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Thanksgiving and Prayer - Philippians 1:1-11

Topics: Believers, Blessing, Glory, God, Gospel, Grace, Jesus Christ, Partnerships, Peace, Praise, Prayer, Righteousness, Serving

Open It

- * 1. What's your usual way of saying hello to your friends?
- 2. In your family, how important are greetings in affirming each other?

Explore It

- 3. Who was the author of the letter to the Philippians? (1:1)
- * 4. How did Paul identify himself and his coworker? (1:1)
- 5. To whom did Paul address this letter? (1:1)
- * 6. How did Paul greet the Philippians? (1:2)
- 7. When Paul thought about the Philippians, what did he do? (1:3)
- 8. How were the Philippians in partnership with Paul? (1:4-5)
- * 9. What was Paul confident about? (1:6)
- 10. How did Paul feel about the Philippian church? (1:7-8)
- 11. What did Paul report that he prayed for? (1:9)
- 12. What two results did Paul seek? (1:10-11)

Get It

- 13. How does your pastor greet church members?
- 14. Why is it a good practice to begin a letter with a Christian blessing?
- * 15. What godly encouragement can you offer other Christians?
- * 16. Paul complimented the church at Philippi; what positive things can you say about your congregation?
- 17. How is Paul's prayer for the Philippians a good prayer for you to copy?

Apply It

- 18. What prayer of thanksgiving can you offer for your church today?
- 19. How can you encourage someone in his or her Christian journey this week?
- * 20. Which Christian brother or sister would be heartened to receive a letter from you this week?

Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel - Philippians 1:12-30

Topics: Believers, Circumstances, Courage, Death, Faith, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Joy, Life, Motives, Prayer, Reputation, Salvation, Suffering

Open It

1. How interested are you in the lives of famous people?
- * 2. How often do you watch TV shows or read articles about celebrities?

Explore It

3. How was Paul's ministry affected by his bondage? (1:12-14)
- * 4. Why was Paul being talked about? (1:13)
5. How did Paul's incarceration affect the testimony of others? (1:14)
6. Why did some people preach Christ out of envy and rivalry? (1:15-17)
7. Why did some people preach Christ in love? (1:15-16)
- * 8. What made Paul rejoice? (1:18)
9. Why did Paul expect to be delivered from his predicament? (1:19)
10. How did Paul expect to be delivered? (1:19-20)
11. What was Paul's main purpose in living? (1:21)
- * 12. What were Paul's convictions about living and dying? (1:22-24)
13. Why did Paul think he would remain alive? (1:24-26)
14. What did Paul want the believers to do? (1:27-30)
15. How did Paul tell the Philippians to face opposition? (1:27-30)
16. How did Paul encourage the Christians at Philippi? (1:29)

Get It

- * 17. How did Paul's notoriety work to his advantage?
18. How would you like the reputation of being a fearless Christian?
19. To what degree do you share Paul's passion for the gospel?
20. For what do you truly live?
21. Whom do you know who is suffering for Christ right now?
22. How is your church different from the Philippian church?
- * 23. What's the toughest thing you've had to experience as a Christian?
24. What are you willing to risk to have the reputation of being a fearless Christian?
25. What about your life-style do you most want to change in your desire to live for Christ?

Apply It

26. What step toward dedicating every area of your life to Christ can you take today?
- * 27. What can you do today to encourage someone who is suffering because of his or her faith?

