



# 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 2

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]

## 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**

# Week 5 - Philippians 3:1-14

# WEEK 5 - PHILIPPIANS 3:1-14

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. What achievements or accomplishments do you like to brag about? [Ex: state champ, record holder, valedictorian, award winner, etc.]
2. What non-rewarding achievements are you proud of...and not proud of at the same time? [Ex: fitting a whole Big Mac in your mouth in one bite]
3. How does it make you feel when someone is bragging/boasting about themselves?

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Read Philippians 3:1-4. What is Paul hoping to do according to verse 1? What does he mean when he says, “it is a safeguard for you”?
2. Who are the dogs, evildoers, and mutilators of the flesh Paul is warning them about?
3. Paul states there are 3 things to identify those who are a part of the new “circumcision” group and are marked/identified as Christ followers: 1] serve God by his Spirit; 2] boast in Christ Jesus; 3] put no confidence in the flesh. Explain these 3 things.

4. **Read Philippians 3:5-9. Why does Paul say if anyone could boast in the flesh it would be him? How does he now view his accomplishments as a Pharisee?**
5. **Paul says righteousness comes from faith in Jesus...not from our ability to follow the Law. How does this bring you peace in your own life?**
6. **Read Philippians 3:12-14. Paul is not giving us a license to live sinful lives and do whatever we want. How does he convey that in these verses?**
7. **How do we choose joy when we are struggling with sin in our lives?**
8. **How do we deal with the tension of “not putting our confidence in the flesh” while still striving to be like Jesus?**

## CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. How have you allowed guilt or shame to keep you from experiencing joy?
2. In what ways are you pressing on and striving to be like Jesus? What can you specifically do today?
3. How well do you know Christ? What actions can you take to know him even more?

## 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

### **Team Expansion: Tim & Amy Maxson**

The Maxsons work at Fellowship Dubai church in the Middle East and are making disciples of migrant workers. The Maxson family has five children. [teamexpansion.org](http://teamexpansion.org)

### **Show-Me Christian Youth Home**

This faith-based organization seeks to improve the lives of children struggling because of circumstances in their current home environment. [showmehelpingkids.com](http://showmehelpingkids.com)



## DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

*“Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. <sup>2</sup>Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. <sup>3</sup>For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup>though I myself have reasons for such confidence.*

*If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.”*

[Philippians 3:1-6, NIV]

### DAY 1:

#### [Philippians 3:1]

- ▶ Why do you think Paul says to rejoice in the Lord right before he warns them about outside threats?

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- ▶ How do you typically respond to people who disagree with you? How do you typically treat those who try to dissuade you from following God?

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### DAY 2:

#### [Philippians 3:2-3]

- ▶ Paul has some very harsh words for these evildoers who were teaching we should first become Jewish before we could become a Christian. What rules do people try to place on converts today?

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- ▶ What is so bad about placing our confidence in the flesh? Where do you place your confidence?

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### DAY 3:

#### [Philippians 3:4-6]

- ▶ Paul seems very braggadocious here. Why does he need to explain his past?

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- ▶ What stories from your past can be used to help others who are struggling in their faith?

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# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

*"But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup>What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. <sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*

*<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. <sup>13</sup>Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

[Philippians 3:7-14, NIV]

## DAY 4:

### [Philippians 3:7-9]

- ▶ Paul considers everything he used to have in his life as garbage compared to Jesus. What are you still hanging on to which is keeping you from reaching out to Christ?

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- ▶ Do you have a righteousness that comes from faith in Christ or is it based on your own effort? What is your motivation for seeking after righteousness as Jesus commands [Matthew 5:6]?

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## DAY 5:

### [Philippians 3:10-11]

- ▶ Do you truly know Jesus Christ? What do you know about him? What do you know about his power, death, resurrection that helps your faith?

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- ▶ What do you think it means to participate with Christ's sufferings? How can you become like him in his death?

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## DAY 6:

### [Philippians 3:12-14]

- ▶ Even Paul has not obtained righteousness or perfection...but he keeps on pressing onward toward it. How does this encourage you today?

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- ▶ What do you need to forget that is behind you? What is the goal you need to press on toward today?

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**I Choose ...**

- i choose to be lazy
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# Week 6 - Philippians 3:15-21

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# WEEK 6 - PHILIPPIANS 3:15-21

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. When have you gotten in trouble because you followed the bad example of someone else?
2. Who have been some of your role models in this life? Who are you a role model for?
3. What makes for a good role model? A poor one?

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Read Philippians 3:15-17. Paul talks about those who are mature in their faith to “take such a view of things.” What is he talking about [refer to last week’s lesson on 3:1-14]?
2. Paul offers himself and Timothy as examples to follow. Are you able to tell people to follow your example? Whose example would you tell people to follow today? [See 1 Timothy 4:12]
3. Read Philippians 3:18-21. Paul writes again about those who say the Gentiles need to be circumcised in order to be saved. What does it mean to live as “enemies of the cross?”



## CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. **What areas of your life are more focused on the world and in earthly appetites?**  
[Think about Paul's list in 1 Timothy 4:12: speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity]
2. **What does it mean for you to be a "citizen of heaven" vs. a citizen of the world?**
3. **How can you be a stronger example to others? Whose example do you need to follow? Don't shy away from asking this person to mentor you!**

## 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

### **Outreach International - Mexico | Josh & Susan Sanchez**

This mission, called Me & My House Ministries, is a church plant in Colima City. Their goal is to begin a church planting movement within the region.

### **Shiloh Christian Children's Ranch**

Located in Kahoka and Clarence, MO, Shiloh is a safe haven for abused and neglected children, and includes six homes for children, two relief homes, and an onsite school. [shilohranch.org](http://shilohranch.org)

# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

*"<sup>15</sup>All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. <sup>16</sup>Only let us live up to what we have already attained.*

*"<sup>17</sup>Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. <sup>18</sup>For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ."*

[Philippians 3:15-18, NIV]

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## DAY 1:

### [Philippians 3:15-16]

- ▶ What do you think spiritual maturity looks like for a Christian? How well are you doing?

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- ▶ What has God made clear to you when you thought you were right? How can you be sure of what he is making clear to you now?

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## DAY 2:

### [Philippians 3:17]

- ▶ Who looks up to you? Who watches your example? Who is someone you look up to and model your life after their example?

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- ▶ Why would Paul want us to keep our eyes on other people who live mature lifestyles like he and his companions? What kind of lifestyles do the people you look up to actually live?

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## DAY 3:

### [Philippians 3:18]

- ▶ Have you ever had an arch-enemy? How did you treat them and how did they treat you?

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- ▶ What do you think it means to be an enemy of the cross? Enemies of the cross are not as easily identified as you may think. How can you be sure you are not being led astray?

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# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

<sup>19</sup>Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup>But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup>who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

Philippians 3:19-21, NIV]

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## DAY 4:

[Philippians 3:19]

- ▶ How does Paul say we can identify these enemies of the cross? What is the end result for them?

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- ▶ The saying “god is in their stomach” refers to someone who is self-centered and whose own desires and pleasures come before anyone and anything else. How can you avoid this type of lifestyle?

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## DAY 5:

[Philippians 3:20]

- ▶ What groups or organizations have you belonged to? What benefits or perks have you received because of that association?

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- ▶ Are you a citizen of heaven? Are you going to receive those perks? How will this impact the way you live your life today?

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## DAY 6:

[Philippians 3:21]

- ▶ What are you most looking forward to with your new body in heaven? What do you think will be the best part about becoming like Jesus?

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- ▶ Notice that our bodies will be transformed or renewed...not replaced. Why do you think this is? How does this impact how you feel about yourself and your body now?

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# I Choose ...



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## Week 7 - Philippians 4:1-9

# WEEK 7 - PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. Are you a glass half-full or half-empty kind of person? Explain your answer.
2. How do you respond to someone who is always negative?
3. When you are doing something mundane like driving, cutting the grass, cleaning, etc. where do your thoughts tend to wander?

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Read Philippians 4:1-3. While we don't know what has divided Euodia [U-OH-DEE-UH] and Syntyche [SIN-TA-KAY], how is he working to bring them together?
2. How can this formula be used as an example of how to deal with conflict within the church body today?
3. Read Philippians 4:4-7. Choose joy...always! These few verses might be some of the most practical and challenging words found in Scripture! How do they encourage you? Challenge you?

- 4. What does Paul mean when he says the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds? Have you ever experienced this?**
  
- 5. Read Philippians 4:8-9. Spend some time with your group discussing each of these things we should think about. What do they mean? True? Noble? Right? Pure? Lovely? Admirable? Excellent? Praiseworthy?**
  
- 6. How will changing the way we think and what we set our minds on bring joy and peace to us and others around us?**
  
  
- 7. Paul again sets himself as an example of this kind of life and thinking. How can we be an example of joy and peace by our thinking?**

## CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. Take captive a negative attitude or thought you regularly have and apply Paul's manner of thinking to it. Write it down and spend some time praying through it.
2. What are catalysts in your life for negative thoughts? What should you do about them? [this could be a negative person, how you watch or read the news, social media, etc.]
3. Are you praying through life and all situations?

## 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

**Haitian Island Ministries**

**Steve & Terry Smith, WCC members**

This organization operates medical programs providing free vitamins, medicine, and medical care and feeding programs which provide a daily meal for thousands of Haitian children each month. They also build schools and churches in some of the most remote areas of Haiti. Their medical program has served hundreds of thousands of Haitians. [haitianislandministries.org](http://haitianislandministries.org)

# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

*“Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!*

*<sup>2</sup>I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. <sup>3</sup>Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.*

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.”*

[Philippians 4:1-5, NIV]

## DAY 1:

[Philippians 4:1]

- ▶ Paul loves and cherishes this church. Whom do you love and long for? Who brings you to you?

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- ▶ What does it mean to stand firm in the Lord? Why does Paul speak so emphatically to his friends about this?

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## DAY 2:

[Philippians 4:2-3]

- ▶ We do not know what quarrel these ladies had, but Paul did not want it to affect their ministry. How can arguments be destructive in a church?

