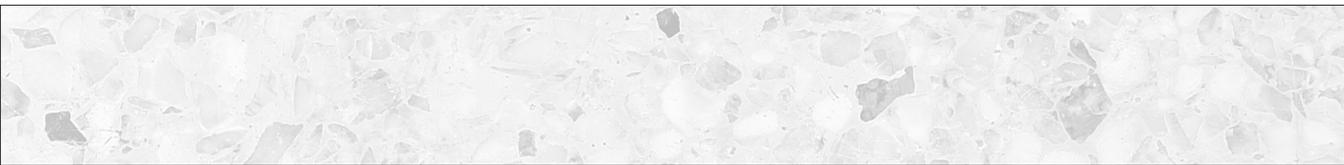


# Letters from Prison

Part One





# Letters from Prison

## Part One

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Philippians and Philemon

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**Vincent M. Smiles, Philippians**  
**Terence J. Keegan, Philemon**  
with Little Rock Scripture Study staff



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Wrap-Up Lectures and Discussion Tips for Facilitators are available for each lesson at no charge. Find them online at



# Welcome

The Bible is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian. It is the Spirit-inspired word of God for us. It reveals to us the God who created, redeemed, and guides us still. It speaks to us personally and as a church. It forms the basis of our public liturgical life and our private prayer lives. It urges us to live worthily and justly, to love tenderly and wholeheartedly, and to be a part of building God's kingdom here on earth.

Though it was written a long time ago, in the context of a very different culture, the Bible is no relic of the past. Catholic biblical scholarship is among the best in the world, and in our time and place, we have unprecedented access to it. By making use of solid scholarship, we can discover much about the ancient culture and religious practices that shaped those who wrote the various books of the Bible. With these insights, and by praying with the words of Scripture, we allow the words and images to shape us as disciples. By sharing our journey of faithful listening to God's word with others, we have the opportunity to be stretched in our understanding and to form communities of love and learning. Ultimately, studying and praying with God's word deepens our relationship with Christ.

## **Letters from Prison, Part One Philippians and Philemon**

The resource you hold in your hands is divided into four lessons. Each lesson involves personal prayer and study using this book *and* the experience of group prayer, discussion, and wrap-up lecture.

If you are using this resource in the context of a small group, we suggest that you meet four times, discussing one lesson per meeting. Allow about 90 minutes for the small group gathering. Small groups function best with eight to twelve people to ensure good group dynamics and to allow all to participate as they wish.

Some groups choose to have an initial gathering before their regular sessions begin. This allows an opportunity to meet one another, pass out books, and, if desired, view the optional intro lecture for this study available on the "Resources" page of the Little Rock Scripture Study website ([www.littlerockscripture.org](http://www.littlerockscripture.org)). Please note that there is only one intro lecture for two-part studies.

## WHAT MATERIALS WILL YOU USE?

The materials in this book include:

- The text of Philippians and Philemon, using the New American Bible, Revised Edition as the translation.
- Commentaries by Vincent M. Smiles (Philippians) and Terence J. Keegan (Philemon), which have also been published separately as part of the New Collegeville Bible Commentary series.
- Occasional inserts  highlighting elements of Philippians and Philemon. Some of these appear also in the *Little Rock Catholic Study Bible* while others are supplied by staff writers.
- Questions for study, reflection, and discussion at the end of each lesson.
- Opening and closing prayers for each lesson, as well as other prayer forms available in the closing pages of the book.

In addition, there are wrap-up lectures available for each lesson. Your group may choose to purchase a DVD containing these lectures or make use of the audio or video lectures online at no charge. The link to these free lectures

 Of course, if your group has access to qualified speakers, you may choose to have live presentations.

Each person will need a current translation of the Bible. We recommend the *Little Rock Catholic Study Bible*, which makes use of the New American Bible, Revised Edition. Other translations, such as the New Jerusalem Bible or the New Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition, would also work well.

## HOW WILL YOU USE THESE MATERIALS?

### **Prepare in advance**

Using Lesson One as an example:

- Begin with a simple prayer like the one found on page 13.
- Read the assigned material in the printed book for Lesson One (pages 14–18) so that you are prepared for the weekly small group session. You may do this assignment by reading a portion over a period of several days (effective and manageable) or by preparing all at once (more challenging).

