

UPWARD
LIVING
in a
WORLD GONE MAD!

Surrender's Joy:
A Study of Philippians

UPWARD LIVING IN A WORLD GONE MAD

Surrender's Joy: A Study of Philippians

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INTRODUCTION

UPWARD LIVING IN A WORLD GONE MAD

Paul lived in a world gone mad ... literally! The Roman rulers had a history of being corrupt, egotistical, immoral and mentally unstable. The status and appearance-conscious Roman society reflected their leader's sinful attitudes and actions, with negative impact on the family unit. They worshipped a confusing and changing assortment of gods and deities, with un-godlike characteristics. Their laws and regulations often resulted in criminals going free and good people being unjustly imprisoned, as was the case with Paul during the time he wrote *Philippians* (62 AD).



He wrote, not knowing whether the infamous ruler Nero would allow him to live or would sentence him to death. His purpose was to redirect the *Philippians* from a downward focus on a church conflict, back to an upward focus. He wanted them to walk their destiny!

Paul knew that an upward focus would lead to the complete surrender of every area of their lives to God. God's peace and strength would then sustain them in the midst of the present and future crises, difficulties and persecution. Moving from self-focus, they would be able to daily live their destiny and walk as light and salt in a world filled with darkness. A victorious walk would have to be a surrendered walk. There was no other way for them to walk in victory and destiny, and there is no other way for us.

Paul had met Christ many years prior, as a Pharisee—religious, yet lost. When he met Jesus in a blinding vision, he had been zealously trying to save himself by destroying Christians. As a result, Paul embraced the Christ he had persecuted, and his life was changed forever. In this way, Paul's **Walk of Surrender** began.

Surrender took Paul to places he had never been: intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically. Intellectually, he had to acknowledge God's truth and not lean on his own understanding and religious traditions. Emotionally, he had to learn to walk in **Surrender's Trust** and contentment instead of reacting negatively and fearfully to difficult circumstances. Spiritually, self-effort and control had to be replaced with God-control. Logistically, he had to learn to let go of some things that might be comfortable so he could fully live **Surrender's Joyful Adventure!**

God's plan requires our surrender to Him. It is a surrender that involves a daily death to self and an offering of our life as a "living sacrifice."

ROMANS 12:1

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

This is just what Paul learned to do, and this is how he learned to walk in **Surrender's daily Joy, Strength and Destiny**. In surrender, Paul came to a place in his life where he could say: "*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain*" (Philippians 1:21).

ARE YOU UPWARD FOCUSED? HOW SURRENDERED IS YOUR LIFE?

This is more than a book or study guide. It's a revolution of thinking and living! This study may be used as a companion to the book, *The Walk of Surrender*, which uses the biblical passage known as the Lord's Prayer to specify principles key to surrender, and further supports these principles by referring to specific verses, as well as my own story and the stories of others.

In contrast, this workbook leads the student on an in-depth journey* through Paul's letter to his beloved Philippians, written while he was imprisoned—chained day and night to a soldier. Throughout his correspondence, Paul urges his readers to rejoice, rejoice! In fact, the word *joy* or *rejoice* is found nineteen times in his letter!

Upward Living: The Walk of Surrender provides you with thought-provoking Word studies and devotionals to guide you in your own daily personal study. I urge you to complete the daily assignments, meditating on the powerful Scriptural truths that surface, as a way to enhance your daily time alone with God. In doing so, your own life and thinking will be revolutionized!

Get ready to live Surrender's Joy, Strength and Destiny!

Marcia L. Gillis

**This workbook may be used as a 6-week class study or a 5-week self-study.*

Visit upwardlivingpublications.com for a free download of the *Upward Living in a World Gone Mad Leader's Guide*.

