

Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians

1 Greeting

2 Polycarp, and the presbyters with him, to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi:
3 Mercy to you, and peace from God Almighty, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, our
4 Saviour, be multiplied.

5 Chapter 1. Praise of the Philippians

6 I have greatly rejoiced with you in our Lord Jesus Christ, because you have
7 followed the example of true love [as displayed by God], and have accompanied,
8 as became you, those who were bound in chains, the fitting ornaments of saints,
9 and which are indeed the diadems of the true elect of God and our Lord; and
10 because the strong root of your faith, spoken of in days Philippians 1:5 long gone
11 by, endures even until now, and brings forth fruit to our Lord Jesus Christ, who for
12 our sins suffered even unto death, [but] whom God raised from the dead, having
13 loosed the bands of the grave. In whom, though now you see Him not, you believe,
14 and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; 1 Peter 1:8 into
15 which joy many desire to enter, knowing that by grace you are saved, not of
16 works, Ephesians 2:8-9 but by the will of God through Jesus Christ.

17 Chapter 2. An exhortation to virtue

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18 Wherefore, girding up your loins, [1 Peter 1:13](#); [Ephesians 6:14](#) serve the Lord
19 in [fear](#) and [truth](#), as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and [error](#) of the
20 multitude, and [believed](#) in Him who raised up [our Lord Jesus Christ](#) from the dead,
21 and gave Him [glory](#), [1 Peter 1:21](#) and a throne at His right hand. To Him all
22 things [1 Peter 3:22](#); [Philippians 2:10](#) in heaven and on earth are subject. Him every
23 spirit serves. He comes as the Judge of the living and the dead. [Acts 17:31](#) His
24 blood will God require of those who do not [believe](#) in Him. But He who raised
25 Him up from the dead will raise us up also, if we do His [will](#), and walk in His
26 commandments, and [love](#) what He loved, keeping ourselves from all
27 unrighteousness, [covetousness](#), [love of money](#), [evil](#) speaking, false [witness](#); not
28 rendering [evil](#) for [evil](#), or railing for railing, [1 Peter 3:9](#) or blow for blow, or
29 cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: Judge
30 not, that you be not judged; [Matthew 7:1](#) forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you;
31 be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; [Luke 6:36](#) with what measure you
32 measure, it shall be measured to you again; [Matthew 7:2](#); [Luke 6:38](#) and once
33 more, Blessed are the [poor](#), and those that are [persecuted](#) for righteousness' sake,
34 for theirs is the [kingdom of God](#).

35 **Chapter 3. Expressions of personal unworthiness**

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36 These things, brethren, I write to you concerning righteousness, not because I take
37 anything upon myself, but because you have invited me to do so. For neither I, nor
38 any other such one, can come up to the wisdom [2 Peter 3:15](#) of the blessed
39 and [glorified Paul](#). He, when among you, accurately and steadfastly taught the
40 word of [truth](#) in the presence of those who were then alive. And when absent from
41 you, he wrote you a letter, which, if you carefully study, you will find to be the
42 means of building you up in that [faith](#) which has been given you, and which, being
43 followed by hope, and preceded by [love](#) towards [God](#), and [Christ](#), and our
44 neighbour, is the mother of us all. [Galatians 4:26](#) For if any one be inwardly
45 possessed of these graces, he has fulfilled the command of righteousness, since he
46 that has [love](#) is far from all [sin](#).

47 **Chapter 4. Various exhortations**

48 But the [love of money](#) is the root of all evils. [1 Timothy 6:10](#) [Knowing](#), therefore,
49 that as we brought nothing into the world, so we can carry nothing
50 out, [1 Timothy 6:7](#) let us arm ourselves with the armour of
51 righteousness; [Ephesians 6:11](#) and let us teach, first of all, ourselves to walk in the
52 commandments of the Lord. Next, [teach] your wives [to walk] in the [faith](#) given
53 to them, and in [love](#) and purity tenderly loving their own husbands in all [truth](#), and
54 loving all [others] equally in all [chastity](#); and to train up their children in

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55 the **knowledge** and **fear** of **God**. Teach the **widows** to be discreet as respects
56 the **faith** of the Lord, **praying** continually **1 Thessalonians 5:17** for all, being far
57 from all **slandering**, evil-speaking, false-witnessing, **love of money**, and every kind
58 of **evil**; **knowing** that they are the altar of **God**, that He clearly perceives all things,
59 and that nothing is hid from Him, neither reasonings, nor reflections, nor any one
60 of the secret things of the heart.

