



CHOOSE JOY!

A verse-by-verse study of Philippians

Radical Word Bible Study

Episode 41

September 10, 2026



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Philippians 2026

Opening Comments

- **Check Hard Drive capacity.**
- **Switch to PowerPoint (slide 2) once timer reaches zero.**
- Welcome to episode 41 of the Radical Word Bible Study.
- I am Rick Lancaster, and we are coming to you live from our temporary podcasting studio in Amarillo, Texas.
- We are streaming this Bible Study live on Rumble, Facebook, and YouTube.
- The podcast version of this Bible Study can be found anywhere you go for podcasts.
- It is listed under Radical Word Bible Study with Rick Lancaster wherever you get your podcasts.
- Radical Word Bible Ministries is an outreach ministry of Calvary Chapel French Valley.
- If you are interested in staying up to date with what is happening at The Radical Word, click the link in the description for this video.
- Also, I publish a daily devotional that I send out by email.
- I will include a link to that as well.
- Today is Thursday, September 10, 2026.
- Let's open with a word of prayer.

• **RECORD**

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- Turn to **Philippians 1** as we continue the series: **CHOOSE JOY! A verse-by-verse study of Philippians.**

Teaching

- **CHOOSE JOY! A verse-by-verse study of Philippians**
- We left off at Philippians 1:7, so we are going to pick it up there.
- To remind us of the context of verse seven, we will read verses 3 to 7.
- **Philippians 1:3-7**

- Paul was thankful for the Philippians because of their response to the gospel message that Paul had preached to them.
- Paul is also confident that God will finish the work He started in them.
- Getting saved is just the beginning of the work God is doing in each of us.
- One of the things we each need to do is discover just what the good work God is doing in us.
- As a pastor, it is one of my joys to help people do that.
- When I minister to someone, one of the things I am trying to do is listen to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to me about them.
- God is doing a work, and if I have the privilege of ministering to them then I have been recruited to help God get them to that good work.
- The same thing is true for all Christ-followers.
- One of the good works God probably wants to do in you is to help others find the good works God wants to do in them.
- I believe that is the calling of all Christ-followers, but only a few will know the amazing blessing of doing it.
- The apostle John said...**3 John 2-4**
²Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. ³For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
- To walk in the truth is to be living in faith and obedience doing those things God created us to do.
- It blesses me to know that I played a role in helping people do that.
- It is God, the Holy Spirit who is doing the real work, but I was invited to participate, and God blessed me because I did.
- We must intentionally seek God's will for other people and then try to help them discover God's will for themselves.
- That blessing is available to anyone who chooses to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in faith and obedience.
- Let's look at verse 7 again.
- **Philippians 1:7**
- Paul says this is the right or correct way for him to think about the Philippians, because he has them in his heart.

- God created humans with the ability and need to be in relationship; with Him first and foremost, but also with other humans.
- In Ephesians 2, Paul is speaking about Jews and Gentiles being made one in Christ. **Ephesians 2:14-15**

¹⁴ **For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,** ¹⁵ **having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace...**

- He goes on to say something about our relationship with God.

Ephesians 2:16-18

¹⁶ **...and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.** ¹⁷ **And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.** ¹⁸ **For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.**

- Our relationship with God was broken by our sin, but through Christ we have been reconciled back into a relationship with God.
- That should fill us with great joy.
- We were enemies of God, but now we are children of God, and co-heirs with Christ.
- Not because of anything we have or have not done, but because we put our trust in Christ and His sacrifice for our sins.
- Upon putting our trust in Christ, we were given the Holy Spirit, and He did something that changes how we are able to relate to others.

Romans 5:5

⁵ **Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

- As Christ-followers, we have God's love in our heart.
- That is what causes us to love others in a godly way.
- This was one of the signs to me that I was saved by Jesus.
- Before Christ my heart wasn't hard, but it was closed off toward others.
- I rarely let anyone into my heart.
- I'm sure therapy would have said it had something to do with the way I grew up and my dysfunctional family and my absentee father.
- After I got saved, I started feeling things toward people that I never had before.
- I wanted to love them – I wanted them to be loved.
- Therapy could never have done that for me.

