

Walking Out the Word:
The Epistle to the Philippians

Important Background to Philippians:

- Philippi was a historic city in Northern Greece founded by the father of Alexander the Great, to help mine Philippi's gold and pay the expenses for the conquering army. Veterans Soldiers of great Roman battles were given land in this part of Macedonia to settle for Rome. Octavian declared Philippi a Roman Colony which had all the rights, tax breaks, and privileges of being a miniature Rome and a center of commerce located along a major ancient highway called the "Egnatian Way."
- Paul pioneered the church of Philippi around 51 AD after having a vision in the night of a man from Macedonia pleading with Paul to come and help (See Acts 16). Lydia, the dealer in purple cloth was converted along with her household. Paul also cast out a demon from a slave girl and ended up in jail. After an earthquake in the night, Paul's jailor and his household were also converted. These conversions led to the beginning of the church.
- Paul wrote this epistle of joy to the Philippians during his first Roman imprisonment around 61 AD. It is a warm letter thanking the Philippians for the gift that they sent and encouraging them by sending Epaphroditus who had fallen sick back to Philippi.
- Christ is portrayed as: The believer's life (chapter 1); The believer's example (chapter 2); The believer's faith and hope (chapter 3); and The believer's strength (chapter 4).

Things to talk about in Walking Out the Word:

- *Opening Discussion:* Describe a tough situation in your life that you faced this week. Why was it difficult? How did you face it? Compare your difficult situation to Paul's.
- *Philippians 1:* Describe Paul's feelings of affection for the Philippians. Who do you care about like this? Do you pray for others like Paul prayed for the Philippians? How did Paul view his own suffering and imprisonment? Do you have the same commitment to the spread of the gospel as Paul did?
- *Philippians 2:* Do you look after your own interests first, or do you look out for the interests of others? How are humility and unity related? Describe how Jesus' example model's a lifestyle of humility for the believer.
- *Philippians 3:* Why does Paul warn against the Judaizers? What is the prize that Paul is talking about? In Philippi, the people took pride in their Roman citizenship, but Paul challenged them to recognize their citizenship that is in heaven. On a daily basis do you think about yourself as a citizen of heaven and as an alien in this world?
- *Philippians 4:* From Paul's perspective, is joy a choice or an emotion? Talk honestly about your thought-life. Are your thoughts mostly negative or positive? Do you live out Paul's challenge in Philippians 4:8 to meditate on noble things? What is the secret for Paul's ability to be content in all things? Are you content?
- *Closing Prayer:* Take time to pray for those things that came up during your discussion together. Pray for each other's perspective, thought-life and contentment in all things.