- Answer the questions, Exploring Lesson One, found at the end of the assigned reading, pages 19–21.
- Use the Closing Prayer on page 21 when you complete your study. This prayer may be used again when you meet with the group.

### **Meet with your small group**

- After introductions and greetings, allow time for prayer (about 5 minutes) as you begin the group session. You may use the prayer found on page 13 (also used by individuals in their preparation) or use a prayer of your choosing.
- Spend about 45–50 minutes discussing the responses to the questions that were prepared in advance. You may also develop your discussion further by responding to questions and interests that arise during the discussion and faith-sharing itself.
- Close the discussion and faith-sharing with prayer, about 5–10 minutes. You may use the Closing Prayer at the end of each lesson or one of your choosing at the end of the book. It is important to allow people to pray for personal and community needs and to give thanks for how God is moving in your lives.
- Listen to or view the wrap-up lecture associated with each lesson (15–20 minutes). You may watch the lecture online, use a DVD, or provide a live lecture by a qualified local speaker. This lecture provides a common focus for the group and reinforces insights from each lesson. You may view the lecture together at the end of the session or, if your group runs out of time, you may invite group members to watch the lecture on their own time after the discussion.

*Above all, be aware that the Holy Spirit is moving within and among you.*



## PREFACE

Welcome to Little Rock Scripture Study's *Letters from Prison, Part One*. Before we begin our study, it may be helpful to understand why some of Paul's letters are classified as "Letters from Prison" (or "Captivity Epistles," as they have also been called).

Both the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's own letters attest to multiple imprisonments endured by Paul "for the defense of the gospel" (Phil 1:16). A determined and unflagging missionary, Paul was not shy about describing the danger and discomforts of his apostleship: "with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, far worse beatings, and numerous brushes with death" (2 Cor 11:23). It seems that Paul's message about a crucified Messiah won over some but angered others, Jews and Gentiles alike, to the point of physical attacks and incarceration (e.g., Acts 14:19; 16:22-24; 28:16; 2 Cor 11:24-26).

In five of the thirteen letters attributed to Paul, the apostle remarks within the letter that he is imprisoned at the time of its composition: Ephesians (3:1, 4:1), Philippians (1:7, 13-14, 16-17), Colossians (4:3, 10, 18), 2 Timothy (1:8, 16; 2:9), and Philemon (1, 9-10, 13). For example, in Philemon, Paul refers to himself as "a prisoner for Christ Jesus" (v. 1, 9), and in Colossians, he writes, "Remember my chains" (4:18).

Of these letters, 2 Timothy is typically classified with the Pastoral Letters (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus), leaving four remaining letters classified as Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. The authorship of Philippians and Philemon is undisputed (Paul himself is most certainly the author), so they are treated together in Part One of our study. Because the authorship of both Colossians and Ephesians is uncertain, and because the two books share many themes and ideas, they are treated together in *Letters from Prison, Part Two*.

As you read the commentary on the letter to the Philippians (Lessons 1-3), you may notice that the author will sometimes quote the text of Philippians with a slightly different wording than you find in the outside columns of your book. In these cases, Vincent M. Smiles is providing his own translation based on the Greek text rather than quoting the New American Bible, Revised Edition. These complementary translations can work together to enhance your study and understanding of this letter.

Enjoy your study!



# Letters from Prison

## Part One

### LESSON ONE

---

#### Introduction and Philippians 1:1-26

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Begin your personal study and group discussion with a simple and sincere prayer such as:

#### *Prayer*

*Lord Jesus, your servant Paul willingly endured and even rejoiced in imprisonment for the sake of the gospel. May we also find joy in a way of life that embraces your death and resurrection. As we study your word, empower us with your strength.*

Read the Introduction on page 14 and the Bible text of Philippians 1:1-26 found in the outside columns of pages 15–18, highlighting what stands out to you.

Read the accompanying commentary to add to your understanding.

Respond to the questions on pages 19–21, Exploring Lesson One.

The Closing Prayer on page 21 is for your personal use and may be used at the end of group discussion.

## INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS

### The importance of Philippi

Philippi was located about 110 miles north-east of Thessalonica in Macedonia. It got its name in 360 B.C. from Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. In 42 B.C. it was the scene of a great battle in the civil war that followed the assassination of Julius Caesar. One of the victorious generals—Octavian—would eventually become Caesar Augustus, the emperor at the time of Jesus’ birth. In 31 B.C. he made Philippi a Roman colony, permitting army veterans to settle there. Philippi, therefore, enjoyed special status; it came under Italian law and was exempt from various taxes. Paul was aware of its prestige (see 3:20; 4:22).

According to Acts 16:9, a vision summoned Paul to preach the gospel in Macedonia. From the very beginning Paul’s relations with Philippi were warm and affectionate; it was the one church that consistently supported him in his apostolic work (4:15-16, cf. 1:5). Its founding members and leaders included a number of women (4:2-3; Acts 16:13-15), but unlike other cities of Paul’s mission, Philippi seems not to have included a synagogue or any large Jewish population. The issue of when and where Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians takes us into its particular difficulties.

### Challenges for interpretation

Scholars are agreed that Paul wrote Philippians, but most also believe that the letter we have was originally two or three separate letters. The most obvious seam is between 3:1 and 3:2; the switch of mood is so abrupt that even those who defend the unity of the letter struggle to explain the transition. Another difficulty is the delayed thank-you (4:10-20), which interrupts what looks like a standard ending of a letter (4:8-9, 21-23).

These and other observations have given rise to numerous theories about the original *letters* to Philippi and, of course, such theories affect the question of when and where Paul wrote. A common theory of multiple letters regards 4:10-20 as *letter A*, written from prison in Ephesus,

about A.D. 55. *Letter B*, from prison a few weeks later, comprises 1:1–3:1a, 4:4-7, 21-23, and *letter C* includes the polemical 3:1b–4:3, 8-9 after Paul’s release and was written perhaps from another city (Corinth?). A more simple theory would be: *letter A* = 1:1–3:1; 4:1-7, 10-23 (from Ephesus, about 55), and *letter B* = 3:2-21; 4:8-9 (from Corinth, about 56). All such theories presuppose that an editor, for some reason, conflated the original two or three letters and in doing so chopped off the openings and endings of one or more letters to avoid needless repetition.

Those who reject such theories insist that, in spite of difficulties, the letter is coherent and should be read as a unity, and certainly it *can* be read as a unity. The commentary to follow will do so, without denying that the theories of division are, at least from a historical perspective, very valuable. Assuming its unity, where was Paul when he wrote Philippians? The traditional view is that he wrote from Rome in the early sixties while under house arrest (Acts 28:16-31). Philippians, however (see 1:12-20; 2:17), envisions more than house arrest, and travel between Rome and Philippi was more difficult than the ease of communication that is presumed in the letter (2:19-30). Some scholars think Ephesus was the more likely place of writing, some time in the mid-fifties. There is no explicit record of Paul being imprisoned in Ephesus, but that is not an insurmountable problem (see 2 Cor 1:8; 11:23; 1 Cor 15:32). The best guess, therefore, is that Philippians comprises one or more letters written from prison in Ephesus in the mid-fifties and perhaps also from Corinth a year or so later.





### 1:1-2 Greeting

The opening is brief and simple but includes interesting details. Timothy is named as co-sender, but he probably had little to do with the actual composition of the letter. From 1:3 Paul speaks in terms of his particular experience (e.g., 1:12-17); this letter, like the others that are original to Paul (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon), bears the imprint of one very strong personality. It is unusual that Paul here does not claim the title “apostle.” It was sometimes important for him to do so (e.g., Rom 1:1; Gal 1:1-12), but in the warm relationship he shared with Philippi, there was no such need. “Slaves” recalls Jesus’ instruction about leadership (Mark 10:44).

Even more interesting, but also strange, is Paul’s special mention of “the overseers and ministers.” The Greek terms (*episkopos* and *diakonos*) are sometimes translated “bishop” and “deacon” (e.g., 1 Tim 3:2, 8), but in his list of primary church functions (1 Cor 12:28), these titles have no place, and in fact “overseers” are never mentioned again in the original letters. He uses “minister” (*diakonos*) to describe, among others, himself and other leading “ministers” of the gospel (1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 3:6), but only in the case of Phoebe (Rom 16:1) does it have an offi-

## I: Address

### CHAPTER 1

#### Greeting

<sup>1</sup>Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the holy ones in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and ministers: <sup>2</sup>grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Thanksgiving

<sup>3</sup>I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup>praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, <sup>5</sup>because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup>I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup>It is right that I should think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, you who are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

*continue*

cial ring to it. These titles are so unusual that some scholars think the phrase was inserted by an editor, but this is doubtful. They must have been leaders of various house-churches—people like Euodia, Syntyche, and Clement (4:2-3).