- God took out my old heart and put in a new one that was open to the love of God being expressed through me to others.
- Paul says in our text that the Philippians are in his heart.
- Relationships with other humans can be very messy.
- When I started ministering to people, I found that some of those people made my life more messy.
- My first inclination was to avoid those people and other people like them.
- After all, I was trying to serve God, and it would be harder to do if other people made my life messier.
- God revealed to me that loving them through their messiness was one of the ways I loved God for what He did and is doing with my messy life.
- He also taught me that any relationship He created in my life was His to guide and direct.
- If God brings someone into my life, I don't have the right to end the relationship.
- Now, you do need discernment in that.
- There are times when I need to limit a relationship, based on the Spirit's guidance.
- For example, I maintain a healthy distance between myself and vulnerable women.
- I will sometimes ask Kelly to act as a buffer between myself and that woman.
- I will love her with and through Kelly, so as to protect all of us.
- We should be open to letting people into our heart, as Paul did with the Philippians.
- That is a risky thing to do because it makes you more vulnerable to being hurt.
- Early in our years of ministry, this was especially hard for Kelly.
- To do ministry well, you have to let people into your heart.
- And then, because people are human, they do these things that hurt; they abandon, they betray, they disrespect, they falsely accuse.
- Because Kelly is more sensitive than I am, it would hurt her more than it did me.

- She started closing her heart to those who hurt her.
- But then she couldn't minister to them, and that was what God was calling her to do.
- I went through that too, just not to the degree that she did.
- God brought her through it and taught her how to handle those things better.
- We have both learned to keep people in our heart even when they are hard to love.
- That is not a problem for Paul with the Philippians.
- Paul refers to his chains, but not in a way that makes you wonder about Paul's faith.
- Quite the contrary, he is matter of fact about it.
- It is what it is.
- It may not be ideal, but he adjusted and kept at the good work God called him to do.
- Paul refers to the defense and confirmation of the gospel.
- Defense is the Greek word *ἀπολογία* (*apologia*) and is where we get the concept of apologetics.
- An apologist is someone answers the objections or questions that people have about the gospel, God, or the Bible.
- To some degree, we should all be willing to be an apologist for Christ.

1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

- Peter is speaking to all believers.
- The second word Paul uses there is confirmation.
- That means to verify or provide proof or evidence that something is true.
- For example, I shared earlier that God opened my heart to love other people after I was saved.
- That was proof to me that I was saved.
- I have heard people say that gospel doesn't need to be defended or proven.

- My answer to them is that they should read Paul words on that, inspired by the Holy Spirit.
 - That verse ends with Paul saying the Philippians are partakers with Paul of grace.
 - Grace, the unmerited favor of God.
 - What grace is Paul referring to?
 - Was it a specific expression of God's grace?
 - I don't think so.
 - I believe it is the special grace that God shows to all His children.
 - Paul was in chains, maybe literally, or he was just in prison, but he was experiencing the same grace the Philippians were experiencing because they were in his heart.
 - God told Paul in 2 Corinthians that the grace of God was sufficient for Paul.
 - God's grace is all we need in this life.
 - If we have the unmerited favor of God, that means we trust that He will provide for our needs. **Matthew 6:8b**
- ⁸... **your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.**
- And Paul will tell us near the end of this letter... **Philippians 4:19**
- ¹⁹ **And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**
- This is where we learn to trust God.
 - God knows what we need.
 - We think we know what we need.
 - We learn to trust God in the part between what we think we need and what God supplies.
 - If you are one of God's children and the Bible tells us He loves His children, then when we don't get what we think we need, it is because God sees something we don't.
 - If we get sick, our need is for God to heal us. Why?
 - I don't need God to heal me; I want Him to heal me.
 - Paul dealt with that. **2 Corinthians 12:7-9**
- ⁷ **And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."**

- Throughout the Bible God's people are encouraged to come to God and ask for Him to intervene in the realities and circumstances of life.
- But we must do so with the understanding that we don't understand everything God does or doesn't do.
- If I, or someone I care about is sick, I am going to pray in faith believing God can heal them.
- If God doesn't heal them, there is a reason He probably won't share with me.
- In those circumstances, I remind myself that God is good, righteous, holy, and full of love for me and for them.
- As Christ-followers, we should choose to rejoice at the thought of God's special grace expressed toward us countless times every day.
- We may not always see it or understand it, but God is loving us with every beat of our heart and breath of our lungs.
- Another expression of God's grace we ought to be thankful for and choose to rejoice in is the fact that God hears and responds to our prayers.
- Think about that: God is busy running the universe, and He still listens to our prayers.
- That doesn't mean He gives us everything we ask for because sometimes our prayers are not in alignment with God's will for our lives.
- We should choose to rejoice that God doesn't give us everything we ask for.
- It is hard to imagine how bad our lives would be if we were able to treat God like a "make me happy" vending machine.
- If you have ever raised children, you know they don't always ask for what is good for them.
- Compared to God we are even less mature than small children, spiritually speaking.
- God hears and responds to our prayers.
- God does not hear everyone's prayers.
- More accurately, God does not listen to everyone's prayers. **Isaiah 59:1-2**

