



~THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS, PART 1~  
~AN OVERVIEW AND SURVEY~  
~ROUTE 66~



**Book:** The Book of Philippians has as a theme the living out of the Christian life. We also find the word “joy” and “rejoicing” throughout the book.

Warren Wiersbe notes,

“The secret of his joy is the *single mind*; he lives for Christ and the Gospel. (Christ is named eighteen times in Philippians 1, and the Gospel is mentioned six times.) "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). But what really is "the single mind"? It is the attitude that says, "It makes no difference what happens to me, just as long as Christ is glorified and the Gospel shared with others." Paul rejoiced in spite of his circumstances, because his circumstances strengthened the *fellowship of the Gospel* (Phil. 1:1-11), promoted the *furtherance of the Gospel* (Phil. 1:12-26), and guarded *tine faith of the Gospel* (Phil. 1:27-30).” – The Bible Exposition Commentary

**Author:** The author is Paul. Let’s first consider the internal evidence. **One**, the author claims to be Paul (Phil. 1:1). **Two**, the book fits that claim. In Phil. 3:4-6 Paul talks about his life before coming to Christ. **Three**, the style is Paul’s, beginning with the familiar “grace and peace” found in Phil. 1:2. **Four**, the doctrine is Pauline. Christ is our life (Phil. 1:21; see Gal. 2:20) as Paul saw this as vital. Christ is the head over all things (Phil. 2:9-11; see Col. 2:9-10).

Now the external evidence. **One**, the earliest MSS of the book have Paul’s name. **Two**, it was accepted into the canon of Scripture as written by Paul. **Three**, the early church Fathers support Paul’s authorship. This includes Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp. **Four**, almost all critics of the Bible accept the letter was written by Paul.

**When It Was Written:** It was written around 61-62 A.D, during Paul’s imprisonment recorded in Acts 28. He hints of a possible release in Phil. 1:19, which, for example, we do not see in 2 Tim. 4:6-8 which is written around 67 A.D., where in 2 Timothy Paul expects to face death.

**Who Was It Written To:** It was written to the Philippian Christians and to the elders and deacons (Phil. 1:1). They are mostly Gentiles. The Philippians seemed to have been a generous church as seen in Phil. 4:10-18.

The church originally seemed to consist of three types of people according to Norman Geisler,

“The original church consisted of three types of people, who typified what the gospel of Christ did for society. They were Lydia’s household (Acts 16:14-15), portraying the liberation of women; the demonized damsel (vv. 16-18), picturing the emancipation of slaves; and the converted jailor (vv. 27-33) exemplifying the conversion of families to Christ. These emphases foreshadowed the very things Christianity was to achieve as the gospel spread through Europe.” – A Popular Survey Of The New Testament

**Why Was It Written:** **One**, Paul wanted to encourage the readers to rejoice always in the Lord (1:26; 3:1; 4:4). **Two**, to relate his situation and circumstances to them so as to ease their anxiety about him (1:19; 4:10). **Three**, Paul wanted to thank them for their many gifts to him and the most recent one by way of Epaphroditus (2:25, 28; 4:15). **Four**, to warn them of the Judaizers (3:1-3; 18-19). **Five**, to exhort them to harmony in Christ (4:2).

**Breaking Down Philippians** – The **first** section is **Christ Our Life** seen in 1:1-1:30. The **next** section is a **Pattern For Christian Living** in Phil. 2:1-2:30. The **third** section is the **Prize For Christian Living – Christ Our Goal** found in Phil. 3:1-3:21. Section **four** is the **Power For Christian Living** in Phil. 4:1-4:23.

## 1. Christ Our Life – Phil. 1:1-1:30

A) **Phil. 1:1-2** is Paul's greeting to the church. Note Paul calls the believers "saints."

B) **Phil. 1:3-6** is Paul sharing the fact that he is constantly praying for these believers who have shared in the spreading of the Gospel of Christ. In **vs. 6** Paul encourages them to remember that God's work in them will be ongoing until the return of Jesus.

**Vss. 7-11** continues Paul's words of encouragement to this church. He prays for them to grow in love towards God and others (**vs. 9**), in the knowledge of God's Word (**vs. 9**) and in discernment (**vs. 9**), which is understandable because of the false teachers floating around.

**H.L. Willmington** writes, "Paul felt a deep affection for this particular church, which had helped him so much." - **Willmington's Bible Handbook**.

He prays for them to increase in righteousness (holy living), so that they will be pure and blameless when Christ returns (**vss. 9-11**).

C) **Phil. 1:12-18** is Paul's explanation of how the Gospel has advanced even though he had suffered tough times. He was using the opportunity to preach to all that he could (**vss. 12-13**). He was an encouragement to others who were not in prison but had the opportunity to preach without fear to those around them as they saw Paul standing for the Gospel (**vs. 14**).

The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** speaks of Paul's situation in this light,

"The advance came partly because the whole palace guard, as well as others, were hearing about Christ (vv. 12-13). The "palace guard" (*praitōriō*) likely refers to the praetorian guard, made up of Roman soldiers. Though Paul resided in his own rented facility (Acts 28:30), he was guarded by these soldiers all the time. The custom was for a prisoner to be chained at the wrist to a soldier.

**All in Rome who came in contact with Paul heard about Christ."**

In **Phil. 1:15-18** Paul says that there are those who are jealous of what God was doing through his ministry while others had the right attitude and heart in sharing the Good News. Paul

rejoiced that the Gospel was getting out. That was his focus. Were both of these “preaching groups” Christians? The second group, who preached from “good will” (vs. 15) definitely was.

The other group may have been Christians who were struggling with envy over Paul’s success or over something else regarding the apostle and his ministry. They definitely were not walking with God but were still proclaiming the truth of what the Gospel is and Paul, even though they were causing him heartache, was glad the Gospel was getting preached. Maybe this second group wanted to outdo Paul when it came to presenting Christ to others.

We all can struggle from wrong motives even when serving Christ.

In referring to vs. 15, the **Life Application New Testament Commentary** says,

**“This comment by Paul provides an interesting look into people’s motives. All of those who preached Christ were sincere believers—they had the right doctrine and they acted upon it by sharing it with others. While the end result might be the same (people hearing the Good News), some actually had wrong motives in their preaching. Now that the great missionary Paul had been virtually silenced in prison, some of these brothers were hoping to make a name for themselves in the vacuum that Paul left. Perhaps they hoped for great notoriety, trying to turn people’s eyes away from Paul and toward themselves. These people had no personal love for Paul. They even hoped that their planting churches and gaining converts would upset Paul and make his imprisonment even more frustrating.”**

**D) Phil. 1:18-30** deals with living for Christ. In vs. 19 Paul shares that he is expecting to be released from prison. He wants to honor Christ in all he does (vs. 20).

In vs. 21-24 Paul talks about the fact that to “live is Christ” and to die is gain. Though heaven is obviously a final place of rest and glorying in God, Paul knows that it is better that he be on earth doing ministry. The departing to be with Christ (vs. 23) is an immediate event. When we leave our bodies we are in the presence of God.

**Vss. 25-30** are words of encouragement to the Philippian believers to stand firm in their faith, unified in the ministry. Though they too would suffer for their faith they could stand strong in Christ as Paul had (vss. 29-30).