

# IN ALL THINGS

A NINE-WEEK DEVOTIONAL BIBLE STUDY  
ON UNSHAKEABLE JOY

MELISSA B. KRUGER

*Author of Walking with God in the Season of Motherhood*

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*For Shanna.*

*You shine as a light in the world (Philippians 2:15).*

*and*

*For my children, Emma, John, and Kate.*

*May the God of hope fill you with all  
joy and peace in believing (Romans 15:13).*

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## Introduction

# An Invitation to Joy

If I could grant you one wish, what would it be?

Many of us might choose the classic beauty pageant answer: world peace. Or perhaps we'd join the chorus with Jeremiah the Bullfrog's friend and sing, "Joy to the world, all the boys and girls." More than money, fame, or success, most of us are hoping for something greater, something grander—something that will last.

We want joy. We hope for peace. We long for contentment.

Money, fame, relationships, health, and success—these things we chase after—are really just means to an end. We're hoping money can buy us some peace or relationships will bring us joy. However, life doesn't always work as we think it should. Stuff piles up all around us and fails to satisfy. The closest relationships can bring the greatest turmoil. So often these longed-for good desires—joy, peace, contentment—seem just beyond our reach.

You may have picked up this book hopeful. You want joy, and you're looking for a road map to find it. You may have picked up this book weary. You've tried every game in town and wandered every path on a quest for something more, only to find yourself emptier than when you began.

Hopeful or weary, I'm glad you're here. I'm thankful we get to study together for the next nine weeks. I'll tell you from the get-go this isn't a self-help book explaining my top ten secret strategies to find joy. You and I both need something much greater than we can muster up on our own. We need something outside

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ourselves, something stronger, something secure. This thing we're searching for, this thing we're hoping to find? Well, it's not really a thing. It's a person.

Spoiler alert: it's Jesus.

I know that may sound simplistic. It's too easy, right? However, there's so much more to Jesus than we realize. He's the creator, sustainer, and source of every good thing, and in His presence is "fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). The more we know Jesus, the more we know joy, peace, and contentment. As we pull back the curtain and study the book of Philippians, we'll understand how knowing Him more makes such a difference.

You may be wondering, "Why the book of Philippians?" Well, that's a good question. I didn't start studying Philippians with the intention of writing a book, nor was I expecting to find peace, joy, and contentment. They found me. I was simply trying to help a friend.

Years ago, I was walking along the streets of Prague, Czech Republic, with my friend Shanna. Our main goal was shopping—we were on the hunt for a pair of perfectly fitting jeans. While that didn't happen (does it ever?), we did share some rather hilarious moments in the dressing rooms. Nothing bonds a friendship like laughing uncontrollably while trying to squeeze into jeans right next to each other.

As we roamed the streets, our conversation quickly shifted to our personal lives. Shanna lives in Prague with her husband, Phil, and their three children. They moved there ten years ago—far from family and friends—to plant a church and share their faith with others. Even though Prague has a rich Christian history, it's currently one of the most atheistic cities in Europe.

Shanna was hoping to gather on a regular basis with some women she'd met through her children's school to study the book of Philippians together. However, she couldn't find a study she thought would work for those in her group. Instead of a video study, she wanted something that would help each woman learn on her own *and* offer opportunities for group discussion. She casually looked over at me while we were getting in the car and asked, "Will you help me? Will you write some questions on the book of Philippians for me?"

I wasn't really sure what type of questions I might come up with, but I said yes. How could I not? She'd moved her entire family overseas to share Jesus with others. Surely I could spend some time writing up a few questions for her group of women.

Well, as it turned out, I couldn't just write *a few questions*. I wrote an entire

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study. And the more I studied, the more I came to love the book of Philippians. Her simple request is the reason you're holding this study in your hands today.

Philippians is an invitation to joy, written by an imprisoned apostle Paul to believers in the early church who were suffering from opposition. His continual refrain throughout the letter is "Rejoice!"

His joy was unshakeable. His peace was secure. His hope was abounding. Where did he find such depths of riches in the midst of such dire circumstances? From what source did he drink that filled him so fully? How did he learn the secret of contentment?

Can I learn it too?

All these questions lingered in my mind as I read Philippians time and again. The more I studied, the more I recognized how different Paul's joy was from the happiness I usually seek. Too often I set my heart on fool's gold and false treasure rather than on the riches found in Christ. Worldly items—the perfect home, a dream job, an amazing vacation, or financial security—may provide momentary happiness but repeatedly fail to satisfy. It's not wrong to enjoy any of these items; they're simply insufficient for lasting contentment. All too quickly, they lose their luster.

As we study together, my hope is that you and I will learn to recognize (and put aside) misguided and unsatisfying methods for finding contentment and instead seek the One who is the source of abiding joy.