61 **Chapter 5. The duties of deacons, youths, and virgins**

62 **Knowing**, then, that **God** is not mocked, **Galatians 6:7** we ought to walk worthy of
63 His commandment and **glory**. In like manner should the **deacons** be blameless
64 before the face of His righteousness, as being the servants of **God** and **Christ**, and
65 not of men. They must not be slanderers, double-tongued, **1 Timothy 3:8** or lovers
66 of money, but temperate in all things, compassionate, industrious, walking
67 according to the **truth** of the Lord, who was the servant **Matthew 20:28** of all. If we
68 please Him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according
69 as He has promised to us that He will raise us again from the dead, and that if we
70 live worthily of Him, we shall also reign together with
71 Him, **2 Timothy 2:12** provided only we **believe**. In like manner, let the young men
72 also be blameless in all things, being especially careful to preserve purity, and
73 keeping themselves in, as with a bridle, from every kind of **evil**. For it is well that

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74 they should be cut off from the [lusts](#) that are in the world,
75 since every [lust wars](#) against the spirit; [1 Peter 2:11](#) and neither fornicators, nor
76 effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with [mankind](#), shall inherit the [kingdom of](#)
77 [God, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#) nor those who do things inconsistent and unbecoming.
78 Wherefore, it is needful to abstain from all these things, being subject to
79 the [presbyters](#) and [deacons](#), as unto God and Christ. The [virgins](#) also must walk in
80 a blameless and pure [conscience](#).

81 **Chapter 6. The duties of presbyters and others**

82 And let the [presbyters](#) be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those
83 that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the [widow](#), the orphan, or
84 the [poor](#), but always providing for that which is becoming in the sight
85 of [God](#) and [man](#); [Romans 12:17](#); [2 Corinthians 8:31](#) abstaining from all [wrath](#),
86 respect of [persons](#), and [unjust](#) judgment; keeping far off from all [covetousness](#), not
87 quickly crediting [an [evil](#) report] against any one, not severe in judgment,
88 as [knowing](#) that we are all under a debt of [sin](#). If then we entreat the Lord to
89 forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive; [Matthew 6:12-14](#) for we are before
90 the eyes of our Lord and [God](#), and we must all appear at the judgment-seat
91 of [Christ](#), and must every one give an account of himself. [Romans 14:10-](#)
92 [12](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#) Let us then serve Him in [fear](#), and with all reverence, even

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93 as He Himself has commanded us, and as the [apostles](#) who preached
94 the [Gospel](#) unto us, and the [prophets](#) who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the
95 Lord [have alike taught us]. Let us be [zealous](#) in the pursuit of that which is [good](#),
96 keeping ourselves from causes of offense, from false brethren, and from those who
97 in hypocrisy bear the name of the Lord, and draw away vain men into [error](#).

98 **Chapter 7. Avoid the Docetæ, and persevere in fasting and prayer**

99 For whosoever does not confess that [Jesus Christ](#) has come in the flesh, is
100 antichrist; [1 John 4:3](#) and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the [cross](#), is
101 of the [devil](#); and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own [lusts](#), and
102 says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the [first-born](#) of [Satan](#).
103 Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their [false doctrines](#), let us return to
104 the word which has been handed down to us from [Jude 3](#) the beginning; watching
105 unto [prayer](#), [1 Peter 4:7](#) and persevering in [fasting](#); beseeching in our supplications
106 the all-seeing God not to lead us into [temptation](#), [Matthew 6:13](#); [Matthew 26:41](#) as
107 the Lord has said: The spirit [truly](#) is willing, but the flesh is
108 weak. [Matthew 26:41](#); [Mark 14:38](#)

109 **Chapter 8. Persevere in hope and patience**

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110 Let us then continually persevere in our [hope](#), and the earnest of our righteousness,
111 which is [Jesus Christ](#), who bore our [sins](#) in His own body on the
112 tree, [1 Peter 2:24](#) who did no [sin](#), neither was guile found in His
113 mouth, [1 Peter 2:22](#) but endured all things for us, that we might live in
114 Him. [1 John 4:9](#) Let us then be imitators of His patience; and if we
115 suffer [Acts 5:41](#); [1 Peter 4:16](#) for His name's sake, let us glorify Him. For He has
116 set us this example [1 Peter 2:21](#) in Himself, and we have [believed](#) that such is the
117 case.

118 Chapter 9. Patience inculcated

119 I exhort you all, therefore, to yield [obedience](#) to the word of righteousness, and to
120 exercise all patience, such as you have seen [set] before your eyes, not only in the
121 case of the [blessed Ignatius](#), and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others among
122 yourselves, and in [Paul](#) himself, and the rest of the [apostles](#). [This do] in the
123 assurance that all these have not run [Philippians 2:16](#); [Galatians 2:2](#) in vain, but
124 in [faith](#) and righteousness, and that they are [now] in their due place in the
125 presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they loved not this present
126 world, but Him who died for us, and for our sakes was raised again by [God](#) from
127 the dead.

