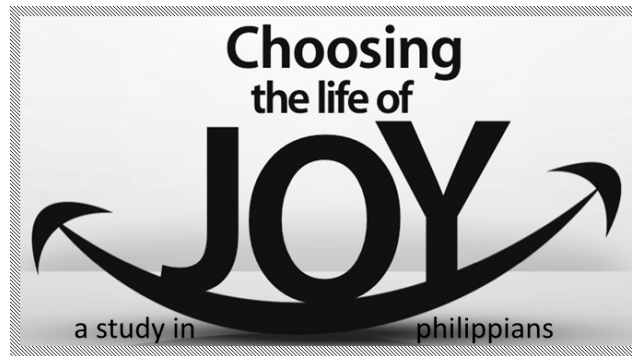


# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, October 10, 2018 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



## CHOOSING THE LIFE OF JOY

### A Study in Philippians

**“A Joyous Perspective: What Are You Living For?”**

*Philippians 1:19-26*

*“<sup>19</sup>For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <sup>20</sup>according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup>For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup>But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup>For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. <sup>24</sup>Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. <sup>25</sup>And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, <sup>26</sup>that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.”*

*–Philippians 1:19-26 (NKJV)*

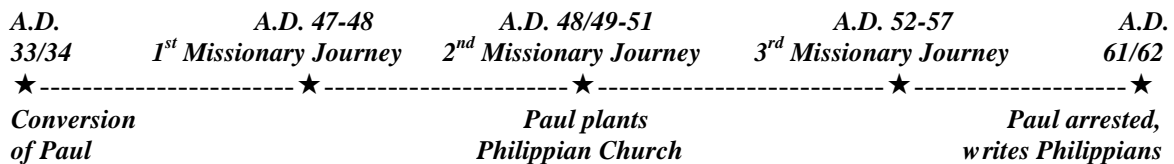
Dr. Warren Wiersbe calls the book (letter) of Philippians, “a personal manifesto on how to live a life full of joy.” We began our verse by verse study of the book of Philippians a couple of weeks ago entitled, “Choosing the Life of Joy; A Study in Philippians.” The book is a book of joy, and that is surprising given the circumstances surround the book.

Just for review let’s be reminded of some of the more interesting facts about Philippians that we have been looking at as a background to the book.

**5 Important Background Facts on the Book of Philippians:** *\*these may be some things that set the book of Philippians apart from Paul's other letters and writings*

- 1. The book of Philippians is written by the Apostle Paul** – The apostle Paul wrote the book as clearly stated in Philippians 1:1-2, “<sup>1</sup>Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: <sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- 2. The book of Philippians is written to believers/Christians at the church at Philippi** – As already stated Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul during his Roman imprisonment to a group of people that were very special to him. These at Philippi had come to know the Lord Jesus through Paul's witness to them during his “Second Missionary Journey,” and in response to the “Macedonian Call” of Acts 16. Notice who Paul identifies as the recipients of this letter in verses 1-2, “<sup>1</sup>Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: <sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- 3. The book of Philippians is actually a letter written by Paul to the church at Philippi** – The apostle Paul wrote this as a letter to the Christians in Philippi, from Rome. Paul ministered at Philippi during his second missionary journey, spending about three months in the city. The ministry at Philippi marked Paul's entrance into Macedonia (Greece, Europe), which came about as a result of a vision he had in the city of Troas, just across the northeastern corner of the Aegean Sea from the port city of Neapolis and its close neighbor Philippi (Acts 16:8–12). During this first stay in Philippi—he later briefly visited the city on his third missionary journey (20:6)—Paul brought to faith in Christ people who would form the core of the burgeoning congregation in the city. Among them were Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul and his coworkers (16:13–15), and the Philippian jailer, who was converted under Paul's ministry after an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison (16:22–34).
- 4. The book of Philippians was written around A.D. 61/62** – Of the four Prison Epistles, Paul likely wrote Philippians last, near the end of his Roman imprisonment in AD 61 or 62. Paul sent the other three Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—by the hand of Tychicus, as their destinations were near one another. However, the letter to the Philippians was to be delivered by Epaphroditus, who had come to Paul in Rome with financial help from the church at Philippi (Philippians 2:25; 4:18). But during his time in Rome, Epaphroditus took ill, which delayed his return home and, therefore, the delivery of the letter (2:26–27).

