

Basics for Believers #01

Philippians 1:1-11

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(relied on D. A. Carson's *Basic for Believers*, Williams Hendrickson's *Expositors Bible Commentary Philippians*, and F. Bruce's *Philippians Commentary*)

Many people want just \$3 worth of the Gospel . . .

Not too much . . . just enough to make me happy . . . but not so that I get addicted . . .

I don't want so much Gospel that I really learn to hate sin . . .

And I don't want so much that I actually start loving my enemies . . . and denying myself and taking up my cross . . .

I certainly don't want so much of the Gospel that I actually prayerfully consider missionary service in some distant land . . .

I want excitement . . . but not repentance . . .

I want to be loved by some nice, forgiving, broad-minded people . . . but I certainly don't want to love those from different races . . .

Especially if they happen to have a different skin color (after all, my kids might end up marrying their kids . . .)

I want enough of the Gospel to make my family happy, secure, and my children well-behaved . . .

But not so much that I find my ambitions and plans readjusted . . . and then changed completely . . .

I want heaven . . . but not a cross . . .

I want happiness . . . I want forgiveness . . . but I don't want anyone, including God, telling me how I am supposed to run my daily life . . .

I want a crown . . . but I don't want a cross . . .

I want God to give me life on my terms . . . I don't want Him demanding my death to myself on His terms . . .

I want a place in heaven . . . and a pleasant place to attend on Sunday mornings, but God can't have my Sunday evenings, my Tuesday evenings, Wednesdays or Saturdays . . .

I want to know my sins are forgiven . . . and that's just good enough for me . . . I really don't need that other part of the Gospel message . . .

I want just \$3 of the Gospel please . . .

We just finished a series in the Gospel of Matthew last week . . . and we were challenged, and convicted, and encouraged . . .

Now we are going to see what that Gospel looks like in living color . . . and for that, we need to open our Bibles to the book of Philippians . . .

In Acts chapter 9, God saved a well-educated and religious young man named Saul . . . and God picked that young man to be an Apostle . . . in particular, an apostle to the Gentiles . . . that he would take the Gospel into the Roman Empire . . . not only to the Jews who lived in the empire, but to everyone else . . .

And God changed his name from Saul to ??

Right . . .

And Paul took a series of missionary trips into the empire, planting churches along the way . .

And on his second missionary trip, he came to the city of Philippi ..

Which was thriving port city . . . had a good economy and a thriving trade business . . .

And as Paul's manner was, he preached the Gospel . . . and a lady name Lydia was saved . . . and you'll probably recall, Paul was used by God to cast a demon out of a young lady . .

And that didn't go over well w/ the majority of the citizens . . . so they had Paul arrested, beat him, and threw him in prison ..

And that night, Paul and Silas were in prison, singing praise to God . . . and what happened? Yep, earth quake . . . Jailor . . . what must I do to be saved . . . believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . .

And after being released from prison, Paul soon left the city to continue on his travels . . .

So Paul was not at Phillipi very long . . . only long enough to lead a few people to Christ, and start a small riot . .

And now we have to skip a few years . . . because by the time Paul came to write the book we're going to study this morning, Paul was in Rome in prison . . . for preaching the Gospel . . .

And what he wrote to this church, while in that prison, we need in our lives . . .

With that in mind, please turn your attention to Philippians 1 and let's learn together about the Basics of the Christian life . . .

READ // PRAY

We are beginning a brand-new series through the wonderful book of Philippians . . .

And if you are looking for an idea of what to do in your personal devotions this week, let me, as your pastor, encourage you to read through this book this week . . . it's only 4 chapters . . .

Here Paul gives us two of the foundational anchors of the Christian life . . . of living the Gospel . . .

So let's see what God has for our lives this morning . . .

**I. First, Put the Gospel First in your Relationships with People – vv. 1-8**

- A. For some people, when they think of others, its only to gossip . .
- B. Or to bring up a hurt in the past . .
- C. Or to criticize . . .
- D. Not Paul . . . when he thought of these folks, he was driven by love to pray for them because He was committed to the Gospel . . .
- E. He understood that the Gospel crosses racial . . . and economic . . . and cultural lines . . .
- F. And Paul understands that this Gospel . . . this life-changing message . . . this life-bringing message has made them part of the same family . . .
- G. Paul was so thankful for this church family . . . for the people in this church . . . b/c of Gospel of Jesus Christ had made them a family . . .
- H. With joy for all of them . . .