God has faithfully given His Word to us as the means to know Him and transform us. Each week of this study, we will use a simple three-step method to ponder selected texts of Scripture, all of which are printed in the book for your convenience:

1. Observation: What does the text say?
2. Interpretation: What does the text mean?
3. Application: How does the text transform me?

All three of these steps are vital in our study of the Bible. Without proper observation, it's impossible to have correct interpretation or application. Without interpretation, our observation can become a fact hunt, useful only for trivia knowledge. Without application, we fail to make the connection between God's words and our own lives.

I've organized the study into four days of homework per week. Typically, Day 1

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will focus on observing the text by reading it carefully. Days 2 and 3 will usually center on interpretation, and Day 4 will be spent applying what we've learned. I've also included a Day 5 Devotional that's best read after you've completed your notes for the week.

I encourage you to complete each week's study over the course of the week rather than in one sitting. For the Scriptures to speak, we need time to soak them in and ponder what the text is saying. Studying for twenty to thirty minutes a day will allow you time to think and meditate. Just as food tastes better when it marinates, the Scriptures satisfy us more as we savor and reflect on them.

So let's begin. My hope and prayer is that as we study this book, we will become women of abiding joy. As the English Puritan minister Samuel Ward said,

Keep your faith, and it will keep your joy. It keeps you even without ebb and flow, turning ever upon the hinges of heavenly joys. . . . Is it not fitting for the righteous to rejoice? What is a Christian but one who is joyful? Does not the kingdom of heaven consist in joy? . . . Show me your faith by your joy. Use your faith, and have joy; increase your faith and increase your joy.<sup>1</sup>

In His joy,  
Melissa Kruger

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Week 1

# We Need More Than a Spiritual Experience

*Joy in Salvation*

**Acts 7–16**

If ever the world needed the witness and testimony of Christian people it is at this present time. The world is unhappy, it is distracted and frightened, and what it needs is to see stars shining out of the heavens in the midst of the darkness, attracting the world by rebuking that darkness, and by giving it light, showing how it too can live that quality of life.

—Martyn Lloyd-Jones

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## DAY 1: OBSERVATION

### *What Does the Text Say?*

For four very long years (it felt like an eternity at the time), my husband and I dated long distance. He was in seminary in California, and I was in college at the University of North Carolina. We lived about as far from each other as we could and still be in the same country.

Email was yet to be invented, and long-distance phone calls came at a steep price. So we wrote letters back and forth to each other. He saved every letter I wrote him, and I did the same. Currently, they're stored up in our attic, treasures of the early stages of our relationship.

Perhaps you, too, have a treasured collection of correspondence. The words of loved ones are important to us. We read them time and again, and we save them, keeping them as reminders of relationships that matter dearly.

When we read the New Testament, it's easy to forget that many of the books were letters. Of course the writers were inspired by God through the Holy Spirit, but these letters also are historical documents, exchanged between actual people in an actual time and place.

For that reason, in this first week of study, we're going to begin in the book of Acts, which reveals some key details about the life of Paul (the author of Philippians). We'll also meet a few early members of the Philippian church.

As we read the book of Philippians in the days to come, it will help to keep in mind that Paul was a real individual, writing to a real congregation. His words are rooted in a historical context and have been saved for two thousand years.

The letters my husband and I wrote to each other might survive a generation or two. I hope my grandchildren find them and enjoy reading the words we wrote as our relationship developed. However, I doubt they'll last much longer than that.

In contrast, Paul's words have been preserved all these years for you and me. These words are still relevant because, ultimately, they are written by a God who is eternally relevant. While historically the book of Philippians records a conversation between Paul and his beloved brothers and sisters in Philippi, all of God's Word is a letter between God and His people, as He reveals Himself throughout the ages.

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What a gift! The God of all the universe speaks to you and me. He invites us to come and learn from Him. We have an amazing opportunity before us today and for the next nine weeks. We get to hear from the Lord through His messenger, the apostle Paul. I cannot wait to dig into these truths with you.

I encourage you to open your time in prayer, asking the Lord to speak to you as you read and to give you joy in this time with Him.

We'll begin today by looking at Paul's arrival on the biblical stage. Known initially by his Hebrew name, Saul, he first appears in the book of Acts just after Stephen, a man full of grace and power, preaches and testifies to the Jewish rulers about Jesus, a message that sparks their anger.

Read Acts 7:58–8:3.

<sup>58</sup>Then they cast [Stephen] out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup>And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." <sup>60</sup>And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

<sup>8:1</sup>And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. <sup>2</sup>Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup>But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

1. List two or three things you learn about Saul from this passage.

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2. Thankfully, Saul's story doesn't end there. Read **Acts 9:1–9** and answer the questions that follow.

