



# wentzville

## CHRISTIAN CHURCH



## I Choose ...



- 🔍 i choose to be lazy
- 🔍 i choose fear
- 🔍 i choose joy
- 🔍 i choose complaining
- 🔍 i choose to just do nothing
- 🔍 i choose anxiety

a series through Philippians [May - June 2020]

I CHOOSE JOY... Part 1

Name:

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Spring 2020

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# LETTER FROM KEITH

**“I choose joy!”**

That phrase is used by a radio station, a christian music group, and now a sermon series for a church! More importantly, it reflects what the Apostle Paul said in his letter to the church in Philippi. In Philippians 4:4, Paul writes, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” While the keyword in this verse is “rejoice” [from the same word for joy], another keyword is “always.” Regardless of our circumstances we are called to rejoice and choose joy!

So, when you get a raise or promotion at work, choose joy. When you get an unexpected financial gift in the mail, choose joy. Easy, right? Let’s ramp this up a little. When you lose your job, choose joy. What?! When a friend or relative lets you down, choose joy. When you hear bad news from the doctor, choose joy. You get the picture, but obviously it is easier said than done.

If we are honest, joy is a little harder to reach at times...sometimes our hearts grab hold of sadness, frustration, or anger before choosing joy. We almost always look back on those moments as failures and I’m guessing most of us would like to choose joy or “rejoice always” whatever we face in this life; the good and the bad. As we explore and dive into the letter of Philippians, my prayer is that all of us will get better at choosing joy in the good times and the hard times (me included).

**With much love and JOY!**

**Keith Comp  
Senior Minister**

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS:

When studying any book of the Bible, we are best able to discover the purpose of the book when we read it in the context in which it was written. Below, you can find the answers to the questions that will help us to best understand the truths to be found in Philippians.

## WHY READ THIS BOOK:

If you've ever had trouble seeing how faith can be dressed in everyday work clothes, Philippians is for you. It puts lofty truths into practical terms. And along the way you'll read about a gamut of human experience: joy, bitterness, unity, bickering, arrogance, humiliation, etc. Read Philippians to peek into the heart of its writer, and to be drawn closer to the one who was foremost in his heart: Jesus Christ.

## WHO WROTE THIS BOOK AND TO WHOM WAS IT WRITTEN:

While under house arrest in Rome, the apostle Paul wrote to believers in the city of Philippi, located in northeastern modern-day Greece. It lay ten miles inland from the modern-day port city of Kavalla.

## WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN:

About AD 61, when Paul was under guard while awaiting trial. He was living in his own rented house, where for two years he was free to impart the gospel to all who came to him [Acts 28:30].

## WHY WAS IT WRITTEN:

Paul wrote to thank the Philippians for sending him money to help defray his living expenses [4:10-18]. Paul also wanted to warn them against false teachers and urge them toward greater unity.

## WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF THIS BOOK:

Philippi, a prosperous Roman colony, was where Paul planted the first church on European soil [Acts 16:11-40], probably around AD 50. When Paul moved on, the church occasionally sent him aid, the only church to do so in those early days [4:15].

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN PHILIPPIANS:

You will find one of the Bible's most prominent psalms of praise to Jesus [2:6-11]. You will see the futility of religious activities and achievements compared to a relationship with Christ [3:4-11]. And you will gain practical tools to help reshape your thinking according to God's ways [4:4-9].

—From the NIV Quest Study Bible [Zondervan, 2011]



# WEEK 1 - PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. When have you received a personal letter or note that meant a lot to you? Explain.
2. What is something you learned in school which has no significance for your life today?
3. What is something you learned growing up which has impacted your life today?

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. How do you think joy is different from happiness?
2. Read Philippians 1:1-6. What do you think it means to have a partnership in the gospel? Why are partnerships important for ministry?



## CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. Do you pray with joy? What do you have to be joyful about in your prayers?
2. What good works has Jesus started in you that need to be carried on toward completion this week?
3. What depth of insight do you want or need to grow in as a Christian? How can you increase your love, knowledge, and insight today?

## PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

*[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]*

## PRAY FOR MISSION OF THE WEEK

### **Jireh India Missions**

This ministry in India shares the good news of Jesus with those who have never heard His name. They provide homes and education for orphans at House of Peace, teach widows to sew so they can provide for their children, provide bread for much of their community through Five Loaves Bakery, and work with a leper colony. They strive to fulfill Psalm 82:3 — *Defend the poor and orphans; do justice to the afflicted and needy.*

## DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

*“Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: <sup>2</sup>Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>3</sup>I thank my God every time I remember you. <sup>4</sup>In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy <sup>5</sup>because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup>being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

[Philippians 1:1-6, NIV]

### DAY 1:

[Philippians 1:1-2]

- ▶ Would you consider yourself a servant of Christ Jesus? Who are some servants of Christ that give you encouragement and inspiration?

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- ▶ What do the words grace and peace mean to you? How can you spread these to everyone you come in contact with today?

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### DAY 2:

[Philippians 1:3-5]

- ▶ Who do you thank God for when you pray? Who brings joy to your life when you pray for them?

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- ▶ Why should we pray for others? Why should we thank God for them? What ministry partners in the gospel do you need to pray for today?

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### DAY 3:

[Philippians 1:6]

- ▶ What good works has Jesus begun doing in you? How will you help to carry them out to completion?

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- ▶ Sanctification is the ongoing process of becoming more like Jesus. What do you need to work on today? Pray for Jesus to help you carry it out to completion!

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## DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

*"It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. <sup>8</sup>God can testify 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 abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, <sup>10</sup>so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup>filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."*

[Philippians 1:7-11, NIV]

### DAY 4:

[Philippians 1:7-8]

- ▶ What do you think brotherly love has to do with showing hospitality to strangers?

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- ▶ Do you think you have ever entertained or snubbed an angel looking for help? Who can you show hospitality to this week?

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### DAY 5:

[Philippians 1:9]

- ▶ What are some groups or types of people that others may not want to associate with or visit?

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- ▶ Have you ever thought of someone as impure, unclean, or not worthy of your time? Who is God leading you to reach out to today?

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### DAY 6:

[Philippians 1:10-11]

- ▶ Did you get picked on when you were younger? How did you act toward those younger than you while growing up?

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- ▶ When have you been an outsider who was forgotten about or mistreated? How should that experience impact the way you treat others today?

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# WEEK 2 - PHILIPPIANS 1:12-30

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. **When has an unfortunate event turned into a blessing for you? Explain.**
2. **What is something you love so much you just have to share it with others?  
[Ex: product, recipe, story, experience, show, etc.]**
3. **When have you given up something you loved to help someone else?**

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. **Read Philippians 1:12-14. What are some of the obstacles Paul is currently facing? What is his attitude toward these things? What enables him to see things as he does?**
2. **How could such a bad situation for Paul actually help him with advancing the gospel?**



## CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. What would it take for you to become capable of not only accepting but rejoicing in suffering?
2. When have you been encouraged by the faith of someone else? How can you be an example with your courage and faith?
3. How confident do you feel in your ability to share the gospel? How can you increase your confidence?

## PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

*[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]*

## PRAY FOR MISSIONS OF THE WEEK

### LOVEtheLOU

LOVEtheLOU is a community development initiative that connects resources to the needs of St. Louis. During the constant process of growth and development, they strive to see St. Louis restored through transforming actions. LTL is proud of the progress in St. Louis and are excited about what will continue to happen as they grow and develop. [lovethelou.org](http://lovethelou.org)

### St. Louis Christian College

SLCC seeks to educate Christians and to graduate leaders who are equipped for service to God. They seek learners who are committed to Christ and highly motivated to serve God and the church; students who are capable of completing the academic rigors of a college education; adults who are willing to acquire both knowledge and skills through service and off-campus learning experiences; and men and women who are drawn from a diversity of geographic, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. [stlchristian.edu](http://stlchristian.edu)

# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

<sup>12</sup>Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. <sup>13</sup>As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. <sup>14</sup>And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear. <sup>15</sup>It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. <sup>16</sup>The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. <sup>17</sup>The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. <sup>18</sup>But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, <sup>19</sup>for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. <sup>20</sup>I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death."  
[Philippians 1:12-20, NIV]

## DAY 1:

### [Philippians 1:12-14]

- ▶ When have you suffered or sacrificed for the benefit of someone else? Why did you do it?

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- ▶ What are you suffering with right now? Take some time to praise God for it. Ask Him to give you perspective in your suffering.

