

# LAUGH AGAIN: Experience Outrageous Joy

## STUDY TWO

### Set Your Sails for Joy

*Philippians 1:1–11*

*Joy is an attitude determined by confidence in God—that He is at work and in control, allowing all things to happen for one ultimate purpose: His greater glory.*  
—Charles R. Swindoll

**T**HE art of penning a personal letter has all but vanished in our high-tech, digital world. In ancient days, however, letters were a primary means of communicating information as well as deeply personal expressions. That is certainly true of the New Testament letters, called epistles, and most pointedly true of Paul's letter to the Philippians.

As we study this letter with Chuck Swindoll, we will do so with care so that we note the information Paul communicated and let this very personal letter move through our minds and into our hearts. After all, it is through these New Testament epistles, like Philippians, that we can connect with the heart and mind of Jesus.



#### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Take some time to contemplate all you know and appreciate about the book of Philippians. Perhaps there is a favorite verse or passage that comes to mind. Offer an expression of gratitude to the Lord for the wonderfully encouraging gift of Philippians!



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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*Philippians 1:1–11*



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Few New Testament epistles communicate such personal affection or levels of personal sentiment as Philippians. Before you begin this study, read Philippians in its entirety. As you do, imagine yourself in a group of first-century Christians in Philippi. You're huddled around a small chimney fire listening with great interest as Paul's words are read aloud. As you read, underline, circle, or highlight words or expressions that feel deeply personal to you.

This would be a good time to locate *Philippi* on a Bible map and orient yourself to its location. Find the map titled "Paul's Missionary Journeys" or something similar. Philippi lies on the north shore of the Aegean Sea and on the eastern boundary of Macedonia. Once you've located the city on a map, look up *Philippi* in your Bible dictionary and read about the importance of this New Testament city. For an online resource, read the article "*Philippi*" in the Encyclopedia of the Bible on BibleGateway.com. Make some notes below on what you learn.



### Observation: A Heartfelt Greeting—Philippians 1:1–11

Observation, the process of looking closely at the details of a passage of Scripture, helps you start to understand the setting and key ideas. Paul's greeting to the Philippian church is filled with deep expressions and rich language.

From whom does Paul say the letter originated (Philippians 1:1)?

In the eyes of the Philippians, Paul and Timothy were probably greater-than-life heroes. In Paul's eyes, however, he and Timothy were much different than that. How did Paul describe Timothy and himself?



## **Set Your Sails for Joy**

*Philippians 1:1–11*

Paul highlighted three groups of individuals to whom he wrote in Philippians 1:1–11. Locate each group and list them below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What phrase did Paul use to describe the Christians at Philippi (Philippians 1:1)?

Paul closed his brief introduction with a traditional blessing, commending to the believers at Philippi two powerful gifts from God the Father. What were those gifts (1:2)?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

### **Joyful Thanksgiving**

Following the opening greeting, Paul described in affectionate terms how deeply he and Timothy felt about the Philippian believers. His words were centered on his commitment to pray personally for them.

*Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus. I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. (Philippians 1:3–9)*



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### ***Philippians 1:1–11***

With each ensuing expression, Paul shared his intense love and affection for the Christians at Philippi. Under each passage below, write out a one or two-word description of the sentiment expressed:

Paul expressed \_\_\_\_\_ for the Philippian believers (Philippians 1:3).

Paul experienced \_\_\_\_\_ each time he prayed for the Philippian believers (1:4).

Paul showed \_\_\_\_\_ in God and in His work in the lives of the Philippian believers (1:6).

Paul wanted the Philippian believers to know that they held a \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart (1:7).

Paul expressed both his great \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for the Philippian believers (1:8).



### **Interpretation: Paul's Desire for the Philippian Church**

Based on Paul's deep affection for the church at Philippi, he desired that each believer experience both a sense of partnership with him in the gospel and a deepening of their experience with Christ. By studying the meaning and significance of a few key words, you can develop an overall interpretation of Paul's opening message to those beloved followers of Christ.

By identifying himself and Timothy as "slaves" of Jesus Christ in Philippians 1:1, Paul demonstrated his desire to model a servant's attitude for the Philippian believers.

The Greek word *doulos* used in verse 1 carries the idea of an individual bound to the service of another. If you have a Bible dictionary, look up the word *slave*, and read about the cultural significance of slavery, particularly in New Testament times. For an online resource, take a look at the note attached to "*slaves*" in the New English Translation at [lumina.bible.org](http://lumina.bible.org).