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128 Chapter 10. Exhortation to the practice of virtue

129 Stand fast, therefore, in these things, and follow the example of the Lord, being
130 firm and unchangeable in the [faith](#), loving the brotherhood, [1 Peter 2:17](#) and being
131 attached to one another, joined together in the [truth](#), exhibiting the meekness of the
132 Lord in your intercourse with one another, and despising no one. When you can do
133 good, defer it not, because [alms](#) delivers from death. [Tobit 4:10](#), [Tobit 12:9](#) Be all
134 of you subject one to another [1 Peter 5:5](#) having your conduct blameless among
135 the [Gentiles](#), [1 Peter 2:12](#) that you may both receive praise for your good works,
136 and the Lord may not be [blasphemed](#) through you. But woe to him by whom the
137 name of the Lord is [blasphemed](#)! [Isaiah 52:5](#) Teach, therefore, sobriety to all, and
138 manifest it also in your own conduct.

139 Chapter 11. Expression of grief on account of Valens

140 I am greatly grieved for Valens, who was once a [presbyter](#) among you, because he
141 so little understands the place that was given him [in the [Church](#)]. I exhort you,
142 therefore, that you abstain from [covetousness](#), and that you be chaste and
143 truthful. Abstain from every form of [evil](#). [1 Thessalonians 5:22](#) For if a man cannot
144 govern himself in such matters, how shall he enjoin them on others? If a man does
145 not keep himself from [covetousness](#), he shall be defiled by [idolatry](#), and shall be

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146 judged as one of the [heathen](#). But who of us are [ignorant](#) of the judgment of the
147 Lord? Do we not [know](#) that the [saints](#) shall judge the
148 world? [1 Corinthians 6:2](#) as [Paul](#) teaches. But I have neither seen nor heard of any
149 such thing among you, in the midst of whom the [blessed Paul](#) laboured, and who
150 are commended in the beginning of his Epistle. For he boasts of you in all those
151 Churches which alone then [knew](#) the Lord; but we [of Smyrna] had not
152 yet [known](#) Him. I am deeply grieved, therefore, brethren, for him (Valens) and his
153 wife; to whom may the Lord grant [true](#) repentance! And be then moderate in
154 regard to this matter, and do not count such as enemies, [2 Thessalonians 3:15](#) but
155 call them back as suffering and straying members, that you may save your whole
156 body. For by so acting you shall edify yourselves. [1 Corinthians 12:26](#)

157 **Chapter 12. Exhortation to various graces**

158 For I trust that you are well versed in the [Sacred Scriptures](#), and that nothing is hid
159 from you; but to me this privilege is not yet granted. It is declared then in these
160 Scriptures, Be [angry](#), and [sin](#) not, and, Let not the sun go down upon
161 your [wrath](#). [Ephesians 4:26](#) Happy is he who remembers this, which I [believe](#) to be
162 the case with you. But may the God and Father of [our Lord Jesus Christ](#), and [Jesus](#)
163 [Christ](#) Himself, who is the [Son of God](#), and our everlasting High Priest, build you
164 up in [faith](#) and [truth](#), and in all meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering,

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165 forbearance, and purity; and may He bestow on you a lot and portion among
166 His [saints](#), and on us with you, and on all that are under heaven, who
167 shall [believe](#) in our Lord [Jesus Christ](#), and in His Father, who raised Him from the
168 dead. [Galatians 1:1](#) Pray for all the [saints](#). Pray also for kings, [1 Timothy 2:2](#) and
169 potentates, and princes, and for those
170 that persecute and hate you, [Matthew 5:44](#) and for the enemies of the cross, that
171 your fruit may be manifest to all, and that you may be perfect in Him.

172 **Chapter 13. Concerning the transmission of epistles**

173 Both you and [Ignatius](#) wrote to me, that if any one went [from this] into [Syria](#), he
174 should carry your letter with him; which request I will attend to if I find a fitting
175 opportunity, either personally, or through some other acting for me, that your
176 desire may be fulfilled. The Epistles of Ignatius written by him to us, and all the
177 rest [of his Epistles] which we have by us, we have sent to you, as you requested.
178 They are subjoined to this Epistle, and by them you may be greatly profited; for
179 they treat of [faith](#) and patience, and all things that tend to edification in our Lord.
180 Any more certain information you may have obtained respecting
181 both [Ignatius](#) himself, and those that were with him, have the goodness to
182 make [known](#) to us.

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183 Chapter 14. Conclusion

184 These things I have written to you by Crescens, whom up to the present time I have
185 recommended unto you, and do now recommend. For he has acted blamelessly
186 among us, and I believe also among you. Moreover, you will hold his sister in
187 esteem when she comes to you. Be safe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with
188 you all. Amen.