PAUL'S MAD WORLD

PAUL LIVED IN DIFFICULT TIMES, SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO OUR OWN. HE AND HIS FELLOW CHRISTIANS FACED AN UNKNOWN FUTURE. THEY WOULD NEED EVERY BIT OF JOY AND STRENGTH THAT UPWARD LIVING PROVIDED THEM TO BE VICTORIOUS IN THE MIDST OF SUCH TURMOIL, STRESS AND UNCERTAINTY.

The corrupt egotistical immoral rulers of Rome had long used any means at their disposal to grab and keep their power—whether it was trickery, bribery, war or murder. They felt justified in killing those who disagreed with them. Their family lives were sacrificed on the altar of their political aspirations. Their power allowed them to participate in unbridled perversions. Their accomplishments included a mixed assortment of the good, the bad and the very ugly.

NERO, the emperor during Paul's time, was born on December 15, 37. He was the son of Cnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, a member of an ancient noble family, and Agrippina, a direct royal descendant. When Nero was born, his uncle Gaius had only recently become emperor. The family survived the short reign of the “crazy” uncle emperor who was soon assassinated. It is not unlikely that it took a conspiracy to bring about the rule of the next emperor, Claudius, another of Agrippina's uncles.

In 40, Domitius died, and Agrippina became a single parent, living as a private citizen until Emperor Claudius executed his third wife, Messalina. At that point, Agrippina competed to become the new empress, marrying her uncle in 49.¹ Soon thereafter, Nero was adopted by Claudius and the philosopher Seneca became his tutor, a relationship which endured for about twelve years. In 54, Claudius died after eating some mushrooms many historians believed were poisoned by Agrippina,² and the 16-year-old Nero was hailed as emperor by the Praetorian Guard.

During his early reign, this young emperor was strongly influenced by his mother, his tutor and others. The first five years of Nero's rule are generally described as a period of good government, as he focused much of his attention on diplomacy, trade and increasing the cultural capital of the empire. Agrippina never let her son forget that she had made him emperor.

Nero's marriage to Octavia, the daughter of the dead Claudius, was an important political step, but she was too shy and modest. He was attracted to another man's wife, Poppaea Sabina. At 21, he took steps to throw off the limits imposed by others by having his mother killed! Later, he arranged to execute Octavia and married Poppaea.³ Nero's rule is often associated with tyranny and extravagance.⁴ He is known for a number of executions, including those of his adoptive brother. He gained notoriety as the emperor who “fiddled while Rome burned” and as an early persecutor of Christians.⁵

The year 64 was significant. His mother and wife were dead, and Seneca had retired. Now, the primary advisor to the young emperor was Tigellinus, a man described as criminal in outlook and action. Nero set out to enjoy his limitless power and the advantages it offered. Essentially, the empire was at peace and the people enjoyed a full measure of food and fun—until a far-reaching disaster occurred!

The fire began in a shopping area and blazed for the better part of a week. It was controlled, briefly, but then started again. This led many to believe that the fires had been deliberately set. After about two weeks, the fire burned itself out, having destroyed ten of the fourteen regions into which the city had been divided. Though Nero attempted substantial relief efforts, many believed he was responsible. All his efforts to assist the stricken city could not remove the suspicion that “the emperor had fiddled while Rome burned.” He lost favor even among the poor people, especially when it came out that a very large part of the city’s center was to become his new home.

To bolster his failing popularity, Nero and Tigellinus realized that they needed scapegoats for the disaster. Christians, unpopular because of their refusal to worship the emperor, their way of life and their secret meetings, became the perfect scapegoat solution. Even more perfect, two of their most important “teachers” were in Rome—Peter and Paul.



The Mamertine Prison consists of two gloomy underground cells where Rome’s vanquished enemies were imprisoned. Legend has it that Paul and Peter were kept here before their executions.