1. Don't miss this . . . circle those words "you all" in v. 4 . . . and write out . . . everyone in the church . . .
2. A whole lot of churches have a "us for and no more" attitude . . .
3. Where there are cliques w/ in the church . . .
4. Where they like their friends in the church . . . and their family in the church . . .
5. And they have their interests . . . and their friendships . . .
6. But they don't go out of their way to welcome others at church that they really don't know or don't spend a lot of time w/ . . .
7. And frankly, that sort of thing will flat out ruin a church . . . because it is flat out sin . . .
8. A lot of folks don't realize that they are sinning when they only come to sit . . . or come to get . . . or come to see their friends . . .
9. They think they are doing a good job . . .
10. But the fact of the matter is, God says over in Ephesians 4 that He is building this church the way He wants it to be . . .
11. And that He is putting us together . . . and making us a family . . .
12. So to not befriend and build relationships in this church w/ others bc you don't really know them that well . . . or because you just have never hit it off w/ them . . .
13. Is sin . . .
14. It's an insult to the God who is putting people in this church . . .
15. And some might say . . . "If that's the way it is, I'm just not going to attend any more . . .

16. Friends, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?
  17. God forbid . . .
  18. Simply put, Paul was thankful for EVERYONE in the church family . . .
- I. and here is why: Because they were fellow laborers with him in the Gospel
1. Circle that word "fellowship" . . .
  2. That poor word is greatly overused and misunderstood in our society and culture today . . .
  3. If you invite an unsaved person into your home for a meal, it's called friendship . . .
  4. If you invited a Christian into your home for a meal, it's called fellowship . . .
  5. If you come to church, and leave as soon as it's over, you have participated in a service..
  6. If you stay for coffee cake and punch afterwards, then you've enjoyed a service and some fellowship . . .
  7. In our language, fellowship means something like warm friendship among Christians . . .
  8. That's not what Paul means here . . .
  9. In Paul's day, "fellowship" had commercial overtones . . . it was taken from the business world . . .
  10. If John and Harry went into the fishing business together, they have entered into a partnership . . . a co-ownership of the business . . .
  11. Both Harry & John put their savings together and buy a boat . . .
  12. They buy the needed nets . . . and supplies . . .

13. They work hard to reach the common goal of making the business succeeded and grow . . .
14. They have entered into a partnership that means self-sacrifice, delayed gratification . . . hard work . . . serious time efforts . . . serious financial commitments . .
15. If the business fails, they would lose everything . . . there is nothing to fall back on . . .
16. So they work hard together . . . they both sacrifice . . . they both work . . . they both give and give and give to reach the goal . . .
17. In our language, they have entered into a partnership that means common sacrifice, common work, and a common goal . . .
18. That is exactly what Paul means here when he says that this church was in fellowship w/ him in the Gospel . .
19. It doesn't mean that he enjoyed cookies and coffee w/ them after a service . . .
20. It means that they are co-laborers w/ him . .
21. It doesn't mean that he really enjoyed snacks after church w/ them . . .
22. He means that they are sacrificing to reach the goal of the getting the gospel into all the world . . . just as the Gospel brought them together as a family . .
23. It also brought them together as servants . . .
24. A common goal . . . a shared vision . . . with the same Lord . . . who wants the entire world to hear the Gospel . . . the saving message of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ

25. according to the Scripture . . . Christian fellowship in the Bible sense of it, is self-sacrificing conformity to the Gospel . . .
26. And that does naturally include overtones of warmth and intimacy . . . but the heart of the matter is this shared vision of what is really important . . .
27. Our commitment together to get the Gospel to other . .
28. Our commitment together to live the gospel in our homes . . . and on our jobs . . . and in our friendships . . .
29. That's what he means . . .
30. It means living for the same reason . . . to bring glory to God by a changed life and glory to God by getting the Gospel to others . . .
31. So when Paul gives thanks for all of these folks, with joy, it is because they, from the day they heard it, from the moment of their conversion, they rolled up their sleeves and got involved in the advance of the gospel . . .
32. They shared the gospel w/ their unsaved neighbors . .
33. They shared the gospel w/ visitors at their church . .
34. They prayed for Paul . .
35. They sent money to support him in his ministry . .
36. All testifying to their shared vision of the importance and priority of the gospel . . .
37. Paul's closest friends were those who were committed to getting the gospel into the lives of others . . .

38. Sometimes we get the mistaken idea that Paul was some sort of Lone Ranger . . . you know, serving God all by himself . . .
39. That's not true . . . there were church made up of folks like you & me were just committed to the Gospel . . .
40. Who didn't come to church to see what they could get . . . but rather, to see what they could give . . .
41. Who didn't look at work as a place where they made a living . . . but rather a place to live for Christ . . .
42. They understood that God's saving grace in their life was for a purpose . . . to change their lives . . . for the glory of God . . .
43. And that change in their lives included them being heavily involved in getting the Gospel out to others . . .
44. And living in such a way that that Gospel message was not only heard by those around them . . . but also seen by those around them . . .