How would Paul's willingness to enslave himself to Christ demonstrate his level of commitment to the Philippian Christians?



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*Philippians 1:1–11*

Paul also expressed a confidence in their spiritual growth that was rooted in the power and goodness of God (Philippians 1:6). Ultimately, Paul desired that their spiritual maturity be “finished” or completed in Christ. The word Paul used, translated “finished,” is a form of the Greek word *tetelestai*—the same word Jesus used just moments before His death when He declared, “It is *finished!*” (John 19:30, emphasis added).

What do you think is the relationship between the *finished* work of Christ and Paul’s confidence in God’s ability to *finish* His work in the lives of the Philippian Christians?

Not only did Paul express great confidence in God to accomplish His work in the lives of God’s people at Philippi, he also expressed a remarkable depth of personal affection for them as well (Philippians 1:7–8).

*God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion [affection] of Christ Jesus. (1:8)*

The word Paul used to express this deep love for the Philippians is *splanchnon*, meaning “the inner part.” Paul felt a deep, inner love and compassion for these people to whom he wrote this heartfelt letter—a compassion drawn from the heart of Christ Himself (Matthew 9:36; 14:14).

Read back through Paul’s words in Philippians 1, and highlight or underline in your Bible the words or phrases he used that expressed this deep love and sentiment.

What impact would such loving expressions have had on these Christians?

According to verse 9, what relationship did Paul draw between his love for the Philippians and his desire for their spiritual growth?



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*Philippians 1:1–11*

What did Paul express as his ultimate goal for the believers at Philippi (Philippians 1:11)?

Just as Paul believed the work of Christ in the Philippian believers' lives issued as affection toward each other, he commanded the believers in all the churches he founded to love one another with that same godly affection.



**Correlation: The Joy of Expressing Godly Affection**

Correlation is the step in the *Searching the Scriptures* process that uses related passages of Scripture to support your interpretation. Read each New Testament passage below and write a sentence or two explaining how each relates to the words Paul wrote to the church at Philippi.

Philippians 2:1–4

Romans 12:9–13

Galatians 5:22

2 Timothy 1:3–4



**Set Your Sails for Joy**

*Philippians 1:1–11*

Summarize a central truth that emerges from comparing these verses with Philippians 1:1–11.



**Application: Finding Joy in Our Relationship with Christ**

Chuck closed his message on this passage with three guiding principles that flow from Paul's passionate words:

1. *Confidence brings joy when you focus on the things and people for which you're thankful* (Philippians 1:3). In the space below, list three things or individuals from your Christian experience for which you're thankful.
  
2. *Confidence brings joy when you let God be God* (1:6). What situation or concern in your life or who in your family do you need to entrust to the Father's care and purpose? What is keeping you from letting go and allowing God to accomplish His work?
  
3. *Confidence brings joy when you share the love of Christ with others* (1:9). What are some practical ways you can express godly love and affection for your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?



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*Philippians 1:1–11*



**A FINAL PRAYER**

*Thank You, Father, for the gracious work You started in me. Thank You also for the affection You showed me in offering forgiveness and grace through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Show me how to outdo my brothers and sisters in Christ with godly affection and love. May You complete Your loving work in and through me, for the praise and glory of Your name. Through Christ, amen.*





**Set Your Sails for Joy**

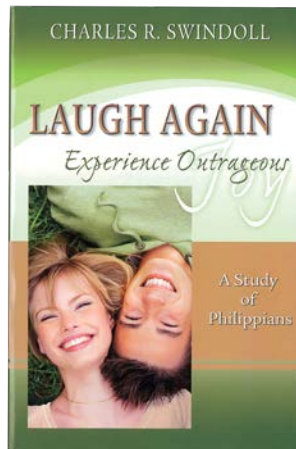
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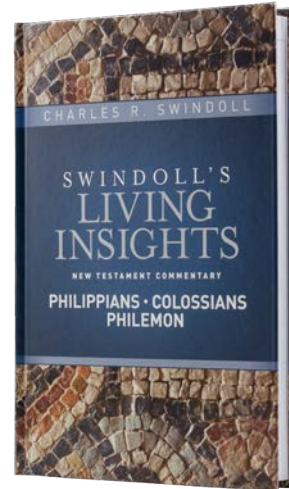
**Tools for Digging Deeper**



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For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.