Christians were individuals whom most Romans loathed and who had often spoken about the end of the world. Their destruction was carried out with precision and cruelty in the guise of entertainment. In the stadium, Christians were exposed to wild animals and were smeared with pitch and set on fire to illuminate the night. The executions were so grisly that even the spectators showed sympathy for the victims. Tradition has it that Peter was crucified upside down on the Vatican hill. Around this same time, Paul was beheaded. As hard as he tried to cast blame in another direction, Nero was viewed as the arsonist and dissatisfaction over his rule grew. Eventually, after conspirators sought to displace and murder him, Nero committed suicide.⁶

SOCIETY'S SAD IMITATION

The Roman society reflected its leaders' sinful attitudes to varying degrees. The closer their city was to metropolitan Rome, the greater the impact. This impact was especially visible in regard to the health and stability of the family.

“The early marriage (449 BC) ceremony created a relation which the Romans called Hand (*manus*), and brought the wife into her husband's power, giving the husband all the property she had when she married. It entitled him to all she might acquire afterwards, whether by gift or by her own labour. It enabled him to command her labour, and even to sell her, though the sale neither extinguished the marriage nor made her a slave, but merely enabled the purchaser to make her work, while still requiring him to respect her personal rights.”⁷

Early on, divorce was frowned upon, but as more husbands began to put away their wives, it became more accepted. By Paul's time (60 AD), divorce was as common among Romans as marriage.⁸

Historians indicate that both men and women, especially rich women, were constantly changing their husbands, for the most frivolous reasons or impulses. To divorce, the husband just needed to say, “keep thy property to thyself” (*tuas res tibi habeto*), and it was done. “Little or no social stigma seems to have attached to the divorcing partner, even to the wife, for public opinion, in older days a rigid guardian of hearth and home, had now, in a rich, luxurious, and corrupt society, a society which treated amusement as the main business of life, come to be callously tolerant.”

In spite of this disregard for commitment, there were still some examples of pure and happy marriages in this decadent society. Still the facts remain. There was a prevalence of divorce, the absence of social penalties, and a general recklessly wasteful, wildly extravagant lifestyle among the wealthier classes.⁹

Paul described his time period in Romans 1:18-25.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE ROMAN SOCIETY

The Romans had many deities, including the most important Roman god, Jupiter, and countless numbers of secret beings and teams of minor deities (existing in extensive lists) each with a minor function in assisting or hindering in each activity or fraction of various human activities, particularly those characteristic of rural areas and those involving private life.¹⁰

Roman religion emphasized *pax deorum* (“peace with the gods”)—the conviction that the basis for earthly prosperity was the maintenance of a harmonious relationship with the gods. In their perspective, all public disasters were caused by a broken relationship between the Roman people and the gods. The reasons for these breaks were diagnosed through divination and corrected by specific cultic measures. Peace was maintained by sacrifice and prayer, exact fulfillment of all vows and oaths, rituals and by paying strict attention to all outward signs of the will of the gods.

Divination played an important role in the lives of the Greeks and Romans up until the fourth century A.D. Divination is the art of interpreting symbolic messages from the gods. Greeks and Romans “distinguished between ‘technical divination’ (the interpretation of signs, sacrifices, dreams, omens and prodigies) and ‘natural divination’ (the direct inspiration of the *mantis* through trance, ecstasy or vision).”

The ancient Greek household practiced a cult which focused on the hearth and the tomb. “The hearth was the place where meals were cooked over a fire that was kept burning for an entire year. The male head of the household functioned as a priest, and such offerings were often made to deceased ancestors who had been made divine upon death. Offerings to these ancestors were also made at the site of their tombs, located on land owned by the family.”¹¹

During the New Testament time period, there was increasing tension between Rome and Judaism, and open hostility to Jesus and His teachings by the Jewish leaders (John 11:47-50; Matthew 24:1-2; 26:59-61, 66). During the time of Nero, the Jews revolted,¹² paying the ultimate price—the destruction of the temple and the ransacking of Jerusalem (70 AD).

