christ. This is a righteousness that comes only through Christ, but manifests itself in the way believers live (verses 10-11). We can follow Paul's example and make these same requests as we pray for each other.

Paul wanted the Philippian believers' relationships with Christ to continue to flourish and grow. This should be true for us as well. Our lives should be characterized by growing maturity, holiness, and love for God and others. We can bear fruit and bring glory to the One who saved us from our sins.

Explore:

The imprisonment of which Paul spoke was likely that referred to in Acts 28. This imprisonment would have been much different from what is typically experienced in today's world as the apostle was free to receive guests, have co-workers at his side, and even write letters such as Philippians. Hearing about Paul's imprisonment, the Philippian believers determined to send a financial contribution to their beloved friend, mentor, and spiritual leader (Philippians 4:10-20). This gift was delivered by Epaphroditus, a possible pastor or leader within the church. While in Rome, he became severely ill and nearly died. In writing this letter to the Philippians, Paul accomplished at least three objectives. First, he provided an update on the condition of Epaphroditus. Second, Paul thanked the church for their sacrificial contribution. Third, from a place typically absent of joy, he encouraged the Philippians to be joyful in all circumstances.

Explore:

Believers Can Glorify Christ by Living Worthy of the Gospel No Matter Their Circumstances (Philippians 1:12-30)

Knowing that the Philippians were concerned about his imprisonment, Paul informed them that what had happened to him was being used for the advancement of the gospel (verse 12). More than anything else, Paul's desire was to reach people with the gospel. If God could use imprisonment to accomplish this goal, Paul could appreciate that, regardless of how challenging it might prove to be. After all, everyone who became aware of Paul's imprisonment also became aware of the reason for it—Jesus Christ (verse 13).

A second reason for Paul to rejoice over his imprisonment was expressed in verse 14. When other believers heard of Paul's imprisonment and his boldness to preach Christ in spite of the dangers associated with it, they also attained boldness to preach

the Word. Paul was not so naïve, however, to think that everyone was preaching with pure motives. He was aware that some were preaching Christ for self- ish reasons (verses 15 and 17).

Consider the terms the apostle used to describe their motives.

Some were envious or jealous of Paul and the “success” he had in reaching people. This led them to begin preaching also. Some preached Christ because of strife or a contentious relationship with Paul. Others preached Christ out of selfish ambition, striving to make a name for themselves. There were even those who preached the good news in an attempt to stir up trouble or get back at Paul for infringing on their territory.

Regardless of the motives, Paul rejoiced that God’s life-changing truth was proclaimed to un- believers (verse 18). Whether they preached Christ out of envy and faction or out of love for Christ, the good news was spreading. For Paul, this was what mattered.

Paul's confidence in and love for the Philippians surfaces again in verse 19. He was so encouraged by their love for him and their prayers that he was confident of his deliverance or salvation. The term used here for deliverance implied rescue from danger or vindication in a Roman court. This could not happen, however, without the help of the Holy Spirit. The word for help carried with it the idea of support, as a ligament provides support in a physical body.

In verse 20, the apostle shared his eager expectation, a word that described an individual straining his neck to see what was ahead. This expectation was not in regard to his release from prison, but was instead related to the testimony he could leave to honor his Lord. That was what really mattered. His desire was to live a life worthy of the gospel, so that, whether in life or death, he would bring glory to Christ. This same desire should be ours as well.

In verse 20, Paul expressed his desire to honor Christ, whether in life or in death. In verse 21, he expanded that idea. Paul faced one of two imminent possibilities—to be released or to be put to death. For him, Christ was the very meaning and focus of life (verse 21). Paul understood that if he were permitted to live, he would be consumed with the concerns, values, and mission of the Savior he loved. His main purpose would be to serve and glorify Christ (verse 22). On the other hand, Paul knew that to die is gain. Even in death, the Lord would be glorified as Paul's testimony continued to go forth. Personally, he knew that he would no longer experience the trials of this life. He would forever be in the presence of Christ.

