

# Paul's Letter to the Philippians



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Questions for reflection and groups

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## Chapter 1

1. Paul is thankful to God when he thinks of the Philippian church (vv3-11).

*What can we thank God for when we think of our own church?*

2. Paul's imprisonment has led to opportunities to spread the gospel (vv12-18).

*Do difficult situations lead us to share our faith more widely, or do they have the opposite effect?*

3. He says, "For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain"(v21).

*Can we say this with the same conviction that Paul says it?*

4. Paul urges them to live their life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (v27). Discuss!

5. He writes of the privilege of suffering for Christ (v29).

*It's something that is easy to say in theory,  
but in practice don't we just want to forego the privilege?*

## Chapter 2

1. Paul urges them to be of the same mind (v2, see also ch.4v2).

*But don't some disagreements need to be worked through,  
and isn't there a danger of shutting down debate?*

2. The great Christian hymn which Paul quotes (vv6-11): there's much that could be said about the understanding it gives us of Jesus. *Say as much of it as you wish.*

3. *Why does Paul quote that hymn here? What point is he making?*

4. Paul urges them to be 'blameless and innocent' and tells them that they 'shine like stars in the world' (v15). Similarly Jesus told his disciples that they should be perfect, like their Father in heaven.

*What do we make of these statements? Are they achievable?*

5. Paul paints a very bleak picture of human nature and society (vv15, 21, also ch.3 vv18-19). Is he right or is he overdoing it?

### Chapter 3

1. Paul's account of all the things that he once trusted in but has now forsaken in order to trust in Jesus (vv4-7) is very much in the context of Jewish race and religion. What would an equivalent account of a Christian in Britain nowadays sound like?

2. Paul talks of knowing Christ as the only thing that matters, and everything else is worthless rubbish (vv8-9). *Can we echo those words, or do we find it an attitude so extreme that we can't relate to it?*

3. Paul speaks of pressing on with relentless determination towards the goal (vv10-14). *How, in practice, do we combine such dedication with the demands of ordinary life?*

4. Paul speaks of his salvation as something he is still striving to achieve (vv11-14). *Does this go against the belief that our salvation is already assured, that we are secure in God's hands, or can the two be held together?*

5. Verses 20-21 contain enough to occupy mind and tongue for several hours. *Consider as much of it as you have time for.*

## Chapter 4

1. Paul says, “The Lord is near” (v5). What would he have meant at the time, and how do we understand it now?

2. Verses 6-7 are great to read, but difficult to put into practice. *Do you have practical advice on how to achieve what the passage recommends?*

3. Paul recommends positively filling our minds with what is good (vv8-9). *Are there things which you consciously bring to mind to help you in this way?*

4. *Does Paul’s advice in verses 8-9 have implications for what we read, what we watch on TV, how we use social media, etc?*

5. *“I have learned to be content with whatever I have” (v11). How well do we do on this? Is our present restricted way of life teaching us contentment, or the opposite?*