Imitating Christ's Humility - Philippians 2:1-11

Topics: Believers, Compassion, Confession, Death, Encouragement, Example, Fellowship, God, Holy Spirit, Humility, Jesus Christ, Joy, Love, Name, Obedience, People, Pride, Self-centeredness, Serving, Unity

Open It

1. When was the last time you had a squabble with a family member?
- * 2. How much of a peacemaker are you?

Explore It

- * 3. What four qualities mark unity with Christ? (2:1)
4. How can Christians show their unity in Christ in practical ways? (2:2)
- * 5. What did Paul say about self-centeredness? (2:3-4)
6. What did Paul exhort believers to have? (2:5)
7. What did Christ set aside when He became a man? (2:6-8)
8. How did Jesus limit Himself? (2:6-8)
9. How was Christ fully God and fully man at the same time? (2:6-8)
- * 10. How is Christ the best example of humility and unselfishness for us? (2:6-8)
11. Why did Christ take on the limitations of being human even though He was of the same nature as God? (2:7)
12. How did God exalt Jesus? (2:9)
13. How did Christ win sovereignty over all people and over everything? (2:10)
14. What confession will every person make? (2:11)

Get It

15. How does your life show that you count on Christ?
16. How do petty quarrels hold you back in your Christian walk?
- * 17. How can Christ help you keep peace with others?
18. What hinders unity in your church?
19. What kind of disposition does Christ want us to have?
- * 20. How does Christ's example of humility challenge our natural self-centeredness?

Apply It

- * 21. What practical steps can you take this week to demonstrate humility in your relationships?
22. For the sake of unity in Christ, what petty squabbles should you clear up right away? How?

Shining as Stars - Philippians 2:12-18

Topics: Arguments, Believers, Complaining, God, Jesus Christ, Joy, Obedience, People, Sacrifice, Salvation, Serving, Sin, Witnessing, Work

Open It

1. Would you prefer to explore the universe aboard a spacecraft or looking through a powerful telescope? Why?
2. What do you most enjoy about the nighttime sky?
3. What is the most frequent complaint you hear?
- * 4. Who pointed the way for you in your first job?

Explore It

- * 5. What did the Philippian Christians need to obey? (2:12)
6. What were the Philippian believers to work out? (2:12-13)
7. How would God help the Philippians obey Him? (2:12-13)
8. What instructions did Paul give in relation to everyday Christian living? (2:14-16)
- * 9. Why were the Philippians not shining “like stars” in their world? (2:14-16)
10. Why did the Philippian assembly need to show a united front to unbelievers? (2:14-16)
11. What would enable Paul to boast about the Philippians? (2:14-16)
12. Whose honor was Paul concerned about? (2:16)
- * 13. How did Paul view his own life? (2:17)
14. How did Paul view the faith of the Philippian believers? (2:17)
15. What did Paul want his friends at Philippi to experience? (2:18)

Get It

16. What does it mean “to work out your salvation with fear and trembling”?
17. What do you tend to complain and argue about?
- * 18. What godly qualities make Christians “shine like stars”?
- * 19. How does shining for Christ encourage others to be drawn to Him?
20. What Christian leader has personally invested in your growth as a follower of Christ?
21. How can you help new believers “shine like stars” for God’s kingdom?

Apply It

22. In what situations this week do you need to make a conscious effort not to complain or argue?
- * 23. Before whom do you want to shine in your place of work or neighborhood? In what ways can you do so?
24. What sacrifices can you make for the sake of others today?

Timothy and Epaphroditus - Philippians 2:19-30

Topics: Church, Encouragement, God, Honor, Jesus Christ, Partnerships, Risk, Sacrifice, Sickness

Open It

- * 1. When was the last time you gave a character reference for a friend?
- 2. If close friends were to talk about you behind your back, what would they say?

Explore It

- 3. Why did Paul plan to send Timothy to the Philippians? (2:19)
- * 4. What was Paul's opinion of Timothy? (2:20)
- 5. What was Timothy's relationship with the church at Philippi? (2:20)
- * 6. In Paul's view, why did Timothy stand out? (2:21-22)
- 7. When would Paul send Timothy to the Philippians? (2:23)
- 8. Why was Paul confident that he would revisit the believers at Philippi? (2:24)
- 9. Who was Epaphroditus? (2:25)
- 10. Why did the Philippians send Epaphroditus to Paul? (2:25)
- 11. How did Epaphroditus feel about his friends in Philippi? (2:26)
- 12. What happened to Epaphroditus? (2:26-27)
- 13. How did God spare Paul tremendous sorrow? (2:27)
- 14. How did Paul demonstrate his selflessness? (2:28)
- * 15. How were the Philippians told to welcome home Epaphroditus? (2:29-30)
- 16. Why were the Philippians told to honor their messenger? (2:30)