#### *Philippians Timeline*



- 5. The book of Philippians is called a prison epistle, because Paul write the letter while he was imprisoned for his faith in Rome** - The book of Philippians is actually one of four “prison epistles” (or letters) and most likely the last of the four written by Paul. As stated, Paul wrote Philippians while he was in prison in Rome. The four “prison epistles” are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Given the theme of the book it is

significant that Philippians was written by Paul at a particularly difficult time in his life... while he was in prison.

Along with these essential background facts surround this letter written by Paul, we have also sated these interesting fact about the book/letter of Philippians:

### **5 Interesting Facts about Philippians:**

1. **The book of Philippians has no Old Testament quotes** – This is distinction that not only sets it apart from Paul’s other writing in the New Testament where Paul is said to have quoted the Old Testament as many as 500 times, just not in Philippians. The Old Testament is quoted more than 1,000 time in the New Testament with half of those being found in Paul’s writings. The lack of Old Testament quotes in Philippians could be as simple as Paul’s purpose in writing. It is a more practical letter.
2. **The book of Philippians contains little historical or theological material, and is primarily a practical (*relevant, everyday, pragmatic, useful*) letter** - The only exceptions to this are the historical biographical material contained concerning Paul’s life in prison during his Roman imprisonment. And Philippians, chapter 2 that describes the humiliation and exaltation of Christ in theological terms. Philippians is the only of Paul’s letter that was not written primarily to address doctrinal, theological issues. The apostle Paul did not write Philippians in response to a crisis (caused by false teachers and false teaching), as he did with Galatians and Colossians. And, in fact, it may be the most practical of Paul’s 13 New Testament books/letters. What do we mean by practical? We mean that of all of Paul’s letters, Philippians in it purpose and content is the most pragmatic and common every-day letter he wrote. We will get more into this as we progress through our study, but suffice it to say that the very reason Paul wrote the letter is simple, every-day in it application.
3. **The book of Philippians is essentially a thank you letter** – This itself sets Philippians apart as the most unusual of Paul’s letters. Instead of writing to correct doctrinal matters, he writes a “thank you” letter to the church at Philippi that had been so generous in supporting him over the years. He primarily wrote to express his appreciation and affection for the Philippian believers. More than any other church, the believers in Philippi offered Paul material support for his ministry. Paul’s affection for these people is clear through the letter as he encouraged them to live out their faith in joy and unity.
4. **The book of Philippians contain the word “joy” in some form at least 16 times** – With the common occurrence of this word in some form repeated throughout the letter, it make it clear that this is the theme of Paul’s letter to the Philippians and to us. And as stated above this theme of “joy” is particularly astounding given the fact that it is a prison epistle, written while Paul was incarcerated and being persecuted for his faith.
5. **The book of Philippians was written to a church and Christians that represent the one of the most important advancements of the Gospel to the west, particularly Europe** - Paul’s “Macedonian Call” in Troas during Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey led him to his work in Philippi and the planting of the church there. Philippi was located in Macedoina, in northern Greece, on the continent of Europe. So the “Macedonian Call” and the planting of this church in Philippi through Paul’s second missionary journey, and Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi are very significant because they represent the advancement of the gospel further west, into Europe and ultimately to the entire world through Europe. It is not to be

missed that the first converts on the continent of Europe were Lydia and her household, a demon possessed girl, and a Philippian jailer.

