



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V24 N47 Nov. 20, 2022

## A Glad Partnership Philippians 1:3-8

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Joy

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

*"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*

**John 15:11**



Is joy  
spontaneous  
or planned?

Prison for most is a scary place. Steel bars, foreboding guards, unfriendly inmates, chains, the unknown – all create an environment of dread. I have had some frightening experiences with places of incarceration. Early in ministry, I had the opportunity to participate in outreach to prisoners at the State Prison in Southern Michigan. This prison, started in 1839, grew to become the world's largest walled prison with almost 6,000 prisoners. The prison encompassed 3,400 acres of farmland and enclosed 57 acres of prison space behind high concrete walls. In 2007, the prison was divided into four smaller prisons on the same property.

Meeting with prisoners was always a somber experience. Visitors would have to make their way through a number of checkpoints before entering an open visiting room. The visiting areas I frequented allowed prisoners to meet on couches or around tables with prisoners, but no touching and no exchange of gifts was allowed. Guards were scattered throughout the room, watching everything. Prisoners were dressed in orange jumpsuits to distinguish them from visitors. Most prisoners were happy to see people from the outside, but the surroundings offered little comfort to anyone present. If you did not fear the disposition of the prisoners, the guards made up for the dreariness of the place with their "no-nonsense" demeanor.

After a few years of interaction with prisoners at Michigan State Prison, I had the opportunity to reach out to inmates at a new minimum security section of the compound. I remember going through all the checkpoints, hearing all the bars slam behind me and being ushered into an open courtyard. Across the yard would be the building in which I would meet inmates. As I was walking past a number of prisoners who were enjoying the open air, I was suddenly struck with a vis-

ceral terror. All the inmates were dressed in plain clothes. None of them had on the fluorescent jumpsuits I associated with prison life. Nothing visible distinguished me from the inmates surrounding me. How was I going to get out? Would the guards confuse me with one of the incarcerated because we were dressed similarly? I clutched my temporary name badge and made sure that it was never out of my sight. Fear of prison is bad enough. Fear of never leaving prison may be worse.

For residents or visitors, prison is no piece of cake. "The Joint" is rarely a place of joy. Remove modern conveniences such as electricity and the Eighth Amendment (no "cruel and unusual punishment") and you have the conditions in which the Apostle Paul found himself. Yet in this depressing place, Paul was able to repeatedly express supernatural joy. "Paul writes while languishing under Roman detention, unsure if he will live or die, reduced to watching his competitors and adversaries advance in Rome and Philippi! Instead, joy is a basic and constant orientation of the Christian life, the fruit and evidence of a relationship with the Lord (Gal. 5:22; cf. Rom. 14:17). As Philippians shows (4:4-7), joy arises from the quiet hope and confidence that the Lord of life will turn affliction into deliverance. Joy in the Lord is not a feeling but an attitude, and as such it can be positively commanded (3:1; 4:4; cf. 2:18)" (Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, Black's New Testament Commentary, 58).

I can have "inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances" even in the most extreme of situations if I am depending on a God who will complete his good work (Ph. 1:6) and am sharing the partnership of the Gospel (Ph. 1:4,7) with faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who help me as I help them until the day of Christ Jesus (Ph. 1:6). Even a prison can become a place of joy and praise if we are firmly dependent upon our Lord.

**Read Philippians 1:3-8**

*3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

*7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle each word that involves emotion or feeling.
- Count how many times "you" or "your" is used in the passage.
- Underline each reference to God.
- Place brackets around the phrase "pray with joy."
- Identify with arrows what is past, present and future in Ph. 1:3-6.
- Place a box around each use of "I" in Ph. 1:7-8.
- Place brackets around the phrase that shows the cause of Paul's emotion in Ph. 1:7.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."



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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What was the source or cause of Paul's positive perspective in Ph. 1:3-8?
2. What is related to joy elsewhere in the book of Philippians (see Ph. 1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17, 18, 28, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10)?
3. What does praying with joy look like (v. 4)?
4. How does partnership in the gospel (v. 5) increase joy?
5. What gives Paul confidence? How does this influence his joy (v. 6)?
6. What is the "good work" that God will complete (v. 6)?
7. What is the "day of Christ Jesus" (v. 6)? How does it contribute to joy?
8. To what does Paul's mention of "chains" refer (v. 7)? What does this detail suggest about joy?
9. Why does Paul appeal to God's testimony in Ph. 1:8?
10. How does Paul's practice of joy influence your own experience with joy?