¹Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. ²But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

- This is one of the mysteries of God.
- He is omniscient; God knows everything about everything.
- He knows when the unrighteous pray, but He chooses to refrain from responding to those prayers.
- This was common knowledge for the Jews of Christ's time.
- Jesus healed a man who was blind from birth on the Sabbath.
- The Jewish religious establishment tried to get the healed man to agree that Jesus was a sinner, an unbeliever, because He healed the man on the Sabbath.
- The blind man responded using their own beliefs to challenge them.

John 9:31

³¹ Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.

- There are millions of people around the world who are praying, and God is not hearing their prayers.
- Muslims pray to Allah, who they claim is God, the same God as the Bible, but they reject Jesus as God.
- You cannot worship God and reject Jesus as God the Son.
- Muslims can pray as many times a day as they want, God is not hearing their prayers.
- This is also true of every other religion, even so-called Christian religions, like Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses, that choose to worship God contrary to His Word.
- The gospel is simple.
- If you mess with it, it is no longer a gospel that saves, and God is not hearing your prayers.
- If you are a true Christ-follower, God loves you and hears your prayers, and He will respond to it.
- We should love Him back by trying to think about that and rejoicing.
- Paul loves the Philippians and says that in the next verse.

Philippians 1:8

- One of my favorite months of the year is February.
- I like the different kinds of weather we experience, especially rain.

- February is the ‘love month’ to me.
- Right in the middle is Valentine’s Day.
- Many of the people who are special to me have birthdays in February.
- And the love of my life, Kelly, has her birthday in February.
- I came across a couple of quotes about love.
- The first one reminded me of Kelly. **Charles M. Schulz**
“All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt.”
- The second one was one of the great philosophers. **Winnie the Pooh**
“If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day, so I never have to live without you.”
- To love and be loved is one of the defining needs of humanity.
- And that makes sense – We were made in the image of God. **1 John 4:16**
¹⁶ **And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.**
- Philosophers and scientists have attempted to understand love for thousands of years.
- Countless poems, books, and movies have been created on this topic.
- Over my lifetime, I have watched the definition of what love is changing and sometimes include perverse expressions of love.
- There are different kinds of love – emotional, physical, familial, with the most common kind of love today is self-love.
- Love is important.
- From a Roman prison the Apostle Paul is going to talk to us about love.
- And not about a ‘Love is blind!’ kind of love or the ‘Love at first sight!’ that we often see in the movies.
- The love Paul is going to talk to us about is the kind of love God expressed when He sent His Son to the world.
- It is the kind of love Jesus showed when He died for our sins.
- It is the love that the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts.
- It is the love that changes us and makes us more like the perfect expression of love – the love that makes us like Jesus.
- Paul just expressed his care for the church in Philippi.
- Paul’s affection for the Philippians found its source in Christ.

- Human affection can be fickle, easily offended, and based on emotions.
- Paul loved them with the love God had given him for them. **Romans 5:5**

⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

- Paul prayed for the Philippians because he loved them.
- Paul loved the Philippians because he prayed for them.
- If you have someone in your life that is hard to love – pray for them.
- The harder you pray for them the easier it becomes to love them.
- You may find it very hard to love someone if you are not praying for them.
- Paul longed for the Philippians.
- From deep within, Paul felt a great desire to be with the Philippians.
- Paul uses an interesting word we translate as affection: *σπλαγχνίζομαι* (*splagchnizomai*).
- It has the sense of coming from the bowels; from deep within.
- Paul then goes on to tell us what he prayed for the Philippians.
- We'll read the whole thing and then go back and break it down.
- **Philippians 1:9-11**
- This prayer is not about the Philippians' love for Paul, but their love in general.
- **Philippians 1:9**
- There was a mutual love between the church and Paul.
- But their love extended beyond Paul into the world around them and they became known as a loving church.
- But then Paul prays that their love would abound still more and more.
- Why? How much is enough love? Jesus spoke on this... **Matthew 22:36-40**

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

- The kind of love that God is calling us to is selfless love.
- Selfless love is not about never thinking about yourself.