J. Church family . . . are you fellowshiping in the Gospel?

1. And I don't mean if you enjoy lemon cookies and coffee after prayer meeting . . .
2. I mean, is your life centered around knowing and loving God . . .
3. And others about Him . . .
4. And making sure you live in such a way that you are advancing the Gospel message in your relationships?
5. Paul prayed for the Christians in this church because they were doing exactly that . . .
6. Could it be that we have weak attendance at

our mid-week prayer meeting b/c the Gospel just isn't that important to us, so praying together for the advancement of the Gospel isn't that important to us?

7. Could it be that we have low attendance at our community outreach Saturdays because, frankly, we are just not really that committed to the Gospel . . .
8. We was \$3 worth . . . but not if it costs us . . .
9. And I want you to notice w/ me that this was not only the "mature" Christians who were doing this . . .
10. Paul says that from the day of their conversion . . .
11. Meaning, none of us can hide behind the excuse of being a new believer . . .
12. These folks were serious about living for God . . .
13. And because they are fellow-shipping with him in the gospel, he is able to say the next phrase . . .

K. Brothers & sisters in Christ, they were such friends b/c they were all committed to the very same thing . . .

L. The gospel of Jesus Christ . . .

M. Church family . . . may I ask you . . .

1. What ties us together as a church family?
2. What ties you together w/ your closest friends?
3. What do you talk about when you get with your closest friends?
4. The weather?
5. Hobbies?
6. Sports?

7. Our careers and our children?
8. Our aches and pains?
9. None of those topics are bad in & of themselves . . .
10. In living life and in sharing, all of those things will come up in conversation . .
11. But what must tie us together as Christians is this passion for the gospel . . . this fellowship of the gospel . . .
12. And I submit to you that there is nothing else as strong that could ever keep us together as a church family . . .
13. Look around . . . what holds this church together . . . so many have testified how this is not a church congregation . . . but a church FAMILY . . .
14. And my question is, why is that? Because we just hit it off . . .
15. Or because we all have the same hobbies . . . that's not the case . . .
16. Or because we all home-school our children . . . that's not true ..
17. Or because we all work in the same type of work?
18. May I tell you, some churches about built on those things . . .
  - a. An economic status . .
  - b. A white collar job or a blue collar job . .
  - c. Or skin color . . .
  - d. Or homeschooling . . . private schooling . . .
  - e. Musical likes and dislikes . . .
  - f. Or ethinc background . . .
  - g. How pathetic . .

19. What must hold us together in spite of educational differences . . . in spite of personality differences . . . in spite of economic differences . . . musical differences . . . in spite of racial differences . . . in spite of employment differences . . .
  20. Is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ . .
  21. What hold us together? It is the gospel, the good news that in Jesus, God Himself has reconciled us to Himself . .
  22. That bring about a precious God-centeredness that we share w/ other believers . .
- N. And that means that in our conversations, we ought regularly to be sharing the gospel w/ the unsaved . .
- O. That is, delighting in God . . .
- P. Sharing w/ one another what we have been learning from His Word . . . which presupposes we are actually reading and studying it like we are supposed to be doing . . .
- Q. Joining in prayer for our missionaries around the globe who are committed to this same goal . .
- R. Encouraging one another in obedience and maturing discipleship . . .
- S. Bearing one another's burdens . . .
- T. It means growing in self-sacrificial love for one another simply for Christ's sake . . .
- U. In short, it means we must put the gospel **first** . . .
- V. And until we do that, we will never love like we should . . .
- W. Now it a good time to say amen or go on home . . . b/c I'm not backing down on this . . .
- X. I believe God is quite serious about this . .
- Y. What does your prayer life show about your love for the Gospel?

- Z. What does your closest human relationships show about your love for the Gospel?
- AA. What do you closest relationship and friendships show about the importance of the Gospel?
- BB. For whom do you pray for on a daily basis?
- CC. Why do you pray for those people and not others?
- DD. And who are your closest friends?
- EE. And why are they your closest friends?
- FF. B/c you have children about the same age?
- GG. B/c you have a shared interest in the same pasttime or hobby?
- HH. Or b/c you work at the same place?
- II. Are your closest friends committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
- JJ. Are they committed to church membership and sacrificial serving through their local church?
- KK. Friends, I didn't write this . . . this isn't my book . . . God had Paul write this letter, and Paul says that he loved these folks . . .B/c they had made the Gospel the priority in their friendships . . .
- LL. Friends, my name is Joe and I am your friend . . .
- MM. What do your closest friends show about your love for God and His Gospel?
- NN. If we could look at your calendar this past week, how much time did you invest in the Gospel of God?
- OO. We can keep busy . . . and delude ourselves that we are just too busy . . . and we are lying to ourselves . . .
- PP. When you think of others, are you driven to prayer because for them because of their commitment to the Gospel?
- QQ. Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

- RR. If your closest friends are not committed to the Gospel, it is time to be the friend of God and find new best friends . . .
- SS. And I recommend doing that here in church . . .
- TT. It doesn't take much . . .
- UU. How about inviting someone to go to lunch w/ you next Sunday after church?
- VV. How about inviting someone into your home for a meal?
- WW. How about coming on Saturday to our community outreach ministry?
- XX. How about serving God faithfully in a ministry?
- YY. **Put the Gospel First in your Relationships with People**
- ZZ. Let's turn from why he was praying to what he was actually praying for . . .

