

DISCIPLESHIP EXPLORED



STUDY GUIDE

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www.christianityexplored.org

Published by
The Good Book Company
Tel (UK): 0845 225 0880
Tel (int) + (44) 208 942 0880
Email: admin@thegoodbook.co.uk



Websites
UK & Europe: www.thegoodbook.co.uk
N America: www.thegoodbook.com
Australia: www.thegoodbook.com.au
New Zealand: www.thegoodbook.co.nz

ISBN Universal Edition 9781906334840
ISBN International Student Edition 9781906334895

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Grateful thanks to: Paul Chelson, Barry Cooper, Steve Devane, Kerry Fee, Alison Mitchell, Andre Parker, Sam Shammass, Tim Thornborough, Nicole Wagner Carter and Anne Woodcock, and the many others who contributed to the development of the Discipleship Explored Universal Edition and International Student Edition.

Design by The Good Book Company

Printed in China

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Before we begin

Welcome to Discipleship Explored!

These Bible studies look at a letter from the New Testament. It was written by Paul to a group of Christians living in the city of Philippi. Philippi was a Roman colony in ancient Greece.

Paul and Timothy visited Philippi to tell people about Jesus. You can read about what happened there in Acts 16. They were forced to leave after a short time because the city rulers did not want them to tell people about Jesus or cause any trouble. They left behind them a small group of new Christians. Paul wrote this letter to them from prison in Rome. He wanted to:

- Encourage the new Christians in Philippi
- Help them keep going as Christians in difficult times
- Remind them about the good news of Jesus Christ
- Give them practical instructions on what it means to live as a follower of Christ. That is what the word disciple means – a learner, a follower.

You may have recently made a decision to become a Christian. You may be someone who is still thinking about what it means to follow Jesus. Or you may be someone who has been a Christian for years, and want to go over the basics once again.

Whoever you are, this short letter will help you understand how good it is to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and how he calls his disciples to live for him today.



Philippians 1:1–11

How can I be sure I'm a Christian?

This letter to the Philippian Christians was written from someone in prison.

■ **What would you write to your friends if you were unfairly put in prison?**

Read Philippians 1:1–11

*Read the verses again. Are there any words you do not understand?
Look at the Bible words list on the next page to help you.*

Read Philippians 1:1–2

Verse 1 is like the envelope of the letter. It shows who it is from and who it is going to.

1 Who is the letter from and who was it sent to?

Week 1

WHO WAS PAUL?

Paul was originally called Saul. As a devoted Jew, he hated the first Jewish Christians and put many of them in prison. But while travelling to Damascus, he was stopped by a bright light and heard Jesus Christ speaking to him. This experience changed Paul completely. He became a Christian and was sent by Jesus to be a teacher and leader. You can read this story in Acts chapter 9.

Paul travelled a lot around Southern Europe and Asia telling others about Jesus Christ. He organised the new disciples into churches, and wrote letters to them, teaching them and encouraging them to keep going. He was often persecuted himself, and was eventually executed by the Romans. Many of Paul's letters are now in the New Testament. Philippians is one of them.

2 What does Paul say about himself and Timothy?

3 What does Paul call the readers of the letter?

Read Philippians 1:3–8

4 How does Paul feel about the Philippian Christians? Why?

“Partnership in the gospel” means that the Philippian Christians were working with Paul to tell other people about Jesus.

5 What is Paul confident about in verse 6?

BIBLE WORDS

v1 Christ. This name means “the chosen king”. The same word in Hebrew is “Messiah”. There are many promises in the Old Testament about the Christ/Messiah. They show that he would be God’s chosen king.

v1 saints. Holy ones; those who God has set apart for himself. Every Christian is a saint.

v1 overseers and deacons.
Church leaders.

v2 grace. God’s gift of forgiveness to people who do not deserve it.

v2 peace. Peace with God.

v2 Lord. Master.

v5 gospel. The good news about Jesus Christ.

v6 day of Christ. The day when Jesus Christ will return to judge the world. (See verse 10 also.)

v7 confirming. Showing something is true.

v8 testify. Be a witness. A witness tells others the truth about something that they have seen or heard.

6 Is becoming a Christian an “inside change” or an “outside change”?
Who makes the change? Why is it important to understand this?

The “inside change” of becoming a Christian can be seen in an “outside change”.

7 What “outside changes” showed Paul that God had begun his work in the Philippians (verse 5)?

8 Have you ever been unsure that you are a real Christian? What made you feel that way?

9 Have you seen any “outside changes” in your life since you became a Christian? What are they?

BIBLE WORDS

v8 I long for all of you. I want to be with you.

v8 with the affection of Christ Jesus. With the love of Jesus.

v9 abound. Increase.

v9 insight. Being able to understand something clearly.

v10 discern. Understand or judge correctly.

v10 pure and blameless. Someone who does not think wrong things or do wrong things.

v11 fruit. Results.

v11 righteousness. Goodness that is good enough for God. You must be perfect and have no sin to be good enough for God. Jesus Christ is the only person who has ever been perfect.

Read Philippians 1:9-11

Paul knows that the Philippians, like all Christians, are not perfect. So he prays for them.

10 What does Paul pray for and why?

11 What does Paul hope will be the result of this (see verses 10-11)?

12 Paul's prayer can help us to pray for other Christians and ourselves.

What should we thank God for, and what should we ask him to do in our lives?

■ **Pray these things now for yourself and others.**

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

MEMORY VERSE

"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:6