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## DAY 2:

### [Philippians 1:12:15-18a]

- ▶ When have you been hesitant/afraid/embarrassed to proclaim the gospel? Why?

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- ▶ How can you be sure you are sharing the gospel with the right motives? How can you have sincerity and goodwill when telling others about Jesus?

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## DAY 3:

### [Philippians 1:18b-20]

- ▶ When was the last time you rejoiced with overwhelming emotion and thanksgiving? Why were you so joyful?

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- ▶ Paul was not ashamed, and knew that he would always have the courage to exalt Christ with his body...no matter what. Could you? Ask God for that courage and strength!

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## DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

<sup>21</sup>For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup>If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! <sup>23</sup>I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; <sup>24</sup>but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. <sup>25</sup>Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup>so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me. <sup>27</sup>Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel <sup>28</sup>without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. <sup>29</sup>For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, <sup>30</sup>since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.”  
Philippians 1:21-30, NIV]

### DAY 4:

#### [Philippians 1:21-26]

- ▶ Paul is not suicidal here. He is being honest about wanting to be with Jesus more than wanting to be on earth. Have you ever felt this way?
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- ▶ What is Paul convinced of? Why does he want to stay in the body? Who are you living for in order that they can progress in joy and in the faith?
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### DAY 5:

#### [Philippians 1:27-28]

- ▶ Take a moment and examine your life. When do you conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ? When do you not?
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- ▶ We are to stand firm in the Spirit and strive together without being frightened. How can you do this with your church family and not try to do it all by yourself?
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### DAY 6:

#### [Philippians 1:29-30]

- ▶ Why would Jesus grant us suffering along with our belief in him? How can this be a good thing on behalf of Christ?
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- ▶ What struggles and suffering do you have right now? How will you use them to strengthen your belief in Jesus today?
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# WEEK 3 - PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. When was a time someone gave you an attitude adjustment?
2. When have you had the wrong attitude but still did the right actions?
3. When have you seen someone else have the wrong attitude with the right actions?

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. The following quotes went viral on social media: *“Respect yourself enough to walk away from anything that no longer serves you, grows you, or makes you happy,”* and *“Don’t stay where you’re tolerated; go where you’re appreciated.”* How do these compare with what we see in Philippians 2:1-11?
2. What is the difference between being self-centered and selfish? What are some examples of our culture promoting these as good things?



## CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. What selfish ambitions do you have at home? Work? Church? Relationships?
2. What attitude/mindset do you need to adjust this week?
3. How will you show the humility of Jesus in your mind and actions this week?

## PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

*[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]*

## PRAY FOR MISSION OF THE WEEK

### **Team Expansion: Allen & Cherry Messimer – Taiwan**

The Messimers have served as missionaries in Taiwan since 2004. Their mission is to evangelize, disciple, and provide training so every believer can use his or her gifts in a simple church ministry. This also means every church can start new, indigenous churches. Over 90% of Taiwanese people still worship idols. [teamexpansion.org](http://teamexpansion.org)

# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup>then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup>not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. <sup>5</sup>In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset [attitude] as Christ Jesus:”

[Philippians 2:1-5, NIV]

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## DAY 1:

[Philippians 2:1-2]

- ▶ What gives you comfort?  
Who gives you comfort?  
What places bring comfort to you? What/who encourages you?

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- ▶ What comfort do you get from the love of Christ?  
What does Paul want us to do with this comfort?

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## DAY 2:

[Philippians 2:3-4]

- ▶ When have you acted out of selfish ambition or vain conceit? Why did you do this?

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- ▶ When have you acted in humility to value others above yourself? Why did you do this?

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## DAY 3:

[Philippians 2:5]

- ▶ What do you think it means to have the same mindset as Jesus? How would your day have gone differently if you did this yesterday?

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- ▶ What attitude do you see in the actions and words of Jesus throughout the Bible? How can you exhibit his humble mindset today?

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## DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

**“<sup>6</sup>Who, being in very nature a God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup>rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup>And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! <sup>9</sup>Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**  
[Philippians 2:6-11, NIV]

### DAY 4:

[Philippians 2:6-7]

- ▶ Have you ever wanted to be the boss? What led you to thinking you could do it better than someone else?

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- ▶ Jesus chose to leave his elevated position and become nothing as a human. Why would he do this? How can you be a servant like Jesus today?

