



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

PHILIPPIANS
& COLOSSIANS

Week 1

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Before You Begin Your Journey...

Think about it—the man who relentlessly travelled throughout the Roman Empire proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God—this same man was now torn from his pulpit, chained to a guard, able to preach only to those who came to him.

Now, in this imprisonment forced upon Paul, he relished the opportunity to contact his beloved brothers and sisters through writing letters known as his prison epistles. It is most likely that Paul wrote Philippians and Colossians while awaiting his trial before Caesar.

Philippians is a book of encouragement for believers who were faced not only with the everyday difficulties of life, but also by the painful reality that their beloved apostle was imprisoned.

As he wrote, Paul must have reflected on his previous visits to Philippi—the Christians there who had been converted and those who rejected the message Paul preached.

As you read, look for Paul's uplifting message, encouraging his readers to find strength in Jesus.

Colossians was written to counteract bad theology. Apparently, some teachers were attempting to convince these already saved Christians that the sacrifice of Jesus and their new life in God needed something more—rituals, special days, mysticism and asceticism. Paul wanted everyone to know that faith and life in Jesus is sufficient for salvation. Not only was Jesus the fullness of God, but the Christian's fullness rests in the relationship with Jesus himself.

We at Plain Truth Ministries pray that your study through Philippians and Colossians will help bring you greater

maturity in our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you as you read and appreciate the Christ-centered intent of the content of Philippians and Colossians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Albrecht". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

1—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God’s written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. We plan to cover the entire Bible in 43 volumes, and while that sounds like a long time, don’t be in a hurry. Take your time! Even though each volume is divided into bite-size daily lessons, you may want to take two days on each “daily” lesson.

2—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule. You will find that the *CWR Bible Survey* will be an invaluable resource for facing your daily challenges.

3—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a study Bible. Plain Truth Ministries has reviewed many of the study Bibles that are available, and in cooperation with Thomas Nelson and Zondervan, we are pleased to be able to offer two superb study Bibles that will be an excellent resource and help to you. Please see the back pages of this book for more details.

4—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

5—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

- **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.
- **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.
- **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

• **Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

6—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

7—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. The *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

• **Abbreviations Used in the *CWR Bible Survey***—

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1Sa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	1Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

PHILIPPIANS & COLOSSIANS

Letters from
a Prisoner

Introduction to Philippians

Authorship: Most scholars agree that Paul wrote this epistle.

Date: Toward the end of his two-year imprisonment in Rome, about A.D. 60-62, Paul wrote this letter of encouragement to the church in Philippi.

Setting and purpose: In A.D. 50, Paul had established this mostly gentile church in Macedonia, north of Greece (Acts 16:6-40). These Christians provide Paul with the financial support he needed for his ministry (Php 4:10, 14-18). Lydia, the slave girl and the jailer were three of Paul's converts.

Philippi was a Roman colony, and its citizens were therefore Roman citizens, a source of some pride for the Philippians. Many had been given land in Philippi in exchange for military service.

Christian service is the theme throughout this epistle: Paul's confidence that Christ worked in the saints (ch. 1); Christ's example as the perfect servant (ch. 2); Jesus alone matters (ch. 3); and the physical, mental and spiritual strength found in Christ (ch. 4).

Paul begins with expressions of deep emotional feelings for these Christians, confident that they are being filled with "the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ..." (1:1-11). He calls for optimism even when the going is rough (1:12-18). Paul lived with a deep purpose in life—to serve Christ (1:19-30). While he hoped for Christ's return, his purpose was to minister to the saints (v. 24), in spite of his physical pain.

The servanthood chapter follows. Paul explains that Christian motives should be pure, with an attitude of humility (2:1-4). Christ was the supreme servant, in his life, death, glory, eternity and in the life of each Christian (2:5-12). Proof of Christian commitment to serving is seen in the life of sacrifice for others and responsibility to God (2:13-18). Timothy and Epaphroditus were sterling examples of Christian service (2:19-30).

In chapter three Paul warned the Philippians about false teachers

(3:1-6). Christians will do well to leave everything behind that gets in the way of their devotion to Jesus (3:7-21). Paul longs to know Christ better, “and so, somehow, attain to the resurrection from the dead” (3:11). The journey of salvation is likened to a race, drawn from the Greek athletic contests of that day.

