

# PHILIPPIANS

## Confident in Christ (1:1-11)

Notes: Week One

### Philippians 1:1-11 (NIV)

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons<sup>[a]</sup>:

<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Thanksgiving and Prayer

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God every time I remember you. <sup>4</sup> In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup> being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

<sup>7</sup> It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. <sup>8</sup> God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, <sup>10</sup> so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Footnotes:

- a. [Philippians 1:1](#) The word *deacons* refers here to Christians designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in Romans 16:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8, 12.

## Philippians 1:1-11 (HCSB)

### *Greeting*

1 Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus:

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Thanksgiving and Prayer**

<sup>3</sup> I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>4</sup> always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you<sup>[b]</sup> will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart,<sup>[c]</sup> and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and establishment of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you can approve the things that are superior and can be pure and blameless in<sup>[d]</sup> the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

### **Footnotes:**

- a. [Philippians 1:3](#) Or *for your every remembrance of me*
- b. [Philippians 1:6](#) Or *work among you*
- c. [Philippians 1:7](#) Or *because you have me in your heart*
- d. [Philippians 1:10](#) Or *until*

## Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*<sup>1</sup>

### *Philippians 1:1-11*

**1:1a** Timothy was with Paul and Silas when they planted the church at Philippi ([Php 2:19-24](#); [Ac 16](#)). "Slave" (Gk *doulos*) expresses humility.

**1:1b** Saints are believers. Overseers (lit "bishops") and deacons (lit "servants") indicate an emerging church structure that became full-blown in later years.

**1:2** Grace and peace, jointly from God and Jesus Christ, attest to the deity and coequality of both.

**1:5** Partnership (lit "fellowship") expresses participation, including giving ([4:10-20](#)) and sending Epaphroditus ([2:25](#)). From the first day shows Paul's continued joy in these believers, in spite of his initial difficulty in the city of Philippi ([Ac 16](#)).

**1:9-10** Paul prayed two petitions: a growing love ([v. 9](#)) and complete character ([v. 10](#)). Love (Gk *agape*) is selfless action for another person. Knowledge and discernment provide the twofold environment that fosters love. "Knowledge" is both intellectual and experiential. "Discernment," unique in the Bible, is moral sensitivity. Love enriched by knowledge and moral discernment leads believers to experience what really matters. The word pure emphasizes personal integrity; blameless means good character that survives all accusations.

**1:11** The phrase filled with the fruit of righteousness expresses how a person attains purity and blamelessness. Righteousness is the character of those whom God declares righteous.

## English Standard Version - *Study Bible*<sup>2</sup>

### *Philippians 1:1-11*

**1:1-11** *Greeting and Prayer.* Paul greets his readers, expressing his gratitude ([vv. 3-6](#)) and affection ([vv. 7-8](#)) for them, followed by a prayer that their love would abound and their holiness increase ([vv. 9-11](#)).

**1:1-2** *Salutation from Paul and Timothy.* Paul, along with Timothy, gives the standard early Christian greeting of grace and peace. Paul does not identify himself as an apostle but designates Timothy and himself as servants. The emphasis on service anticipates the rest of the letter, and this emphasis is seen especially in what is said of the humiliation of Christ Jesus ([2:5-11](#)). It is uncertain what level of formal church governance is implied by overseers and deacons. The former are presumably elders, who would be charged with spiritual oversight of the congregation (cf. [Acts 14:23](#) [with [note](#)]; [20:17, 28](#); [1 Tim. 3:1-7](#); [Titus 1:5-9](#); [James 5:14](#); [1 Pet. 5:1-4](#)), while the latter would be entrusted with matters of practical service (cf. [Acts 6:1-7](#); [1 Tim. 3:8-13](#)).

**1:3-11** *Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Philippians.* Paul's letters frequently begin with thanksgiving and prayer. The prayer here helps establish the major themes of the letter.

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1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Philippians 1".

2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Philippians 1".

