

JOURNEY TO OZ "IF I ONLY HAD A HEART" PHILIPPIANS 1:3-8

This Week's Core Competency

Biblical Community – I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world. Acts 2:44-47 *All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

"Fellowship" and "potluck" are not synonymous. People who attend church "potlucks" once in a while may equate their experience with the experience of biblical community, but they would be wrong. The experience of biblical community goes far beyond sharing the occasional meal with friends at church. True Christian fellowship and the experience of biblical community it entails involves mutually working together as partners to advance the gospel.

The experience of biblical community is closely tied to the meaning of *koinonia*, a Greek word that appears in the opening of Paul's letter to the Philippians and elsewhere in the New Testament often translated "fellowship" in our English versions. Following the salutation in the first two

The sign of our professed love for the gospel is the measure of sacrifice we are prepared to make in order to help its progress.

– Ralph P. Martin

verses, the apostle goes on to report how he thanks God every time he remembers his readers in prayer. He writes, "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (v. 3). The NIV translates *koinonia* "partnership" in this verse. The NET Bible and the ESV translate it "participation," the NRSV translates it "sharing," and the NKJV translates it "fellowship." No matter how it's translated, it refers to the fact that the Philippians supported Paul financially from early on. He writes, "Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need" . . . "I am amply supplied now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" (4:15-18).

Moreover, their "partnership" with Paul went beyond just financial support. One author writes, "Their share or partnership in (or toward) the gospel was not a quiet enjoyment of it, but a keen activity in the interest of it, an effective participation for the furtherance of the gospel . . . That fellowship of the church in the gospel reveals different aspects: their acceptance of the gospel in faith, their identification with the aims thereof, their co-operation in preaching and spreading it, their expression of sympathy with the apostle in his afflictions for the sake of Christ (verse 7), amongst others, by sending pecuniary contributions for the

cont. pg. 2

relief of his needs in prison (Phil. 4:14-17) or for the benefit of other fellow believers by collecting for them (Rom. 15:26). *In short, it refers to their sympathetic attitude and practical action in the interest of the gospel: their co-operation, zeal, prayers and sacrifice, arising from their personal appropriation of the gospel by faith*" (Jac. J. Mueller, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, NICNT, 40, 41 italics added). In other words, the Philippians did more than "potluck" with Paul.

The experience of true biblical community involves living missionally together with others in the church. People who only attend worship service inevitably miss it, even if they attend every Sunday, and as a result, they may feel that they've stalled spiritually—that they're stuck, mired, hindered, that their spiritual growth has slowed to a crawl. A key for them getting unstuck is to reengage spiritually through the experience of biblical community. At Pantego that involves getting connected to a community group and home group to study the Bible together with others and participate in the Seven Functions of Biblical Community. It involves investing in the lives of others by volunteering in ministries inside or perhaps outside the church. It involves cultivating a passion for and making a tangible contribution to a ministry or missionary of one's choosing. If a missionary, that passion might lead to a personal visit to join arms with that one in his ministry. These "Belong, Become, go Beyond" kinds of things lead to the experience of true biblical community.

For Discussion

Phil and Sarah have attended Pantego Bible Church for years. They attend the 10:45 a.m. worship service regularly—Sarah more regularly than Phil. Sarah would like to get connected, but Phil isn't that interested, and Sarah doesn't want to go to community group alone. Phil calls Pantego his church, David Daniels his pastor, but one hour of church a week is enough for him. Needless to say, neither volunteers at church or in their community, neither is deliberately involved in making disciples of children or adults, and neither has any passion for any particular ministry or missionary. They are stalled spiritually. Sarah would like to reengage, but not Phil. What can be done to help them?

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Philippians 1:3-8

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 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.

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. (NIV(c)1984)

Cf., another translation

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. (ESV)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "thank" in v. 3.
- * Bracket "I remember you" in v. 3.
- * Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 5.
- * Circle "partnership" in v. 5.
- * Bracket "in the gospel" in v. 5.
- * Circle "good work" in v. 6.
- * Underline "the day of Jesus Christ" in v. 6.
- * Circle "feel" in v. 7.
- * Bracket "I have you in my heart" in v. 7.
- * Circle "defending" and "confirming" in v. 7.
- * Circle "God's grace" in v. 7.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Describe Paul's relationship to the Philippian believers based on what he tells them in verses 3-8.
2. Much of what he writes pertains to his *personal* relationship to his *contemporary* readers and not his *modern* readers. Give one or two examples.
3. However, because he addresses his readers as Christians, some of what he writes *does* pertain to his *modern* readers. Give one or two examples.
4. Comment on the words "with joy" in verse 4.
5. Identify the one-word reason why he regularly thanks God for them and explain what it refers to.
6. Identify the "good work" he refers to in verse 6.
7. In what way does Paul "feel" about the Philippians according to verse 7?
8. Verse 7b ("for") and verse 5 ("because") are complementary. How so?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about how believers can share in God's grace with those who minister to them (v. 7).