Paul alerts Christians to stand firm—military terminology for digging in against anticipated attack (4:1). He calls for believers to rejoice, live in moderation and focus on the peace of God (4:2-10). Christians can live in contentment, whether full or hungry, because their strength comes from Christ (4:11-13). Paul concludes with words of appreciation (4:14-23).

Outline:

I. OUTLOOK FROM BEHIND PRISON WALLS, 1

- A. A Message of Confidence, 1:1-6
- B. From Prison With Love, 1:7-11
- C. Chained for Christ, 1:12-18
- D. Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death! 1:19-30

II. SERVANTHOOD IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, 2

- A. It’s Hard to Be Humble, 2:1-4
- B. Christ the Servant, 2:5-11
- C. Activate Your Salvation, 2:12-18
- D. Onward, Fellow Soldiers, 2:19-30

III. WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS, 3

- A. Watch Out for Legalists, 3:1-3
- B. Flesh or Faith? 3:4-7
- C. Stride for the Prize, 3:8-14
- D. Citizens of Heaven, 3:15-21

IV. JOYFUL LIVING, 4

- A. Guard the Crown, 4:1-7
- B. The Mind Game, 4:8-13
- C. Share in Evangelism, 4:14-23

Philippi

Thessalonica

Apollonia

Neapolis

Athens

Corinth

Philippi:

- Founded in 356 B.C. by Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great.
- Located on a flat plain surrounded by mountains on almost every side.
- Located on the main highway connecting Greece and Italy to the east.
- Site of the first church in Europe (Ac 16:12-40).

Aegean
Sea

Area of
detail

A Message of Confidence

DAY 1

Philippians 1:1-6

Remember the lyrics to the hymn: *Shall we gather at the river, the beautiful, beautiful river...that flows by the throne of God.*

1. How do you feel Paul's introduction sets the foundation for this epistle (v. 1-2)?
 2. Paul had established this church (Ac 16:6-40). Who was converted first?
 3. What did Paul remember most about them (Php 1:3-6)?
-

1. How have you come to know God through Jesus Christ? Like Lydia (Ac 16:14)? Or more like the jailer who was shocked that Paul hadn't escaped prison when opportunity had presented itself (Ac 16:29-30)?

2. In what does your confidence lie (Php 1:6)? In God's grace? Or in your good behavior? Which has eternal value?

3. How do you support the gospel? (a) prayer, (b) preaching and proclaiming, (c) finances, (d) other.

Philippi was a Roman colony in Macedonia, north of Greece. Upon receiving a vision of a man in Macedonia asking Paul to come preach, Paul left Asia Minor to cross over to Europe (Ac 16:9-10). Since there was no synagogue in the city, Paul met with the women who gathered by a river for prayer on the Sabbath.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 2

From Prison, With Love

Philippians 1:7-11

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever visited anyone in prison? What were your feelings? (a) concerned, (b) shocked, (c) scared, (d) sobered.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Paul had been imprisoned in Jerusalem, transferred by night to Caesarea, then taken by ship to stand trial in Rome. What were the living conditions of Paul in Rome (vs. 7-8; see Ac 28:16, 30-31)?

