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*“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)*

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## ALL THINGS ARE NOT HELPFUL

There are many activities that people of the world participate in that you may wonder – “Would it be ok if I did that as well? The Bible doesn’t expressly forbid it. Can I do it?” Certainly, there are some things that the Bible expressly says are sinful. Here is such a list.

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you be-*

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*fore, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19-21)*

Anything that does something evil, however small, should be abandoned at once. But there are many activities that are not evil of themselves and are not specifically forbidden in the Bible. How do you decide whether to do them or not?

In the first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul gives some very good guidance.

*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (1 Cor. 6:12)*

Similar guidance is given in 1 Corinthians 10:23-24:

*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.*

From these two passages, the Apostle Paul gives three reasons to avoid certain activities. Let us evaluate each of the reasons that he gives.

While many things are lawful, not all things are helpful or profitable or beneficial. There are many activities which cannot be strictly proven to be unlawful or sinful, yet they don't make you better and may cause injury in some way if indulged in. These things might injure the body, produce scandal, lead to sin in your life or in the life of others, or simply not make you better for doing it. Why engage in something that is not helpful or beneficial in the end? If an activity is not truly beneficial or can in any way be hurtful to yourself or others, avoid it.

While many things are lawful, some things can have power over you. They might develop into a bad habit, consume your time, sap your energy, use up your resources or enslave you in some way.

*For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put*

*to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. (1 Pet. 2:15-16)*

You and I are servants of God and our first allegiance is to Him. Anything that puts Him in second place should be avoided. The Kingdom of God and your service to God can be impacted if you let other things control you or consume you.

*For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (Gal. 5:13)*

While many things are lawful, some things do not edify. They don't make you stronger. Rather than edify others, they may actually tear others down. Be especially careful on things that you do that might cause someone else to stumble or fall away. *"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak"* (1 Cor. 8:9).

*I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. (Rom. 14:14-19)*

Many things are lawful but they may not be beneficial. Many things are lawful, but they can in some way control you. Many things are lawful but they do not edify. I encourage you to voluntarily restrict what you do to avoid activities that inhibit you from better serving God and serving your fellow man.

ED ANDERSON  
(Sierra Vista, AZ)

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. On the fourth day God made the sun, moon and what else?
2. Who gave water to the camels of Abraham's servant, in answer to his prayer?
3. What was the name of Abigail's first husband?
4. In which gospel does Jesus state that he is the "Bread of Life?"
5. After Pilate found no guilt in Christ, for what reason did the Jews say that Jesus should die?

### ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

...and remember last month's questions?

1. What was the reason that Jacob and his family began a new life in Egypt?    FAMINE IN CANAAN (Gen. 47:4)
2. What did Samson do to the Philistines' crops after discovering his bride had been given to someone else?    BURNED THEM (Jdg. 15:5)
3. What was the name of Ruth's son?    OBED (Ruth 4:17)
4. Who said to Mary, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb!"?    ELISABETH (Luke 1:41-42)
5. What did Jesus say you should do if someone asks you to go with them for a mile?    GO WITH THEM FOR TWO MILES (Mat. 5:41)

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

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# PHILIPPIANS 1

## (PART I)

Lately it has been brought up by many people the importance of reading passages from the Bible in context. Of course, there is nothing wrong with finding verses that support a certain topic or theme. There is nothing wrong with using individual verses to create a lesson or to create an article. At the same time, there is something to be said for taking passages from the Bible as written and trying to get meaning from the complete work and not just from a small portion of it. I would like to do this with the book of Philippians. What is it really about? Why was it written? Hopefully, questions that will be answered as we go through this study.

Philippians was written by Paul to the people of Philippi to thank them for their support of him and to offer words of wisdom and encouragement. It is believed that it was written after Paul's second missionary journey during which he and Timothy visited with the Philippian people. It begins in verses 1 and 2 with a greeting.

*Philippians 1:1-2 - Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*

*Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul then talks about how thankful he is for the Philippian people. He says that they are constantly in his prayers that the good work that has been put into them will continue until the day that Jesus returns. Paul also expresses thankfulness for their fellowship in the gospel.

*Philippians 1:3-6 - I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very*

*thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

Verse 6 mentions the good work begun that will be done until the day of Jesus Christ. This is commonly tied to John 6:29:

*Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

Which then ties to 1 John 3:23:

*And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.*

The next verse of Philippians changes the tone slightly...

*Philippians 1:7 - Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.*

Basically Paul is saying “I’m telling you this because you are in my heart, but also because even as I am in jail, even as a defender of the truth of the gospel, all of you (the Philippian people) have access to the grace that I have seen.” Paul wants them to know that no matter what happens here on Earth, as long as they follow God they will be ok.

In the next verse, Paul is saying that God knows just how much that he would really enjoy spending time with the Philippian people, that his heart is truly with them.

*Philippians 1:8 - Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.*

As we can see from the first eight verses of this book, Paul is very thankful for the Philippian people and has great admiration for their stand for the gospel.

The next three verses give Paul's hope that they continue to love not just because of what they know but with how they act. That they continue to follow God's will in everything, approving of the good and being filled with righteousness.

*Philippians 1:9-11 - And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

Paul then goes into his present circumstances. He has been captured, but his bonds can be used to further the gospel. Not just in the palace where he is being held, but all over the world.

*Philippians 1:12-13 - But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;*

The next verse:

*Philippians 1:14 - And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*

How Paul responded to being captured and put in jail made others more likely to speak out. They saw that living for

Two natures beat within my breast  
The one is foul, the one is blessed  
The one I love, the one I hate.  
The one I feed will dominate.

-Author Unknown

## GOSPEL MEETINGS

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<b>DATES</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>
December 7 - 9	Willow Oaks Russell Springs, KY	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
December 28 - 30	Verona Verona, KY	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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Christ and following God's will give them a promise of something greater than what the trials and tribulations of this world could take away. Some had good intentions but not everyone responded in such a positive manner.

*Philippians 1:15-17 - Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.*

Paul's opinion was that it does not matter what the intentions are, but that Christ was being preached and his gospel was being spread. He will rejoice in that fact.

*Philippians 1:18 - What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

Do we rejoice in the same thing or do we worry too much about things that are not as important? Think about that.

A. D.

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### THANK YOU

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