The Romans disliked Christians, even more than they disliked the Jews. The Jews were thought of as an ancient people who had remained faithful to their ancestral traditions. In contrast, the Christians had left their ancestral religions to become followers of the Crucified Christ.

Christians refused to worship Roman gods, representing them as either nonexistent or demonic, and would not even acknowledge that others ought to do so (de Ste. Croix). To the Romans this was atheism.¹³ It alienated the gods upon whom the well-being of the empire depended.¹⁴

Paul was fully aware that his pagan society recognized many gods and lords (1 Corinthians 8:5). The Acts of the Apostles and his letters, primary sources for our knowledge of Paul, show how the Greek and Roman beliefs impacted him and his missionary activities.¹⁵

POLITICS, LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The Roman Empire was monstrous in its size and reach throughout Europe and in its establishment of a trade route deep into Asia. During Paul's time, it consisted of 2.2 million miles and 60 million people, as many as one fifth of the world's population! 50,000 miles of roads spread Roman influence throughout the world.

Rome ruled its provinces with a strong hand. Though tradition indicates that Paul was killed by the Romans, Acts describes the Romans as rescuing Paul from Jewish hands, allowing him to continue his missionary work. One of his Roman imprisonments actually enabled him to travel to Rome and conduct missionary work at Roman expense (Romans 1:11-13; Acts 27:1-28, 16)!

In the provinces, Rome allowed native leaders to rule and maintain order. It was these rulers who, initially, caused trouble for Paul. City officials imprisoned Paul and Silas in Philippi after they ministered deliverance to a demonic woman, therefore depriving her owners from their means of support (Acts 16:16-24). In Thessalonica, city officials were upset by the disturbance caused in opposition to Paul's ministry (Acts 17:8-9). In general, Paul was unjustly imprisoned seven times over his missionary activities, while others who were actual criminals went free.

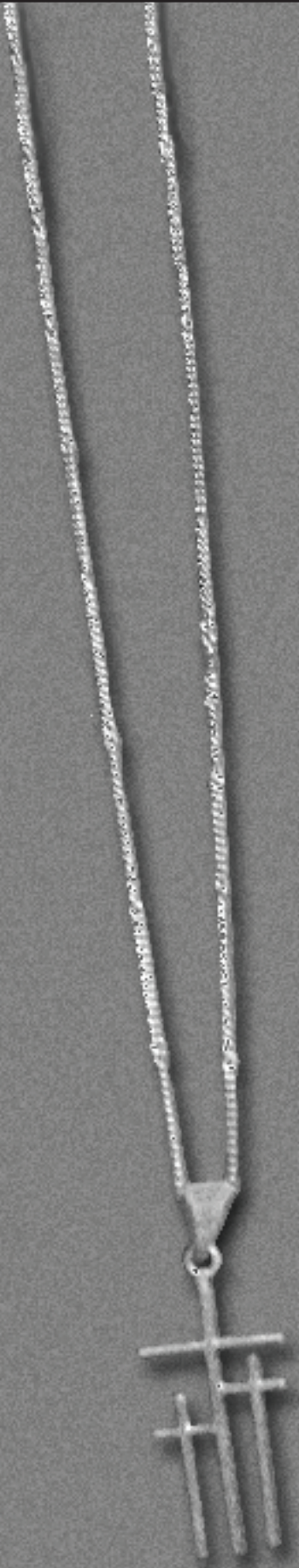
Write down any noted similarities between Paul's mad world and ours.