Get It

- * 17. Among your circle of Christian friends, for whom do you have the highest regard? Why?
- 18. Why could Paul count on Timothy and Epaphroditus?
- 19. What reputation do you have in your church?
- * 20. In what ways have you proved to be a reliable servant of God?
- 21. What risks are you willing to take on behalf of other Christians?
- 22. In what ways can you be God's "courier" to others?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you be a model of humility and service to other Christians this week?
- 24. This week, how can you look out for the interests of the Lord rather than your own interests?

No Confidence in the Flesh - Philippians 3:1-11

Topics: Accomplishments, Believers, Faith, Heresy, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Joy, Reputation, Resurrection, Righteousness, Suffering

Open It

- * 1. If you were to update your resume today, what recent accomplishment would you want to include?
- 2. What do you feel are your most valuable skills and gifts?
- 3. How do you feel when someone is better than you at something you do well?

Explore It

- 4. What did Paul call on believers to do? (3:1)
- 5. Why did Paul repeat essential truths to the Philippians? (3:1)
- 6. What did Paul say about certain false teachers? (3:2)
- 7. Whom did Paul identify as “true”? (3:3)
- * 8. What autobiographical facts did Paul give? (3:4-6)
- 9. In what sense was Paul not boasting, even though he was calling attention to his accomplishments? (3:7-9)
- * 10. Why did Paul view his former accomplishments as “rubbish”? (3:8)
- * 11. What was Paul’s status in Christ? (3:9)
- 12. What longings did Paul admit to the Philippians? (3:10-11)
- 13. What hope did Paul express? (3:11)

Get It

- 14. What sorts of things tend to draw you away from Christ?
- * 15. What do you usually boast about?
- 16. Why do we tend to base our worth as Christians on our performance?
- * 17. Why should our identity and confidence be in the Lord?
- 18. How is the Apostle Paul’s commitment to Christ an example to you?

Apply It

- * 19. What do you need to start counting as rubbish for the sake of Christ?
- 20. When you face struggles this week, how can you remember to rejoice rather than complain?

Pressing on Toward the Goal - Philippians 3:12-4:1

Topics: Believers, Citizenship, Enemies, Example, Goals, God, Heaven, Jesus Christ, Maturity, Power, Shame

Open It

- * 1. How physically fit are you?
- 2. If you lived in ancient times and participated in sports, would you prefer chariot racing or spear throwing? Why?
- 3. How much time do you spend watching or participating in sports?

Explore It

- 4. What was Paul's testimony? (3:12-14)
- * 5. In what ways did Paul's spiritual life resemble the discipline of a runner? (3:12-14)
- 6. What was Paul's view of the past? (3:13)
- * 7. What was Paul's goal? (3:14)
- 8. How did Paul call the Philippians to share his view? (3:15)
- 9. What did Paul hope for the believers who disagreed with him? (3:15)
- 10. What was Paul's plea to the Philippians? (3:16)
- * 11. How did Paul want believers to imitate him? (3:17)
- 12. How did Paul describe God's enemies? (3:18-19)
- 13. Where did the Philippian Christians have their citizenship? (3:20)
- 14. Whom did the Philippian believers eagerly await? (3:20)
- 15. What characterizes citizens of heaven? (3:21)

Get It

- * 16. What kind of race are you running for Christ?
- 17. What prize do you seek?
- * 18. What kind of opposition do you face in your struggle to live as a Christian?
- 19. How can you imitate Paul's life and example?
- 20. How can Christ help you stay on track and reach the goal?

