

The Book of Philippians

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Morning Devotions

In your devotions this morning, read **Psalm 97**. As you read, talk to the Lord about the content of this psalm. When you have finished, go back and find one or two verses and meditate prayerfully on them.

Morning Study

This morning we begin reading the book of Philippians. But before we do, let's first acquaint ourselves a little with the background of the Philippian church.

Philippians was written by Paul, addressed to the Christians in Philippi, a major city in Macedonia. Because Philippi was a Roman colony, it appears there were very few Jews living there. There were not even the required number of ten Jewish males to establish a synagogue, thus when Paul first came to Philippi, the few Jews and God-fearing Gentiles were meeting by a river (see **Acts 16:13**). It is probably for this reason that Philippians contains no Old Testament quotations.

As citizens of a Roman colony, Philippians were also citizens of Rome, a highly valued status (see **Acts 22:25-29**). Culturally, Philippians saw themselves as Romans (see **Acts 16:21**). This is probably why Paul emphasizes so strongly to the Philippians their citizenship in heaven (read **Philippians 3:20-21**).

Now take a quick look at the historical background of Paul's mission to Philippi.

Read Acts 16:6-40

The letter to the Philippians was written as a thank you letter. Paul expresses a father's pride in the Philippians' "partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (read **Philippians 1:4; 4:15-19** and **2 Corinthians 8:1-5**). The letter to the Philippians is a letter of joy. As you read Philippians, circle the word "joy" or "rejoice" whenever you see it (if you mark your Bible) and count how many times these words are used throughout the letter. Note also how Paul connects the Philippians with "overflowing joy" in **2 Corinthians 8:2**.

So, find yourself a comfortable seat and let's read the book of Philippians right through in one sitting. As you read, keep asking yourself: What is Paul seeking to say to his readers? What is the most important thing on his heart?

MEMORY VERSE

...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 1:6

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verse:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its "address" (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This gives the verse a clear "reference tag."
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is His Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!