## Joy and Rejoicing in Philippians

Reference	Paul...
<a href="#">1:4</a>	prays with joy
<a href="#">1:18</a>	rejoices that Christ is proclaimed
<a href="#">1:25</a>	will remain living on earth, for the Philippians' joy in the faith
<a href="#">2:2</a>	asks the Philippians to complete his joy
<a href="#">2:17-18</a>	is glad and rejoices with the Philippians
<a href="#">2:28</a>	sends Epaphroditus, that the Philippians might rejoice
<a href="#">2:29</a>	tells the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus with joy
<a href="#">3:1</a>	tells the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord
<a href="#">4:1</a>	tells the Philippians they are his joy
<a href="#">4:4</a>	tells the Philippians twice to rejoice in the Lord
<a href="#">4:10</a>	rejoiced in the Lord at the Philippians' concern for him

**1:3-5** Paul prays for the Philippians with **joy**, a word that will become a keynote theme in [ch. 4](#). This joy springs from their **partnership in the gospel**, which involves not only their financial support of the apostle ([4:15-16](#)) but also their deep personal concern for his well-being.

**1:6** Paul is **sure** about God's commitment to the Philippians. The foundation for spiritual growth is recognizing that it is God who **began a good work in you** and **will bring it to completion**. Genuine spiritual progress is rooted in what God has done, is doing, and will do. His faithfulness ensures that he will be with believers until Jesus returns (**the day of Jesus Christ**; cf. [2:16](#); [1 Thess. 5:2-11](#); [2 Pet. 3:10-13](#); [Rev. 20:11-21:8](#)). They can have confidence that the God who has saved them will never let them go, and that they will inherit their eternal reward.

**1:7-8** Again Paul expresses his warm thoughts about the Philippians and the fellowship they enjoy in God's grace. Paul's **imprisonment** would have been a source of great shame in the ancient world, but the Philippians have nonetheless stood in solidarity with him. This was no doubt an encouragement as he shared the good news with his captors and judges.

**1:9-11** The first petition in Paul's prayer is that God would cause the cardinal Christian virtue of **love** to **abound more and more**, and that it would be accompanied by **knowledge** and **all discernment**, so that the Philippians' love would find expression in wise actions that would truly benefit others and glorify God. As Christians grow in their understanding of what it means to follow Jesus, they will increasingly be able to affirm and practice **what is excellent**. Such joyful obedience to God will give them the confidence of being found **pure and blameless** when Jesus returns. This does not imply instantaneous spiritual perfection but rather an increasing likeness to Christ. But **fruit of righteousness** is not produced in the believer's own power. Because that fruit comes **through Jesus Christ**, it will result in the **glory and praise of God**.

## NLT Life Application Study Bible<sup>3</sup>

### *Philippians 1:1-11*

**1:1** This is a personal letter to the Philippians, not intended for general circulation to all the churches, as was the letter to the Ephesians. Paul wanted to thank the believers for helping him when he had a need. He also wanted to tell them why he could be full of joy despite his imprisonment and upcoming trial. In this uplifting letter, Paul counseled the Philippians about humility and unity and warned them about potential problems.

**1:1** On Paul's first missionary journey, he visited towns close to his headquarters in Antioch of Syria. On his second and third journeys, he traveled farther away. Because of the great distances between the congregations that Paul had founded, he could no longer personally oversee them all. Thus, he was compelled to write letters to teach and encourage the believers. Fortunately, Paul had a staff of volunteers (including Timothy, Mark, and Epaphras) who personally delivered these letters and often remained with the congregations for a while to teach and encourage them.

**1:1** For more information on Paul, see his Profile in [Acts 9, p. 1837](#). Timothy's Profile is found in [1 Timothy 2, p. 2059](#).