Verse 23 revealed the struggle between these two options for the apostle. Being hard-pressed portrayed a picture of a man being pressed from each side, with no opportunity to lean either way. Personally, Paul knew it would be better to be with Christ, an experience that comes only through death. On the other hand, he

recognized that his life and ministry on earth would be of greater value to the churches that Paul loved and ministered to (verses 24-25).

Regardless of what happened to Paul, he wanted the Philippian believers to use their lives to honor and glorify Christ. The manner of life of verse 27 was a political term that simply meant to live as citizens. Whether he lived and came to visit them, or whether he died and went to Heaven, Paul wanted the assurance that they would do the right things. This included, but was not limited to, standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel. In other words, they must be faithful in word and deed to the gospel message while united together as one body.

In verse 28, he also admonished the Philippian believers not to be terrified or frightened by the adversaries and difficulties they would face for the cause of the gospel. The word picture is that

of a horse being spooked or frightened by unexpected noises. Refusing to be frightened in this way would serve as a sign to the adversaries that God was acting on the believers' behalf and that they refused to be deterred from doing the right thing.

Paul did not want these believers to be surprised by the persecution and challenges that would come their way. In verses 29-30, he reiterated the fact that suffering was not coming as a punishment from God but was instead a privilege that had been granted to them, just as it had been granted to Paul, their spiritual father.

While we cannot know what trying times will come our way, we can determine what our response will be. Like Paul, we can use these times as a chance to further the gospel. We are to live in ways worthy of Christ, even when it includes suffering.

Explore:

This is the simplest self-identification used by Paul in any of his letters, except for the two to Thessalonica. In nine of the thirteen letters (all but here, Philem., and the Th. letters) he identifies himself as an apostle, either using that word alone or along with another identification. Perhaps he did not feel that his apostleship needed to be mentioned to the Philippians.

Only here, in Titus, and in Romans does he use the word servant in the formal opening. This word (Greek doulos) referred to the bondslave in Paul's world, totally at his owner-master's disposal. By this word Paul indicates that he (with Timothy) is the property of his Master, Jesus Christ. He does the Lord's bidding.

A few writers have preferred to find the significance of "servants" in the fact that the O.T. sometimes refers to the special servants/prophets of the Lord. This would give the word a "higher" sense as referring to God's "accredited" spokesmen. But Paul is writing to Gentiles, primarily, and the common

Greek use of the word is more probable. Ronald Russell suggests that the phrase “servants of Jesus Christ” is anticipatory: “The meaning of being a servant of Christ and the related experience of suffering are definite themes throughout the letter” (297). See 1:13, 17; 2:7, 17, 22, 25; 3:7, 8, 17; 4:3.

Robert E. Picirilli, “Commentary on the Book of Ephesians and Philippians,” in *Galatians through Colossians*, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, First Edition., *The Randall House Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1988), 272.

Explore:

In seven of the thirteen letters there is an “associate writer,” as we might express Timothy’s role here. (The others are 1, 2 Cor., Col., 1, 2 Th., and Philem.) In five of those, Timothy has that honor. I do not mean that Timothy helped dictate the letter or was, like Paul, inspired. Furthermore, in this letter Paul does not

use “we” (as in some other letters), but “I” throughout.

Philippians is very personal.

Still, considering how sparingly Paul named others with him in these formal openings, the role means more than a mere co-worker present at the time and sending greetings. Paul had other ways of sending greetings from co-workers, usually at the end of his letters. Someone associated with him in the formal opening should be regarded, therefore, as one present at the time, especially interested in and known to the recipients of the letter, and probably one with whom Paul would have discussed the situation at the letter’s destination and what he was writing them. Indeed, he might even have sat in on the session (s) when the letter was dictated. (There is no reason to think he was the scribe; see Rom. 1:1 and 16:22.)

Robert E. Picirilli, “Commentary on the Book of Ephesians and Philippians,” in *Galatians through Colossians*, ed. Robert E.

Picirilli, First Edition., *The Randall House Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1988), 272.