<sup>1</sup>But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. <sup>4</sup>And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" <sup>5</sup>And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. <sup>6</sup>But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." <sup>7</sup>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. <sup>8</sup>Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

- a. Why was Saul going to Damascus?
- b. Who appeared to Saul along the way, and how did Saul respond?
- c. What happened to Saul afterward?

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### 3. The story continues in Acts 9:10–19.

<sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” <sup>11</sup>And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. <sup>16</sup>For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” <sup>17</sup>So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; <sup>19</sup>and taking food, he was strengthened.

a. Who was Ananias? How did he feel about visiting Saul?

b. What specific ministry did God plan for Saul (verse 15)?

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c. How did Saul respond to Ananias's words?

4. Continue reading Saul's story in **Acts 9:19–30**.

<sup>19</sup>For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. <sup>20</sup>And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." <sup>21</sup>And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?" <sup>22</sup>But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

<sup>23</sup>When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, <sup>24</sup>but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, <sup>25</sup>but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

<sup>26</sup>And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup>But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup>So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup>And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. <sup>30</sup>And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

a. Once Saul believed in Jesus, what did he begin to do (verse 20)?

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- b. What challenges did he encounter (verses 23–25)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. How did many of the disciples feel about Saul?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- d. Who brought him to the apostles?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- e. How do you think Saul's past affected his ministry to others?

Notice the abrupt transformation in Saul's life. The persecutor had become the preacher—and then the persecuted. Only a divine meeting could produce such a metamorphosis in Saul. He changed from being an enemy of the church to being willing to suffer for it. He went from being devoted to destroying the church to risking his own life to build it. Meeting Jesus changed everything.

The turmoil that began with Stephen's message continued to affect followers of Jesus, as well as Saul's ministry.

- 5. Read Acts 11:19–26 and answer the questions that follow.

<sup>19</sup>Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch,

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speaking the word to no one except Jews. <sup>20</sup>But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup>The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, <sup>24</sup>for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. <sup>25</sup>So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, <sup>26</sup>and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

- a. What happened because of the scattering that occurred after Stephen's death?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Where was Barnabas sent? How long did he stay there? What significant thing happened there?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. How does this passage demonstrate the truth of God's words to Ananias about Saul in Acts 9:15?

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Saul's salvation is a miraculous story. Not only did God change his heart, but He also set him apart as an apostle, giving him the special calling of authority in the church and, later, the privilege of writing the very words of Scripture. God intervened and transformed this man's life in an amazing way, setting him on a course to share the good news of Jesus with those outside the Jewish faith, who knew him by his Greek name, Paul. God prepared a ministry for Paul and prepared Paul for the ministry.

While we are unlikely to experience a blinding light on the road to Damascus, each of us has a story of faith that's a miracle in its own way. Your story may be just as dramatic as Paul's, or you may have experienced a slow awakening to faith. God calls each of us to Himself in different ways. Whatever way He worked in your life, the good news is that the scales that once blinded you to faith fell from your spiritual eyes! God has prepared a ministry for you and has prepared you for a ministry to others.

Close your time today by thinking about how you came to faith. Write down how you learned of Jesus and the ways you've seen your faith grow throughout the years. What particular moments, if any, stand out to you? Take time to praise God for the people and ways He used to call you to Himself.

If you're not certain you believe in God or Christianity, write down your questions. Do you have doubts? Are you fearful or distrustful of religion? What keeps you from believing in Jesus? Take time to pray that God would meet you in your doubts and that Christ would become real to you.



## DAY 2: OBSERVATION

*What Does the Text Say?*

Yesterday we observed the amazing transformation that happened in Paul's life after his encounter with Jesus. He went from persecutor to preacher to persecuted.

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In the course of his life, Paul traveled around the Roman Empire bringing the good news of Christ. Paul spent the majority of his time preaching to Gentiles (non-Jewish people). Accompanied by various other disciples, he made a total of three missionary journeys.

Today we'll consider Paul's second missionary journey, which eventually took him to Macedonia, a region that included the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea.

We'll begin our study in Acts 15 and 16 to gain helpful insights about the people Paul wrote to in his letter to the Philippians. We'll divide it into smaller sections so you can reflect as you read.

1. Read **Acts 15:36–16:5** and answer the questions that follow.

<sup>36</sup>And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” <sup>37</sup>Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. <sup>38</sup>But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. <sup>39</sup>And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, <sup>40</sup>but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. <sup>41</sup>And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

<sup>16:1</sup>Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. <sup>2</sup>He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. <sup>3</sup>Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. <sup>4</sup>As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup>So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

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- a. Who accompanied Paul on this particular missionary journey? Who was noticeably absent?
- b. List the regions they traveled through. (If you have a map of Paul's second missionary journey in your Bible, you may find it helpful to take the time to locate these cities.)
- c. What did they do in each of the cities they visited? What was the result (verses 4–5)?

