



## Day 1 Uniting

Paul instructed the Philippians to stand together, united, when they faced problems and persecutions. Regardless of how you feel right now or how things are working out for you, the fact is that life is filled with challenges, conflicts, and pain. We need others—relationships. God created us to live in community, not isolated from others. Solomon highlights this truth when he explains how two are so much better than one, and three, together, are better yet. In this Philippians passage Paul urges believers to work together so people who persecute them because of their faith won't frighten them. God wants us to work together to rescue and protect individuals who are attacked by others. Together we can support, encourage, and affirm each other—while holding each other accountable. We can create a safe place where people are accepted and loved, and we can send a message to the watching world about how Christians love each other.

Today, we are going to look at Philippians 1. Remember I encourage you to read the whole chapter, but the questions will focus in on the selected text. Let's take a look and see what we can learn.

## Read Philippians 1:12-30

How did Paul instruct people to respond to persecution and opposition?

What message will be sent to the world through Christians standing together?

How can being part of a group help you face problems better than you would handle them as an individual?

What can our group do to help rescue and protect others who need help?



## Day 2 Shining

Paul started the church at Philippi on his second missionary journey. He wrote this letter from prison to remind them true joy comes from following and serving Jesus. Paul had been with the believers in Philippi a long time—teaching them about Jesus and encouraging them to follow Christ. Paul didn't rant to these young Christ-followers about sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Instead he focused on complaining, grumbling, and arguing. We might consider these small, unimportant temptations, but they're very important. Slipping away from God starts with forgetting to be thankful for what God has done for you and what he has given you. It gets worse when we have unresolved disputes with other Christians. Paul encouraged this church to keep obeying God despite the fact that Paul was no longer with them. He wanted them to kick it up a notch and really tap into the joy of following Jesus, giving thanks in all situations and loving each other unselfishly. He told them to do everything cheerfully, without bickering. Paul wanted to see them grow and be lights to the world because then people would get to see God working in ordinary people.

Today, we are going to look at Philippians 2. Remember I encourage you to read the whole chapter, but the questions will focus in on the selected text. Let's take a look and see what we can learn.

## Read Philippians 2:1-18

Why would the Philippian believers find it fairly easy to obey God when Paul was with them? Why would it be more difficult in his absence?

What do your friends complain about most? What about your family or siblings? What about you?

What does Paul tell them that will make them shine like stars?

What makes living like a child of God in this world so difficult?



## Day 3 Striving

Students will understand what it means to have Christ as the prize of their lives and what it takes to attain that prize. Our lives are filled with unusual, sometimes tragic, events. At times our spiritual journey feels like a roller coaster ride—ups and downs, fun times and scary times. Paul's life must have been like that, too. To receive the prize Paul dedicated his life to two actions: First he committed to forget what was behind him. The second action Paul took as he strained and pressed toward the prize was focusing completely on Jesus Christ. We must keep our eyes on the prize if we want to receive it. Sprinters have a fundamental rule: Always keep your head forward looking only at the finish line from start to finish. Never look around, especially at any of your competitors. Jesus is our finish line, focus on reaching Him.

Today we are going to be focusing in on Chapter 3. Remember I encourage you to read the whole chapter, but the questions will focus in on the selected text. Let's take a look and see what we can learn.

## Read Philippians 3:12-21

What types of competitions have you participated in? Did you win anything?

In what class did Paul put those who did not walk as he walked in his Christian life?

Where is a Christians citizenship located?

What are some characteristics of the people Paul is challenging us to be? What is one thing you can work on this week to exemplify these characteristics?



## Day 4 Rejoicing

When Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians, he was sitting in prison. Paul was instructing all Christians to rejoice in all situations, no matter how bad. In every situation we should pray and afterward rest in the “peace of God.” It’s human nature to just feel in the moment. When we’re happy, we laugh and smile. When we’re sad, we cry. So how can we “rejoice” always when not every moment of our lives is great? Paul wrote this letter while in prison: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Paul probably had no reason to rejoice while being incarcerated. But he chose to control his attitude and rejoice in the situation he found himself in. Controlling our attitudes isn’t easy. We naturally get discouraged when we experience hard times. So, we have to be determined to make ourselves “rejoice.” God promises that when we pray and tell him everything, we’re anxious about, he’ll give us peace—a peace that “transcends all understanding” and will “guard your hearts and your minds in Christ.” Ultimate joy and peace come from Christ being in us and knowing he’s always with us.

Today, we are going to look at Philippians 4. Remember I encourage you to read the whole chapter, but the questions will focus in on the selected text. Let’s take a look and see what we can learn.

## Read Philippians 4:1-9

When do you find it difficult to laugh? When has joy been difficult to find? What’s the difference between happiness and joy?

When have you been happy but not joyful? When have you been joyful but not happy?

What other emotions tend to suppress your joy? Why is that?

What does Paul present in this passage as the secret to having joy?

How are joy and peace related?

Because of your time in Philippians this week, what do you need to implement or change in your life?