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Philippians is one of Paul's four Prison Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Clearly it was written from prison for in 1:12-14 he writes, "Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly" (cf., v. 7). "Some have argued that this imprisonment took place in Ephesus, perhaps c. A.D. 53-55; others put it in Caesarea c. 57-59. Best evidence, however, favors Rome as the place of origin and the date as c. 61. This fits well with the account of Paul's house arrest in Ac 28:14-31. When he wrote Philippians, he was not in the Mamertine dungeon as he was when he wrote 2 Timothy. He was in his own rented house, where for two years he was free to impart the gospel to all who came to him" (*The NIV Study Bible*, 1801). While he had a number of reasons for writing them, the most obvious one was to thank them for the financial gift they had recently sent him upon learning of his detention in Rome (1:5; 4:18).

As in so many of his other epistles, following an opening salutation, Paul begins his letter with thanksgiving and prayer (vv. 3-11). "The result is a twofold prayer-report: prayer as thanksgiving—for their partnership in the gospel, in every kind of way; and prayer as petition—for continued fruitfulness in living out the gospel in Philippi. Both reports, which focus on their past and present in Christ, also underscore their certain future: as affirmation of God's work in them (v. 6) and as petition for the same (vv. 10-11)" (Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT, 73).

Verses 3-8, containing Paul's thanksgiving, belong to one long sentence in Greek that is broken into a number of shorter sentences by our English versions. While these differences make a difference, the sense of the whole is largely unaffected by them.

In verses 3-6, the apostle tells his readers that he made a habit of giving thanks to God for them in prayer and explains why. The character of his

relationship to them is evident from the fact that his "every remembrance" of them filled him "with joy" enabling him to swear that he longed for them all "with the affection of Christ Jesus" (v. 8). It was their "partnership in the gospel" in particular that moved him since they had supported him from the beginning. From the time he left Philippi after preaching the gospel to them and being put in jail for it (Ac 16:11-40), they alone supported him (Php 4:15). During his ministry in Thessalonica (Ac 17:1-9), they sent him aid "again and again" (v. 16). No doubt, they supported him in broader terms, as well, by engaging in the ministry he left to them in Philippi. They were active not passive partners; that's the important thing. In verse 6 the apostle digresses a bit to assure them of his confidence that God would continue to work in them, transforming them into the likeness of his Son (Ro 8:29), until the Lord's return.

In verses 7, 8 he goes on to justify the way he feels about them. He has a certain view of them, that is he sees them in a certain way and so explains why he has the right to feel that way. What he writes in verse 7 echoes what he wrote in verse 5 alluding again to their faithfulness to the "partnership." Regardless of Paul's circumstances, they shared in God's grace with him. They didn't let circumstances get in the way of supporting him or ministering the gospel in Philippi. For that reason, Paul could honestly say that he longed for them "with the affection of Christ Jesus" (v. 8).

What can contemporary readers take away from this passage given the fact that so much of it pertains exclusively to Paul and his relationship to the Philippians? The fact that they partnered with him in the ministry is a good place to start. His commendation of them gives us reason to follow the example of this church. Together with the apostle they lived missional lives; they were actively engaged in advancing the gospel. Furthermore, his assurance that the one who began a good work in them as Christians would finish it gives us reason to believe that God finish his work of salvation in us as well.

The Message of the Passage

*Partner with others in the church and those who minister to you
to advance the gospel of Christ Jesus until he finishes
his work in you at his return.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

“If I Only Had a Heart”

(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

vv. 3-8 **I thank . . .** "In modern translations the thanksgiving is often broken into two parts, sometimes into two paragraphs (vv. 3-6, 7-8; cf. NIV). In fact, however, this is a single (especially difficult and convoluted) sentence in Paul's Greek" (Fee, 75; cf., "the grammatical and syntactical relationships in this section [vv. 4, 5] are quite complicated," Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, NAC, 55).

v. 3 **remember you** Lit., "upon (*epi*, which can mean "on the basis of = because of" or "on the occasion of") every remembrance of you" (NKJV). So the phrase can mean "at all my remembrance of you" (objective genitive) or "because of your every remembrance [of me]" (subjective genitive). The question of whether Paul thanks God every time he remembers the Philippians (most English translations) or every time the Philippians remember him by actively supporting his ministry (Moffatt, "I thank my God for all your remembrance of me;" cf., HCSB footnote) is answered in part by the grammar, which favors the former (see discussion, 77-80). A survey of the various options can be found in the NET Bible, 8^{tn} Php 1:5.

v. 4 **In all my . . .** For the sake of clarity, the NIV begins a new sentence in verse 4; other English translations wait until verse 6 (ESV, NRSV, NLT). The NET Bible begins a new sentence in both verses 4 and 6; the NKJV waits until verse 7 to begin a new sentence.

