

The Letter of Philippians

1 *READ THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS*

2 QUESTIONS

For the Saint

In what ways do you see the Philippians already living true to their identity in Christ?

For the sufferer

What significant situational stressors were Paul / the Philippian Church facing? Consider things like body/health issues, relationship pressures and circumstantial and social/cultural influences

For the sinner

What desires, thoughts, emotions, and actions are out of line with gospel/kingdom values?

What explicit commands are given to the Philippians?

What would Paul add or change if he was writing this letter to us – as individuals or as a church?

How could you change in response to the message of Philippians?

3 PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH¹

China, North Korea, Syria, Iraq, Sudan...

1. Thank God that He is all-knowing and that in Christ, He Himself experienced shame, pain and agonising death, as well as the glorious resurrection. Thank Him for His promise: “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Matthew 28:20).
2. That all governments will work for justice and righteousness, and that leaders of liberal democracies will use their influence to find ways to reduce, if not end, persecution in countries where it occurs.
3. For the growth of the Church where persecution flourishes, remembering that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church”, for strength and courage for those undergoing persecution, and for peace that only Jesus can bring. Thank God that His grace is sufficient for their needs (2 Cor 12:9). Pray that their faith will not fail, but that their suffering will draw them closer to Jesus and increase their faith.
4. That the Holy Spirit will enable persecuted Christians to forgive and love their persecutors (Matt 5:44) and that their Christ-like reactions will have an impact on their persecutors; that the Holy Spirit will be at work in the hearts of those who currently persecute our sisters and brothers to bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus, as He did with Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9).
5. That Christians who are experiencing persecution will not lose the ability to accept or trust genuine approaches from those who have formerly persecuted them, as when the believers in Jerusalem had to learn to accept the reality of Saul’s conversion (Acts 9). Pray that the Holy Spirit will give them discernment, and relief from unnecessary fears.
6. Pray for ourselves and for persecuted Christians to be spiritually ready for whatever tomorrow brings, be that persecution, respite from suffering or Christ’s return (Matt 24:42).

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¹ Source: the Barnabas Fund prayer card entitled “How to pray for persecuted Christians”