With these important facts about the book of Philippians let's probe a bit deeper into our study by looking at verses 12-18 (**READ: Philippians 1:19-30**)

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Dr. John MacArthur say, "The joyful Christian thinks more of his Lord than his personal difficulties, more of his spiritual riches in Christ than his poverty on earth, and more of his glorious fulfillment in heaven than his present pain. Therein lies our joy." This is certainly true and reflected clearly in the New Testament book of Philippians, and as Paul begins to reveal his current circumstances as he writes we begin to see the very practical teaching of a believer joy in spite of trouble and troubling circumstances. Indeed, the theme of Philippians 1:12-18 is joy in ministry. The keynote is Paul's declaration, "*...I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice*" (v. 18). He wrote that statement in the midst of some very difficult circumstances. Yet in spite of the difficulties, Paul rejoiced in the ministry God had given him.

### **JOY IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULTIES**

Here is another quote from Dr. John MacArthur on "joy." Listen to MacArthur's statement and respond. Do you agree or disagree? What is meant by this statement? What does MacArthur mean?

*"A believer's spiritual maturity can be measured by what it takes to steal his (or her) joy."*  
 —Dr. John MacArthur

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### **The Believer's Joy Amidst Difficulties**

Here is Dr. John MacArthur gain, "A believer's spiritual maturity can be measured by what it takes to steal his joy."

New Christians will quite often have misconceptions about God, the Christian life and other believers and the things we face in this life... namely the struggles, the problems, the trials this life can hold, and when those trial and struggles strike they may cause one to lose their joy, or for their joy in their Christian life to be stolen away. They may be left floundering in their faith and wondering, "where is God in all of this?" Has He left me? Why are all of these bad things happening to me.

But that is not only a reality for new Christians, many who have been Christians for years may carry these misconception tucked neatly in their back pocket and when trial, and difficulties, and hardships come... when things don't go as they expected in their Christian world these misconceptions may reveal themselves in a lack of joy and victory in their walk, in their life and

witness, and even in their spirit and disposition communicated to others... ever wonder why some who call themselves Christians look so miserable all the time and it is reflected in how they treat others. . This look at the common misconceptions of Christianity is designed to dispel some of the myths that typically hinder Christians from growing and maturing in the faith even in the face of trials.

### **3 Biblical Calls for a Believer's Joy in the Midst of Difficulties:**

- 1. Joy is part of the fruit of a Spirit-controlled life... Galatians 5:22-25** – *“<sup>62</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”* In speaking of the fruit of the Spirit... the fruit that ought to flow from the life of a believer, notice that “joy” takes a front and center position. This ought to be one of the most striking qualities noticeable in the life of a believer regardless of the circumstances.
- 2. We are to rejoice always... Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16** – Paul says in Philippians 4:4, *“<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”* And similarly in 1 Thessalonians 5:16, *“<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always.”* Notice the word “always!” Paul signifies here the sphere in which the believer's joy exists... a sphere unrelated to the circumstances of life, but related to the unassailable, unchanging relationship to the sovereign Lord.
- 3. Joy in trials is seen as a characteristic of a believers life... James 1:2-4** - *“<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces <sup>4</sup>patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”* James, particularly seems to give us something to focus on as a source of joy in trials... our spiritual growth and maturity in Christ. The Greek word “count” may also be translated “consider” or “evaluate.” The natural human response to trials is not to rejoice; therefore the believer must make a conscious commitment to face them with joy. “Trials” here is the Greek word that connotes trouble, or something that breaks the pattern of peace, comfort, joy, and happiness in someone's life. The verb form of this words means “to put someone or something to the test,” with the purpose of discovering that persons' nature or that thing's quality. God brings such tests to prove... and increase... the strength and quality of one's faith and to demonstrate its validity. Every trial becomes a test of faith designed to strengthen; if the believer fails the test by wrongly responding, that test then becomes a temptation, or a solicitation to evil. The word “perfect” is not a reference to sinless perfection, but to spiritual maturity. The testing of faith drives believers to deeper communion and greater trust in Christ... qualities that in turn produce a stable, godly, and righteous character.