### Commentary On The Text

The Bible is comprised of many different types of literature. Our own Dr. Tom Bulick frequently teaches a seminary course entitled “The Bible as Literature.” Some books of the Bible contain narrative. Other books are the artful expressions of psalmists or poets. Some books are prophetic and speak in cryptic metaphors and unfolding mysteries. Another literary form would be found in the Epistles. These are letters written to churches or individuals. These letters generally follow a pattern that includes initial greetings and prayers, theological teachings, ethical or practical applications and then closing salutations. The book of Philippians follows this “epistle” pattern quite consistently.

Philippians opens with a section of Greetings and Thanksgiving (Ph. 1:1-8) that leads to specific prayers for the believers (Ph. 1:9-11). Paul’s opening statements are not just perfunctory. His words are personal, heartfelt and emotional. Paul deeply cared for those to whom he proclaimed the Gospel. The opening words of Paul’s epistles are not only customary but are inspired by God and valuable for the edification of even believers today.

Looking closely at these opening statements to the Philippians, we observe Paul’s style of stating one concrete verbal action (“I thank my God,” Ph. 1:3) followed by a number of subordinate clauses and phrases forming a long and complicated sentence (Ph. 1:3-6). The next sentence (Ph. 1:7-8) is equally complex. Greek lends itself to this style of “run-on” rhetoric and the manuscripts, devoid of punctuation, contribute to the problem of deciphering the precise meaning of such intricate composition. The opening greeting of Philippians is long but not Paul’s longest sentence in the New Testament. Ephesians showcases a single Pauline sentence clocking in at over 200 words (Eph 1:3-14).

Out of gratitude (Ph. 1:3), Paul expressed a number of memories, emotions, hopes, and desires for the Philippian believers. These sentiments revealed the depth of Paul’s compassion and serve now as examples for our own evangelism and discipleship. If the original Apostle to the Gentiles was a man of deep compassion, we would do well to follow his example.

Paul prayed for others (Ph. 1:4). His prayer life was frequent, consistent and anticipatory. Twice in verse four, Paul recalled his frequent intercession. “The double reference to prayer indicates the indispensable importance which ongoing and specific prayer had for Paul’s work and for every aspect of the Christian life (cf. esp. 4:6; 1 Thess. 3:10; 5:17). Christian intercession is fundamentally a participation in Christ’s mission and care for the church and the world” (Bockmuehl, 58).

Paul’s prayers introduced the concept of joy, a frequent theme in the book of Philippians. “The noun joy, a word that, together with its verbal form rejoice, Paul will use fourteen times in this letter, more often than in

any other letter. The terms are popularly used today to describe a feeling of pleasure derived from agreeable circumstances. If understood in this light, the reference to joy in this passage might be misunderstood to mean that Paul is happy because the Philippians have alleviated his personal suffering and made him more comfortable by their participation with him in the gospel. It is important in applying this passage to understand that joy was not linked for Paul to his personal comfort but to the progress of the gospel. ...Paul’s joy is unrelated to his own comfort but is instead the contentment that results from seeing the goals of the gospel advanced, whatever that might mean in terms of personal inconvenience” (Frank Thielman, *Philippians*, The NIV Application Commentary, 49).

Paul’s joy was predicated upon the “partnership” he shared with the Philippians. This partnership or “fellowship” (*koinonia*) involved financial support (Ph. 4:16-18) but also included the continued ministry of the Philippians in Paul’s absence (Ph. 4:1-3). Paul repeated this partnership idea in Ph. 1:7 with the phrase “you share in God’s grace with me.” “We should not think of our fellowship with other Christians as a spiritual luxury, an optional addition to the exercises of private devotion. We should recognize rather that such fellowship is a spiritual necessity” (J. I. Packer, *God’s Words*, 193).

