



PHILIPPIANS: JOY FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY  
COLLECTIVE GIFTEDNESS • PHILIPPIANS 1:1-6 • 4/24/2022

## NOTES

This week we will be going over Phil 1:1-11 and talking about appreciating the people in our lives. As a LIFEGroup, you can focus on the first 6 verses and discussing effectively serving together.

## MAIN POINT

Our collective giftedness allows means we can accomplish God's will more effectively together.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Do you prefer working with a team or working by yourself more?**

**What is an example of a project that would work better if you worked together with others?**

Church is a team sport. Lone ranger Christians do not exist. God has redeemed individuals together into the collective group of the church to love and serve Him together. But why did God do it this way? The organization of God's church values both the individual members as well as the group. Each person has been given a particular spiritual gift to build the church and help spur her on in mission. Because everyone has a different gifting the church works best when we partner together.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2.

**How are the Philippian believers described in verse 1?**

As Christians, we are saints, set apart for God's service and living in the sphere of Christ's love and grace. "Saints" doesn't refer to an elite category of superspiritual believers but to all people redeemed by grace through faith in Christ—people set apart for God's service and for living by His lofty standards. We may not feel saintly now, but this is how God views us because we have been justified through Christ.

**In contrast, how did Paul describe himself and Timothy in verse 1? What did this title imply?**

**Paul consistently greeted churches with grace and peace to you? Why do you think Paul regularly used the same greeting in his letters to churches?**

**In your own words, define grace and peace. What is the source of "grace and peace" for the Christian?**

Grace is God's undeserved favor—His love in action. Peace is wholeness or soundness under His rule. Paul never varied the order of the terms; only on the basis of God's grace is wholeness possible.

**Why are grace and peace important elements in church fellowship? How are they evident in our church?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:3-6.

**According to these verses, why was Paul thankful for the Philippian believers?**

**What type of relationship must Paul have had with them in order to pray like this?**

**What does Paul's prayer for the Philippians teach us about our prayers?**

**How do you define joy? What does it mean to you that Paul said he prayed "with joy"?**

**Is this something that characterizes your prayer life? If not, how could it be? Why should partnering with other believers bring us joy?**

Paul prayed for his friends with joy because of his warm recollections of them and because of their faithfulness. He sounded for the first time what would become a prominent note in his letter: joy (or rejoicing). The Greek word for joy comes from the same root as the term grace. It

conveys not just the emotion of happiness but also the sense of confident well-being that comes from a close relationship with God.

**In what did the Philippian believers “partner” with Paul (v. 5)? Why can we do more for God by partnering with other believers?**

**What is your earliest memory of helping others spread the gospel? What is an example of direct involvement of spreading the gospel you have had more recently?**

**What type of relationships have you developed with the people you’ve partnered with for the sake of the gospel?**

The Philippian Christians participated in Paul’s efforts to spread the gospel; they shared his missionary zeal and contributed to his work. Persistently, even to the time Paul was writing his letter, they helped him by sending needed resources to further his ministry.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What would our church be like if Paul’s prayer to the Philippians was fulfilled in our church? What could be the impact on our community?**

**How is our group partnering together for the gospel? What can we do this week to increase our impact?**

**What are some specific ways that our group can support and encourage our pastor and the rest of the church staff in their ministries, like the Philippian church encouraged Paul? Why do our pastors sometimes get excluded from this equation?**

**How has the Holy Spirit gifted you to serve the church? How are you using this gifting to serve?**

## PRAYER

Thank God for the community of faith He has drawn together in the gospel. Praise the Lord for gifting the saints for service in the kingdom. Pray that we would be a people who joyfully come together with other believers to fulfill the mission of the church.

## COMMENTARY

| PHILIPPIANS 1:1-6

1:1-2. Paul was in prison in Rome, probably about A.D. 63. The Philippian believers had learned of his location and had sent a church member, Epaphroditus, to deliver a gift to him and to stay with him. Epaphroditus had become gravely ill but had recovered, so Paul sent him back with a letter that explained Epaphroditus's early return and gave information about his situation, addressed problems in the church, and expressed appreciation for the Philippian believers' support.

Paul identified himself and greeted the Philippian believers. His including Timothy in the greeting does not indicate Timothy co-wrote the letter; rather, Timothy was Paul's valued coworker who had been with the apostle in Philippi on the second missionary journey (see Acts 16:1-12). The Philippian Christians knew and respected Timothy (see Phil. 2:22). With genuine humility, Paul described himself and Timothy as slaves of Christ Jesus. The Greek word translated slaves literally means "bondslaves." The noun probably comes from a verb that means "to tie" or "to bind." A bondslave was totally subservient to his master's will. Paul and Timothy were at their Lord's disposal. The phrase Christ Jesus identified Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and Savior.

Paul's letter was addressed to all the Philippian believers. He used the word all nine times in his letter—perhaps to stress that he excluded no one from his deep love or from his gratitude for the church's expression of care for him. He also may have wanted to underscore at the letter's beginning that the congregation was to be united. The word saints should be understood as a synonym for Christians. All Christians are in Christ Jesus—they live in the sphere of His lordship. Paul's phrase in Christ was another way to designate people committed to Christ.

Paul included the church's overseers and deacons in his greeting. At this time in church history, these terms primarily designated functions, not offices. Overseers probably were elders—older men with leadership responsibilities. Deacons were involved in ministering to church members' needs. Paul may have mentioned these church leaders in particular because they had recommended and supervised the collection of the church's gift to him.

Paul's consistent prayer for recipients of his letters was grace and peace. As Christians' Father in the best possible sense, God provides grace and peace. Through faith in Christ, we become members of His family—His children. We live in His compassionate care. Paul's full designation the Lord (Deity) Jesus (Savior) Christ (Messiah) emphasized the Son's role in supplying grace and peace.

1:3-6. In his conversations with God, Paul remembered his positive, productive experiences with the Philippian Christians. The word praying conveys continuous action and has the idea of asking God to meet a need. In particular, Paul's petitions for the Philippian believers were infused with joy because of their partnership in the gospel. The term partnership translates the Greek

word koinonia, which comes from a verb meaning “to share,” “to associate oneself with,” “to be made a partner.”

Paul expressed his confidence in the Philippian Christians’ continued spiritual growth. His certainty was not based on his ability or on their efforts but on God, who had started a good work in them. The beginning of God’s good work occurred when the believers placed their faith in Christ. By His grace, God would carry their salvation on to completion (fully finish it). Paul and the Philippian believers shared in a common enterprise: spreading the gospel. They were joint participants in God’s redemptive purpose. Here the term grace referred to Paul’s missionary ministry. With a solemn oath, Paul declared his intense, eager yearning to be reunited with his friends. Christ Jesus was the Source of Paul’s deep desire. Through Paul, Christ’s love reached out to his friends.