

Philippians 1:1-11 - Study Questions

Lesson 2

Background of the Philippian Church

The Philippian church had been founded by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16). Several years later, he visited Philippi again on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:1-6). The book of Philippians was written about 10 years after the church was founded. Philippians, along with Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written by Paul from prison.

The Philippian church had not forgotten Paul. They showed their love and support by sending Epaphroditus to him with a gift (Philippians 2:25, 4:18). His great love for them is evident throughout the letter.

1. This week's memory verse is Philippians 1:6:

"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

2. Who was Paul? List some highlights of his life:

- Before his conversion – Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-2, 26:4-5, Philippians 3:3-6

- His conversion – Acts 9:3-9, 26:12-18

- Soon after his conversion – Acts 9:20-22

Background of letter-writing in ancient times

Many of the New Testament (NT) books are epistles or letters. Paul wrote 13 of the letters in the NT (*some* scholars and commentators believe it may also include Hebrews, which would total 14). Paul's letters followed the general pattern of letters written in ancient times.

These letters usually consisted of:

- A greeting
- A prayer/thanksgiving
- The main body
- Personal greetings/ending remarks

Letters were often dictated and written down by a secretary or scribe. Paul followed this custom as well (Romans 16:22). The person dictating the letter would often sign it to authenticate it (Romans 16:22, 1 Corinthians 16:21, Colossians 4:18).

The letters of Paul are grouped together in the NT in Romans through Philemon. His letters are arranged primarily by length; Romans is the longest and Philemon is the shortest.

3. How does Philippians follow the typical pattern of a letter written in ancient times?

4. Philippians is one of Paul's most tender and personal letters. What evidence do you see of his love for this church in verses 1-11?

5. Write out Philippians 1:6.
 - Define confident.

 - In whom did Paul place his confidence?

 - What was Paul confident would happen?

6. The phrase "good work" in verse 6 can mean several things, including sanctification.
 - Define sanctification

 - What is the goal of sanctification? Romans 8:29, Ephesians 4:13-15

7. Sanctification is the work of God but is influenced by the believer's obedience. How do the following Scriptures describe God's work in sanctification?
 - Philippians 2:13

 - Hebrews 12:2a

 - Hebrews 13:20-21

 - Jude 24

8. What insights do the following passages provide into the believer's part in sanctification?
- Romans 12:1-2

 - Galatians 5:16

 - Ephesians 4:22-24, 30

 - 1 Thessalonians 5:19
9. Describe how each of the following analogies are a picture of sanctification:
- Potter/clay – Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18:1-6, Romans 9:20-21

 - Gardner/seed or plant – Psalm 1:1-3, Jeremiah 17:7-8, 1 Corinthians 3:6

 - Vine/branches – John 15:1-11
10. Paul prayed that their love would abound more and more. Read through 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Write out the key words/phrases and give definitions for each.

Philippians 1:1-11 - Discussion Questions

Lesson 2

1. If you were in the circumstances that Paul was in as he wrote to the Philippian believers, how would you begin your letter to your loved ones?

2. Paul's epistles, or letters, always begin with a salutation that includes the words "grace" and "peace." Explain why grace *always* precedes peace.
 - Can you think of examples where grace has preceded peace in your life?

3. Read Deuteronomy 15:12-18. A bondservant is one, who by choice out of love, serves his master forever. Describe your Master.
 - Ponder these questions and spend time talking with the Lord about them:
 - How much of my life is under the Lord's control?
 - How much is under my control?
 - Am I less of a bondservant now than I was when I first gave my life to the Lord?

 - What improvement(s), if any, would you like to see in your service to God?

 - Describe the joy you have in being a bondservant of Jesus Christ.

4. Paul was thankful for the fellowship he had with the believers in Philippi. Read Luke 17:11-19. What do you learn about Jesus from this passage?
 - Make a list of the reasons you are thankful for the people in your home church.
 - Who especially comes to mind? Why not take some time to write a note this week telling them why you are thankful for them and what about them brings you joy?

5. Intercession is so important! God uses our prayers for others to work in their lives and in ours. Share with your group the ways and methods you use to intercede for others.
 - Read Paul's prayer in verses 9-11. List his individual requests and explain *what* he was asking God for in each.
 - Write out the prayer in your own words. Will you commit to pray this prayer for the women in your group this week, naming them one by one?

6. Paul encouraged the Philippians. What did he say he is confident of in verse 6? How does this encourage you?
 - How can your confidence in the promises of God encourage others today?