**Key Thought: In all circumstances the Spirit of God produces joy, so there ought not to be any time when we're not rejoicing in some way.**

Still, though we should not allow circumstances to make us sullen, bitter, or negative, or “joyless,” the one thing that will rob our joy is sin. It's then we cry out like the psalmist, *“Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation”* in Psalm 51:12. Nothing short of sin should steal our joy.

But change, confusion, trials, attacks, unmet desires, conflict, and strained relationships can throw us off balance and rob us of our joy if we're not careful.

We ought to expect trouble. Again, Jesus said, "*In the world you [will] have tribulation*" in John 16:33. The apostle James as we have seen said it, "*Consider it all joy ... when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance*" in James 1:2-3. God has His own profound purpose in our afflictions, but it's never to take away our joy. To maintain our joy we must adopt God's perspective regarding our trials. When we yield to the working of His Spirit in our lives, our difficulties will not overwhelm us.

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### A JOYOUS PERSPECTIVE: WHAT ARE YOU LIVING FOR?

A young man came to W. E. Gladstone when he was Prime Minister of England and said, "Mr. Gladstone, I would appreciate your giving me a few minutes in which I might lay before you my plans for the future. I would like to study law." "Yes," said the great statesman, "and what then?" "Then, sir, I would like to gain entrance to the Bar of England." "Yes, young man, and what then?"

"Then, sir, I hope to have a place in Parliament, in the House of Lords." "Yes, young man, what then?" pressed Gladstone.

"Then I hope to do great things for Britain." "Yes, young man, and what then?"

"Then, sir, I hope to retire and take life easy." "Yes, young man, and what then?" he tenaciously asked.

"Well, then, Mr. Gladstone, I suppose I will die." "Yes, young man, and what then?" The young man hesitated and then said, "I never thought any further than that, sir."

Looking at the young man sternly and steadily, Gladstone said, "Young man, you are a fool. Go home and think life through!" (Told by Leonard Griffith, *This is Living* [Abingdon Press], pp. 48, 49.)

What are *you* living for? Your answer to that question will determine the direction of your life, and your answer to that question is directly linked to your joy.

If your purpose is wrong, your direction will be wrong, and joy in this life will be illusive. If your purpose is vague or fuzzy, your direction will be fuzzy, and you may now have a worldly happiness now and then, but joy... deep and abiding joy will escape you. If you don't know your purpose, you'll just be swept along by the currents of our age, doing what seems to bring you happiness. It is crucial that you be clear and correct in answering the question, "**What are you living for?**" As the story of the young man and Mr. Gladstone illustrates, the correct answer to that question must include some thought about the fact of death and what lies beyond. It must also include consideration of the uncertainty of life, so that whenever death may come, it doesn't thwart your purpose.

The Apostle Paul was clear and focused on his purpose. I believe that the purpose for which he lived is the only purpose that takes eternity into account, so that whether we live a long life or

whether it is cut short, that purpose will be fulfilled. In short, Paul's purpose is, *"For to me, to live is Christ" (1:21).*

As Martyn Lloyd-Jones points out (*The Life of Joy* [Baker], pp. 85, 86), *"That sentence is not only a statement of the apostle's true experience, but also it is a standard of judgment which confronts us with the most thorough test of our Christian faith we will ever encounter."*

Every person who professes Christ as Savior must grapple with the question, "Can I honestly say, 'For me, to live is Christ'?" If I can say, "Yes," then I have also answered that fundamental question, "What about death and what lies beyond?" It will be gain for me.