The letter is addressed to “*all the holy ones*” (the baptized); he greets them with the standard but significant formula he employs in all his letters: “Grace to you and peace . . .” Though Paul addresses the community six times as “brothers” (e.g., 1:12), it is important to note that he is addressing women and men alike (note 4:2-3). *Adelphoi* (“brothers”) in this context is best translated “believers.”

### 1:3-11 The thanksgiving

The warmth of Paul’s relationship with the Philippians is evident here: “I thank my God at *every* remembrance of you, praying *always*

<sup>8</sup>For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, <sup>10</sup>to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup>filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

*continue*

with joy at my *every* prayer for *all* of you.” In Greek the italicized words all begin with the letter “p,” increasing the emotional and rhetorical effect. “My God” (also 4:19; Rom 1:8) denotes a personal relationship and is quite common in the psalms (e.g., Ps 22). “Joy” characterizes this letter throughout (1:18; 2:2, 17; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10).

As a “thanksgiving,” the passage is a standard feature of letter writing (cf. Rom 1:8-15; 1 Cor 1:4-9, etc.), but there is nothing standard or merely formal about Paul’s “joyful” remembrance of the Philippians and of their “partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (1:5). “Partnership” (or “participation”—see 2:1; 3:10; 4:15) refers both to their spiritual and their material sharing in the task of the gospel (see 4:15). They “defend and confirm” (1:7) the gospel by living it and by “struggling together” for its progress (1:27). They have also generously enabled Paul’s missionary endeavors by their gifts to him (4:16); the phrase “until now” may refer to Paul’s having just received their latest contribution.

The beginning of the “good work” that God “will continue” in them was that “first day,” when Paul came to Philippi and was received, according to Acts 16:11-15, by Lydia and the other women at the “place of prayer.” Lydia herself is not mentioned in Philippians, but the leadership of women seems to have remained important (4:2-3) in the intervening years. Lydia was from Thyatira (northwest Asia

Minor), says Luke (Acts 16:14), so she may no longer have been in Philippi.

The “day of Christ” is the first of several references to the expected return of Jesus (see 1:10; 2:16; 3:20-21). Some years earlier Paul had fully expected to be alive for Jesus’ return (1 Thess 4:15-17), but now he realizes that he may die first (1:20-23). Nevertheless, the end will come soon, and Paul’s confident prayer (1:9) is that, at the judgment, the believers of Philippi will be “pure and blameless” (1:10). In the meantime, he says, he “longs for them with the affection of Christ Jesus” (1:8); Paul’s love for his churches was unmistakable (1 Thess 2:7-8; 2 Cor 11:11). His final prayer is that they “will be filled with the fruit of righteousness” (1:11). Paul will resume this theme of “righteousness through Christ” in the fiery words of 3:2-9.

Although he was in prison (1:7, 13-17), the apostle was joyful and confident. Epaphroditus, who has delivered the Philippians’ gift (4:18), remains with Paul, recovering, we will discover later, from a near brush with death (2:25-30). Also with Paul is Timothy, of whom Paul will speak affectionately (2:22).



Paul lists numerous imprisonments during his career (e.g., 2 Cor 11:23; Phil 1:7, 13-14; Phlm 1:1, 9), most of which were likely in Roman prisons. **Imprisonment in the Greco-Roman world** could occur for a variety of reasons, such as being in debt or being caught in a crime; but conditions varied somewhat, depending on the status of the person. Roman citizens might enjoy a kind of “house arrest,” which allowed them to continue a modified lifestyle (e.g., Paul in Acts 28:30-31). Harsher conditions awaited hardened criminals, the poor, and runaway slaves. Prisons were generally dark, gloomy, filled with rats and other vermin, and lacking basic hygiene and ventilation. Men and women were not segregated in prison, and conditions were usually overcrowded and fostered disease. Prisoners were often

kept shackled in chains, so that “chains” became synonymous with imprisonment (see Col 4:18). Some Roman officials tried to reform prison conditions because of the tendency to abuse prisoners. Early Christians were exhorted to visit the imprisoned as an act of mercy (Matt 25:36; Heb 13:3).