## II. Second basic in a Christian life is putting the Gospel first in your prayers . . .

- A. I want you to notice three facets of this prayer . . .
- B. First, paul prays that their love would abound more and more . . .
  1. And the question needs to be asked . . . "Is this their love for God or love for each other?"
  2. And the answer is, "Yes . . ."
  3. Paul provides no object of the love . . . he doesn't say that their love for God would increase . . . or that their love for each other would increase . . . or that their love for him would increase . . .
  4. Friends, let's not kid ourselves . . . from a Christian point of view, growing in love with God is the only way to truly grow in love with other believes . . . and the only

way for your love for others to grow is to have your love for God grow . . . your love for God and your love for others are not two separate things . . . like what you do w/ leftovers in tupperware . .

5. No, love for God and love for others in the Christian life are intertwined . . .
6. (1Jo 4:20) If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?
7. As John tells us, we can't say we love God, whom we can't see, if we don't love our brother, whom we can see . . . we are lying to ourselves . . .
8. And this church was loving already . . . so Paul wanted that love, that was already there, to grow more & more . . .

- C. Second, so they would approve of things that really matter . . .
1. This is not mere sentimentalism . . . or the here today and gone tomorrow love that our unsaved culture displays day after day . .
  2. READ v. 10 . . .
  3. The kind of love that Paul has in mind is the love that become more knowledgeable . . .
  4. And let me pause . . . he is not saying that our knowledge of nuclear physics would grow . . . or our knowledge and understanding of the spotted sea turtle would increase . . .
  5. He has in mind the knowledge of God . .
  6. he wants them to enjoy insight into God's Word . . and God's ways . . .
  7. And thus live a life more pleasing to God

because you grew in your knowledge of God . .

8. And the fact is, you can't grow in your knowledge of God if you are full of bitterness or other self-centered sins . . . .
9. There is a moral side to knowing God . .
10. So sure, you could memorize Scripture, or teach SS somewhere, or get a degree in theology . . . but that is not necessarily the same thing as growing in your knowledge of God . . .
11. Growing in the knowledge of God means growing in humility . . .
12. It demands repentance . . .
13. It requires a self-sacrificing discipline . .
14. It demands we die to ourselves over & over again . .
15. And I need to hear me clearly at this point . .
16. It is impossible to grow in your prayer life if you are not growing in the knoweldge of God . .
17. Christians cannot say, "I will improve my prayer life, but not change what I watch on TV . . ."
18. Or "I will grow in my love for God, but not in my purity in relationships with the opposite sex . . ."
19. Or "I will grow in my love for God . . . but I will not spend more time in studying His Word . . ."
20. Or, "I want to love God more . . . but I don't want to serve Him . . ."
21. That is simply impossible . . .
22. That cannot be . . .
23. The cross of Jesus Chrsit . . . His sacrifice

- demands every facet of our existence . . .
24. All of our living . . . and doing . . . And thinking . . . and speaking is to be discharged in joyful submission to God and to His Son, our Savior . . .
- D. Third, Paul prayed this prayer with the long view in mind . . .
1. REREAD v. 10 . . .
  2. he doesn't want them to be satisfied with mere mediocrity . . .
  3. God is not satisfied w/ us maintaining the status quo in this fallen and sinful world . . .
  4. he wants us to move one, to become more and more discerning . . . proving what is best . . .
  5. God wants us to pursue what is best in the knowledge of God . . .
  6. What is best in our relationships with others . . .
  7. What is best in our joyful obedience . . .
  8. You know, some people want to be known for their holiness . . .
  9. They seek holiness as a reputation . . .
  10. That's not good enough . . .
  11. The whole reason for praying out of love . . . and praying that love would grow . . .
  12. Is so the God who saved us gets greater glory . . .
  13. That's Paul's sole reason for praying . . . the Gospel of Jesus Christ was Paul's reason for praying for these family members . . .

Specifically, does the Gospel of Jesus Christ show up in your friendships?

Does the Gospel of Jesus Christ show up in your prayer life?

Truthfully, does the Gospel of Jesus Christ show up in your daily life?

\$3 of the Gospel please . . . is not good enough . . .

Friend, may I ask you a tough question?

How important in your life is the Gospel of Jesus Christ?