**The first part of Paul’s wonderful letter to the church at Philippi contains a beautiful prayer for their continued growth and maturation. He assures them that God is very much a part of this process, and He is fully committed to our spiritual development. Verse 6 of Chapter 1 is our “unconditional guarantee” of His faithfulness. Although the Philippian church presented an outstanding example of Christian love, Paul takes this opportunity to encourage them to even greater heights.**

**Paul continues his exhortation in Chapter 2. In doing so, he presents one of the most beautiful pictures of our Lord Jesus and the magnitude of His sacrifice. The life and example of Jesus reveals an important truth about God – with Him, the way up is down! Humility is the path to greatness in the kingdom of God.**

**In this chapter, Paul reveals his heart for his “son in the Gospel” – young Timothy. The Philippians were familiar with Timothy – he was with Paul when he planted the church there, and continued with Paul for the rest of his life.**

**Chapter 2 also introduces us to one of the outstanding members of the Philippian church – Epaphroditus. His sacrifice and devotion to Christian service were held up as an example worthy of imitation.**

1. **Read Philippians 2:1-2. How could the Philippian believers “fulfill” Paul’s joy? What does he desire them to do or be? Answer: The church members of Philippi could fulfill Paul’s joy by being , having the , being of one , and of one . (See also John 13:34-35; 17:20-21; Acts 4:32-33; romans 12:1-5; Ephesians 4:1-6)**
2. **Read verses 3-4. In Christ, the means don’t justify the ends – our motives are at least as important than our actions, and maybe even more. What are two unacceptable motives for Christian service? (v.3) Answer: and .**
3. **We live in a time and culture that emphasizes the importance of *self*-esteem. In these verses, Paul calls attention to the importance of “*other*-esteem” in the life of the Christian. How should a loving Christian consider others? (v.3) Answer: Loving Christians should esteem others than themselves. Think of some things that might happen if we DON’T follow this teaching – what kind of persons might we become? (See Esther 6:1-6; Matthew 23:1-12; Luke 12:13-21; III John 1:9-10)**
4. **People often say, “Not my problem!” when they hear of other people’s troubles. Can a follower of Jesus Christ use this as a reason to refuse help to others? (v. 4; see also Luke 10:25-37; Acts 2:44-47; Galatians 6:9-10; Ephesians 4:28; I John 3:16-18)**
5. **Read verses 5-13. This passage is perhaps one of the most well-known in the Bible. It describes the steps Jesus took DOWN from Heaven to earth – ending up with His death on the cross. Then it describes the steps UP from there to His current exalted position at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56). In doing so, the MIND of CHRIST is revealed, as an example for us to follow. What position did Jesus have with God in heaven? (v. 5-6) Answer: Jesus was “in the of God and was with God. (See also Genesis 2:25-28; Genesis 11:1-9; Psalm 2:6-12; Luke 1:26-35)**
6. **It is human nature to hold tightly to power when we receive it. Not so with Jesus! What did He do, in order to save us? (v.6-7) Answer: Though He was equal with God, Jesus made Himself of and took upon Himself the form of a , and was made in the of . (See also Isaiah 53:1-3)**
7. **The “way down” for Jesus did not stop at His birth. When He became a man, what did He do? (v. 8) Answer: He became “ unto “. What kind of death? Answer: the death of the . (See Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Matthew 26:36-46; Galatians 3:13)**
8. **Verse 9 begins with “wherefore”, which ties it to what happened in the previous verses. What did God do as direct consequence of what Jesus did in verses 6-8? Answer: God has Jesus and given Him a that is every . (See Colossians 1:18-20; I Timothy 2:5-6; Revelation 1:9-16; 19:11-16)**
9. **What TWO things will happen “at the name of Jesus”, and where will it happen? Who gets the glory? (v.10-11) Describe, in your own words. (See Genesis 41:39-45)**
