

PHILIPPIANS
LESSON #2 - 1:3-8

- Pray for God to open your eyes to His glory as you study His revelation of Himself in 1:3-8
- Read 2:1-2 out loud 10 times before and after you complete lesson 2
- Read through chapter 1 in its entirety before you study this text
- Be sure to mark your Philippians Observation Sheet as you make discoveries about the text

Observations And Interpretation

1. What does Paul say he is doing in v. 3? Make sure to see this because it will serve as the main verb in v. 3-8.
2. Why is it appropriate to “thank...God” for what is mentioned in v. 4-8? If Paul is talking about good fruit done by the Philippians, why thank God?
3. What are some of the descriptions of Paul’s praying for the Philippians in v. 4? How does this reveal Paul’s love for the Philippians?
4. What does v. 5 say is the cause of Paul’s thankfulness to God for the Philippians? How does knowing Paul’s circumstance help you see why this means so much to him?

5. The root word behind “partnership” in v. 5 is κοινωνία (koinonia). We usually refer to this as “fellowship”. Because fellowship seems to be difficult for many to define, it will be helpful to see how the New Testament uses this word. Observe the following uses of the word:
- Jerry Bridges comments on Acts 2:42: Those first Christians of Acts 2 were not devoting themselves to social activities but to a relationship — a relationship that consisted of sharing together the very life of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They understood that they had entered this relationship by faith in Jesus Christ, not by joining an organization. And they realized that their fellowship with God logically brought them into fellowship with one another. Through their union with Christ, they were formed into a spiritually organic community. They were living stones being built into a spiritual house (see 1 Peter 2:5), fellow members of the body of Christ. As William Hendriksen said, “Koinonia, then, is basically a community-relationship.” It is not primarily an activity; it is a relationship.
 - This relationship is centered on **PARTNERING** in making disciples - 2 Cor. 6:14 Gal. 2:9; Phil. 1:5; 3:10; Philemon 1:17
 - This relationship is centered on **FELLOWSHIP** from spiritual life in Christ - 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:16; 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1; 3:10; Philemon 1:6; 1 John 1:3, 6, 7
 - This relationship is centered on **SHARING** material resources God has provided - Rom. 12:13; 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Gal. 6:6 Heb. 13:16
 - Jerry Bridges, “We can see, then, that the concepts of community and fellowship are so closely linked that we cannot have true community unless we practice true fellowship. In fact, the concepts of biblical community and biblical fellowship are so closely tied that I may sometimes use the words community and fellowship interchangeably. That is because what the community does in terms of fellowship determines the character and face of the community.”
 - Based upon the New Testament uses of this word, how do some modern uses of this term “fellowship” differ from what you find in the New Testament?
6. How did the Philippians have a “partnership” with Paul? See Phil. 4:10-18; Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:3-5; 9:13.

7. What is Paul “sure of” in v. 6?

- Who is the “he” who began this good work, and where did “he” start this good work?
- What is the “good work” that has been started? See Gal. 3:3; Rm. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:3-14
- When does Paul expect this good work to be completed?

8. For help regarding “the day of Jesus Christ” (aka the Day of the Lord), read this summary:

- Mark Hitchcock, “The Old Testament refers to the Day of the Lord nineteen specific times, but dozens of other places refer to “the day” or “that day.” The New Testament mentions the Day of the Lord four times¹... Putting these passages together, the day of the Lord is any time God intervenes directly and dramatically in history either to judge or to bless. God has intervened in this way in the past, and he will do so again in the future. There have been specific, past “days of the Lord” when God intervened dramatically to judge. For instance, the destruction of Egypt was called the “day of the LORD” (Ezekiel 30:1-4). The locust plague in Joel was a day of the Lord when God intervened directly to judge Israel (Joel 1:15). Yet, it is important to remember that all these past, historical days of the Lord prefigure the final, future Day of the Lord... As revealed in Scripture, the future Day of the Lord is a period of time that will begin with the seven-year Tribulation, which we could call the judgment phase, and will continue throughout the entire one-thousand-year reign of Christ and the creation of the new heavens and new earth, which we could call the blessing phase. The future Day of the Lord will stretch all the way from the Rapture to the creation of the new heavens and new earth—from the Rapture to the re-creation. It will commence with a time of wrath and judgment upon a wicked and Christ-rejecting world and will culminate in a time of peace and prosperity; Christ will be in the midst of the earth, will rule over the earth, and will bless the nation of Israel... In short, Scripture clearly portrays the Day of the Lord as a day of divine judgment upon the world followed by a time of unparalleled blessing. In the Day of the Lord, Christ will rule with a rod of iron over the entire earth (Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27). He will administer absolute justice (Isaiah 11:1-9). In that day Israel will also be regathered (Isaiah 11:10-12) and brought into the perfect peace of the millennial kingdom (Zephaniah 3:14-20) and on to the creation of the new heavens and new earth.”

¹ Isaiah 2:12; 13:6, 9; Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18 (2x), 20; Obadiah 1:15; Zephaniah 1:7, 14 (2x); Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10

- How does familiarity with this “day” and its timing help you understand why you and every other unglorified Christian still have remaining sin to kill, even though your justification is as secure as it will ever be?

9. What does Paul “know” will happen in everyone that this good work has been started? How is this same promise revealed in Rom. 8:29-30?

10. What is “this way” that Paul feels about them in v. 7? Why is this an appropriate way for him to feel about them?

11. What is God called to bear witness to in v. 8?

Questions For Application

1. In what ways can/do you discipline yourself to give more thanks to God?

2. Who is someone that you could encourage by telling them how thankful to God you are for them and the work He is doing in them? Tell them this week.

3. In what ways do you partner with others in the advancement of the Gospel?

4. What are some reasons you may doubt the completion of the “good work” started in you?

5. How do you balance being “sure” that God will complete what He started in you while still giving the appropriate effort to bring it about? See 2:12-13.

6. Is it possible for someone to wrongly claim the promise of 1:6 as their own? In other words, is it possible for people to misunderstand assurance and security and therefore be falsely assured of salvation? How can you help them with this misunderstanding?

7. How does the Gospel partnership between Paul and the Philippians change how you view your relationships in your local Church? Though Christians may have many things in common, what does Paul provide as a sure foundation for genuine fellowship?

Write down a 1-2 sentence summary of the passage you studied this week

Write down at least one way you will implement something you have learned in this chapter