2. How did Paul's prayer reflect his deep concern for these Christians (Php 1:9-11)?

3. How does Paul link love to the ability of discernment (vs. 9-10)? What is its result (v. 11)?

LIVING
out the Word

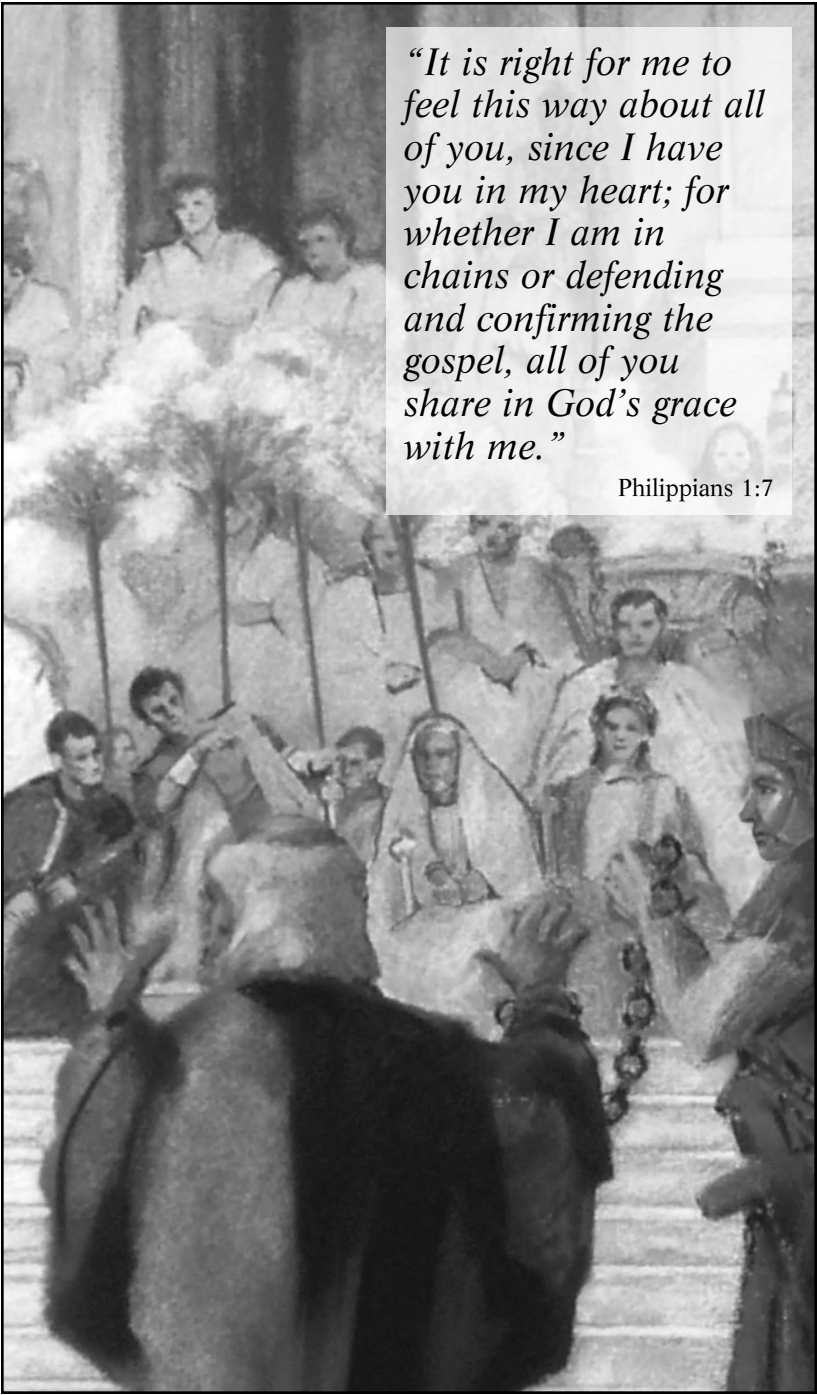
1. List some difficulties that restrict your living conditions. How do you cope?

2. What is your prayer for your children and friends? Can you summarize it like Paul did?

3. Reflect on the righteousness that is in you through Jesus Christ (v. 11).

WINDOW
on the Word

*Paul elsewhere declares **God's love** for us (Ro 5:8) and that God is the source of love (2Co 13:11, 14), and in Philippians he writes that genuine love provides comfort (2:1), that love must be possessed by all (2:2). Love is not blind (1:9). Love is exercised best with insight that leads to purity and righteousness.*



“It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me.”

Philippians 1:7

DAY 3

Chained for Christ

Philippians 1:12-18

OPENING
up to the Word

Look for chains in your community. Where do you find them? (a) on dogs, (b) on criminals, (c) on gates, (d) on keys, (e) in marriage.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How does Paul interpret his circumstances (vs. 12-14)? Did God do this to him? Or did Paul use a difficult circumstance to further serve God?
2. In what ways were preachers motivated to promote the gospel of Jesus (vs. 15-17)?
3. How did Paul evaluate the preaching of Christ from a variety of motives (v. 18)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. If you are “imprisoned”—either literally or by some restrictive circumstance, how do you use your “chains” for Christ? Whom have you encouraged? If you are free of any such encumbrance, how do you use your freedom for Christ?
2. When you talk to others about Jesus, what is your motivation? Have you experienced any of these motivations? (a) envy, (b) rivalry, (c) goodwill, (d) selfishness, (e) sincerity.

