

That I  
*May* Know  
Him

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HARVEST HOUSE™ PUBLISHERS

EUGENE, OREGON

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Cover by Koechel Peterson & Associates, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**The New Inductive Study Series**  
**THAT I MAY KNOW HIM**

Copyright © 1998 by Precept Ministries International  
Published by Harvest House Publishers  
Eugene, Oregon 97402

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Arthur, Kay, 1933–

That I may know him / Kay Arthur and David Lawson.

p. cm. — (The new inductive study series)

ISBN 0-7369-0809-9

1. Bible. N.T. Philippians—Study and teaching. 2. Bible. N.T. Colossians—Study and teaching. I. Lawson, David. II. Title. III. Series: Arthur, Kay, 1933–The new inductive study series.

BS2705.5.A77 1998

227'.6'0071—dc21

98-36529

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Printed in the United States of America.

02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 / BP / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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# *P*HILIPPIANS

# KNOWING HIM, KNOWING JOY



Life is tough. Sometimes it's filled with pain and betrayal—or if not betrayal, at least the tensions of interpersonal relationships that can divide us and separate us from what we need most—unconditional love and fellowship with others.

Sometimes our circumstances seem so difficult, so hard, and so confining that it seems we live in a prison with invisible bars and a door that has rusted shut.


Yet...despite it all, whatever may come your way, do you realize that you can have a deep and abiding joy? That's the message of the book of Philippians. During the six weeks of this study, you're going to discover for yourself how to have joy no matter what the circumstances of your life.

So whatever it may cost in the way of discipline to stay with this study, do it. I guarantee you that it will be worth the effort!

OH TO BE ABLE TO SAY,  
“TO LIVE IS CHRIST”  
AND MEAN IT!



How important is it to you to share the gospel? Important enough that you would go to prison if necessary? Wouldn't it be wonderful if your heart was that set on Christ and on the defense of the gospel?



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DAY ONE

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When you study a book of the Bible, you should first observe the text to see exactly what it says. Careful and thorough observation is the key to handling the Word of God accurately, as 2 Timothy 2:15 says. If you will learn to handle it carefully, you will not be ashamed when you see your Lord face-to-face. Remember it is God's Word, not man's, and it is to be respected accordingly.

Your assignment for today is to read through Philippians to gain a general overview of this letter's content.

Make a section in your notebook entitled OVERVIEW OF PHILIPPIANS. In this section, you will need several pages. You might title your comments in your notebook, MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF PHILIPPIANS. Then as you read, note who is writing this epistle and to whom.

When you finish, take a few minutes to record any general impressions you have about this book. By first impressions, we mean . . .

what kind of a letter is it?

what prompted the writing (the circumstances or occasion)?

what is its tone; i.e., instructive, encouraging, admonishing, warning, correcting?

what seems to be happening?

what is the purpose of the letter?

Many times the purpose is not obvious on the first reading, but it will be when you dig deeper into the text.

## DAY TWO

When you observe a book of the Bible, you should begin by looking for the obvious. Usually the most obvious thing is the people who are mentioned. Therefore, today you are to read the first chapter of Philippians and color or underline every reference to the author in a specific color—for example, color or underline each reference blue. This includes any personal pronouns such as *I*, *my*, *me*, or *we*.

When you finish, look at each reference you marked. Then, in your notebook, begin a list of what you learn about the author(s) of this epistle. Title it **FACTS ABOUT THE AUTHOR**.

At this point, don't record all the details of what he is telling the Philippians to do because we will look at this



later. Simply record any facts that would tell you something about Paul as a person. For example, note who he is, where he is, why he is there, what is transpiring, or what has happened before. Doing this will help you discover the historical context of this epistle: when it was written and what was occurring at this time.

Also watch for anything that would give you a clue as to why he is writing this letter. For instance, would verse 9 or verse 27 indicate some concern he feels? If so, make a column in your notebook called POSSIBLE REASONS FOR WRITING. Then list any insights you observe in this column. (You'll pick up more possibilities as you mark the references to the Philippians in the remaining weeks of study.)

As you list your observations, note the chapter and verse from which you gleaned your information. When you finish, think about what you can learn from the author's example and what you can learn for your own life.

### DAY THREE

Read Philippians 2 again, color-coding each reference to the author. Record your observations in your notebook as you did yesterday.

### DAY FOUR

Read Philippians 3 and once again mark every reference to Paul. However, do not take time today to make a list of what you learn about Paul because it would be very detailed and take too long. We will save this exercise for the fourth week of our study of Philippians when it will mean

more because of the content of the chapter. Leave room in your notebook to add these insights later.

## DAY FIVE

You guessed it! Once again mark every reference to Paul as you read chapter 4. List what you learn about Paul in 4:21,22. When you finish your assignment, review the list of all you have recorded about the author of Philippians.

Now what do you learn from your list about Paul? Look at it carefully and see if it tells you who Paul is, where he is, why he is there, who is with him, what his circumstances are, and why he is writing. These are all important for your study of Philippians.

What you are doing by reviewing your observations on Paul is asking the investigative questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how. We call these the 5 Ws and an H.

Considering all that you have observed from the overall context of Philippians, what do you think is the main theme of this letter? In other words, what is it about? What phrases and ideas are repeated? What is Paul's desire for the Philippians? Record the main theme on the PHILIPPIANS AT A GLANCE chart on page 45.

Record your insights in the overview section of your notebook.

## DAY SIX

Today we want to get a brief historical understanding of Paul's relationship to the Philippians. Read Acts 15:36–17:1,



which will tell you of Paul's first visit to Philippi during his second missionary journey (recorded in Acts 15:36–18:22).