*If for me, to live is Christ, then for me to die will be gain.*

What does Paul's purpose statement mean for him and for you and I as believers? Every Christian should aim at being able to say truthfully, *"For me, to live is Christ..."* Can you truthfully say that? Can I? We need to be honest in examining our lives before the Lord. To bring this purpose into focus, we need to answer two questions: *What does it mean to "live Christ"?* and, *How do we "live Christ"?*

## **2 Important Questions:**

1. What does it mean to "live Christ"?
2. How do we "live Christ"?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "LIVE CHRIST"?**

#### **What does it mean to "live Christ"?:**

1. To "live Christ" means to live in union with Christ, that that He become my all in all - The concept of being "in Christ" was vital to Paul's understanding of what it means to be a Christian. He addresses this letter *"to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi" (1:1)*. The instant a person truly believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he is joined in a living, real union with Christ the Head as a member of His body, the church. To be *"in Christ"* means that all that is true of Christ is true of the believer. As Paul writes in Romans 6:10-11, *"For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."* The believer is in union with Christ. While that is our true standing before God, we must grow in our experience of the reality of that standing, so that in our daily lives, we live in *fellowship with Christ*, communing with Him and depending on Him for everything.

#### **What does it mean to live in fellowship with Christ:**

- (1) It means growing to know Christ intimately (Philippians 3:7-11) – *"<sup>7</sup>But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. <sup>8</sup>Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; <sup>10</sup>that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being*

*conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup> if, by any means, I may attain<sup>ω</sup> to the resurrection from the dead.”*

- (2) **It means growing to love Christ with all of my heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving other as He does (Mark 12:28-31) -** *“<sup>28</sup> Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, <sup>[i]</sup>perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the <sup>[i]</sup>first commandment of all?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>30</sup> And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ <sup>[i]</sup>This is the first commandment. <sup>31</sup> And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*
- (3) **It means submitting all of my thoughts, emotions, words, and deeds to the lordship of Christ, so that I seek to please Him in all respects (Colossians 1:9-14) –** *“<sup>9</sup> For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup> that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. <sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the power of darkness and <sup>14</sup>conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption <sup>ω</sup>through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”*
- (4) **It means growing to experience Christ as my “all in all” (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 3:8-11) –** Paul says in Ephesians 1:22-23, *“<sup>22</sup> And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”* You see it? Not only is He “all in all,” He is our “all in all.” And here is Paul again in Colossians 3:8-11, *“<sup>8</sup> But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, <sup>11</sup> where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”* He is our “all in all.”

In other words, every aspect of life must be centered around the Lord Jesus Christ. The glorious *person of Christ*, and nothing less, *in* the Christian life. Of course, our experience of “living Christ” is a process that is never fully realized in this life. As Paul says in *Philippians 3:12*, *“Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”* Even the most godly Christians have times when Christ seems distant and the soul is dull and sluggish.

In this life we never reach a point where we are not tempted by sin, where we do not have to battle the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16). But, each of us who are truly children of God will have as our focus to live in an experiential way the fact of our union with Christ, so that He becomes our all in all. Christ really is all we need. We must grow to know experientially what it means to “live Christ.”



2. To “live Christ” means to exalt Christ through everything we do – Notice Paul’s words again in **verse 19-21**, paying close attention to what he says in **verse 20**, *“For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <sup>20</sup> according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* Here is Paul in **verse 20** *“...but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.”* This is just another way of stating the great goal of the Christian life, which is to glorify God by everything we are and do.

To glorify God, in common language, means to make God look good, as He truly is. We may think, “Christ is the Almighty God, Creator of the universe. How can I possibly exalt or glorify Him?” Think of Him as being a distant star. It may be more brilliant than our own sun, but to the human eye, it is just a dim speck in the night sky. To many in this world, Christ is that way. He is the very splendor of God, brighter than a million suns. But the world doesn’t see Him that way. The believer is to be a telescope to bring the truth about Christ into view for the unbeliever. Through us, and especially through how we handle trials, Christ is magnified to a skeptical, unbelieving world.

