

Study guide – Phillipians 1:1-14

Historical Context:

- Paul's Imprisonment: Paul wrote Phillipians while in prison, likely in Rome (around 61-63 AD). Despite his circumstances, he expressed joy and gratitude.
- The Church in Philippi: The Philippian church was one of the first churches Paul established in Europe (Acts 16:9-40). They had a strong partnership with Paul in ministry and supported him financially.
- Themes in Phillipians 1:1-14: Paul's letter begins with thanksgiving for the Phillipians' partnership and expresses joy despite his imprisonment.

Breakdown of the reading of Phillipians

1. Phillipians 1:1-2: Greeting

Paul, along with Timothy, greets the Phillipians with grace and peace. This introduction sets the tone for the letter, emphasising the importance of relationships and spiritual well-being.

2. Phillipians 1:3-5: Thanksgiving

Paul expresses gratitude for the Phillipians' partnership in ministry, highlighting their financial support and shared commitment to the gospel. This passage shows the value of:

1. Partnership: Collaborating with others in ministry and sharing resources.
2. Gratitude: Acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of others.

3. Phillipians 1:6-8: Confidence in the Phillipians

Paul's confidence in the Phillipians stems from their shared faith and God's work in their lives. This passage emphasises:

1. God's faithfulness: Trusting in God's goodness and provision.
2. Sincere affection: Paul's genuine love and care for the Phillipians.

4. Phillipians 1:9-11: Prayer for the Phillipians

Paul prays for the Phillipians' growth in love, knowledge, and discernment. This passage highlights the importance of:

1. Intercessory prayer: Praying for others' spiritual growth and well-being.
2. Moral purity: Striving for a life that honours God and reflects His character.

5. Philippians 1:12-14: Gospel Advancement

Despite his imprisonment, Paul affirms that the gospel is advancing. This passage shows:

1. God's sovereignty: Trusting that God can use any circumstance for His purposes.
2. Courage in adversity: Finding courage to share the gospel even in difficult situations.

Reflection Questions:

Here are 8 reflective questions based on Philippians 1:1-14:

1. How do I express gratitude to those who support me in ministry or life, like Paul thanked the Philippians?
2. What does Paul's emphasis on partnership in ministry teach me about collaboration and teamwork?
3. How can I cultivate a sense of joy and contentment in difficult circumstances, like Paul in prison?
4. In what ways can I prioritize prayer for others, like Paul prayed for the Philippians?
5. What are some areas where I need to trust God's sovereignty and goodness, like Paul did in prison?
6. How can I demonstrate sincere affection and love for others, like Paul's love for the Philippians?
7. What does Paul's prayer for the Philippians' growth in love and knowledge mean for my own spiritual growth?
8. How can I find opportunities to share the gospel and advance God's kingdom, even in challenging situations?

Further Insights:

- Gratitude and Partnership: Paul's gratitude for the Philippians highlights the importance of appreciating and acknowledging the contributions of others in ministry.
- Joy in Adversity: Paul's joy despite imprisonment shows that true joy comes from a deep relationship with Christ, not from circumstances.