Paul’s gratitude continued with the anticipation of the “completion” of God’s “good work” (Ph. 1:6). This “completion” occurs at “the day of Christ.” This suggests that more than personal sanctification is in mind. “Since salvation did not begin with the will of man (cf. Phil. 1:29), it follows that its completion cannot decisively depend upon the power of man. The God-centered nature of salvation is good news because man is fickle but God is faithful to finish what he starts. God’s work will come to full completion ‘at the day of Jesus Christ.’ Paul’s focus on the ‘day of Jesus Christ’ fills Philippians with a pervasive hope of glory (cf. 1:10; 2:10-11, 2:16; 3:20-21)” (Jason C. Meyer, “Philippians,” *Ephesians–Philemon*, ESV Expository Commentary, 135).

Paul finished his greeting with expressions of affection. This affection began with a frame of mind (“feel” Ph. 1:7) that involved personal connection (“my heart”) and ended with Christ’s compassion (“affection of Christ” Ph. 1:8). “Paul claims boldly that he regards the Philippians with the affectionate love (lit.: ‘bowels’) of Christ Jesus. Originally a reference to the inward parts (e.g. heart, liver, lungs), the word *splanchna* (almost always plural) comes to be used for the innermost seat of human emotions” (Bockmuehl, 65).

Paul packed a lot into his opening remarks in the book of Philippians. We benefit ourselves and others greatly by following his example of compassionate evangelism and discipleship.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 3 *thank* “This thanksgiving differs from the thanksgiving sections in Paul’s other letters in its emphasis on the Philippians’ partnership in the gospel, their anticipated completion on the day of the Lord, and his deep affection for them” (David E. Garland, “Philippians,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians–Philemon (Revised Edition)*, 191–192).

v. 4 *always* “not: in every recollection, but, as the article requires: in my whole recollection of you, so that the sense is not: as often as I remember you (so usually, following Chrysostom and Luther), but: my remembrance of you in its entire tenor and compass is mingled with thankfulness towards God” (Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians*, 14).

v. 5 *partnership* “The Greek word underlying ‘fellowship’ is *koinōnia*; depending on the context, it can denote one’s fellowship with Christ or one’s fellowship with other believers, or it can have the notion of ‘sharing’ and ‘generosity’ (as in Phlm 1:6). Paul was thanking God for the Philippians’ spiritual partnership, as well as their financial support (see 4:10–20)” (Philip W. Comfort, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon*, Vol. 16, 154).

v. 5 *gospel* “‘The gospel’ comprises the message about what God has accomplished through the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ that subverts the presumptions and aspirations of those would-be lords who arrogate to themselves the glory and honor due only to God. Here the term ‘gospel’ serves as shorthand for the work of making this message known to the world (1:12; 2:22; 4:3). The gospel joins them together in Christ, and their mutual commitment to its spread unites them ever more closely. The subtext might be that a fractured church can only threaten the gospel’s expansion across the world” (Garland, 193).

v. 6 *completion* “The ‘good work’ in them will reach its culmination and perfection not on the day of the death of the believers and their departure from this world, but at ‘the day of Christ’, i.e. the day of His Advent, the day of His revelation as the Judge of heaven and earth, the day of His final victory. For that day of judgment the church must prepare itself, and up to that day the sanctification of the bridal church, and also her partnership in the gospel, must be continued (cf. 1 Thess. 5:23). Not before that day will the church reach its ultimate destination, will the redemptive work of Christ come to completion” (Jac J. Müller, *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon*, *The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament*, 41).

v. 6 *day of Christ* “On three occasions in Philippians, Paul speaks of ‘the day of [Jesus] Christ’ (1:6, 10; 2:16; cf. 3:20–21). Elsewhere in his letters Paul refers to ‘the day of the Lord’ (1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2), ‘the day of the Lord Jesus’ (1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14), and ‘the day of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Cor 1:8). He also refers to ‘the day’ and to those who belong to it (Rom 13:12, 13; 1 Cor 3:13; 1 Thess 5:5, 8). Prophetic texts within the OT portray ‘the day of the Lord’ as a day of divine judgment (Isa 13:6, 9; Jer 46:10; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:14; Amos 5:20; Obad 1:15; Zeph 1:7, 14) to which the nations, if not Israel herself, would be subject. According to Paul, a person’s fate on ‘that day’ will be based upon and determined through Jesus Christ (Rom 2:16). For those who belong to Christ, it will be a day of salvation and redemption (2 Cor 6:2; Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 1:9–10); for the rest, Paul maintains, it will be a ‘day of wrath’ (1 Thess 5:9; cf. Rom 2:5)” (Todd D. Still, *Philippians & Philemon*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, 31).

