

December 13 Answers

- 1) Philippians is the first of what are known as the "**Prison** Epistles" (Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon), so named because they were written during Paul's imprisonment in **Rome**. This letter has many insights on how to be a disciple of Jesus. First, Paul emphasized the need to **rejoice**. This teaches us that joy is both a **decision** and an **emotion**. As we **focus** our minds on what God is doing and choose to **praise** God in every situation, the Spirit produces within us a feeling of joy. Second, Paul highlighted the fact that his imprisonment had served to **advance** the gospel. This teaches us to **notice** and **rejoice** in how God is using the circumstances in our lives to spread the good news and make us more like Jesus. Third, Paul encouraged the church to let their **conduct** be worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil 1:27). Rather than acting from selfish ambition and conceit, they were to **humble** themselves, considering **others** as more important. This teaches us to imitate the mindset and attitude of **Jesus**. Fourth, Paul warned against false **teachers**. The Jews who demanded circumcision and works of the law were quick to tout their **fleshly** credentials. Paul dismissed such claims and reminded the Philippians that he could boast of the same things, yet he counted them as **rubbish** "in order that I may know Christ" (Phil 3:8). This teaches us that the righteousness which really matters is the righteousness that depends on **faith**, for the ultimate credential is to **know** Christ and the power of His resurrection. Finally, Paul admonished the Philippians to be **content** in every situation. He revealed that the secret to obeying this command is found in the glorious truth: "I can do **all** things through him who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). This teaches us to regard what God has given us to be **enough** and rest in the knowledge that He will supply our needs as He sees fit.