

*IS JOY POSSIBLE
EVEN WHEN I FEEL IMPRISONED
BY MY CIRCUMSTANCES?*



Does it bother you when people put you down because of your faith—when they ridicule you, talk about you behind your back, ignore or pass over you when it comes to recognition in the workplace and the community? Does it hurt, make you angry, or make you wonder what you are doing wrong? Does the pain and persecution tempt you not to be as open about your faith? Hold on...persevere...stand firm. There is an answer for your dilemma as we will discover this week.

DAY ONE

Read through Philippians 1 again. Mark in a second distinctive color every reference to the Philippians. Make sure you mark the pronouns and synonyms such as *saints* or *brethren*.¹ Then, when you finish, make another section in your notebook entitled FACTS ABOUT THE PHILIPPIANS and record what you observe about them from this chapter.

DAY THREE

When we began our study, I pointed out that references to people are the easiest thing to see when we observe the text of a book of the Bible. As you read through the first chapter, who (other than Paul) is mentioned more often than anyone else? When you discover this, mark every reference to Him in another distinctive color or symbol.

DAY THREE

A reading of the book of Philippians will show that the Lord Jesus Christ is front and center stage in this brief, joyous epistle.

There are several key words used throughout the letter to the Philippians that you will want to mark as you observe its content. If you have not read the "How to Get Started" section in the front of this book, it would be beneficial to do so before you go any further. It will explain the value of marking your key words—*joy*² (*rejoice*), *mind(s)*³ (*attitude*⁴), and *gospel*. Another word that would be good to mark in this first chapter is *imprisonment*.⁵ Choose a distinctive way or color for marking each of these words. Then list and color code them on a 3 x 5 card or on the perforated card in the back of this book. Once you finish your bookmark, read Philippians 1 and mark every occurrence of any of these words.

DAY FOUR

Whenever I read my Bible, I like to mark any reference to *pray(er)* or *supplication*⁶ in its own distinguishing way,

to prayer. As with all doctrines, men and women sometimes teach some fanciful ideas on the subject of prayer that can be contrary to the Scriptures or not present in the Word of God. Therefore, it is good to build your theology on any given subject by what the Word of God teaches throughout its pages.

Today, let's discover what insights Philippians 1 gives us on the subject of prayer. Choose a way you would like to mark all references to *prayer* throughout your Bible, and then mark all the references in Philippians 1 accordingly.

(By the way, you might want to reserve a portion of one of the blank pages in the front or back of your Bible for the recording of key words that you would like to mark in a consistent manner as you read through the Word of God. This would be a good place not only to record the word, but to mark it so that you will always have it there as a reminder of how you have chosen to mark each particular word.)

When you finish, record in your notebook what you learn about prayer from this chapter. Then, as you bring your study to a close, use Paul's prayer in Philippians 1:9-11 to pray for those God lays upon your heart.

DAY FIVE

Read Philippians 1:12-26. What do you learn about Paul's circumstances from this passage? What is taking place? Record your insights in your notebook. As you do, watch for Paul's response. Note how he is handling his situation and why. What—who—is Paul's passion?

In your notebook, list what you learn about Jesus Christ from marking the references to Him in 1:1-26. Then

was also written by Paul.

From this passage, what would you say are the main points of the gospel which we learned in Philippians that Paul is determined to defend? List these points in your notebook.

DAY SIX

In 1:27-30, Paul gives instructions to the church at Philippi. Record what you learn from this passage. What are they to do? Why?

In your notebook, list what you observe in chapter 1 from marking *gospel* and *joy* (*rejoice*). What do you learn about each of these? How does it minister to you personally?

Having spent a week observing Philippians 1, what would you say is the main subject or teaching of this chapter? Record your answer on the PHILIPPAINS AT A GLANCE chart on page 45. Record it on the line for chapter 1.

DAY SEVEN



Store in your heart: Philippians 1:29.

Read and discuss: Philippians 1; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- What did you learn from marking the word *gospel* in Philippians 1? Who is central to the gospel? What is the gospel of Jesus Christ all about? If you are going to

stated in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11?

- According to Philippians 1:27-30, what was Paul's concern in respect to the gospel? What do you learn in chapter 1 about the reception of the gospel in Philippi?
- From Philippians 1:27-30, what do you see that accompanies salvation in Jesus Christ? Have you experienced this as a Christian? How did you handle it? In this particular passage, what is Paul's admonition to the church?
- From reading Philippians 1, what do you learn about Paul and what it cost him to defend the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- What did you learn in the first chapter of Philippians that would help Paul to stand firm as he suffered for the gospel? What did Paul request of the Philippians?
- What did you learn about prayer? What is the hardest aspect of prayer for you?
- You marked the key words *joy* (*rejoice*) this week. What do you learn about them from this chapter?
- As you studied Philippians 1, what had the biggest impact upon you?

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

As we clearly saw in this week's study, suffering is a gift from our Lord—a gift that accompanies salvation; therefore, it is something we are to expect. We must remember, Beloved, that we are living in the last days, which began with the coming of our Lord to earth. Since we are in the

kingdom clashes with the kingdom of darkness? The kingdom of darkness and its ruler of old, the serpent who is the devil—Satan—goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

However, though the lion roars, we need not fear. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, as the Lamb of God, overcame him when He paid in full the penalty for our sin.

According to Hebrews 2, when Jesus Christ became your Savior and all your sins were no longer imputed to your account, the devil, who previously had the power of death because of our sin, was defeated. Sin gave Satan his power; the blood of Christ took it away.

Death's "stinger" has been removed. Jesus holds the keys of death and hell. Therefore, remember that although it is given to you to suffer for Christ's sake, you are to stand firm. You are not alone because Jesus is at the door. He will soon come to take you home. He who began a good work in you, the work of salvation, will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Suffering is part of His perfecting work, Beloved, so live in such a way as to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ.

TAKING CARE OF THAT ATTITUDE!



Attitudes—we all have them. But it's the bad ones that are hard to handle, isn't it? Whether it's ours or someone else's, what do we do in response to a rude, self-absorbed attitude?

DAY ONE

As you begin your study, ask God to help you understand how He wants you to interact with others.

Read through Philippians 2. As you read, mark the key words on your bookmark.

If you will take the time to read Philippians 2 aloud, it will help you memorize the content of this chapter. When you file it in your memory, it'll be an easy recall when you need it.

DAY TWO

Read Philippians 2 again and mark every reference to *Jesus Christ* or *Lord*. He's your key resource for maintaining a good attitude. Watch for and mark in the same way all the pronouns (*He, Himself, Him, who* [if they refer to Christ]).