WEEK ONE
THE SURRENDER OF UPWARD LIVING

Philippians 1:1-11

Day 1 – The Church at Philippi (1:1)	3
Day 2 – Grace and Peace Be Mine (1:2)	7
Day 3 – He Who Began a Good Work (1:3-6)	11
Day 4 – Surrender’s Real Knowledge (1:7-11)	15
Day 5 – Surrender’s Discernment (1:7-11)	21

UPWARD LIVING IN A WORLD GONE MAD
SURRENDER’S JOY
A Study of Philippians



*"The cross must
be more
than a chain
worn around
our neck.
It must
be burned
into our heart."*

*Des Evans, Pastor
Bethesda Community Church
Fort Worth, Texas*

WEEK ONE

THE SURRENDER OF UPWARD LIVING

What joy there is in beginning to understand the profound meaning of a passage and in allowing that meaning to infiltrate and change your life! This is just what you will see happen as you apply yourself to the careful study of the assigned passages. To aid you in the study, read the passages in your own Bible and in the sculptured/outlined format as they are given in each week's lesson. This format makes it easier to see the relationships of various parts of the passage to each other and key concepts. **Philippians 1:1-11** is sculptured below. Please begin your study by reading all four chapters of Philippians, and then, the sculptured portion given here.

1 *Paul and Timothy,*

bond-servants of Christ Jesus,

*to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi,
including the overseers and deacons:*

2 *Grace to you and peace*

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 *I thank my God*

in all my remembrance of you,

4 *always offering prayer*

with joy in my every prayer for you all,

5 *in view of your participation in the gospel
from the first day until now.*

6 *For I am confident of this very thing,*

*that He who began a good work in you will perfect it
until the day of Christ Jesus.*

7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all,
because **I have you in my heart**,
since both in my imprisonment
and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel,
you all are **partakers of grace** with me.

8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all
with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this I pray, that your **love** may **abound** still more and more
in **real knowledge** and all **discernment**,

10 so that you may **approve** the things that are **excellent**,
in order to be **sincere** and **blameless** until the day of Christ;

11 having been filled with the **fruit of righteousness**
which comes through Jesus Christ,
to the **glory** and **praise** of God.

DAY 1

THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI

Philippians 1:1

1 Paul and Timothy,
bond-servants of Christ Jesus,
to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi,
including the overseers and deacons:

The Philippians would have listened intently to the affectionate words of their teacher's long-awaited letter. As they listened, they may have tried to picture Paul in his imprisonment, knowing that he was more concerned about their well-being than himself and his own dire circumstances. It had been twelve years since he had seen them, yet this sentimental letter reveals that he had a special bond with this faithful church body.

It was during his second missionary journey (50 AD) that a dream, and Paul's **Walk of Surrender**, led him to Philippi (Acts 16:1-5), a Roman colony and a military and agricultural center initially established by the father of Alexander the Great. There, he met Lydia, a businesswoman. Lydia's conversion led to the conversion of all the members of her household, and her home became a base of operation for Paul's work and a place of assembly for the young church, one of the earliest to be founded in Europe.

Paul's work in Philippi immediately resulted in a beating and landed him in prison after he cast a demon from a slave girl (Acts 16:16-25). Her deliverance stopped the income her demonic activity generated for her greedy owners. Yet, what Satan would use for evil, God used for good. Prayer opened prison doors miraculously and the jailer and his family were saved (Acts 16:25-34)!

Paul remained in Philippi only a short time, but this Gentile church kept thriving under the care of Luke and women like Lydia and others whom God was teaching to walk in **Surrender's Joy** (Acts 16:16-40).



The jail where Paul and Silas were imprisoned.

Paul's writings indicate that the Church at Philippi had a prominence of women. In general, Macedonian converts were, as a class, very poor. This makes their generous financial support of the

great missionary even more remarkable. They had often sent Paul money and gifts (Philippians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 11:7-10; Acts 18:5). Paul would only have been willing to receive money from friends with whom he had deep love and confidence, for he had a principle which absolutely forbade him to take such help from any others. Not only was he unable to refuse what his friends offered, but he knew he would never be misunderstood by them. In fact, the whole tone of Philippians reveals Paul's deep affection for the people of the Church at Philippi.

This is Paul's most personal letter. In it, he lays his heart bare, as he challenges them to be all they can be in Christ and updates them about his situation.