v. 7 *feel* “In describing his attitude the apostle uses the term [*phroneo*] (of the twenty-six occurrences in the NT all but three are found in Paul), which is a favourite one in this letter. It turns up on ten occasions: 1:7; 2:2 (twice), 5; 3:15 (twice), 19; 4:2, 10 (twice), in significant contexts where it describes either a true or a false mental attitude.... The references in Paul, especially in Rom. 8, make it abundantly clear that the way one thinks is intimately related to the way one behaves. A person’s thinking and striving cannot be seen in isolation from the overall direction of his or her life. [*Phroneo*] expresses not merely an activity of the intellect, but also a movement of the will” (Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary*, 66).

v. 7 *heart* “[Heart] reflects the Heb. *lēb*, ‘the center of inner life, including emotions, understanding and knowledge, and will’ (Reumann 117). Not all aspects are equally present, however, in any given occurrence. Although some argue otherwise (Reumann 117–18; ‘the whole person’ [O’Brien 68]), it is fair to view the affective component as dominant here (J. Behm, *TDNT* 3.612) since Paul reiterates his attitude in explicitly affective terms, with affection, in v. 8” (Joseph H. Hellerman, *Philippians*, *Exegetical Guide to the Greek NT*, 27).

v. 8 *witness* “Resort to an oath is unusual in the epistles (Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; 1 Thes. 2:5, 10) and demonstrates the great seriousness of what is being said. In such oaths God is spoken of as a witness not in a judicial sense of witness to facts, but in a more general sense of his witnessing to the processes and motives in Paul’s inner life or the reasons for his behaviour under particular circumstances” (O’Brien, 70).

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## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Partner with others to share the Gospel, through joyful intercession and acts of compassion.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



### 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

Imagine your child is in college and you're writing that little darling a letter. Okay, pull it together. Quit crying and pick yourself up off the floor. Whether it's college, trade school, mission work or moving across the country for a job, your sweet, precious, angel child is going to leave your home one day and start building a home of their own. Part of our job is to mold God-loving kids that launch. So, imagine you're writing your child a letter. What will you write? Will you tell him you're praying joyfully for him? Will you speak of the confidence she can have in Christ's sanctifying work in her life? In addition to the overwhelming love you have as a parent, will you speak with the affection you have for another believer? Will you pray he continues growing a deep, abiding relationship with the Lord? Is there any reason why we shouldn't speak to our kids like this today? I get so caught up in the daily management of life that I forget sometimes my kids are not only part of my immediate family, but also part of my Christian family. As a fellow believer, I have the right and responsibility to encourage and disciple my kids through life. Discipleship isn't something that happens when they get older and more mature, it's a daily process of pointing to the Lord and helping to develop a character that reflects His righteousness. Discipleship starts today, this moment. Let's invite God into our daily parenting. Need help or ideas? Check out [wearecentral.org/nextstepkids](http://wearecentral.org/nextstepkids) for tips on discipleship through ages and stages. We're praying for you!

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read Philippians 1:3-8

1. What does Paul do when he remembers his friends in Philippi?
2. How does Paul pray for the Philippians and why?
3. What does Paul pray for the Philippians?

### What Do You Think?

Why is it important to encourage and pray for other believers?

### What Do You Do?

Write a letter of encouragement to another believer (friend, family or church member). Have your parents help you mail the letter.

### CORE COMPETENCY: Joy

I am happy on the inside no matter what's happening on the outside.

### MEMORY VERSE: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

### **Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

### **Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

### **Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

### **The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

### **Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

### **Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

### **Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

### **Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

### **Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

### **Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

### **Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

### **Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

### **Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

### **Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

### **Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

### **Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

### **Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

### **Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

### **Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

### **Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

### **Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

### **Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

### **Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

### **Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

### **Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

### **Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

### **Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

### **Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

### **Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

### **Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

### **Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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**Stephanie Thomas** (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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