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- ▶ How do you need to be of the same mind in the Lord with others? How do you need to seek unity in the body for the sake of the gospel?

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## DAY 3:

[Philippians 4:4-5]

- ▶ We can never rejoice in the Lord too much! Spend some time right now praising and rejoicing in the goodness of God!

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- ▶ How does joy and gentleness go hand in hand? What needs to change in your life so these are evident to everyone around you?

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## DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*<sup>8</sup>Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup>Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*

[Philippians 4:6-9, NIV]

### DAY 4:

[Philippians 4:6]

- ▶ What makes you anxious? How does Paul’s words here bring you comfort?

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- ▶ How is prayer related to anxious thoughts? Pray right now! Present your requests and thanksgivings to God!

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### DAY 5:

[Philippians 4:7]

- ▶ How is verse 7 related to verse 6? What is the result of praying with thanksgiving when we are anxious?

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- ▶ What do you think the peace of God looks like and feels like? What needs to be guarded in your heart and mind today?

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### DAY 6:

[Philippians 4:8-9]

- ▶ What kind of things do you typically think about throughout the day? How can you keep your mind on heavenly things today?

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- ▶ Why is Paul so concerned with the way the Philppians put things into practice? What is the result? How can you do this today?

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# WEEK 8 - PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. **When is it difficult for you to choose joy? When is it easy?**
2. **What verse or verses in Philippians have resonated with you in choosing joy?**
3. **How are being content and choosing joy related?**

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. **As we come to the close of Paul's letter to the Philippians, why is it important to remember Paul's circumstances?**
2. **Read Philippians 4:10-13. Verse 13 is not about scoring touchdowns or making 3-point shots. What is it about?**



- 3. How do you think Paul learned to be so content? How could we learn to be content in all things? What does that mean?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4. Read Philippians 4:14-18. What stands out to you about how Paul describes the financial support the Philippians give to him?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5. What earthly and eternal impact does our giving have for the work of the Gospel of Christ? In our community? In our world?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 6. Read Philippians 4:19-20. How could someone misunderstand these verses?**

## CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. What situation have you struggled to choose joy in? How can you address that differently?
2. When have you allowed discontentment to enter into your life and thinking?
3. Where can you choose to be content rather than dissatisfied 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

### **Central Christian College of the Bible**

The goal of Central Christian College of the Bible is to raise up servant leaders for the church and to do so as affordably as possible. CCCB believes so completely in what their students will do for Christ that they want to not only equip them with a quality education, but an affordable one so their future ministry will not be burdened by financial stress. That is why CCCB offers a Full-Tuition Scholarship and will continue to do so as long as there are means. [cccb.edu](http://cccb.edu)

### **Christian Prison Ministry of Mid-America**

Missouri is home to 29 prisons and 2 county jails in 5 states. CPMM's goal is to evangelize, encourage, and equip the believers in all of these prisons. To date, over 400 inmates have been baptized!

[christianprisonministryofmissouri.org](http://christianprisonministryofmissouri.org)

# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 1-3]

**“<sup>10</sup>I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. <sup>11</sup>I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup>I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup>I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”**

**[Philippians 4:10-13, NIV]**

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## DAY 1:

**[Philippians 4:10]**

- ▶ When was the last time you rejoiced greatly in the Lord? Why was Paul rejoicing?

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- ▶ Who do you show concern for so much that they would praise God? Who can you help today?

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## DAY 2:

**[Philippians 4:11-12]**

- ▶ Paul was thankful for their support, but he says he would be content without it. What possessions do you think you could not live without?

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- ▶ What do you think is the secret of being content? How can you be content no matter what circumstances you face?

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## DAY 3:

**[Philippians 4:13]**

- ▶ How does the context of this verse give it a much different meaning than how many people use this verse?

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- ▶ What hardships have you endured through the power of Jesus? How does this verse give you strength and encouragement for when you face bad times in the future?

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# DAILY DEVOTION [DAYS 4-6]

<sup>14</sup>Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. <sup>15</sup>Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; <sup>16</sup>for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. <sup>17</sup>Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. <sup>18</sup>I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup>And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

<sup>20</sup>To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>21</sup>Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. <sup>22</sup>All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

<sup>23</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen." [Philippians 4:14-23, NIV]

## DAY 4:

### [Philippians 4:14-16]

- ▶ How did the Philippian church help Paul in his troubles? Why is financial support so important for the ministry of Jesus throughout the world?

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- ▶ We are called to invest our treasures in the Kingdom for the sake of the gospel. Do you financially support the ministry of WCC? Other missionaries? Why or why not?

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## DAY 5:

### [Philippians 4:17]

- ▶ When have you given something and received a special blessing in return that you did not expect? What was it?

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- ▶ What is the blessing the Philippian church received? Who are you going to bless this week?

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## DAY 6:

### [Philippians 4:18-20]

- ▶ How does Paul describe their financial gifts for his ministry? Our gifts are pleasing to God! Our financial gifts to the church is not just for immediate, practical reasons. It's also a spiritual act of worship!

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- ▶ What is the result of being a sacrificial giver to Christian ministries? What is the difference between having our needs met and our wants met? Celebrate in the riches of the glory of Jesus you will receive!

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