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### DAY 5:

[Philippians 2:8]

- ▶ When have you been obedient, even though it led you to suffer or have trouble? Why did you remain obedient?

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- ▶ Humility led to obedience, which led to death, which led to eternal life for us. Thank Jesus for this! Ask him to give you strength to live in humility and obedience.

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### DAY 6:

[Philippians 2:9-11]

- ▶ If you could change your name to anything, what would it be? Why is the name of Jesus, above every other name, so important?

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- ▶ Jesus is exalted! Everyone will eventually bow down to him and acknowledge he is Lord. Bow down right now and worship the name of Jesus. Acknowledge him as your Lord out loud and give glory to God the Father!

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# WEEK 4 - PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. What is the hardest thing you have ever worked on to complete?
2. When you accomplish a large project or complete something difficult, how do you usually celebrate?
3. When your order gets messed up at a restaurant, what do you typically do?

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Read Philippians 2:12-13. What do you think it means to work out your salvation? Who does the work of our salvation? [See Ephesians 2:8-10]
  
2. Why would Paul say we need to work out our salvation with “fear and trembling”? This does not sound like the grace and peace he wishes on us at the beginning of the letter!



## CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. How can you find joy and peace instead of grumbling and complaining?
2. How do you need to obey and work out your salvation this week?
3. Where do you need to choose joy in your life right now? How can you choose joy instead of grumbling today?

## PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER

*[Spend some time praying with your Life Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.]*

## PRAY FOR MISSIONS OF THE WEEK

### **High Hill Christian Camp**

High Hill Christian Camp and Retreat Center's goal is to offer a fun, Christian atmosphere in a modern camp setting surrounded by God's wilderness — all designed so that children will leave with a closer relationship with Jesus. If you have children, make sure to get them registered for camp. Early bird prices have been extended. For a list of camps WCC is attending, visit our website ([wentzvillecc.org](http://wentzvillecc.org)) and register at [highhillcamp.org](http://highhillcamp.org)

### **HOPE Ministries Food Pantry**

HOPE provides families in St. Charles county assistance with food and physical needs. You can donate non-perishable food items to this ministry by visiting the food cart in the WCC café. Take home a bag and bring it back with the items requested for the month.

# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

**“<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. <sup>14</sup>Do everything without grumbling or arguing”**  
[Philippians 2:12-14, NIV]

## DAY 1:

[Philippians 2:12]

- ▶ As a child, when would you disobey your parents when they were gone? When did you do what they said when they were away?

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- ▶ What does it mean to work out your salvation? How can you continue to work for the Lord’s sake this week [not to earn your salvation, but as a result of your salvation]?

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## DAY 2:

[Philippians 2:13]

- ▶ Do you ever wonder what God’s purpose is for your life? What does this verse say God’s good purpose is for you?

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- ▶ Since God works in you to accomplish His purpose, how does that impact how you should live each day? How does that change what you will do today?

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## DAY 3:

[Philippians 2:14]

- ▶ How does this verse relate to the themes of joy, purity, and holiness in the rest of the book?

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- ▶ Read...this...verse...slowly...and...then...read...it...again...and...again. Now go and do it today! And every day!

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# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

**“<sup>15</sup>so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky <sup>16</sup>as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. <sup>17</sup>But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. <sup>18</sup>So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.”**

**[Philippians 2:15-18, NIV]**

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## DAY 4:

**[Philippians 2:15a]**

- ▶ This verse is a continuation of verse 14. Read them both together. How does one lead to another? Conversely, what does grumbling and complaining lead to?

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- ▶ THIS is how we are to live as children of God and be different than the crooked world around us. What do you need to stop grumbling about? Complaining about? Arguing about?

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## DAY 5:

**[Philippians 2:15b-16]**

- ▶ Again, this is a continuation of the previous verses. What are the results of becoming blameless and pure children of God?

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- ▶ Do you hold firmly to the word of life [Bible]? Do you use it and live by it each day? Start today!

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## DAY 6:

**[Philippians 2:17-18]**

- ▶ Why is Paul glad and joyful, even though he is in prison? What are the Philippians doing that make him feel this way?

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- ▶ Would you describe your faith as a sacrifice and a service? Or is it more of a habit and a routine? Live in such a faithful way today that it leads others to rejoice and be glad!

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