

Just for September Leader Guide
Philippians 1

Before You Read: Have you received a letter, an email, or a call recently where a person praised you for something you've done? Think about how that made you feel. As you read, consider Paul's mood as he is writing this letter. How do you think the Philippians reacted when they opened his letter and began to read? It must have been a thrilling moment when they finally heard from their beloved brother, the Apostle Paul.

Read 1:1-11

1. What did you notice? What stuck out to you?
2. What fills you with joy in your life?
3. We learn something important about Paul's prayer life: joy is a key part of it (v. 4). Would you say joy is a part of your prayer life? If not, what are some ways you could incorporate joy into it?
4. Paul is confident that God is doing a good work in the people of Philippi, and the seed that is planted will be ripe for harvest when the Lord returns (v. 6). Can you think of some of the good work God is doing in your life today?
5. Paul prays that they may have the gift of discernment as they go through life (v. 10). Making big decisions can be overwhelming. Over the years how have you discerned what to do in life? Have you felt God was leading you in a particular direction?

Read 1:12-30

6. Suffering is a part of the human experience; Jesus didn't even escape it. How does Paul reconcile his own suffering in light of the gospel?
7. How has suffering shaped your life, either through your own suffering, or what you have witnessed from others?
8. Consider how Paul could be filled with so much joy and hope while suffering. How can this be? What does it teach us?

Prayer: Father in Heaven, send us out to the world filled with love, knowledge, and insight, so that we may discern your will. Give us strength and courage to be Christ's light, to not be frightened of those who oppose us, or discouraged in our struggles. Amen. *(Written by Julie Pincus)*