### 1:12-26 The irresistible progress of the gospel

The first paragraph here (1:12-18) is remarkable, speaking as it does of the effect of Paul’s imprisonment, first among “the praetorium and all the rest” (1:13), probably denoting non-believers, and second, among believers also (1:14-18). “The praetorium” (palace guard) refers not to a place but to the soldiers and others of “Caesar’s household” (4:22). Paul wants the Philippians to know that his imprisonment, although on the surface a disadvantage, “served to advance the gospel.” This goes along with Paul’s optimistic tone, in spite of the most difficult circumstances. Even among non-believers it has become known that Paul’s imprisonment is “in Christ,” meaning that they see Paul, not as a common criminal, but as a witness of Christ. And “most of the believers,” far from being intimidated by his imprisonment, have gained greater confidence “to speak the word fearlessly” (1:14).

It is amazing that Paul has such equanimity in the circumstances he describes next. “Some,” he says, “proclaim Christ because of envy and rivalry” (1:15), “thinking to cause me trouble in my imprisonment” (1:17). We know, then, that these opponents were Christians, but it is impossible to know much else about them or what sort of “trouble” (or “affliction”) they might cause for Paul. Because he was a champion of the freedom of Gentile believers from the Jewish law, Paul ran into opposition many times, including in Antioch, Jerusalem (Gal 2:1-14; Acts 15:1-5), Galatia (Gal 1:6-9; 6:12-16), and Philippi (Phil 3:2-9; cf. Rom 3:8; 6:1-15).

### II: Progress of the Gospel

<sup>12</sup>I want you to know, brothers, that my situation has turned out rather to advance the gospel, <sup>13</sup>so that my imprisonment has become well known in Christ throughout the whole praetorium and to all the rest, <sup>14</sup>and so that the majority of the brothers, having taken encouragement in the Lord from my imprisonment, dare more than ever to proclaim the word fearlessly.

<sup>15</sup>Of course, some preach Christ from envy and rivalry, others from good will. <sup>16</sup>The latter act out of love, aware that I am here for the defense of the gospel; <sup>17</sup>the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not from pure motives, thinking that they will cause me trouble in my imprisonment. <sup>18</sup>What difference does it make, as long as in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is being proclaimed? And in that I rejoice.

*continue*

The “trouble” these people sought to cause was perhaps simply distress in Paul’s own mind. Their intention, however, may have been even more sinister, hoping to make his imprisonment worse and more protracted. Whatever the case, Paul refused to see it as a defeat. There was no trouble that could subdue his joy and confidence in Christ! Especially encouraging for him are those believers who preach Christ “for the sake of God’s will” (1:15, not merely human “good will”) and “out of love,” aware that Paul was in prison “in defense of the gospel” (1:16). All that matters for Paul, whether to his advantage or not, is that “Christ is proclaimed; in that,” he says, “I rejoice”!

“And I will continue to rejoice,” he insists, “because I know that ‘this will result in deliverance for me.’” These last words are from the book of Job (13:16). Whether or not the Philippians would recognize the reference—Philippians is almost devoid of Old Testament quotations—it seems clear that Paul sees in Job’s words a reason for confidence. In the text in question, Job rebukes

Indeed I shall continue to rejoice, <sup>19</sup>for I know that this will result in deliverance for me through your prayers and support from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. <sup>20</sup>My eager expectation and hope is that I shall not be put to shame in any way, but that with all boldness, now as always, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup>For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. <sup>22</sup>If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. <sup>23</sup>I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, [for] that is far better. <sup>24</sup>Yet that I remain [in] the flesh is more necessary for your benefit. <sup>25</sup>And this I know with confidence, that I shall remain and continue in the service of all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup>so that your boasting in Christ Jesus may abound on account of me when I come to you again.

his friends because they have presumed to speak for God. Job, however, is convinced that they do not understand God's ways and that God, somehow, will vindicate him and bring him "deliverance" (or "salvation"). In applying this text to himself, Paul appears to be saying that he "knows" what will happen to him. In reality, however, he does not even know whether the outcome will be "life or death" (1:20). Either alternative will be "deliverance"!

