

A Confident Attitude

Philippians 1:1-11

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Getting Started

How confident are you that God is in control of the circumstances surrounding your life? If you are like most people, you will probably admit that there are times when everything seems to be out of control. However there are also times when you have the faith of Daniel. How do we cultivate a confidence in God that can carry us through the tough times?

In this first section of Philippians (and in reality all through the letter 1:19, 20, 25; 2:24; 4:4-8; and 4:19), Paul demonstrates a confidence that God is at work in the lives of the Philippians in such a way that he can speak of them in terms of abounding joy. If you read the whole letter in one sitting, you get the unmistakable impression that Paul is overjoyed that even though the Philippians have their share of struggles, God is at work in them. How did Paul develop this attitude concerning God and the Philippians?

A big part of the answer has to be how Paul first came to know the Philippians. Read Acts 15:36 – 17:1 and take note of these events:

1. Wanting to revisit those they had met on the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas set out but had some conflict over who should go with them. The church of Antioch blessed their journeys, and they went. They probably had some doubts concerning that stumbling beginning.
2. When Paul and company tried to preach the Gospel in Asia and Bithynia they were stopped from preaching by the Holy Spirit, twice! Talk about confusing!
3. Paul had the Macedonia vision, which they took as the direction of God. Perhaps the struggles so far had been the hand of God at work!
4. They arrived in Philippi and had a quick convert in Lydia! God was at work!
5. Trouble came in the form of a servant girl and a confrontation with the magistrates of the city. Was God in control?
6. Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison. Did they make a mistake going to Philippi?
7. The jailer responded to the Gospel and the church in Philippi was born! God was always in control. Paul's confidence in God grew.

As you study Philippians 1:1-11, keep in mind that confidence in God is built as we consistently see God at work, even through the troubling times.

Read Philippians 1:1-11

1. What words does Paul use to describe his attitude toward the Philippians?

If he walked into a gathering of Philippian believers what do you think Paul would do?

2. Compare verse 6 to verses 9-11. What elements do they share in common?

What would the complete work of God in the Philippians' lives be?

3. How did the Philippians partner with Paul in the Gospel? (see also 2:25-30 and 4:14-19)
4. What does Paul pray for the Philippians?
5. How does love grow in knowledge and dept of insight? (Remember Paul's journey to them.)
6. What is the fruit of righteousness? (Remember Paul's fruit in Philippi.)

Applying God's Word to Us Today

1. Paul developed confidence in God by growing in his loving knowledge of how God works. What past experiences have you had that helped you grow in loving knowledge of how God works?
2. What are some of the struggles that you are experiencing right now that cast doubt on God's control in the situation? (financial struggles, parenting problems, relationships, work situations, life goals being blocked)
3. How can remembering God's faithfulness to you in the past help you to have confidence in Him now?
4. Paul was confident that God would finish the work in those he loved. Are there those in your life for whom you wish you could say the same thing as Paul?

As a group encourage one another with remembrances of how God has worked.

5. What is God's main goal for your life? (see vs. 11; I John 3:2; Romans 8:28, 29; and II Peter 1:4) Are you willing to trust God to work that out in you? If you are willing to allow God to work His will in your life, pray a prayer of surrender to, and confidence in, His work for you and those you love.