**Paul and Silas (with Timothy, Luke and other saints) established the church in Philippi on his second missionary journey (Acts 16). He revisited the church during his third missionary journey (Acts 20:1-6). Near the end of the third journey, while Paul was in Jerusalem, a riot broke out in the Temple, and he was arrested (Acts 21-22). There he was kept in custody for more than two years. Seeing no other way to be released, he made an appeal to Caesar (Acts 24:27-25:12). After a perilous journey, he was finally taken to Rome. Luke tells us in Acts 28:30-31 that Paul spent at least another two years in Rome, awaiting his trial in the court of the Roman emperor – Nero. Paul wrote this letter to the Philippian church during this time.**

**Paul’s reason for writing this letter had nothing to do with reports of trouble in the church, as was the case with his letter to the church at Corinth. It was just the opposite; the Philippians had sent one of their members, named Epaphroditus, to Rome with a gift from the church. During his stay, Epaphroditus had become seriously ill. After his recovery, Paul sent him back with a letter of thanks for their gifts. This letter is saturated with joy and praise. For instance, the word “joy” appears SIX times here, versus ZERO times in I Corinthians! In short, this letter is a loving “thank you note” to the Philippian church. Though brief, it contains some of the most moving and memorable passages of the New Testament.**

1. **Read Philippians 1:1-11. How does Paul describe himself and Timothy? (v.1) Answer: He and Timothy are “the of “. Contrast this with I Corinthians 1:1. What is different?**
2. **Verses 3-11 are a prayer that Paul makes for the Philippians. A simple acronym for the elements of prayer is A.C.T.S., which stand for: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (prayer requests). Which of these four elements are present in this prayer? Are any absent?**
3. **Looking at verse 6, what can we say about God’s faithfulness to us? (see also John 10:27-29; John 17:9-24; Romans 8:29-39; Hebrews 7:22-28; I John 3:1-3)**
4. **What FOUR specific requests did Paul make to God for the Philippian saints? (v. 9-11)**
5. **Read verses 12-20. In this passage, Paul offers an explanation to the Philippians as to why he has been imprisoned. Compare this to what Joseph said to his brothers in Genesis 45:3-11 and Genesis 50:15-21. How should we respond to unmerited sufferings or hardships?**
6. **What effect did Paul’s confinement have on the preaching of the gospel? (v.14)**
7. **Verses 15-17 reveal that not everyone who preached in Paul’s day did so for good reasons! Do you think that this is still true? What might be some “not-so-good” reasons that people preach today?**
8. **Did this have any negative effect on Paul’s morale? (v.18-20)**
9. **Read verses 21-26. This passage reveals two things: first, the possibility of Paul’s execution upon being found guilty in Caesar’s court; and second, Paul’s perspective on life and death. How did the Paul state his perspective? (v. 21) Answer: For Paul, “to live is , and to die is .”**
10. **For the Christian, life in this world gives us the chance to produce . (v. 22) (See Matthew 13:18-23; Colossians 1:9-11)**
11. **Which did Paul consider to be better for HIM: to remain on earth or to be with Jesus? (v. 23) How much better?**
12. **Which did Paul consider to be better (“more needful”) for the Philippians? (v. 24)**
13. **What was the “deciding factor” in Paul’s dilemma, and what did he hope to do? (v.25-26) What does this tell us about Paul’s heart?**
14. **Read the last passage of this chapter (v. 27-30) Whether Paul will be able to visit the Philippians again or not, what FOUR things does he want them to do? (v. 27-28)**
15. **Finally, Paul reminds the saints that believing in Jesus also means for His sake. (v. 29; see also Acts 9:13-17; Romans 8:16-18; II Timothy 2:8-13)**
16. **What (or who) was their example? (v. 30)**

**Summing Up**

**In this first chapter we have seen the depth of Paul’s love for the church at Philippi. Given the choice of being in Heaven with Jesus or remaining on earth with the Philippians, Paul chose the latter! Though they already had a wonderful love for each other, Paul exhorts them to do even better. This reminds us that the life of a Christian should be one of continual improvement. There is never a time in this life when we should feel that we have “arrived” – we can always do better: in John 15:2, even the branch that bears fruit is purged, or pruned, so that it can bear even more fruit.**

**We also learned that “God can get the glory” even out of our most difficult circumstances. Paul’s lengthy imprisonment emboldened many to preach the gospel, and his presence in Nero’s palace brought saving faith in Jesus to many there. As the patriarch Joseph said to his brothers, “you meant it for evil; but God meant it for good.”**

**Chapter 2 gives us the most concise description of the mind of Jesus Christ, and teaches us that with God, the way up is down! We also see Paul reveal his heart for Timothy, and we are introduced to an outstanding member of the Philippian church – Epaphroditus.**