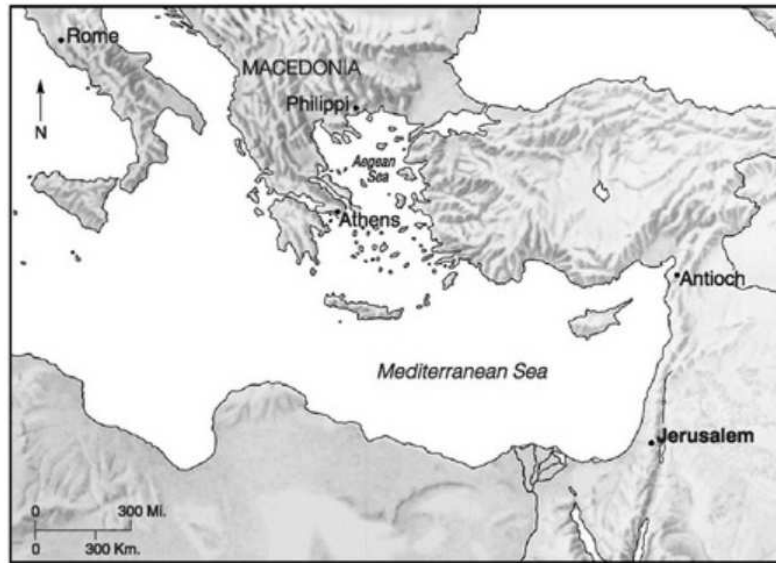
**1:1** The Roman colony of Philippi was located in northern Greece (called Macedonia in Paul's day). Philip II of Macedon (the father of Alexander the Great) took the town from ancient Thrace in about 357 B.C., enlarged and strengthened it, and gave it his name. This thriving commercial center sat at the crossroads between Europe and Asia. In about A.D. 50, Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke crossed the Aegean Sea from Asia Minor and landed at Philippi ([Acts 16:11-40](#)). The church in Philippi consisted mostly of Gentile (non-Jewish) believers. Because they were not familiar with the Old Testament, Paul did not specifically quote any Old Testament passages in this letter.

**1:1** Elders (bishops or pastors) and deacons led the early Christian churches. The qualifications and duties of the elders are explained in detail in [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#) and [Titus 1:5-9](#). The qualifications and duties of deacons are spelled out in [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#).

**1:2** We get upset at children who fail to appreciate small gifts, yet we undervalue God's immeasurable gifts of grace and peace. Instead, we seek the possessions and shallow experiences the world offers. Compared to the big and bright "packages" of our culture, grace and peace appear insignificant. But when we unwrap them, we discover God's wonderful personal dealings with us. Inside the tiny package marked "grace and peace," we find an inexhaustible treasure of God's daily presence in our lives. Using these two words in his greetings to all the churches to whom he wrote, Paul wasn't offering something new. He was reminding his readers of what they already possessed in Christ. Thank God for his grace, and live in his peace.

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3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 2013-2015.



*Location of Philippi*

Philippi sat on the Egnatian Way, the main transportation route in Macedonia, an extension of the Appian Way, which joined the eastern empire with Italy.

**1:4** This is the first of many times Paul used the word *joy* in this letter. The Philippians were remembered with joy and thanksgiving whenever Paul prayed. By helping Paul, they were helping Christ's cause. The Philippians were willing to be used by God for whatever he wanted them to do. When others think about you, what comes to their minds? Are you remembered with joy by them? Do your acts of kindness lift up others?

**1:4, 5** The Philippians first heard the Good News about 10 years earlier when Paul and his companions visited Philippi (during Paul's second missionary journey) and founded the church there.

**1:5** When Paul said that the Philippians were partners in spreading the Good News, he was remembering how they contributed through their practical help when Paul was in Philippi and through their financial support when he was in prison. As we help our ministers, missionaries, and evangelists through prayer, hospitality, and financial gifts, we become partners with them in spreading the gospel message.

**1:6** The God who began a good work within us continues it throughout our lifetime and will finish it when we meet him face to face. God's work *for* us began when Christ died on the cross in our place. His work *within* us began when we first believed. Now the Holy Spirit lives in us, enabling us to be more like Christ every day. Paul is describing the process of Christian growth and maturity that began when we accepted Jesus and continues until Christ returns.

**1:6** Do you sometimes feel as though you aren't making progress in your spiritual life? When God starts a project, he completes it! As with the Philippians, God will help you grow in grace until he has completed his work in your life. When you are discouraged, remember that God won't give up on you. He promises to finish the work he has begun. When you feel incomplete, unfinished, or distressed by your shortcomings, remember God's promise and provision. Don't let your present condition rob you of the joy of knowing Christ or keep you from growing closer to him.