Bond-servants

Paul describes himself and his faithful co-worker, Timothy, as ***bond-servants of Christ Jesus***. When you think of the word "servant," what comes to mind?

In this context, the Greek word for "servant" (*doulos*) is used metaphorically as one who gives himself up wholly to another's will (1 Corinthians 7:23); one who is devoted to another in disregard of one's own interests (Matthew 20:27; Mark 10:44). The perfect example is Christ who gave Himself totally over to doing the will of His Father.¹⁶

How does the word "bond-servants" positively portray Paul and Timothy in regards to:

1) Their attitudes toward themselves?

2) Their attitudes toward Christ?

3) Their relationship with Christ?

Can you describe yourself as a bond-servant of Christ on a daily basis? Why or why not?

Think of past circumstances from your life, one in which you joyfully surrendered to doing God's will and one in which you went your own way. Briefly describe these circumstances below, and contrast your motives, feelings and the outcome.

CIRCUMSTANCE ~ SURRENDERED	CIRCUMSTANCE ~ NOT SURRENDERED
MOTIVES	MOTIVES
FEELINGS	FEELINGS
OUTCOME	OUTCOME

Saints

Paul calls the Philippians **saints**. When you think of the word "saint," what do you think of?

In the Greek, the word translated "*saint*" (*hagios*) refers to people set apart for God; belonging to God, and as such, constituting a religious entity.¹⁷ "It is important to avoid an expression which means 'sanctified,' for the focus is not upon a particular state of holiness, but upon a special relationship to God."¹⁸

We see many places in Scripture in which God gave His People new names. For example: Abram (High Father) became Abraham (Father of a Multitude). Sarai (Contentious) became Sarah (Princess). Jacob (Deceiver) became Israel (God Fighter). As Christians, we have been given a new name by God. We are called “Saints.” The more we allow Him to control our lives, the more we live up to that name. We become Saints through our union with Christ. The more time we spend in His presence, the more likely we are to reflect Him to the world around us.

How does it make you feel to know that God has called you by a new name—Saint? Look up the scriptures below and write out other positive names that God calls you as His child.

ROMANS 1:7; 1 CORINTHIANS 10:14 »

EPHESIANS 5:8; MATTHEW 5:14 »

MATTHEW 5:13 »

ROMANS 9:8 »

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16 »

ROMANS 8:17; GALATIANS 3:29 »

1 PETER 2:5 »

MATTHEW 13:38; LUKE 6:35; ROMANS 8:15; 2 CORINTHIANS 6:18 »

GALATIANS 4:28 »

COLOSSIANS 3:12; TITUS 1:1 »

MEDITATE

Re-read this devotion and meditate on its implications for your life.

What is the Lord telling you? Is there anything you need to change about the way you think about yourself? If so, what is it?

DAY 2

GRACE AND PEACE BE MINE

Philippians 1:2

2 *Grace to you and peace*

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“*Grace to you and peace*” was the common salutation in Paul’s epistles. Grace was always first. Without grace, there would be no true peace. Inward peace comes only from a sense of divine favor, and comes through God’s provision through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

JAMES 1:17

Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.

Certainly Paul had every reason to be anxious and even bitter. Throughout his Christian walk he suffered seven beatings and seven years of imprisonment for no legitimate cause. His only offense was that He unashamedly proclaimed Christ and set spiritual captives free! Yet, in spite of such unjust treatment, Paul walked in peace and reminded his dear Philippians to do the same. He exemplified **Upward Living!**

Grace

Grace expresses God’s unconditional loving-kindness/divine favor to sinful, undeserving people, like us. That amazing love was manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Look up the following verses. What do they say about grace?

EPHESIANS 2:4-11

COLOSSIANS 2:9-10

ROMANS 6:14; 8:1

Now meditate, for a moment, on what God has done for you. What do you have as a result of God's grace? Have you been living in the light of His grace?