- It is about seeking to put others before yourself; to think of yourself last.
- That is hard because we all have real needs, wants, desires, dreams, and wishes.
- How do we love selflessly when all those things are real. **John 15:13**
¹³ **Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**
- Some interpret 'lay down one's life' to mean to die for someone.
- And while that might be the ultimate expression of selfless love, that is not what is meant here.
- In the context of that verse, a more natural interpretation is 'set aside your life'.
- That means choosing to set aside your needs, wants, dreams, desires, and wishes and choosing to love someone.
- Paul expressed that thought to husbands **Ephesians 5:25**
²⁵ **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her...**
- Guys, until you are loving your wife as much as Christ loves the church, you are not loving her enough.
- This is hard for unbelievers because if they don't love themselves first, who can they trust to love them the way they need to be loved?
- But we can trust God to love us perfectly.
- I don't have to worry about my own needs, wants, dreams, desires, and wishes because I know God cares about me and for me. **1 Peter 5:6-7**
- ⁶ **Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,** ⁷ **casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**
- By trusting God to care for me, I can focus on letting Him use me to care for others.
- And as I do that, God is going to use others to care for me.
- I choose to rejoice in how God uses others to care for me.
- So, the answer to the question of how much we should love is, love as much as Jesus does.
- Paul gives us a clue to how your 'love may abound more and more...in knowledge and all discernment'.
- It is an ancient saying, 'Love is blind!'

- That means love is often irrational and clouds otherwise good judgment.
- True love, the selfless love Paul is referring to, cannot be ignorant or irrational but must be based in knowledge of the person who is to be loved. **Frank Sheed**

“A virtuous man may be ignorant, but ignorance is not a virtue. It would be a strange God Who could be loved better by being known less. Love of God is not the same thing as the knowledge of God; love of God is immeasurably more important than knowledge of God; but if a man loves God knowing a little about Him, he should love God more from knowing more about Him: for every new thing known about God is a new reason for loving Him.”

- This is one of the reasons why we keep encouraging you to read and study the Bible.
- It is God’s love letter to you and the rest of the world.
- The Bible was given to the world so that we would know God.
- And the better we know Him the better we are able to love Him.
- In fact, apart from the Bible, loving God would be irrational.
- That is why unbelievers consider Christians to be deluded in our love for God.
- Because they do not know God, they cannot comprehend how you can love Him.
- Some say, ‘You can’t love others until you love yourself!’
- That is false – it is exceedingly rare that someone doesn’t love themselves more than they love others.
- The key is to love God – the better you know God, the more you will love Him.
- The more you love God, the more you will see His love within you and the more that love will flow out to others.
- The better you know God, the better you will love Him.
- The better you will love God, the more you will seek to know others so that you can love them more, even the unlovable ones.
- Paul adds to knowledge discernment.

Discernment: the mental ability to understand and discriminate between relations; especially as acquired through experience.

- The word of God helps us to understand how to discriminate between right and wrong, good and evil, light and darkness.

- The better we know God and learn to walk with Him in faith based upon a deeper understanding of God from what He has revealed about Himself in His Word, the better we will be able to love Him and others.
- Discernment coupled with knowledge is how we learn to love people.
- There is no one-size-fits-all kind of love.
- Every person needs to be loved in a way that they are able to feel loved.
- In the book, The Five Love Languages, Gary Chapman describes how we all communicate and understand expressions of love.
- One of his main points is that I can't expect someone to feel loved if I try to love them the way I want to be loved.
- As an example, Kelly feels loved when I spend time with her.
- If I want her to feel loved, I just be with her.
- It is much more nuanced than that, but the point is, if I want Kelly to feel loved, which I do, then I need to know what it takes for her to feel loved and then love her that way.
- And the selfless part of that is that I do it even if she doesn't love me the way I feel loved.
- Part of the nuance of that is sometimes what she wants is selfish, just like some of my wants are selfish.
- Spirit-filled discernment helps me to sort out what she needs from what she wants.
- You need that knowledge and discernment for the next three things Paul prays for the Philippians.
- First – **Seek the Excellent**
- **Philippians 1:10a**
- 'approve the things that are excellent'.
- Life is a continuous series of choices.
- The most basic is the choice between right and wrong or good and evil.
- As children of a good God, we should always choose the good and right.
- Sometimes in life the choice is between two good things.

