



Study of Philippians

*The house church at Philippi
and beyond
with the women who led there.*

*“Grace and peace to you from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Table 3

Philippians 1:1-11

“Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Welcome to the study table! I hope this lesson will enrich your week. My approach to Philippians is to move slow and steady through this letter savoring and meditating on every divine word. I want us to encounter Jesus through Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. I mentioned on the podcast that I would love for us to commit to reading this entire letter every week. This will help the Word to be planted within us. As you read, try to envision the people who make up this Church at Philippi. Then think about your people and your church community. Perhaps the Lord will show us how we can apply Paul's words to pray for and encourage our people. This study is first for you; then for others. Take all the encouragement into your inner being, then watch the Lord use you to enrich others. The Word of God should never stop with us. We are living stones just like the ones at Philippi. The more fortified we are the more fortified our churches will be. Listen to the podcast on Apple or Spotify

His Word before my words: [Philippians 1:1-11](#)

Philippians was one of the places where as a new Christian I found the encouragement I needed to persevere through trials. I found out pretty fast that the kingdom of darkness was pretty unhappy about my decision to follow Christ. In previous episodes I've shared about some of the trials God worked through to bring me to Christ. My circumstances helped me relate to some of the dramatic ways the Church at Philippi was birthed. I also could relate to the sudden onslaught of persecutions they endured right out of the gate. It doesn't take new Christians very long to discover there are real enemies who hate them because they have been born again into the Kingdom of God.

When Paul wrote this letter, the Church at Philippi had existed for approximately a decade. Here's the [timeline](#) I referenced on the podcast. This is a great resource.

Journal prompt: Think about the circumstance that brought you to Christ. Consider how long you have been in Christ. Write down some of the highlights and the low points of the journey. I believe remembering is a valuable part of our journey. This helps us to maintain being dependent upon the Lord while also remembering His faithfulness to us.

The Church at Philippi was made up of people who by the standards of the world should have had very little in common. I picture Paul with a big grin on his face when he thinks about the diversity of this small group of believers. I keep going back to the timeline. According to the timeline, when he wrote Paul had been in Christ for nearly thirty years. This church was around ten years old. So, here's why I think he's grinning.

THE GOSPEL WORKS!

Paul's seen the effects of grace and peace. Rich or poor, slave or free, Jews or Gentiles, male or female...the gospel works for all people. The gospel tears down the dividing walls of class and culture. The grace of God is a bridge to faith in God. It's the bridge no one can find on their own. Oh, but we/people try. We turn to every other god of nature or religion. Until the grace of God reaches us, we have no idea how to fill the piece of us that's missing. In Philippians, Paul remembers all the ways he tried to fill that missing piece of him. The gospel worked for Paul and Paul began to work for the gospel.

When he thinks about the Church at Philippi, he smiles and gives thanks to God. He's amazed at how God brings wealthy women, civil servants, slaves, and freedmen together to unite in one mission. This is the gospel at work!

"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from first day until now," verses 4-5.

We're going to unpack the Greek word *Koinonia* translated as partnership. This word teaches us why Paul holds the Philippians in high regard. In English as in other languages *Koinonia* loses some of its richness. The word is translated in English as partnership or fellowship. It's so much greater than simply an activity done together. The word contains the beauty of being caught up in communion with God. All of the "one another" commands of Jesus are in view with this kind of partnership.

Let's check out the first use of *Koinonia*. A word used in the Bible twenty times.

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

[Acts 2:42-47](#). This is the dream, friends! This is what happened in the fellowship of Believers after the Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost. Peter and all of the other disciples had a preview of this table flipping way of living when they were with Jesus. They saw Jesus live this way towards them and others. They just couldn't get a handle on it until the gift of the empowering Holy Spirit moved inside of them.

The Holy Spirit is supposed to make us rich towards God and others.

Paul struck Holy Communion gold with the Church at Philippi. The Church at Philippi got on board with the table flipping gospel from day one. Amazing!

As I reflect on my life, I have my day one person and I have people who for a season were my partners in the gospel. My husband is my day one partner. We entered into union with Christ together being baptized on the same day. Others have been my partners for seasons. I learned from Paul and his letters, particularly this one to be thankful for my partners in the gospel. Spend some time reflecting and praying for your gospel partners. I have some amazing gospel partners this season.

Philippians 1:6 is a verse worthy of being embroidered onto a pillow. If I were making a list of verses to be memorized, this one is going on it for sure. The narrow road is long, mostly uphill, and pretty treacherous. To follow Christ on this narrow road you're going to need to remember to pack your confidence and your assurance. You're going to need a pillow verse to lay your head on. This one has kept me going.

Have you ever wondered, why did Paul need to tell this important truth to the Church at Philippi? Think about why you cling to this verse and verses like it. What was going on in Philippi? What were they lacking and what are you lacking when you need this verse?

Whatever God begins, God finishes.

The doctrine of perseverance of the saints is that no one who has come to saving faith in Christ will ever be lost. Reflect on these verses: [John 10:27-28](#), [Romans 8:28-39](#), [John 6:37-47](#), [John 5:24](#), and [Ephesians 1:13-14](#).

The word perseverance throws some people because it sounds like we're working to earn our salvation. Some prefer the word preservation of the saints instead of perseverance. One place I turn for some clarity is to [Hebrews 12:1-3](#). This gets my eyes back on the Author of my salvation.

“**All of You**” is a big statement from verse 8.

Who are the people you're having a hard time fitting into this all encompassing longing?

Remember there's a conflict brewing in the Church at Philippi between those women with the names I struggle to pronounce. (Why are there no Mary's in Greece? LOL)

Euodia and Syntyche are called out by name for their conflict. This probably means they're among the overseers and deacons. Their conflict was affecting the Church.

I'm bringing this up because I think when the Church at Philippi was reading this letter from Paul the conviction of the Holy Spirit was spreading among them when Paul said, “God can testify how **I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.**”

Oh snap! Let me ask my question another way. **Are there Christians you can't stand?**

We can't stay this way. God has to change us. His goal is for us to be one in Christ.

There will be no divisions in heaven. We're all going to sit at the same table. One big happy family. There will be no pretending or avoiding anyone.

Let's make Paul's prayer our prayer. We need to bend to love over hate. I know you're thinking hate is a strong word. You just dislike them. You wouldn't say you hate them. I'll meet you there. **Are there Christians you don't like?**

Paul's Prayer for the Church at Philippi in the [NIV](#) and in [The Message](#).

Praying Paul's Prayer

This is a great prayer to be praying right before an election.

This is a great prayer to be praying right before the holidays.

This is a great prayer to pray on any given day.

What do you think might happen if you wrote this prayer down, posted it somewhere you will see it every day, and then pray it every single day? Let's try it.

Our goal is to have a love that flourishes through ever increasing knowledge and depth of insight. Our goal is to be free of hypocrisy and be filled with the fruit of righteousness.

Is the way we love other Christians making Christ more attractive to others?

Our love for one another is supposed to make others want to join our family. I know I've read that somewhere...

[John 13:35](#).

Do you want to know what was the final catalyst for getting me to abandon religion and run to Jesus? **It was JOY!** Paul and I were new parents and we were trying to get our act together. We had joined a small group. I wanted to quit. Paul wanted to keep going.

There was a guy younger than us who had also grown up in the same cult of religion in our small group. He had joy and it was contagious. I watched him. I listened to him pray. I said, "That's it! I want whatever he has."

May our cups be overflowing with joy as we study Philippians. See you at the Table!