Look at the map of the regions Paul would eventually visit on his three missionary journeys. As you read Acts 15:36–17:1, trace the route he took on this second journey that led him to Philippi.

After his third missionary journey, Paul returned to Jerusalem, where he was arrested. After spending three years in Caesarea as a prisoner of the Roman Empire, Paul called upon his rights as a Roman citizen and, appealing to Caesar, was transferred to Rome. Read Acts 28:16-30 and note where Paul is when the book of Acts comes to an end. How does this compare to what you learned about Paul from reading Philippians this week? (Carefully note Acts 28:16.)

You will find a chart, SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN PAUL'S LIFE AFTER HIS CONVERSION, on page 17. Examine the chart, noting the years of Paul's first Roman imprisonment and the dates when Philippians was written. Record this information on the PHILIPPIANS AT A GLANCE chart on page 45.

## DAY SEVEN



Store in your heart: Philippians 1:21.

Read and discuss: Philippians 1:12-26; 4:13-23.

### *QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY*

- ☞ What were some of the first impressions you recorded in your notebook after reading through the book of Philippians?

## Sequence of Events in Paul's Life After His Conversion\*

*\*There are differing opinions on these dates.  
For continuity's sake this chart will be the basis for all dates pertaining to Paul's life.*

Scripture	Year A.D.	Event
Acts 9:1-25	33-34	Conversion, time in Damascus
	35-47	Mostly silent years, except we know that Paul:
Galatians 1:17	14 years	1. Spent time in Arabia and Damascus
Acts 9:26; Galatians 1:18		2. Made first visit to Jerusalem
Acts 9:30-11:26 Galatians 1:21		3. Went to Tarsus, Syria-Cilicia area
Acts 11:26	Galatians 2:1	4. Was with Barnabas in Antioch
Acts 11:29,30		5. With Barnabas took relief to brethren in Judea Paul's second visit to Jerusalem
Acts 12:23	44	Herod Agrippa I dies
Acts 12:25		6. Returned to Antioch; was sent out with Barnabas by church at Antioch
Acts 13:4-14:26	47-48	<b>First missionary journey:</b> <i>Galatians</i> written Proconsul Sergius Paulus on Paphos is datable
Acts 15:1-35; Galatians 2:1	49	Apostolic Council at Jerusalem—Paul visits Jerusalem (compare Acts 15 with Galatians 2:1)
Acts 15:36-18:22	49-51	<b>Second missionary journey:</b> <i>1 and 2 Thessa-</i> <i>lonians</i> written; 1½ years in Corinth, Acts 18:11
	51-52	Gallio known to be proconsul in Corinth
Acts 18:23-21:17	52-56	<b>Third missionary journey:</b> <i>1 and 2 Corinthians</i> <i>and Romans</i> written
Acts 21:18-23:35	56	Paul goes to Jerusalem and is arrested; held in Caesarea
Acts 24-26	57-59	Appearance before Felix and Drusilla; before Festus —appeals to Caesar; before Agrippa—datable
Acts 27-28:15	59-60	Paul goes from Caesarea to Rome
Acts 28:16-31	60-62	First Roman imprisonment: <i>Ephesians, Philemon,</i> <i>Colossians,</i> and <i>Philippians</i> written— 2 years in prison
	62	Paul's release; possible trip to Spain
	62	Paul in Macedonia: <i>1 Timothy</i> written
	62	Paul goes to Crete: <i>Titus</i> written
	63-64	Paul taken to Rome and imprisoned: <i>2 Timothy</i> written
	64	Paul is absent from the body and present with the Lord
		<i>(Others put Paul's conversion about A.D. 35, his death at A.D. 68.)</i>

- ☞ What did you learn about the apostle Paul from marking the various references to him in this epistle? If you are using this book for a group study and you have a white board or static images sheets, list the class observations for the whole group to see. (Remember, all your insights should come from the book of Philippians, so the class should be prepared to back up its insights with Scripture.)
- ☞ What did you learn about Paul's first visit to the city of Philippi? Where is this city located—what country is it in?
- ☞ How was the church first established in Philippi?
  - a. What were the events surrounding it?
  - b. Where did Paul find his first converts?
  - c. How long was Paul in Philippi?
  - d. Why did he leave there?
- ☞ Where was Paul when he wrote the epistle to the Philippians?
  - a. What was Paul's purpose in writing the letter to the Philippians?
  - b. Discuss the verses that give you these insights.
- ☞ What did you learn about Paul this week that you would like to see mirrored in your own life?

### *THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK*

Wouldn't it be wonderful to live in such a way that, with confidence, you could say the very words recorded for eternity by the apostle Paul, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21)? Wouldn't it be wonderful to

know that your life had been spent for the defense of the gospel?

We know from 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 that Paul was acutely aware of his accountability to the Lord. Paul had been appointed by God to proclaim the gospel to Jew and Gentile. He knew he was a steward of the mysteries of God, and he ordered his life accordingly. The Lord Jesus Christ and His glorious gospel were the focus of Paul's life, and he made every moment and every situation count. Thus, we have to assume that if God had taken Paul home to heaven during the time of his first Roman imprisonment, he would not have been ashamed.

If Paul's passion, as stated in Philippians 1:20, becomes our passion, then we will have the same confidence. Think about these words, Beloved. Meditate on them during the week. Use them as a divine plumb line against all that you do...and watch how it affects your decisions, your responses, and your relationships with others and with God.

“According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death” (Philippians 1:20).