WINDOW
on the Word

*Paul had lived for two years in Rome, in his rented house, **chained** to a guard (Ac 28:16, 20, 30-31). In the process of receiving visitors and preaching the gospel, some of the Roman guard had converted to Christianity (see Php 4:22). Some commentators suggest that by the time Paul wrote this epistle, he may have been moved to a prison cell to await the outcome of his trial.*

Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!

DAY 4

Philippians 1:19-30

It has been said that we learn how to live once we accept the reality of our mortality. Death is a macabre subject. How do you view death? (a) release from pain, (b) end of the first stage of life, (c) end of everything, (d) start of the fullness of eternity.

1. What “deliverance” is Paul so sure of (vs. 19-20)? How could death be seen as deliverance?
2. How was Paul torn between life and death (vs. 20-24)? Why did he view death in a positive manner?
3. Responsibility to live as a Christian dominates Paul’s writings. How was life, even in prison, better than death (vs. 24-26)?
4. How did the struggle of Christians in Philippi parallel Paul’s own struggles (vs. 27-30)?

1. How do your prayers help others in their struggles (v. 19)?
2. How does the quality of your life affect your attitude toward life? Toward death?
3. In what ways, in both attitude and conduct, are you progressing in joy in your faith (v. 25)?

Here Paul reflects on difficulties in his life. See 2 Corinthians 11:16-33 for Paul’s account of his early difficulties. Add to that his imprisonment in Jerusalem and Caesarea, his shipwreck off Malta and his imprisonment in Rome. Paul was willing to live in pain and hardship (2Co 12:7-10), but longed for release from his physical body, for he awaited the spiritual body of the resurrection (1Co 15:35-50).

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 5

It's Hard to Be Humble

Philippians 2:1-4

OPENING
up to the Word

Remember this song? *Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble!* Do you find it hard to be humble because you are, like the singer, *perfect in every way?*

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What attributes spring from unity with Christ (v. 1)? How do these attributes motivate a person toward servanthood?
 2. Paul then turns to the attitude Jesus produces in servants of Christ (vs. 2-3). What three attitudes result from being united in Christ?
 3. How does a Christ-follower consider others (vs. 3-4)?
-

LIVING
out the Word

1. How deep are the emotions of Christ living in you (v. 1)? How do you reflect his joy?
 2. What are your God-given attributes?
-

WINDOW
on the Word

Paul uses the Greek word **paraklesis** in the first verse, translated "encouragement" in the NIV. The apostle John used the noun form of this word, *paraklete*, to refer to God the Holy Spirit as the "Counselor"(NIV) or "Helper" (NKJV) in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7. In 1 John 2:1, John used the same word to call Jesus "one who speaks to the father in our defense"(NIV) or our "Advocate"(NKJV). Since God is one as the three divine Persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it is no shock that Paul uses the same word to refer to the work of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Philippians 2:3-4



DAY 6

Christ the Servant

Philippians 2:5-11

OPENING
up to the Word

What is your favorite Christian hymn? Can you sing the first verse from memory?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Read through this passage felt by many scholars to be the lyrics to one of the earliest Christian hymns (vs. 6-11). What attitude of Christ does it emphasize (v. 5)?

2. How does the action of the Son reflect an attitude of being a servant (vs. 6-8)? How would you define a servant? Also, see Luke 22:24-27.