v. 5 **partnership** "The term 'partnership' (*koinonia*) means more than 'fellowship' (KJV) or even 'sharing' (NRSV). It refers to the Philippians' practical support of Paul's efforts to proclaim the gospel and meet the needs of other believers. Thus Paul uses the verbal form of this noun later in the letter to commend the Philippians for entering into partnership with him (*sunkoinoneo*) in his troubles by means of their gifts to him during his imprisonment (4:14). He also uses it to recall their willingness to participate (*koinoneo*) 'in the matter of giving and receiving' during his ministry at Thessalonica and elsewhere (4:15; cf. 2 Cor. 8:2). The 'partnership' of the Philippians for which Paul thanks God in verse 5, therefore, is their practical assistance of his efforts to proclaim the gospel" (Frank Thielman, *The NIV Application Commentary: Philippians*, 38). "The best understanding of 'your *koinonia* in the gospel' is that which takes the word first of all in its 'neutral' sense to refer to their participation in spreading the gospel itself, *in every possible way*, which in particular includes their recent partnership in the gospel by sending him a gift while he is imprisoned for the defense of the gospel" (Fee, 84 italics added; cf., Melick, 56).

v. 6 **good work** Paul emphasizes what God is doing in or among them, not what he is doing through them (Fee, 85-87). "It is possible to take a good work as an allusion to the Philippians' participation in the apostolic ministry by their gifts: 'their co-operation with and affection for the apostle', as Lightfoot puts it. 2 Corinthians 8:6 uses almost identical verbs, 'begin, finish', for Titus' administration of the relief fund for the Jerusalem church. So, 'this "sharing in the gospel" is the good work referred to here' (Hawthorne). On the other hand, Paul may be looking beyond the generosity of the Philippians to that work of grace within their lives which first gave them the impulse to contribute to his missionary labours. The good work would then be the action of God at the time of their conversion. This is confirmed by the way in which Paul often refers to the time when God's grace began to work in the lives of his readers (see 1 Cor. 1:4; Col. 1:5; 1 Thes. 1:5-6; Phm. 5f. and especially Gal. 3:3 where he two verbs of this verse are used). God's redeeming and renewing work will reach its crown and climax at the day of Christ Jesus. This eschatological note makes Hawthorne's view that verse 6 refers exclusively to the matter of Philippian generosity in aiding the gospel unlikely" (Ralph P. Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, TNTC, 63; cf., Thielman, 38, 39; Melick, 58)

v. 6 **day of Christ Jesus** "While at times the term may emphasize the aspect of judgment inherent in its OT usage, much more often the emphasis in Paul is on the eschatological consummation that has Christ's coming and therefore his final exaltation and glorification, including those who are his—as its central focus" (Fee, 86).

v. 7 **feel** The Greek verb "refers neither to 'thinking' in general, nor 'reasoning' as such, nor is it used for a specific act of thought; rather, it has to do with having or developing a certain 'mindset,' including attitudes and dispositions" (89). It refers to Paul's "view" of them.

v. 7 **defending and confirming** "The terms Paul uses for 'defending' (*apologia*) and 'confirming' (*bebaiosis*) are technical terms for providing a speech of defense before an official (Acts 22:1; 2 Tim. 4:16) and giving a guarantee that something is true (Heb. 6:16). Paul's imprisonment and impending trial (1:13, 17, 19-26) may have suggested these terms to Paul, as many commentators believe, but the Philippians' support of the apostle is not limited to his legal battles (cf. 4:15-16), and so his meaning here cannot be confined to that context. Whether he is in chains or persuading hearers of the truth of the gospel outside prison walls, Paul says the Philippians have stood with him" (Thielman, 40).

v. 8 **God's grace** "Paul very likely is referring to the 'grace' of being 'partners together in the defense and vindication of the gospel' even in the midst of present 'chains'" (91).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Years ago, when our kids were younger, the home group we were a part of met at our house. Most of the children in our group fell in the age range between newborn to twelve and there were fourteen of them. We prayed for nice weather every Sunday evening so the older ones could play outside. On one particular rainy Sunday, we all huddled into the living room to create family posters. These were intended to be an advertisement for each family. Each member was to be depicted on it and each family was to choose a family motto. As we presented them to the group, one poster was different from the rest. It had not only the six members of that family but everyone else in the room as well. The motto simply read "Together". This family's definition of family was much bigger than ours! But just as Paul thought of the Philippians in our passage today, this family had all of us in their heart and longed for us with the affection of Christ. In 2013, will you consider making a commitment to join a home group or get connected with some other families who are on a journey with God? The trip is so much better when we make it together.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Philippians 1:3-8

1. To whom is Paul writing?
2. From where is Paul writing this letter? (hint: Phil. 1:13-14)
3. According to verse 6, of what is Paul confident?

What Do You Think

1. How do you think Paul feels about the Philippians?
2. How do you know the people Paul is writing to are Christians?
3. Paul said that just thinking about the Philippians caused him to pray for them. Are you being faithful to pray for others?

What R U Going To Do

This week we are learning to BELONG. Take this quick BELONG Quiz. (1) Do I belong to God? Yes or No; (2) On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=not connected at all. 5=Very connected) How much do I belong to church? 1 2 3 4 5; (3) On the same scale, how much do I belong to community? 1 2 3 4 5. LET'S FOCUS ON BELONGING TO EACH OTHER IN 2013!

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Biblical Community - I spend time with other Christians to help with God's work.

Memory Verse

Philippians 1:6 "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."

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.