- What Paul is praying for here is that they will be able to examine those choices and then choose what is excellent or best.
- As believers, we should never settle for good enough – seek God’s best – seek what is excellent.
- Who defines what is excellent - God and His Word.
- If you have a choice to make, and you are not sure what would be excellent, seek God in prayer, seek an answer in God’s Word, and if you still don’t have an answer, go to someone who knows God better than you and ask them to help you.
- Paul is challenging them as a church to approve of the things that are excellent.
- The word approve has the meaning of to try out, to test, to examine.
- It also has the idea of judging those things that are good and regarding them as genuine or worthy.
- People sometimes get a little nervous when we talk about judging.
- The church must be always judging those things that might want to influence the church and approving of those things that are excellent.
- If the church doesn’t do not, it will allow things that do not belong in Christ’s church.
- For example, in the name of love, sexual delusion and deviance has been allowed in some churches.
- For example: a September 1, 2026, headline in Episcopal New Service reads **“Wisconsin cathedral welcomes Episcopal Church’s first transgender dean”**
- A woman who is so-called transitioning to be a man has been ordained as a priest in the Episcopal church.
- Every day there are news articles about churches approving things that are not excellent; they are the opposite of excellent.
- Again, the Bible is our gauge of what is excellent and what is not.
- Another article described a gay bishop who said they must work to make sure everyone in the LGBT+++ community was fully welcomed into the daily life of the church.
- One of the many problems with that is they keep expanding who is included in that community to include even more perverse lifestyles.

- Remember, Paul is commending them on their love and encouraging them to love more.
- It is not loving to encourage people in a lifestyle that God, not just disapproves of, but describes as an abomination.
- It is not loving to encourage people to continue the path that leads to hell.
- Let's be clear; God calls us to love everyone, even people who are living wicked lifestyles, but we must learn to love them while, at the same time, not approving of their lifestyle.
- It is the church's responsibility to judge the things in the church and approve those things that are excellent.
- And that means we are to disapprove within the church of those things that are not excellent.
- We don't have to judge or condemn the world; it has already been judged. **John 3:18**

¹⁸ **He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

- Instead, through our love, show them a better way. **Matthew 5:16**
- ¹⁶ **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

- The greatest thing we can do for this world is to love God, to love each other, and to love sinners as much as God does.
- That would be excellent.
- The second thing – **Be Sincere**
- **Philippians 1:10b**
- 'be sincere' has the sense of purity or wholesome.
- The Greek word is made up of two words which mean 'sun' and 'to judge'.
- This indicates that it is tested by the light of the sun. **R. Kent Hughes** "It denotes transparency of heart, a heart with pure and unmixed desires."
- To be sincere is to act like the person you are.
- Taking it all by itself, many people could be considered sincere even though what they are doing is objectionable to us.
- Sincerity, by itself, is not enough – must have knowledge and understanding of God and His Word with sincerity.
- And you must be seeking what is excellent.

- You cannot be sincere and do what is not pure or wholesome.
- You cannot be a sincere criminal.
- You can be a committed criminal but you are not being sincere.
- Third – **Without Offense**

- **Philippians 1:10c**

- Paul tells them to be without offence.
- Live in such a way as to not cause others to stumble into sin. **1**

Corinthians 10:32-33

³² **Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,**

³³ **just as I also please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.**

- The prayer is that they would not stumble into sin, nor would they cause anyone to stumble into sin.
- If we are faithful to God, someone will be offended.
- If I am faithful to preach God's Word, those who reject God's Word will be offended.
- If I stand on the truth, like 'A man cannot be a woman and a woman cannot be a man' someone is going to be offended – rejection of truth.
- But we can stand on the truth in a way that is not deliberately offensive.
- If I walk up to a man who has deluded himself into believing he is a woman, stick my finger in his face, and scream that his lifestyle is an abomination before God – it might be true, but it is offensive.
- It does not reflect God's love for that person – misrepresents God.
- Everything that needs to be said and done can be in a way that reflects God's true nature and character and love.
- Doing what is right will be offensive to some – especially to those who reject God and His Word.
- But doing what is offensive might hinder someone God wants to save from seeing Him and believing in Him for forgiveness of sins.
- Recently, I heard of a man who was walking around Muslims with a Quran with bacon inside it.
- That is offensive and unloving.
- The exhortation to not offend also relates to our behavior around other believers.