LIVING
out the Word

1. How can service and authority co-exist?

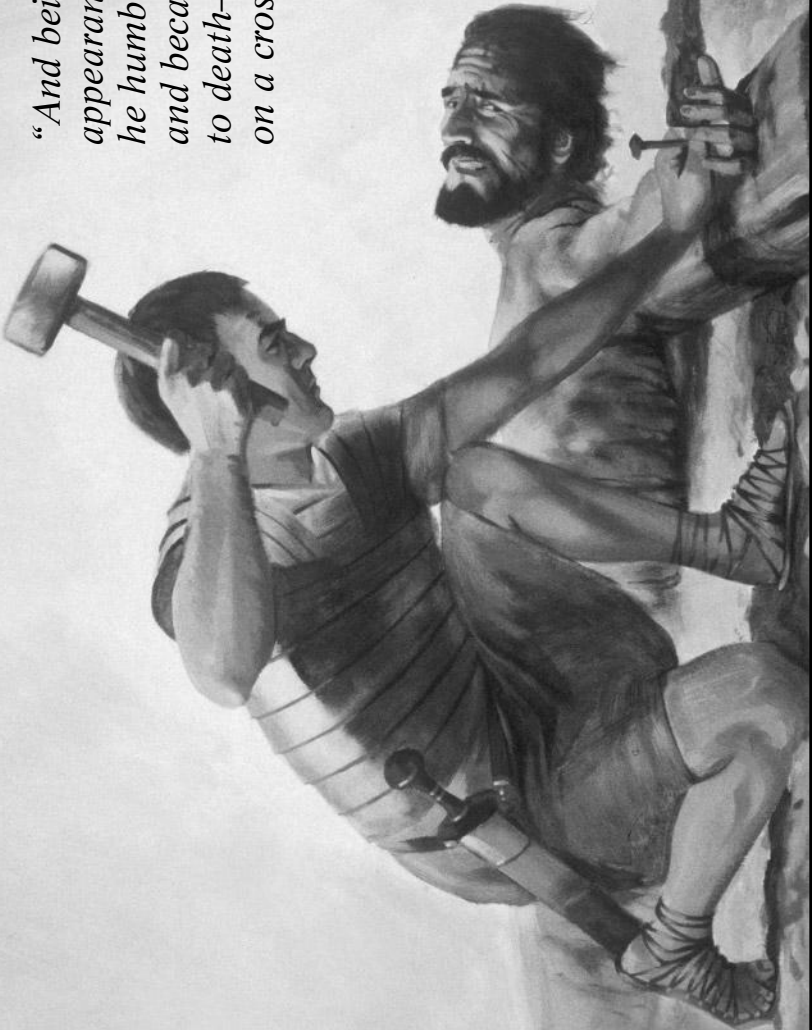
2. Have you ever chosen not to exercise any authority you have over others in order to better serve their needs?

WINDOW
on the Word

*This passage is known as the **kenosis** passage, because Paul uses that Greek term in verse 7, interpreted in the NIV as “made himself nothing.” In his full divinity, the Son chose to take upon himself the fullness of being human, so that he might become one of us, serving us—elsewhere as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 8:9, “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor....”*

*“And being found in
appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient
to death—even death
on a cross!”*

Philippians 2:8



Activate Your Salvation

Philippians 2:12-18

OPENING
up to the Word

Where do you exert your best energy? (a) at the office, (b) at the gym, (c) at the dinner table, (d) on your knees in prayer.

