



*Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with JOY-*

*Philippians 1:3-4*



**Get to Know You:** Who is the last person you gave a 'Thank You' card to, or when was the last time you received one from someone. What was it for?

1. **Read Philippians 1:1-5.** Paul is writing this letter from a Roman prison cell just for preaching the Gospel. Who is the letter being addressed to? Paul is thanking God for people despite his circumstances. When we go through tough times, it's often easier to feel self-pity or be justifiably grumpy—especially if things are 'unfair'. How can practicing gratitude for and towards others help to recharge us when we face hard situations?
2. **Read & discuss this statement:** *"Gratitude reorders the heart. When life narrows your vision to pain, gratitude widens it to see grace" (Ps. Inoke).* Think of a time in which you felt overwhelmed by your circumstances. Were you able to find things to be thankful for in the midst of your pain? What happens when we fail to see any good during hard times? How can we come alongside someone who's in a tough place and help them to 'see grace' *without* being dismissive or over-spiritualising their situation? Has there been a time gratitude helped you experience God's grace when life felt overwhelming?

3. **Read Philippians 1:6.** How did Paul encourage his readers? Often our words bear more weight when they are spoken from a place of experience. By encouraging the Philippians that God would finish His work in them, Paul was reminding himself that God would complete the work in him as well—even if he was never released from prison. How can having confidence that God is still writing your story (or the story of someone you love) encourage you to keep going when life feels uncertain or unfinished? Consider **Romans 8:28**.
4. **Read Philippians 1:7-11.** What are some of the things Paul is praying for his friends back in Philippi? This is the second time Paul mentions the return of Christ (verses 6 & 10) Why do you think Paul reminds them of this truth? Consider another of Paul's letters to the church in Corinth—see **1 Corinthians 15:57**. Because of what Jesus has done, we have hope beyond this life. How can remembering God's faithfulness help you with your current struggles at home, work, or ministry?
5. Christian joy is not circumstantial, it is Christ-centred. When we have a prayerful attitude of gratitude it can help us "shift our posture from what's missing (or broken) to what's working". How could listing what's "working" change the way you pray or see your current situation? What are some things you can thank Jesus for today?
6. **Read James 1:2-4.** One key to growth & maturity in our faith is clinging to "what we are becoming, not what we are escaping." Growth doesn't come from "mere intellect" but moral maturity—trusting God to complete His work in you. How can you "live a life of defiance that doesn't let despair have the last word"?
7. As Paul found joy in a prison cell, we find joy "in the kitchen" or "in the hospital" with an "Even if" faith that: 1) Thanks, 2) Trusts, & 3) Prays. Where is God inviting you to discover Christ's presence within your current "even if" moment?