"The prayer" of his friends in Philippi and the "support of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (1:19) are further reasons that Paul is confident. In fact, his confidence extends to "eager expectation and hope" (1:20). "Hope" here denotes the biblical virtue that "waits with eager longing" (Rom 8:19); it is not to be understood, as so often in modern speech, as a vague and anxious desire ("I hope the weather will be nice"). Paul

fully "expects" his hope to be fulfilled. "I shall not be put to shame," he says, "in any way," meaning that there is nothing his enemies can do to defeat him. That is true for the simple reason that Paul has let go of any personal gain or advantage; all that matters is that "Christ is glorified," and whether that happens by Paul's "life or death" (1:20), it is all he desires.

Indifference to death is difficult to understand. We associate such indifference with the depths of despair and pain, but here it arises in a letter which, more than any other, exudes hope and joy. This gives a glimpse into Paul's spirit and into what motivated his long and difficult ministry. For Paul, "life" itself is nothing other than "Christ," and therefore "to die is gain" (1:21). To the Galatians he had said, "I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, rather, Christ lives within me" (Gal 2:19-20; cf. Rom 8:10-11). His entire life and identity are enfolded in his allegiance to Jesus. He is, therefore, content "to live in the flesh" for the sake of "fruitful labor" (1:22) for the gospel. On the other hand, he has a great desire "to depart this life and be with Christ—which is far better" (1:23). Nevertheless, he knows that it may be "more necessary for [their] benefit" to remain (1:24) and, for some reason, he seems convinced that this is the more likely outcome.

In fact, Paul is sure that he will "remain and abide with" them for their "progress and joy in the faith" (1:25), "so that" the Philippians "may boast in Christ Jesus" when Paul comes to them again. "Boasting" is closely related to the joyful hope that so fills this letter. Paradoxically, there is no such thing for Paul as "boasting" (Rom 3:27; 4:2; 1 Cor 1:29), as though humans could somehow be independent of God. On the other hand, within the relationship of faith, Paul often speaks of the joyful boast that believers can have because of what God enables within them (e.g., Rom 5:2-3; 2 Cor 1:12-14; Phil 2:16; 1 Thess 2:19).

**EXPLORING LESSON ONE**

1. What has motivated you to embark on a study of the letters associated with Paul's imprisonment?

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2. Read Acts 16:9-40. What do you learn about Paul's experience in Philippi according to Acts?

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3. Why do many scholars think that Paul's letter to the Philippians as we now have it was originally two or even three letters (see Introduction)?

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4. Why might Paul identify himself as a "slave" of Jesus Christ (1:1) rather than an "apostle" as he often does in letters (e.g., 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1)?

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5. a) Paul writes of the Philippians' "partnership for the gospel" and their partnership "with me in grace" (1:5, 7). What is the nature of the Philippians' partnership with Paul?

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*Lesson One*

b) In what ways are you part of a “partnership for the gospel”?

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6. How has Paul’s imprisonment actually promoted the spread of the gospel (1:12-18)?

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7. Have you ever shared Paul’s experience of rejoicing in a difficult, uncomfortable, or painful situation (1:18-19)? If so, what was the source of your joy?

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8. a) What do you think Paul means when he writes, “My eager expectation and hope is that . . . Christ will be magnified in my body” (1:20)?

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b) What are some ways that Christ can be “magnified” in our bodies?

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9. a) Why is Paul content to live or die (1:21-26)?

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b) Can you relate to this attitude? Why or why not?

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### CLOSING PRAYER

## Prayer

*I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Phil 1:6)*

Lord Jesus, guide our study and prayer as we come to know Paul through time spent with his words. Inspire in us his spirit of joy and steadfastness. Bless us with relationships as fruitful as his friendship with the Philipians. And above all, make us partners in the gospel, imitating Paul's life in Christ—a life of faith, hope, and love. We pray now for those who are part of our own communities: our families, friends, fellow parishioners, and co-workers, especially . . .