DIGGING
into the Word

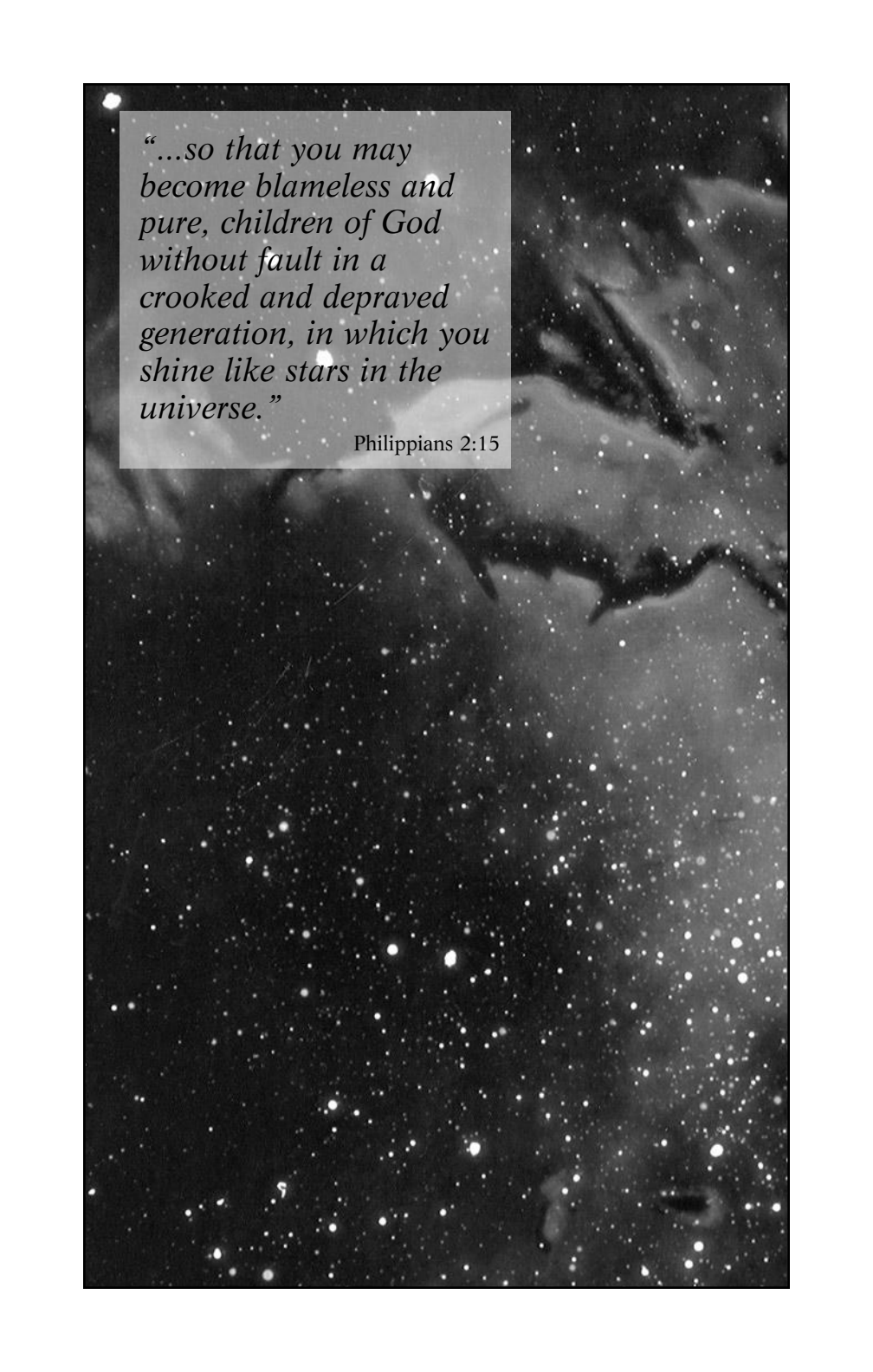
1. How does Paul view the effort Christians exert (vs. 12-13)? Does God do it all? Who gets the credit when salvation is *worked out* (v. 13)? Indeed, can salvation be *worked out* if it is not already present *within*, by God's grace?
2. Why is the spirit of complaining and arguing opposed to God's children (v. 14-18)?
3. Paul uses the imagery of sacrifice to describe Christian service. How was he "poured out" (vs. 17) for them?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How do you feel that God may have changed your will and your action (v. 13)?
2. When did you last complain or argue (v. 14)? Does this passage mean that all complaints or arguments are wrong—or do you think Paul is referring only to divisive and quarrelsome complaints and arguments? Consider the spirit of your complaints and arguments over the next few days. Are you shining like a star in the universe (v. 15)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*In verse 12, Paul uses the Greek term **katergazesthai**, translated "work out" (NIV). From the root of this term (erg) we get the English word energy. Paul's meaning is that Jesus enables Christians to continue the journey to full maturity in Jesus Christ. Verse 14 seems to ban **complaining and arguing** for Christians, yet it is clear that this is not intended to discourage intelligent and productive discussion or disagreement. Acts 15:7 records that the Apostles disputed and discussed major doctrinal questions in the Jerusalem Council. Paul's intent in Philippians 2:14 is that believers work together in a spirit of cooperation, harmony and humility.*

A black and white photograph of a starry night sky. The background is filled with numerous small, bright stars of varying sizes. In the upper right quadrant, there is a prominent, dark, and wispy nebula or galaxy structure, possibly the Orion Nebula, which adds a sense of depth and cosmic scale to the image. The overall tone is serene and majestic.

*“...so that you may
become blameless and
pure, children of God
without fault in a
crooked and depraved
generation, in which you
shine like stars in the
universe.”*

Philippians 2:15