In view of Paul’s circumstances, it is remarkable that his main focus was not on getting released from prison, but rather on exalting Christ. Whether he lived or died wasn’t the issue... all that mattered to Paul was that he exalted Christ. In **verse 19**, he says, *“For I know that this [situation] will turn out for my deliverance...”* The word “deliverance” is, literally, “salvation.” Some interpret this to mean that Paul was hopeful of being released from prison, but verse 20 really impedes this view, because Paul acknowledges that he may well be executed. Paul’s words in verse 19 are verbatim from the Greek Old Testament of Job 13:16. In that context, Job was on trial by his “friends,” and he wanted to be “saved” from being found to be a hypocrite, that is, he wanted to be vindicated.

In the same way, Paul is saying that as the Philippians prayed for him and as God’s Spirit enabled him, he would be delivered from denying Christ and disgracing the gospel at his trial before Caesar. Thus he would be vindicated in the ultimate court, before God, by exalting Christ, even through martyrdom if need be.

The only cause for shame to Paul would be not to hear “well done” from Christ when he stood before Him. **Verse 26** does not mean that the Philippians would exalt Paul. It should read, *“So that your reason for boasting [or, exulting] may abound in Christ Jesus in connection with me through my coming to you.”* Paul means that if their prayers are answered by Paul being released so that he can be with them, they will boast in Christ, not in Paul. Note (1:20) that the way we exalt Christ is through our bodies. This is a comprehensive and practical concept. It means that we may either exalt Christ or bring shame to His name by our attitudes, our words, and our behavior.

### **Some Questions to Consider:**

1. **How do you use your eyes?** - A lustful glance at a woman or even at a sexy picture does not exalt Christ.

2. **How do you use your ears?** - Do you listen to music that defiles you or music that exalts Christ? Do you listen to gossip or slander?
3. **How do you use your tongue?** – Do you tear down or build other up? Is your speech hateful, bitter, angry, wrathful, slanderous, hurtful, degrading, etc.?
4. **How do you use your hands?** -
5. **How do you use your feet?** -
6. **How do you use your countenance?** -
7. **How do you use your body?** In purity or for sensuality? What about your personal appearance? Do you dress to be seductive or to attract attention to yourself? Or, do you exalt Christ?

As Paul says it in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”* To “live Christ” means to exalt Him through everything we do.

3. **To “live Christ” means to die to selfish desires in order to live to serve others for Jesus’ sake** - Paul’s desire was to check out. He really wanted to depart and be with Christ. But, he also realized that the Philippians and others needed his ministry. So he was willing to deny his desires for the sake of serving others for Christ’s sake. Of course, the final decision as to whether Paul lived or died rested with the Lord. But Paul was willing to live on in fruitful service if that’s what the Lord wanted for him to do. Paul’s focus suggests two applications:

### **2 Important Applications for Self-denying Service:**

- (1) **First, if you’re not denying self in order to serve Christ, you are not “living Christ”; you’re living for self** - Many people today have the notion that Christ is there to serve me, rather than that I am to serve Christ. They think the church is here to meet their needs, and if it doesn’t they drop out of church or try to find one that better meets their needs. We need to get back to the biblical truth, that we have been saved to serve Christ. If everyone who attends this church had this mind-set, we’d have a waiting list to teach Sunday School! What a radical thought!
- (2) **Second, Christians should challenge the American notion of retirement** - The idea that when you finally reach a point where you don’t have to work, you’re free to live for self and pleasure is contrary to Scripture. Any time the Lord gives us we are to manage for Him, seeking first His kingdom and righteousness. As long as He gives us health and strength, we should ask, “How can I serve Him?” Being freed from a job should mean that you’re free to spend more time furthering the Lord’s work. Give your time to the church or to a mission. Consider going to a foreign country to help out in the cause of Christ. Charles Simeon, a British preacher of the past century, worked long and hard for Christ. Late in life he said, “I cannot but run with all my might, for I am close to the goal” (cited by H. C. G. Moule, *Philippian Studies* [CLC], p. 75).

Thus, to “live Christ” means to live in union with Him, so that He is my all in all; to exalt Him in all I do; and, to die to self so as to serve Him.