- In Corinthians, Paul gives a lengthy word about our Christian liberty and not using it in such a way as to cause another believer to stumble in their faith.
- It often comes up around the topic of drinking but could apply to many things in this life.
- Is it sinful for Christians to smoke or vape?
- The Bible doesn't speak about either directly and there is division within the body of Christ on that topic and others like it.
- A mature walk with Christ makes those things much easier to sort out.
- Paul finishes that verse telling them how long his prayer for them is meant to carry them.
- 'till the day of Christ' – until you are standing face-to-face with Jesus.
- For as long as we are on this earth we are to be loving more and more in knowledge and discernment, seeking what is excellent, being sincere in our faith, and seeking not to be offensive, causing others to stumble in their faith.
- The good work that God is doing in you is a work of love.
- It is because He loves you and because He wants you to know Him better and better so that you can love Him more.
- And the better you learn to love God, the more you will love others.
- Paul ends this prayer by telling us what comes out of a life like that.
- **Philippians 1:11**
- God saved you because He loves you.
- He created you for His glory – to do good works.
- Those are the things that reflect His nature, character, and love to the world.
- The word 'fruits' has the idea of outcome.
- Just as a tree produces fruit simply by being a tree, a Christian produces the fruits of righteousness simply by walking in righteousness by faith in God and obedience to His Word in the way God created them to live.
- A tree does not try to produce fruit, it simply lives where it is planted.
- Paul tells us the character of that fruit **Galatians 5:22-23**
²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control.

- And Jesus tells us that we can only bear that fruit through Him. **John 15:5**

⁵**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**

- And then a few verses later He tells us the final result. **John 15:8**

⁸**By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

- We were each created in the image of God to be the objects of His love and a reflection of His glory.
 - God is glorified when, in faith, we bear the fruits of righteousness.
 - When we are kind, or gentle, or humble, or compassionate as an expression of our faith in Christ – it glorifies God – people get a glimpse of the nature and love of God.
 - When we love the unlovable, forgive the unforgiveable, or give sacrificially, we are through our faith in Christ, showing the world God’s heart.
 - When we know joy even during our darkest times, we express to the rest of the world the hope we have in Christ.
 - There can be no greater joy in this life than knowing that God loves you.
 - Get to know Him better and better – know His love – know joy.
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 - Paul then shifts from this prayer to letting the church in Philippi know how it is going with him.
 - I am convinced that God is actively involved in the things of my life and yours.
 - And it is not unusual that I do not understand what God is doing or why He is doing it the way He is.
 - The Bible explains why that is true. **Isaiah 55:8-9**
- ⁸**“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. ⁹“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”**
- And that is well and good when you are well, and things are good.
 - But what do you do with those things when you are not well, and things are not good?

- How do we make sense of life when things don't make sense in your life?
- Philippians is a letter that the apostle Paul wrote to the church he founded in Macedonia.
- Life was harder for Paul after he became a believer, but he came to know joy even in the midst of hard things.
- You can read about what he went through in 2 Corinthians 11.
- And here he is chained to a Roman soldier writing a letter that has a strong tone of joy throughout.
- Paul is going to tell us in our text for today that God's way of doing things is the right way even when we don't understand it – even when it makes our life harder.
- And knowing that is true, Paul was able to rejoice.
- One of the reasons Paul wrote this letter was to respond to the concern that the Philippians had for Paul's safety and well-being.
- Paul's future was uncertain, and they loved him.
- Paul changes their focus.
- **Philippians 1:12**
- Paul's focus was not on himself, his comfort, his safety.
- Paul's focus was on the furtherance of the gospel.
- That was why the Philippians cared about Paul – he had brought the gospel to them, they believed – they were the fruit of Paul's focus of the 'furtherance of the gospel'.
- To understand Paul, we must understand that the gospel was the main thing - the only thing.
- Everything else in life was to be secondary to the proclaiming of the truth of the gospel, including his own comfort and security.
- To Paul, life meant furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- He will say that very thing a little further in this chapter. **Philippians 1:21-22a**

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor...

