

## PROBING PHILIPPIANS: THE JOY OF LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

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*By the Book™* A Chapter by  
Chapter Bible Study Series  
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*The Vines By the Book™ Bible study series will enable you to study the New Testament in a chapter-by-chapter sequence. These leaders' guides are prepared to help you lead students in a simple, easy to understand manner.*

*They are not designed to cover every verse of the chapter. Rather, they are intended to give a summary view of the teaching each chapter presents. I pray you will be blessed as you pursue this method of Bible study.*

*The book of Philippians is a book of joy! Though Paul nowhere defines joy, he everywhere displays joy.*

*As you study this delightful little book, may you and those you teach enter into God's intention for you- a life of daily experiencing the joy of Jesus Christ!*

*Jerry Vines*

### A Brief Introduction

#### The City

The city of Philippi was located in Macedonia and named after King Philip. Philippi was noted for the gold in the region as well as for being a rich farming area.

More importantly, Philippi was a colony of Rome. To make a colony, the Roman government sent retired Roman soldiers and Roman officials to the city they wished to colonize. Their purpose was to have "little Rome" using the language, laws and culture of the Roman Empire.

#### The Church

Paul established the church in Philippi. In Acts 16 we have the historical background of how Paul came to the city of Philippi and how the church at Philippi was established.

You may recall in the opening verses of Acts 16 that Paul was beginning his second missionary journey. Acts 16:6 says, "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia and were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia."

For some reason it was not the plan of the Holy Spirit that they stop there. Then verse 7 says, "After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia [north]; but the Spirit suffered them not."

For some reason the Holy Spirit would not let them go north. The Holy Spirit was leading Paul and his party to move in another direction.

#### The Letter

By the time Paul wrote this particular letter, he was in prison. The Philippians had heard of his arrest and had sent him aid by a man named Epaphroditus. He is found in Philippians 2:25.

Epaphroditus became ill, and in verses 25 through 30, it talks about his illness. The Lord spared his life, so Paul evidently sent this letter back to them from this man Epaphroditus.

#### The Purpose

Let me give you the purpose of the book. There are several purposes in Paul's writing this book.

First, Paul was writing to explain his circumstances, to show them why the circumstances were such in his life at this particular time.

Second, he wrote to explain the ministry of this man Epaphroditus.

Third, he wrote to thank them for their generous support.



## The Theme

When you begin to read through the book of Philippians, there is a word that you just cannot miss--joy. Some form of the word joy is used approximately 18 times in this little four chapter book of Philippians.

Note: Paul was in a Roman prison. He was writing in the midst of very difficult circumstances. As we saw earlier, at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to the Lord.

Here in prison, Paul writes a letter, and the key note was joy. It is the joy book!

Joy is easy to see, but Dr. Warren Wiersbe points out another key word to this book. Mind or words that refer to the mind are found many times in Philippians.

For instance, the words remember and think are found. Philippians 1:3, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." Look at verse 7, "Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart. . . ."

Look at Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Thus, when you take those two keys, joy and mind, and put them together, what you have is the thrust of the book if Philippians.

The whole theme of the book is how a Christian can have a joyful mind.

## The Challenge

Following is a great outline suggested by Dr. Wiersbe<sup>(1)</sup>. Letting it be your guide is a great way to the joy-filled life:

- I. The Single Mind (Chapter 1)**
- II. The Submissive Mind (Chapter 2)**
- III. The Spiritual Mind (Chapter 3)**
- IV. The Secure Mind (Chapter 4)**

<sup>(1)</sup> *I am forever indebted to Dr. Warren Wiersbe for his masterful expositions. His influence is obvious within these studies.*