

Paul expressed his deep love for the Philippians (Phil. 1:1–11). He wanted them to grow spiritually so they would choose **the things that are excellent** and ultimately bring more glory to God. In this lesson, Paul reassures the Philippians that God used his circumstances as a prisoner in Rome to advance the gospel. To Paul, proclaiming the gospel was so important that being in prison was a small price to pay for such a great reward. Before you begin this lesson, humble yourself before God, and ask Him to reveal Himself to you through His inspired Word.

1. Paul was a warrior for Jesus Christ — a soldier of the cross. He was scourged five times, beaten with rods three times, stoned, shipwrecked three times, and spent a day and night in the sea (2 Cor. 11:24–25). He faced threats from thieves, Gentiles, and false brethren (2 Cor. 11:26–27). Paul was often tired from toil yet spent many nights without sleep. He was often hungry, thirsty, and cold (2 Cor. 11:27). But still he pressed on, ministering to the churches and preaching the gospel of salvation to those without Christ in their lives.
 - a. As he conducted mission work, Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and eventually imprisoned in Rome. Rather than resenting God or becoming discouraged, he accepted imprisonment as God's sovereign plan for his life. List three positive things that occurred while Paul was imprisoned (Phil. 1:12–14).
 - b. The apostle's statement **the things which happened** (Phil. 1:12) indicates that his arrest and imprisonment were unanticipated, interrupting his missionary plans. The statement **have actually turned out** (Phil. 1:12, NIV — "have really turned out") shows that Paul was unable to see God's plan until sometime *after* his imprisonment. List at least two important spiritual truths that Philippians 1:12 teaches about how God reveals His will to believers — even His choicest servants.
2. Paul's imprisonment caused some of the brethren to more boldly witness for Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:14). Some preached the Word with pure intentions. Others, however, were motivated by envy, strife, and selfish ambition, hoping to cause Paul trouble (Phil. 1:16). What was Paul's response to the preaching of God's Word by both groups (Phil. 1:18)?
3. The Bible instructs Christians to do good works with pure motives (1 Cor. 10:31–33; Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3). In Philippians 1:15–18, however, Paul seems unconcerned if Christians have pure motives when they preach to others. If Paul isn't rejoicing in believers serving with impure motives, in what was Paul rejoicing (Phil. 1:18)?
 - a. In what way(s) *do you think* Paul's statement in Philippians 1:18 emphasizes the importance of preaching the gospel to the lost?
 - b. If you are a Christian, do you faithfully share your faith in Jesus Christ with the lost, or are you satisfied to just attend church each week? What can you do to become a more effective witness for Christ and make disciples of all nations?
4. Paul wrote to the Philippians while in prison (Phil. 1:13). Under Roman law, an individual could be held in prison for an extended time while awaiting trial, but not as a punishment. Once a prisoner was tried, he was executed, punished, or released. Paul was optimistic that God would deliver him in response to the Philippians' prayers and by the help of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Jesus Christ; the Greek can be translated "of" or "from" Jesus Christ; John 16:7).
 - a. Philippians 1:21 is Paul's spiritual mission statement: **For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain**. Although this verse is familiar to many Christians, many don't fully understand its meaning. Using Philippians 1:20–22, develop a more comprehensive definition of Paul's statement, **to live is Christ, to die is gain**.
 - b. Some people worship their work, work at their play, and play at their worship. Now that you have a more complete understanding of Paul's personal mission statement (Phil. 1:21), prepare your own one-sentence spiritual mission statement. Begin your statement, *The ultimate goal of my Christian life is _____.*
5. Paul instructed the Philippians to conduct themselves in a manner **worthy of the gospel of Christ** (Phil. 1:27). The Greek word *politeuomai* means "to be a citizen, to conduct one's self as a citizen." Likely, to make an important point Paul was comparing the Philippian believers' Roman citizenship to their standing before Christ.
 - a. Of what country, nation, or kingdom is every Christian a citizen (Phil. 3:20)? Does that include you? If you're uncertain about your eternal destiny, please turn to the back of this Bible study and read "The Final Exam."
 - b. Only when a believer fully understands his heavenly citizenship can he fully embrace his *present* calling to tell unbelievers about salvation through Jesus Christ. What is a believer's current role and responsibility on earth as a citizen of heaven (2 Cor. 5:18–20)?
 - c. Hebrews 11 is often called the Hall of Faith because it highlights several Old Testament saints and their heroic acts of faith. How did these spiritual giants of faith regard this world and their eternal home (Heb. 11:10–16)?
6. In what way(s) do you think a believer's heavenly *citizenship* and *commission* as Christ's ambassador on earth should affect his life and service for God?
7. What specific things did Paul instruct the Philippians to do to live worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:27–29)?
8. The relationship between *faith* and *suffering* confuses many within the church of Jesus Christ. To many in the "health-wealth" or "prosperity gospel" religious movement, suffering is often viewed as lack of faith, the presence of unconfessed sin, or even demon possession. What important spiritual instruction did Paul give the Philippian believers regarding faith and suffering (Phil. 1:29–30)?
9. As you study Philippians, it's easy to become engrossed in Paul's loving relationship with this faithful church. When this happens, we may forget that the central focus of all Scripture is God rather than man. As we conclude this lesson, take a minute to review Philippians 1. What specific things did Jesus Christ do for the Philippian believers — and for you (Phil. 1:1–3, 11, 19, 29)?