Explore:

The anxiety of the Philippians for Paul's welfare is understandable. His circumstances had changed. No longer was he allowed the relative freedom of living within his own hired house in Rome (Acts 28:16, 23, 30 f.). He had recently come to trial in connection with his appeal to Caesar and was currently in prison awaiting the verdict. The decision, once reached, was beyond appeal; he would either be released or sentenced to death (1:7, 13, 16, 19–26; 2:17). Paul was not deceived about the seriousness of the moment, nor was he unappreciative of his friends' concern (cf. 4:14). Yet the appropriate response to anxiety was—and remains—a quiet reliance upon God expressed through prayer (1:19; 4:6).

Paul has peace of mind, for behind the troubles that have befallen him he can discern the hand and purpose of God. His altered circumstances had actually served to advance the gospel (12). During the course of his trial it had become known to the whole praetorium guard (Caesar's elite troops) and to all associated with his case that his imprisonment was due to his bold witness for Christ, not for a criminal offense (13).

Moreover, as a direct result of his defense of the gospel, local believers were proclaiming Christ with greater boldness (14).

Their number included slaves and freedmen attached to the emperor's residence (4:22). In this turn of events Paul saw the affirmation of the principle he had expressed earlier in a Letter to Rome: 'In everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose' (Rom. 8:28). He knew from his experience that the Christian does not live 'under the circumstances' but above them!

Arthur E. Cundall et al., *Romans–Revelation, Daily Devotional Bible Commentary* (A. J. Holman Company, 2019), 261–262.

Explore:

This profound thankfulness and love led to specific prayers for the Philippians, as it should for us. Christians shouldn't just say, "You're in our thoughts." We should say, "You're in our prayers"—and we should mean it! Paul certainly did. His deep, joyful contemplation of the Philippians prompted him to pray for some specific things, things that can only come from God.

First, he prayed that their love would continue to grow and would be characterized by "real knowledge and all discernment" (1:9). I like to picture love like a river. It needs to be guided by the banks of knowledge and discernment. Paul isn't telling the Philippians to let their love blind them to truth and righteousness so they end up overlooking sin and compromising holiness.

That's a false interpretation of "love" we often see in the world today. True Christian love is guided by the best interest of others. With true knowledge and discernment, love learns to spot the phony, the wrong, the evil. It learns to "approve the things that are excellent" (1:10). This love, guided by wisdom, will preserve believers in righteousness until "the day of Christ"—the Second Coming, when the Lord Jesus will reward them for faithfulness.

Second, Paul prayed that they would be filled with the "fruit of righteousness" (1:11). Don't confuse this with self-righteousness, personal piety, or self-motivated works. Paul is referring to the righteousness of Christ working in us by the indwelling Holy Spirit to produce fruit in our lives (see Gal. 5:22–23). The result of such good works empowered by God will be "the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:11)—not our own praise and glory. Jesus said essentially the same thing: "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your

good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

What a solid basis for abiding joy! When Paul scanned the ten-year life span of the body of Christ in Philippi, he had every reason to rejoice in confidence, as expressed in thanksgiving, prayer, and praise.

Charles R. Swindoll, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 9 of *Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2017), 20.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

1. Believers Find Joy in Loving One Another, Partnering to Spread the Gospel, and Growing in Christ.

2. Believers Can Glorify Christ by Living Worthy of the Gospel No Matter Their Circumstances.

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: The apostle Paul likely wrote this letter to the Christians in Philippi while under house arrest in Rome, around AD 62.

Paul led the way in obeying Christ's command to take the gospel to all people groups, establishing churches and teaching them to obey Christ's commands.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny

depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a

simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior
(Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection
(Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ-followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

If the ground of Israel was holy because of God's presence, how should we look at ourselves because we have the Holy Spirit living in us?

Question 2 of 5

What does it mean to be focused on something? What are some things people focus on in our culture?

Question 3 of 5

How do you hang out with Jesus to become more like Him?

Question 4 of 5

Give an instance of someone who used pain as a platform.

How do you know if someone's pain is a platform for Christ?

Question 5 of 5

What did Paul mean when He said living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.?

How do you live for Christ?