

# Philippians

Begin Session Two

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**Paul's Appreciation for *Kononia* and Showing us the Objective of Learning God's Word as expressed in his Prayer for the Philippians**– Philippians 1:3-11.

**3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.**

**6 For I am confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. God.**

**9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**

**Paul's Appreciation of their Kononia with him - vs.  
3-5**

**3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.**

**1. *I give thanks*** – this is the word from which we get *Eucharist*, - the giving of thanks by Christ at the last supper which we observe. Thus, thankfulness requires involvement, participation, awareness and appreciation for what is real.

We do not give thanks for other believers and their efforts when they are often absent from our minds. However, Paul thought of these sheep, often (every remembrance), as the present tense verb shows, regularly and repeatedly.

Further, a believer cannot and will not appreciate spiritually based ministry if he or she does value it and they don't value it because they are not or have not, taken on the values of God, divine viewpoint. They are failing or have failed to permit their inner-man to be transformed through the renewing of their minds.

**2. *Always, offering prayer with joy in every prayer*** – the word for prayer, here, is often translated “supplication”. This has in view an intervention on their behalf, an urgent praying to God for their needs. Here Paul is under house arrest yet, praying for the needs of others. He is aware of all of the pitfalls of this young but faithful church. He knows The Evil One prowls. This prayer cannot occur in our lives if we are not familiar with the ministry efforts of others. Is there a supplicating you do for others? If not, why not?

**3. *in view of your participation the gospel from the first day until now.***

Paul is not experiencing joy because the church has money, because someone has become wealthy, because the church has many social functions or the respect of the world. Paul cites the reason for this joy, the core and most important reason and focus which is essential for any church to genuinely be healthy and do the will of God as a church which is *their centrality of being a gospel preaching and teaching church.*

**4. *Partnership in the gospel*** – the word for participation or partnership is one which you may have heard before, κοινωνία (kononia).

This is an *instrumental* use of the word. In other words, the reason or instrument of/for Paul and the Philippian believers coming together and uniting is not from social compatibility, or on behalf of some social cause. Their fellowship is not based on like-mindedness with regard to any human endeavor.

Rather, their unity is based on their partnering in the gospel. And this speaks to what a church is and is not.

Paul's commendation of these believers and the cause for his joy has nothing to do with personal or social camaraderie. They aren't united around a social cause but a spiritual one, the spreading of the gospel and subsequent growth as followers of Christ. That is the basis of their partnership.

As you will see through this study, this point will be elevated not merely because it is an issue facing the church today on several fronts but because Paul, in writing this letter and all of his letters, has this view as a fundamentally underlying principle regarding how and why a church operates.

Many groups want to co-opt the church for their social and political objectives.

And out of this we will come to understand that our love for one another in the church and regarding spiritual matters is not based on human or personal love and camaraderie. We will have enlarged, in this study, the emphasis that the church is a spiritual body, not a social one and that it is spiritual camaraderie originating from all members being born again, belonging to Christ, possessing his spiritual DNA and his Word thus, sharing the same mind in doctrine which results in the same focus and target in ministry which should be the salvation of souls and the building up or discipleship of those saved and not social camaraderie.

Paul is appreciative and praying for the Philippian believers because they have it right and did so from the first day. Their focus as an assembly, as a local body of believers, is spiritual work.

***Koinonia***, true spiritual fellowship, is not focused on developing social camaraderie between believers, it isn't zeroed in on social justice warriorism, it isn't to fix political shortcomings and it isn't to promote the brotherhood of man. It is just what Paul identifies in the Philippian believers, fellowship or partnership in the gospel.

Thus, “*kononia* in the gospel” is the basis for fellowship between believers. Later on we will see an interesting case between two Christian women which involves personal camaraderie verses spiritual camaraderie.

One hint, people preoccupied with personalities and trying to “figure them out” are the most susceptible to failing the *gospel kononia* protocol.

***What are some practical ways this is applied in a local church or your own, personal life?***

### **Paul’s Confidence Toward the Philippian Christians – VS.**

6-8

**6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.**

**1. Confident...that he who began a good work in you –**

*began* (better translated “having begun”) is from the word ἐναρξάμενος (enarxameos) which has two parts  
en – inwardly or inside

archo – to begin a rule or reign

This obviously refers to one being saved by faith in the gospel. When a person is saved they are born again thus, it is the beginning of God’s work in them. God’s objective, after you are saved then, is to bring you to maturity through discipleship.

