

# Philippians 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

## Analysis

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**For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ** (μάρτυς γάρ μου ὁ θεὸς ὃς ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς, martys gar mou ho theos hōs epipothō pantas hymas)—Paul invokes God as witness (martys) to his internal affection, following ancient oath patterns. Epipothō ("I long for, yearn for") expresses intense desire, the same verb used of deer panting for water (Ps 42:1 LXX).

**In the bowels of Jesus Christ** (ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, en splanchnois Christou Iēsou)—Splanchna (literally "intestines, inward parts") metaphorically signifies deep compassion and affection. Paul's longing is not mere human sentiment but Christ-shaped love; he loves the Philippians with Christ's own affections. This phrase reveals union with Christ produces Christlike emotions toward others—transformed affections, not just doctrine.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Mediterranean culture located emotions in bodily organs (heart, kidneys, bowels) rather than abstractly. Splanchna appears frequently in Philippians (1:8, 2:1) and Paul's letters as the seat of compassionate love. Invoking God as witness to emotions was serious—false oaths invited divine judgment. Paul's oath underscores the authenticity and intensity of his pastoral love.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What would it mean for you to love others 'in the bowels of Jesus Christ' rather than your own capacity?
2. How can we cultivate affections shaped by union with Christ, not just correct doctrine about Him?
3. Who could honestly say of you what Paul says here—that you long after them with Christlike compassion?

## Interlinear Text

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μάρτυς γάρ μου ἐστιν ὁ θεός ὡς ἐπιποθῶ  
record For my is G3588 God how greatly I long after  
G3144 G1063 G3450 G2076 G2316 G5613 G1971

πάντας ὑμᾶς ἐν σπλάγχνοις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ  
all you in the bowels of Jesus Christ  
G3956 G5209 G1722 G4698 G2424 G5547

## Additional Cross-References

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**Philippians 4:1** (Parallel theme): Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

**Romans 1:9** (References God): For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

**2 Timothy 1:4** (Parallel theme): Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

**1 Thessalonians 2:8** (References God): So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

**Romans 9:1** (References Christ): I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

**Philemon 1:12** (Parallel theme): Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

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