What do you need to change about your attitudes, perspectives and actions to live your life in the light of His grace?

What would your life be like without Him?

Peace

In Philippians 1:2 peace does not mean simply an absence of troubles or anxieties, but a state of total well-being, a wholeness of life resulting from forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God through Christ. He is the One who revealed Abba Father as being the ultimate source of grace, but the extent to which that blessing is made possible depends on Him being confirmed as Messiah and exalted as Lord by His resurrection (Philippians 2:9)! He is also declared the giver of grace and peace. Through Christ we can have peace *with* God and the peace *of* God! **Upward Living** allows this to take place even in a world gone mad!

Billy Graham describes peace with God this way:

Peace can be experienced only when we have received divine pardon—when we have been reconciled to God and when we have harmony within, with our fellow man and especially with God. “There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked” (Isaiah 57:21). But through the blood of the cross, Christ has made peace with God for us and is Himself our peace. If by faith we accept Him, we are justified by God and can realize the inner serenity that can come to man through no other means. When Christ enters our hearts, we are freed of that haunting sense of sin. Cleansed of all feeling of contamination and unfitness, we can lift up our heads secure in the knowledge that we can look with confidence into the face of our fellow men. “When a man’s ways please the Lord He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7). Even more important, we know that we can stand before God in the hour of our death with this same feeling of peace and security.¹⁹

Look up the following verses. What do they tell you about why you can walk in peace as God's child?

JOHN 14:27

ROMANS 5:1-11

COLOSSIANS 3:15

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Even when the storm rages, our surrendered hearts can be at peace in Christ. Write out Philippians 4:6-7.

We surrender to God, the One who so desired relationship *with* us and good

for us that He gave His own life, paying the ultimate price.

He has proven Himself trustworthy!

MEDITATE

Re-read this devotion and meditate on its implications for your life.

What is the Lord telling you?

MEMORIZE

Memorize the personalized version of Philippians 1:2 below, and repeat it every day.

Grace and peace are mine from God my Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

DAY 3

HE WILL PERFECT HIS GOOD WORK

Philippians 1:3-6

3 *I thank my God*

in all my remembrance of you,

4 *always offering prayer*

with joy in my every prayer for you all,

5 *in view of your participation in the gospel*

from the first day until now.

6 *For I am confident of this very thing,*

*that He who began a good work in you will perfect it
until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Joy

The book of Philippians speaks words of encouragement to us, even as it spoke to the Philippian believers. Were Paul alive today, he would be saying to us, “*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.*”

In some languages the translation would read, “Every time I think of you, I thank God for you, and I am continuously offering joyful supplication for you.” Verse 5 provides the reason for the “joy” mentioned in verse 4: “*in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.*” The Philippians were imperfect beings, as are we, but they had continued in the Faith! Their lives had changed dramatically from what they had been—before Christ took charge. Without a doubt, though, they grieved over the areas of their lives that still needed change, just as you grieve. They needed to be reminded of how far they had come. Just as Paul said to them, he says to you, “*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*”

Prayer

“The type of prayer Paul is offering here is supplication, the executive form of prayer.”²⁰ It is as if Paul saw the divine intention and was praying it into existence. He saw that God had bigger plans for them than they could imagine for themselves.

Paul offered prayer for them with “joy,” not with a heavy heart. In some languages, this joy would be translated as “my heart dances as I pray.”²¹

Why could Paul offer prayer for them with “joy?” Find two of the answers in Philippians 1:3-6 and write them below.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

The word “*participation*” (*koinōnia*) has also been translated as fellowship, community and partnership. In general, the Greek word refers to “participation in something with someone.” The context seems to indicate that Paul is not just referring to their financial participation, but to their wider share in the work of the gospel, as evidenced by their personal proclamation of the gospel, their sympathy, their suffering and their generosity.²²

Without a doubt, the Philippians were people like you. Certainly they lived in a different time period and culture, yet they had similarities. They were brothers and sisters, singles, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, common laborers and business people. They faced crises and daily concerns about finances and time management. They were busy, at times stressed, living in a time of upheaval. Yet, in the midst of living, they proclaimed Christ to those around them. They showed care to those in need and they gave to the needy and to support full-time ministers of the gospel.