- A few years before Paul wrote this letter, Paul was busy serving Christ.
- He had been ministering to the churches he had helped start in Asia Minor.

- When those churches discovered the church in Jerusalem was suffering, they prepared a generous gift to help support them.
- Paul was one of the men tasked with carrying the gift to them.
- The elders in Jerusalem welcomed him and rejoiced in the gift.
- Paul had a chance to share all the good God had done through Paul's ministry and the church in Jerusalem rejoiced in that too.
- Life was good – but then, Paul is falsely accused by Jews who objected to the gospel – arrested by the Romans – barely escapes an assassination attempt – and is forced to appeal to Caesar to keep from being handed over to the Jews who were trying to kill him.
- And then he is on a ship headed to Rome.
- What will happen to his ministry of furthering the gospel?
- It kept going.
- God's ways are not our ways!
- God's ways are the way to good!
- God's ways are the way to God!
- In this section we will see three aspects of how God's ways are good.
- First – **God's Ways are Good for the Lost**
- **Philippians 1:13**
- Paul was not locked up in some dark, dank, lonely prison cell.
- It was more like house arrest. **Acts 28:16**
- ¹⁶ **Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.**
- Except rather than a monitor around his ankle was a chain attached to a Roman soldier.
- Try to imagine that – every shift change brought someone new for Paul to share the gospel with.
- Paul was allowed to have visitors – those guards experienced the love of Christ shared between believers.
- These were not just any guards – they were palace guards.
- These are the guards who guarded Caesar's palace.
- And they were getting saved – Paul ends this letter with...

Philippians 4:22

²² **All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.**

- The Philippians didn't understand what God was doing when He allowed Paul to be arrested and sent to Rome.
- From a human perspective Paul's life and ministry were over.
- God's ways are not our ways!
- It is unlikely that Paul would ever have an opportunity to share the gospel with as many of the guard as he did by being chained to them night and day.
- If you are anything like me, your life has not gone the way you planned it.
- As a teenager, I was drawn to Jacques Cousteau and so I wanted to be an oceanographer when I grew up.
- Kelly wanted to be a veterinarian.
- Our lives often take unexpected turns.
- Our plans are disrupted or blocked by things outside of our control.
- This is true whether you are a believer in Christ or not.
- But it is faith that tells us that is not a bad thing. **Proverbs 16:9**
- ⁹ **A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.**
- I never imagined I would be spending my life sharing God's Word with anyone who would listen.
- The course of my life changed, and God has used my life to bring the gospel to people I would never have encountered otherwise.
- The same is true for all of us – rarely does someone end up where they thought they would.
- It is not a mistake – it is not a failure on your part – it is not God punishing you – it is not the world conspiring to ruin your life.
- It is God's sovereign will determining the path of your life for His glory and for the good of others, including you.
- It can be hard to rejoice when life takes a turn you weren't expecting.
- Kelly and I are in one of those seasons right now.
- A year ago, if you told us we would be living in Amarillo, Texas preparing to take God's Word on the road, we would have laughed.
- Wherever God is taking you is good, even when it feels bad or hard.
- Trust Him and try to rejoice in the hope of a future with Him.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.**

- Wherever God is leading you is for the furtherance of the gospel.
- Seek Him in the dark times and watch for the doors He is working to open.
- We'll get to the second and third aspects of how God's ways are good next week.
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- **Switch to last PowerPoint slide.**
- **Closing Comments**
- We are going to stop there for the night.
- Thank you for watching all the way to the end of the study.
- Please subscribe, share, and like this video.
- It helps us to get God's radical Word out to others.
- If you have any questions, please connect with me.
- You can email me at rick@radicalword.com.
- You can also connect with me on social media.
- If you are listening to the podcast and would like to tune in to the live stream, you can go to radicalword.com and click on one of the links at the top of the page every Thursday at 7:00pm CST.
- Let's close with a word of prayer.
- God bless you all. Until next time, go be radical with Jesus.
- -
- **Stop recording.**
- For those of you watching the live stream, thank you for your participation.
- I will stay online for a few minutes if you have any questions or comments.
- Have a radical week with Jesus.
- **Switch to Post Stream scene.**
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