## HOW DO WE “LIVE CHRIST”?

I trust that the question has been answered for the most part by the answer to the first question. We “live Christ” by daily fellowship with Him, by seeking to exalt Him, by dying to self in order to serve Him. But also let’s consider these help how to “live Christ.”

### How do we “live Christ”?

1. **We “live Christ” by making that our constant aim** – Paul clearly was determined to “live Christ” as his sole aim. He expresses it elsewhere in slightly differing terms, but with the same idea in 1 Corinthians 9:23, “*I do all things for the sake of the gospel.*” And in Philippians 3:7, “*...whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ*” Or in Philippians 3:13-14, “*... one thing I do: ... I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*” Christ was Paul’s constant aim.

As Christians, we need honestly to evaluate our lives in light of this aim. It’s easy to fall into living for good things, but not for the best. God graciously blesses us with our families, friends, homes, possessions, work, leisure enjoyments. But if we’re not careful, these good *things* become the things for which we’re living. Even those of us in vocational ministry can begin living for our ministries. We need to keep asking ourselves, “What if this thing (person, activity) were taken from me?” Certainly, it would be difficult if, like Job, I lost my children, my health, and my possessions. But if I’m truly living for Christ, I will be able to come through any tragedy without despair, because He can’t be taken from me. So I must constantly evaluate my life by asking, “Is Christ at the center? Is He my all in all?”

2. **We “live Christ” through prayer and the provision of the Holy Spirit** - Paul was a man of prayer, but he also freely solicited the prayers of others for him (1:19). We tend to think of Paul as being naturally bold, but he often asked for prayer that he would be bold in his witness, because he knew that he was weak (see Eph. 1:19, 20; Col. 4:3, 4; 2 Thess. 3:1, 2). To “live Christ” we need much prayer! But also, Paul needed “the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (1:19). The Christian life is impossible to live in the power of the flesh. We must walk by the Spirit every day, depending on Him for His strength. Why does Paul here say, “the Spirit of Jesus Christ”? He may mean, the Spirit who was given to us by Christ. Or, he may be describing the Spirit in this way because Jesus, in facing His trial and execution, bore faithful witness by relying on the Spirit. Paul was facing possible execution and wanted to be a faithful witness. This same Spirit is available to us so that we can “live Christ” in every situation, no matter how difficult. Living Christ must be our aim.

## CONCLUSION

In Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice asks the Cheshire Cat, “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” The Cat replies, “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.” “I don’t much care where--” says Alice. “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” says the Cat. “You’re sure to get *somewhere*--if you only walk long enough.”

Where do you want to get to? If you want to get to heaven, then you need to consider the question, “What am I living for?”

Complete the sentence:

**“For me, to live is \_\_\_\_\_.”**

What? Money? Success? Happiness? Pleasure? Fun? Good times? Family? Self? If your answer is any of the these, then to die will be a terrible loss, not a gain, and perhaps may tell you why joy evades you. But if, with Paul, you can honestly say as you evaluate your life, **“For me, to live is Christ,”** then you can also say with all the confidence of God’s Word behind you, **“to die is gain!”**

### Discussion Questions

1. **Honestly complete the sentence: For me, to live is \_\_\_\_\_?**
2. **Is it overly simplistic to say, “Christ is all we need for our emotional and psychological wholeness”?**
3. **What are some of the implications of “exalting Christ” through our bodies?**
4. **Agree/disagree: If you aren’t serving Christ, you’re living for self?**

**17 Biblical Ways to Glorify God with Your Life:** Thomas Watson’s timeless advice for making much of God in your life. This list was first printed by Puritan Thomas Watson in 1692 in his bestselling classic, *A Body of Practical Divinity*.