**2. He...will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**

The day of Christ Jesus refers to his return and the inauguration of eternity with Christ ruling.

*Perfect it* – from the Greek word ἐπιτελέω (epiteleo). The word means to build upon, to complete or perfect something. This comes from two words.

epi – upon

teleo – to finish or complete.

Here, the prepositional prefix is important.

Upon (epi) what, is the good work of Christ building? He is building upon the salvation given to us when we are saved.

Thus, it does not have in view, as some would suggest, completing our salvation as if when we were saved our salvation was not completed.

Our salvation is the foundation. Now God will build upon this (*which is why we are regenerated, justified and possess imputed righteousness and so on, so that he may build upon it*) by maturing us, growing us and transforming us into Christ-like believers who are to inherit an eternal kingdom in which we are told we will rule and reign with Christ.

Understand that Paul's view that Christ will complete this is two-sided. Of course he knows Christ will never fail to do the work in us promised. However, we must be a yielded vessel. And Paul views these believers as such.

### **The Basis of Paul's Affection and the Justification for his Confidence vs 7-8**

**7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.**

**1. 7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all** – Here, in verse 7, Paul refers back to what he just said in verse 6:

**6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus**

What is the outstanding reason why Paul views the Philippians as believers whom Christ will bring to spiritual maturity??

Because of their preoccupation with Christ and his gospel work. Not because they are geniuses, rich in this world or of significance in the world or any myriad of bad ideas but because of their love of Christ.

When you enter a local fellowship with an objective other than with a preoccupation with Christ and his objectives, you will never grow to full spiritual maturity.

But for these believers, Paul is certain of them growing to full maturity. So ask yourself, since Paul is certain they will grow to full spiritual maturity, *are you certain you will?*

If you do not come prepared to be a disciple and in one-accord you will be:

- Halted by personality conflicts
- Disinterested in spiritual endeavors which do not appeal to your misplaced emphasis, *(whatever it may be and there are many reasons why people have wrong priorities as a church member)*
- Become doctrinally and ecclesiastically combative against the church and/or denomination's confession and practice

Eventually such a Christian will become a weight and deficit to a local assembly, not an asset. He or she will not be a true partner, one that *konomias* in the gospel, but one who is a member of a fellowship with their own agenda.

This does not mean believers may not have objections, ask questions and test doctrine and practice because a true student must discover for themselves the weight of a confession and practice. But if one shows up either determined to combat it or rejects it, they remain in the congregation for the wrong reasons and should find a fellowship which shares their views.

**2. Partakers of grace with me** – this expression is with reference to their support and participation in sharing the gospel, themselves, with others (a soul winner) and of forming a healthy local assembly or church and of praying for and funding the gospel work outside of their local assembly and with like-minded believers, in this case the Apostle Paul who was their spiritual father and of course had actually ecclesiastical authority over them as an Apostle.

This is the full expectation of God. A believer who simply “attends church” and believes they have satisfied God, done their duty or whatever, is far from what Paul refers to in describing the Philippian Christians. He has in view active disciples, active praying people, active gospel sharers – winners of souls to Christ, and financially supportive believers - where possible - who also are willing even to suffer from serving if necessary.

**3. how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.** When the Apostle Paul refers to the Philippian believers, he says that God is his witness how he longs for them with “the affection of Christ”. He makes himself accountable to God that his affections are based on God’s priorities, not his own.

It is here that we encounter a concept that is critical for believers to recognize and apply in their spiritual walk. Paul’s affection for them is not *personal*. It is not his own personal attraction and estimation of their likeability which compels him to care for these believers, rather it is an affection or love which is based in the person of Christ.

These are not those with whom he has developed some great social rapport and camaraderie rather, those who were lost but were found, a Christ value, and those who now are growing in the Lord as disciples, another Christ value.

Paul loves them, not personally but impersonally, through another's' set of values (God's) which have now become his way of valuing and thinking with respect to the world and more specifically, Christians.

Thus, in our next session, as we examine the prayer of Paul, itself, for the Philippians, we will look, in detail, at two categories of love:

- *personal love*
- *impersonal love*

And what we will discover is that while there are places which are quite legitimate for the use of personal love or personal attraction, the fellowship of the spiritual body of the church is not one of these.

As well, this examination will enable us to complete the section of Scripture we read at the beginning of the class which goes all the way to verse 11.

**End Session Two**