**1:7** When he mentions his imprisonment, Paul was probably referring to his imprisonment in Philippi (see [Acts 16:22-36](#)). In [verses 13](#) and [14](#), Paul speaks of his Roman imprisonment. Wherever Paul was, even in prison, he faithfully preached the Good News. Remember Paul's inspiring example when hindrances, small or large, slow down your work for God.

**1:7, 8** Have you ever longed to see a friend with whom you share fond memories? Paul had such a longing to see the Christians at Philippi. His love and affection for them was based not merely on past experiences but also on the unity that comes when believers draw upon Christ's love. All Christians are part of God's family and thus share equally in the transforming power of his love. Do you feel a deep love for fellow Christians, friends and strangers alike? Let Christ's love motivate you to love other Christians and to express that love in your actions toward them.

**1:9** Often the best way to influence someone is to pray for him or her. Paul's prayer for the Philippians was that they would be unified in love. Their love was to result in greater knowledge of Christ and deeper understanding (moral discernment). Their love was not based on feelings but on what Christ had done for them. As you grow in Christ's love, your heart and mind must grow together. Are your love and insight growing?

**1:10** Paul prayed that the Philippian believers would have the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad, vital and trivial. We ought to pray for moral discernment so we can maintain our Christian morals and values. [Hebrews 5:14](#) emphasizes the need for discernment.

**1:10** "The day of Christ's return" refers to the time when God will judge the world through Jesus Christ. We should live each day as though he might return at any moment.

**1:11** The "fruit of your salvation" includes all of the character traits flowing from a right relationship with God. There is no other way for us to gain this fruit of righteousness than through Christ. See [Galatians 5:22, 23](#) for the "fruit of the Spirit."



# Life Essentials Study Bible<sup>4</sup>

## A Principle to Live By Philippians #1: Leadership Development

from Philippians 1:1-2

**To produce mature and growing churches,  
we must make it a priority to mentor and develop qualified leaders.**

This is the only letter where Paul specifically included elders/overseers and deacons in his greeting. This indicates that men and women had been equipped spiritually to occupy these important leadership roles. Though Paul did not put the qualifications for these positions in writing until later, he was very likely teaching these characteristics on his various missionary journeys.

Since this was primarily a Gentile church, it's significant that men and women had become mature enough to serve in these official leadership roles. The reason is that Luke stayed in Philippi for at least eight years after Paul, Silas, and Timothy went to Macedonia and beyond (note the plural pronouns "they" and "we" in [Ac 17:1](#) and [20:5-6](#)). We can conclude that Paul encouraged Luke—as he did Timothy—to devote a lot of time to equipping people to become mature in Christ so they could serve in these leadership roles.

### Reflection and Response

*What happens in churches where men and women are not equipped spiritually to serve in key leadership roles?*

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## A Principle to Live By Philippians #2: Expressing Appreciation

from Philippians 1:3-8

**Spiritual leaders should express sincere appreciation  
to those who partner with them in the ministry.**

One of Paul's main reasons for writing this letter was to let the Philippians know how often he thanked God for their "partnership in the gospel," which began the first day of his ministry among them ([v. 5](#)).

Shortly after Paul and his fellow missionaries Silas, Timothy, and Luke arrived in Philippi, they heard about a Sabbath day prayer session. Lydia was an affluent Gentile woman—"a dealer in purple cloth"—who was among a group of women who had gathered to pray. She and her whole household responded to the gospel, and she immediately opened her home to these four missionaries ([Ac 16:14-15](#)).

This was just the beginning of a deep, loving partnership between the Philippian church and Paul. They often sent gifts of money to care for his needs. When Paul used the words "until now" ([Php 1:5](#)), he was under house arrest in Rome, and as he closed out this letter, he thanked them once again for meeting his needs with their gifts of love ([4:14-16](#)).

### Reflection and Response

*Without showing favoritism, in what practical ways can we show appreciation to those who are generous with their time, talents, and material possessions?*

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4. Gene Getz, *Life Essentials Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2011), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1626.