10. **What did the Philippian Christians do, with respect to Paul’s teaching? (v. 12) Answer: They . Did it matter whether Paul was there or not? Answer:**
11. **What does Paul instruct each one of the Philippian saints to do? (v. 12) Answer: He tells them to their own salvation. (See Matthew 13:18-23; Colossians 1:9-11)**
12. **Who is “at work” on the INSIDE of every sincere Christian, and why? (v.13)**
13. **Read verses 14-18. Paul has instructed the Philippians to “work out” their salvation, that is to manifest to the world the changes that God, through the Holy Spirit, is making on the inside (See Ephesians 3:14-19). Here he gives them some examples. How should disciples of Jesus “do all things”? (v. 14) Answer: Christians should be able to do all things WITHOUT and . (See Exodus 16:1-12; Numbers 13:26-14:25; Acts 6:1; Jude 1:4-16) What part of the body is being used (or misused!) when we murmur, complain, or argue?**
14. **What marks of spiritual maturity does Paul describe in verses 15 and 16?**
15. **How would Paul, the founder of the Philippian church, respond when he sees these marks in them? (v. 16-18)**
16. **Read verses 19-24. This passage focuses on Paul’s mentee, Timothy (or Timotheus). What does Paul intend to do with Timothy, and why? (v. 19)**
17. **What are Timothy’s qualifications for this assignment? (v. 20-21)**
18. **How has Timothy served the Lord with Paul? (v. 22) Answer: Timothy has served with Paul in the gospel as a with the .**
19. **When does Paul intend to send Timothy? (v. 23)**
20. **For what did Paul “trust in the Lord”? (v. 24) (See Psalm 56:1-4; Psalm 62:5-8; Psalm 91:1-4; Psalm 118:8-9; Psalm 125:1; Proverbs 3:5-8; Isaiah 12:1-2; Jeremiah 17:7-8)**
21. **Read the last passage of this chapter, verses 25-30. This passage deals with another of Paul’s companions – Epaphroditus. This was a fairly common and clearly pagan name; it means “devoted to Aphrodite”. Aphrodite was the Greek goddess of “love, beauty and sexuality”, whose worship was often associated with prostitution, especially at Corinth. In spite of his name, Epaphroditus was devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ! What FIVE terms did Paul use to describe him? (v. 25)**
22. **Why was Paul sending Epaphroditus back to Philippi? (v. 26)**
23. **What had happened to him, and what did the Lord do about it? (v.26-27)**
24. **How did Paul expect the Philippian saints to react when Epaphroditus came back to them, and what TWO instructions did he give them? (v. 28-29; see also I Thessalonians 5:12-13; I Timothy 5:17-18)**
25. **Why had Epaphroditus become so ill? (v. 30) Answer: He became ill because of his dedication to “the of “. (See Mark 8:34-35)**

**Summing Up**

**In the first chapter of this wonderful letter to the church at Philippi, Paul expresses his love for the and reassures them that God is still in control, even though Paul is a prisoner, facing a potential death penalty. In fact, God is using his imprisonment to bring the gospel into the palace of Caesar, saving many. Facing death, Paul could confidently say, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” How many of us can say that? He reminds them once again that suffering is to be expected when living for Jesus in this world.**

**The Philippians were already good Christians and remained so even when Paul was not there. In chapter two, Paul encouraged them to become even better. He presents the “mind of Christ Jesus” (verses 5-8), which led Him from Heaven to earth, and from earth to the cross, and from the cross to the tomb. This was all done in order to save us from our sins (Romans 5:6-11). Paul encouraged the saints at Philippi to be “likeminded” – placing the needs of others ahead of their own. God will likewise reward all disciples of Jesus who humbly serve Him and His church (Matthew 25:31-40).**

**Lastly, Chapter 2 gave us the godly example of two men of faith – Timothy and Epaphroditus. Both of them were proof of the wonderful things that God can do with people who are fully committed to Him, and fully yielded to His will.**

**In Chapter 3, Paul walks into the spotlight himself, giving us more passages of Scripture that are worthy of meditation and memorization!**