Apply It

- * 21. What spiritual workout or training this week will help you run your Christian marathon?
- 22. In what way can you renew your commitment to press on toward the goal of being like Christ?

Exhortations - Philippians 4:2-9

Topics: Believers, Example, Gentleness, God, Jesus Christ, Joy, Partnerships, Peace, Prayer, Thankfulness, Thinking, Value

Open It

1. How do you tend to respond when things don't go your way?
- * 2. What does it take to live at peace with difficult family members or colleagues?

Explore It

3. How did Paul feel toward the Philippian congregation? (4:1)
4. What did Paul exhort the Philippian believers to do? (4:1)
- * 5. Why did Paul plead with Euodia and Syntyche? (4:2)
6. How had Euodia and Syntyche helped Paul in the past? (4:3)
7. What was Paul's relationship with Clement? (4:3)
8. How could Paul count on his "loyal yokefellow"? (4:3)
9. What did Paul encourage his readers to do? (4:4)
- * 10. How did Paul tell the Philippian Christians to treat others? (4:5)
11. How should an awareness of Christ's imminent return affect a person's attitude? (4:5-7)
12. What did Paul say about anxiety? (4:6-7)
13. What were the Philippians to do instead of worrying? (4:6-7)
- * 14. How can a believer enjoy the peace of God? (4:6-7)
15. What are the qualities of wholesome thoughts? (4:8)
16. What were the Philippians to put into practice? (4:9)
17. How can believers enjoy the presence of the God of peace? (4:9)

Get It

18. How have disagreements between people affected your church?
- * 19. When have you been involved in helping Christians resolve differences?
20. How can you have a peaceful spirit?
- * 21. If you were more thankful, joyful, and gentle, how might your family and friends be affected?
22. What does it take for you to think worthy thoughts?
23. What does it mean to live a righteous life-style?
24. In what areas of your life do you need to follow Paul's example?

Apply It

25. What can you do today to reduce your level of anxiety?
- * 26. How can you be an effective peacemaker this week?

Thanks for Their Gifts - Philippians 4:10-23

Topics: Abundance, Church, Confidence, Contentment, Generosity, Gifts, God, Gospel, Grace, Jesus Christ, Joy, Poor, Sacrifice, Strength

Open It

1. What experiences bring you the most contentment?
- * 2. When was a time you felt contentment in the middle of problems or uncertainty?

Explore It

3. Why was Paul glad? (4:10-13)
- * 4. What lesson had Paul learned about contentment? (4:10-13)
5. Why could Paul handle any kind of circumstance? (4:13)
6. What did the Philippians do about Paul's troubles? (4:14)
7. How did Paul feel toward the Philippian believers? Why? (4:14)
- * 8. How had the Philippians supported Paul in the past? (4:15-16)
9. What did Paul not want? (4:17)
10. What did Paul want for the Philippians? (4:17)
11. What was Paul's current financial situation? (4:18)
12. How did Paul respond to the Philippians' generosity? (4:18-19)
- * 13. How would God reciprocate the believers' generosity? (4:19)
14. To whom did Paul give thanks and praise? (4:20)
15. Who sent final greetings to the Philippians? (4:21-22)
16. To what did Paul give prominence in closing his letter? (4:23)

Get It

- * 17. How could Paul be so flexible in his approach to life's circumstances?
18. How do you handle the unexpected?
19. What can you learn from Paul about being content?
- * 20. The Philippian Christians helped Paul when he needed it; how are you able to help others in trouble?
21. What can you do to be ready for others when they need financial help?
22. What can your church do to help missionaries with financial needs?
23. How will God honor a giving spirit?
24. How can the relationship between Paul and the Philippians help your church in its relationship to those involved in missions?

Apply It

25. This week, what can you do to help a Christian who needs financial support?
26. Whom do you know who needs a note of encouragement from you today?
- * 27. What can you do to develop an attitude of contentment in all circumstances?