After years of preaching and traveling together, Paul and Barnabas separated over a disagreement about Mark, who had deserted them on an earlier journey. On this missionary journey, Paul traveled with Silas, Timothy, and Luke. (Luke is the author of Acts, an eyewitness to these events.) After various twists and turns, the Holy Spirit guided them to Philippi.

## 2. Read Acts 16:9–10.

<sup>9</sup>And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” <sup>10</sup>And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

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- a. Describe the vision Paul had.
- b. How did Paul and his fellow travelers respond?

Paul and his companions had three significant encounters during their time in Philippi. Let's look at each situation and observe what happened.

3. First Encounter: read **Acts 16:11–15**.

<sup>11</sup>So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, <sup>12</sup>and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. <sup>13</sup>And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. <sup>14</sup>One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup>And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

- a. What do you learn about the city of Philippi?

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- b. To whom did Paul and Timothy speak by the riverside?
  - c. List three things you learn about this person.
  - d. How does verse 14 describe what happened as she listened to Paul's message?
  - e. How did belief in the apostles' message translate into action for this woman? What two things did she do in verse 15?
4. Second Encounter: read **Acts 16:16–24**.

<sup>16</sup>As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup>She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."

<sup>18</sup>And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

<sup>19</sup>But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they

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seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. <sup>20</sup>And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. <sup>21</sup>They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” <sup>22</sup>The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. <sup>23</sup>And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. <sup>24</sup>Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

- a. What did Paul do about the slave girl who followed them?
  - b. How did the slave girl's life change? Why were her owners angry with Paul (verse 19)?
  - c. List everything that happened to Paul and Silas in verses 22–24.
5. Third Encounter: read **Acts 16:25–34**.

<sup>25</sup>About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, <sup>26</sup>and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken.

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And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. <sup>27</sup>When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup>But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." <sup>29</sup>And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup>Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup>And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." <sup>32</sup>And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup>And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. <sup>34</sup>Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

- a. How did Paul and Silas respond to their imprisonment? Who listened to them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. What happened to the prisoners as a result of the earthquake?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. How did the jailer respond when he believed all the prisoners had escaped?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- d. What did Paul say to relieve his fears? How did the jailer respond?

- e. How did Paul answer his question, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”
  - f. What four actions did the jailer take once he believed the message?
6. We find the conclusion of Paul’s visit to Philippi in **Acts 16:35–40**.

<sup>35</sup>But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, “Let those men go.” <sup>36</sup>And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace.” <sup>37</sup>But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.” <sup>38</sup>The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. <sup>39</sup>So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. <sup>40</sup>So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

- a. The next day, the magistrates released Paul and Silas. How did Paul respond?

b. Who did Paul and his companions visit on their way out of Philippi?

Paul met many people during his time in Philippi. They represented various nationalities and stations in society. Lydia was a businesswoman from Thyatira, wealthy enough to be able to invite Paul and his companions to her household. He also met a slave girl, devoid of personal rights and used for the monetary gain of her owners. In prison, he interacted with fellow prisoners, who listened to his songs in the night. Paul also conversed with a Roman guard, sharing the gospel with his entire household.

Notice the diversity of those with whom Paul engaged: men and women, rich and poor, religious and nonreligious, politically connected and enemies of the state. The good news of the gospel is for everyone. No one is so good that she doesn't need the gospel, and no one is so lost that the gospel can't find her.

Take some time today to think of those in your own life. Do you know someone who needs to hear the good news of the gospel? Pray for that person, that the Lord might open his or her heart to the message, just as He did with Lydia, and that the Lord will give you opportunities to share.

Close your time in prayer, praying with David,

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit. (Psalm 51:12)

### DAY 3: INTERPRETATION

*What Does the Text Mean?*

Today, we'll revisit the passage from yesterday, seeking to understand more fully what the text means. While observation questions are usually pretty straightforward and the answers are found directly in the text, interpretation questions allow us

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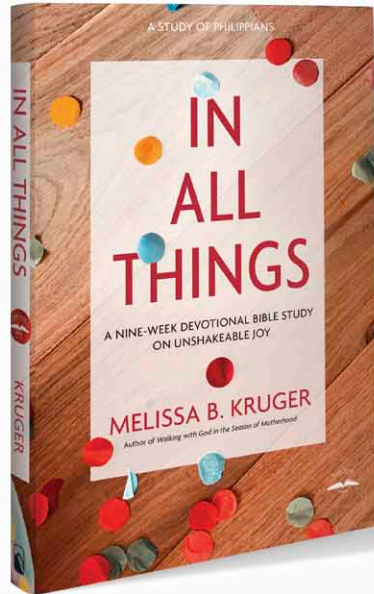
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