1. **We glorify God when we aim purely at his glory** – “I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of him who sent me.” (John 8:50) “Father, glorify your name.” (John 12:28) Thomas Watson: *“It is one thing to advance God’s glory, another thing to aim at it. God must be the ultimate end of all actions.”*
2. **We glorify God when we sincerely confess our sin** - “Then Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.’” (Joshua 7:19) Thomas Watson: *“The thief on the cross had dishonored God in his life, but at his death he brought glory to God by confession of sin.”*
3. **We glorify God when we believe by faith** - “No unbelief made him (Abraham) waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God” (Romans 4:20) Thomas Watson: *“Faith knows there are no impossibilities with God, and will trust him where it cannot trace him.”*
4. **We glorify God when we are tender to his glory** - “For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.” (Psalm 69:9) Thomas Watson: *“When we hear God reproached, it is as if we were reproached; when God’s glory suffers, it is as if we suffered.”*
5. **We glorify God when we bear spiritual fruit** – “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” (John 15:8) Thomas Watson: *“It is not profession, but fruit that glorifies God.”*
6. **We glorify God when we are content in the state Providence has placed us** - “The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.” (Psalms 16:5) Thomas Watson: *“A good Christian argues: It is God that has put me in this condition; he could have raised me higher, if he pleased, but that might have been a snare to me; he has done it in wisdom and love; therefore I will sit down satisfied in my condition.”*
7. **We glorify God when we work out our own salvation** – “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work

out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12) Thomas Watson: *“What an encouragement is this to the service of God, to think, while I am hearing and praying, I am glorifying God.”*

8. **We glorify God when we live to God** - “...and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (2 Corinthians 5:15) “For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” (Romans 14:8) Thomas Watson: *“We live to God when we live to his service, and lay ourselves out wholly for God.”*
  9. **We glorify God when we walk cheerfully** - “...who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Corinthians 1:4) “And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 1:6) Thomas Watson: *“It brings glory to God, when the world sees a Christian has that within him that can make him cheerful in the worst times.”*
  10. **We glorify God when we stand up for his truths** - “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jude 3) Thomas Watson: *“When we are advocates for truth we glorify God.”*
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11. **We glorify God when we praise him** - “The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!” (Psalms 50:23) “I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and will glorify your name forever.” (Psalms 86:12) Thomas Watson: *“Praising God is one of the highest and purest acts of religion. In prayer we act like me; in praise we act like angels.”*
  12. **We glorify God when we are zealous for his name** - “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy.” (Number 25:11) “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.” (Revelation 2:2) Thomas Watson: *“Zeal is impatient of God’s dishonor; a Christian fired with zeal takes a dishonor done to God worse than an injury done to himself.”*
  13. **We glorify God when we remember God in our eating and drinking** - “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31) **Thomas Watson:** *“A gracious person holds the golden bridle of temperance; he takes his food as a medicine to heal the decays of nature, that he may be fitter, by the strength he receives, for the service of God.”*
  14. **We glorify God when we labor to draw others to God; seek their conversion, and so make them instruments of glorifying God** - “My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!” (Galatians 4:19) Thomas Watson: *“It is a great way of glorifying God, when we break open the devil’s prison, and turn men from the power of Satan to God.”*
  15. **We glorify God in a high degree when we suffer for God, and seal the gospel with our blood** - “Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go. Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God.” (John 21:18-19) Thomas Watson:

*“The glory of Christ’s kingdom does not stand in worldly pomp and grandeur, as other kings’; but it is seen in the cheerful sufferings of his people.”*

- 16. We glorify God when we give God glory of all that we achieve** - “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10) **Thomas Watson:** *“As the silkworm, when she weaves her curious work, hides herself under the silk, and is not seen; so when we have done anything praiseworthy, we must hide ourselves under the veil of humility, and transfer the glory of all we have done to God.”*
- 17. We glorify God when we live a holy life** - “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9) **Thomas Watson:** *“Though the main work of religion lies in the heart, yet our light must so shine that others may behold it.”*

*Modified from: Thomas Watson, A Body of Divinity, pp. 10-18*