Write out some ways you can “participate” in the gospel on a daily basis:

Now, let’s look at the second reason Paul felt joy when he prayed for his beloved Philippians and why he would have joy in praying for you.

*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work
in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

A study of the Greek meaning of the underlined words will enhance our understanding of the meaning of this verse.

Confident, v. (peithō)

“To believe in something or someone to the extent of placing reliance or trust in or on it – ‘to rely on, to trust in, to depend on, to have (complete) confidence in, confidence, trust.’” In many languages trust or reliance is “to lean one’s weight on” or “to hang upon” or “to place oneself in the hands of.”²³

Good, adj. (*agathos*)

Agathos describes that which, being “good” in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect. For example, a “good” tree will bear “good” fruit. “The neuter of the adjective with the definite article signifies that which is ‘good,’ lit., ‘the good,’ as being morally honorable, pleasing to God, and therefore beneficial.”²⁴ “What is upright, honorable and acceptable to God.”²⁵ “Pertaining to having the proper characteristics or performing the expected function in a fully satisfactory way – ‘good, nice, pleasant.’”²⁶

Work, n. (*ergon*)

Business, employment, that with which anyone is occupied; any product whatever, anything accomplished by hand, art, industry, mind; an act, deed, thing done.²⁷

The result of someone’s activity or work – “workmanship, result of what has been done.”²⁸

Work, employment, task.²⁹

Will perform; perfect, v. (*epiteletō*)

To cause to happen, with the purpose of some end result – “to accomplish, to bring about.”³⁰ To bring to an end, accomplish, perfect, execute, complete.³¹ A strengthened form of that verb, in the sense of “accomplishing.” The fuller meaning is “to accomplish perfectly.”³²

Study the Greek definitions above, then write verse 6 in your own words replacing the word “you” with “me.”

“Paul did not see Phillipis as an outpost, struggling to exist. He saw something bigger.”³³ He was praying that nothing would prevent these Philipians from fulfilling their God-given destiny.³⁴

God’s business is to do good work, even in a world gone mad. God’s work is always good work. God has done—and will do—a good work in you. “He will perfect it.” He’s not done with you yet. The more you focus on Him, His Words and His work, the more able He is to do His good work in you. Write out some of the good things He has done *in* you, *through* you and *for* you.

People of faith are people of prayer. People of faith are people of the Word. **Surrender's Change** demands faith and trust. It is easy to meander. "You don't need faith to go around the same old mountain. Most aren't afraid of a shaking boat, if it's in their living room!"³⁵

God see something bigger for you. Are you going to allow Him to do it? Jesus has a timeless love for you. He sees you as a person of destiny. Are you going to allow Him to help you walk that destiny on a day-by-day basis? "You are more than a person of past history (the 'good old days'). You are a person of destiny (today and in the future)."³⁶ Accept by faith that which is already reality with God.

Our kingdom is an insecure one, dependent on our limited ability to rule. His kingdom is an eternal one. In surrender, we trade *self-rule* for *God-rule*. It is a minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour and day-by-day process.

We surrender to God because we trust Him. He has already earned our trust by making the ultimate sacrifice and by what He has done for us in the past. What you are is not what you are going to be. Learn to live beyond yourself. Come against the negative world influences with a different Spirit—Him in you!

Allow Him to complete His good work in you.

MEDITATE

Re-read this devotion and meditate on its implications for your life.

What is the Lord telling you?

MEMORIZE

Memorize the personalized versions of Philippians 1:2 and 6 below, and repeat them every day.

Grace and peace are mine from God my Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who began a good work in me will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.