

Growth: The Study of Philippians

“Thankfulness, Prayer & Confidence”

Text: Philippians 1:1-11

Introduction and Greeting:

In his greeting, Paul refers to himself and Timothy as servants (Phil. 1:1).

- Being a servant is not a demeaning term; it is something to be praised and, according to the teachings of Christ (Matt. 20:20-28), is the key to greatness.

Not only did Paul write to the saints, but he also addressed the bishops and deacons who worked together for the church's health.

- Bishops are overseers responsible for the spiritual well-being of the church.
- Deacons also play a vital role within the church by performing ministerial duties, such as aiding the poor and addressing church needs, as indicated by the Greek term “diakonos” (Acts 6:1-6).

Thanksgiving and Prayer:

Paul regularly expressed gratitude to God for the Philippians (Phil. 1:3-4).

- Paul encountered the believers in Philippi during one of his missionary trips through Macedonia (Acts 16:11-40).
 - Phil 1:5 – The Greek term for “fellowship” is *koinonia*, which means *fellowship, association, community, communion, and joint participation*. It also denotes one's share in something.
 - After Paul's departure, the Philippian believers became his primary financial supporters (Phil. 4:15-16).
- Leaders should take time to give thanks to God for those in their spiritual care (Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:16; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2).

Paul expressed confidence that God would complete the work He had begun in the Philippians' lives (Phil. 1:6).

- God is committed to our spiritual formation; however, the outcome depends on our willingness and obedience to cooperate with Him (Is. 1:19; Phil. 2:12-13).

- The Holy Spirit empowers us by transforming our hearts to become more like Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18).

Paul describes how the Philippians shared in his sufferings and in his defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:7-8).

Paul's love for the Philippians motivated him to pray for them (Phil. 1:9-11).

- Paul's prayer expressed hope that the Philippians would deepen their understanding of love, beginning with love for God and extending to love for others.
 - All aspects of the Christian life center on the law of love (Mark 12:30-31).
 - Growing in love is a sign of spiritual maturity and shows the world that we belong to God (Col. 3:14; John 13:35).
- Paul also prayed that their love for God would enable them to discern and intentionally pursue a morally pure life.
 - Our lifestyle shows what we truly believe and is the loudest sermon we preach (Titus 2:6-8; 1 Pete 2:12).

Call to Action:

1. Thank God for the people He has placed in your life.
2. Pray specifically for spiritual growth in yourself and in others.
3. Trust God to finish what He started in you.