

# BITTER OR BETTER

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### SHARPEN THE POINT

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*For further study of today's message*

**ENTRY POINT:** Think of the Book of Philippians as Paul's love letter to the believers in Philippi! He wrote it to encourage the church, which he had founded and loved so well and he was able to encourage them in spite of the fact he was imprisoned in Rome at the time. His joy came from his relationship with God and far surpassed the reality of his circumstances!

**Begin your study by reading the Book of Philippians.**

**Paul assured his readers that even his imprisonment was working toward the glory of God. What do others see in the way you handle difficult circumstances? Are they encouraged by your strength and joy in the Lord?**

**What difficult circumstances has God used to develop your character? What was the resulting awareness, or joy?**

**How does your life change when you accept the fact that God has planned *everything* for you? How much differently do you look at illness, death, debt, disaster knowing they are all a part of God's grand design?**

**Paul's clear objective after his conversion was the fulfillment of his calling by God through Jesus. How does that compare with your main objective in life?**

*"My brethren, count it all joy  
when you fall into various trials,  
knowing that the testing of your faith  
produces patience."  
James 1:2-3 (NKJV)*