

# God Is Completing Us

Phil. 1:3-11

Paul tells the Philippians that he is confident that God, who began a good work in them, will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

How could Paul know for sure? Aren't there some that will fall away? How does he know they won't be among the apostate?

Here are the reasons Paul could be confident. They are the same reasons we can be confident that God will complete us. What applies to churches can also apply to individuals.

## 1. The Connection (v. 7)

The Philippians are partakers of the same grace with Paul. He knows this because they have shared with him both in the cost (chains) and the benefit (defense and confirmation of the gospel). Paul knew they were joined to him by God, and Paul knew if he (Paul) stayed faithful to the Lord, the Philippians would as well, because of the connection.

When God joins people together in a mutual grace, it is normal that what happens to one happens to the other. This is how the body of Christ works. We derive our nourishment from the supporting ligaments (I Cor. 12:26; Eph. 4:16). We grow together. And if we're growing, the work in us is being completed.

## 2. The Longevity (v. 5)

They stayed in fellowship with Paul from the first day. The first day was the day they first started supporting him by supporting his work. They continued to do so right up to the time of his writing.

There is something about supporting one another that strengthens the connection. When we actually do something for each other it moves

fellowship out of the realm of the theoretical and right into the practical reality. And when fellowship stands the test of time, this is a sure sign that God is at work, and He will keep working.

This is why it is important to love one another, not just in word but in deed and in truth (I John 3:18). This moves us to the next reason we can be confident God is at work and will finish what He started in us.

### 3. The Love (v. 8-9)

God put them in Paul's heart, and God also put Paul in their hearts (v. 9). This love also extended to one another among the Philippians. Paul knew that love never fails (I Cor. 13:8), so when we love, we will last through hard times and tests. When love is at work, God is at work.

Paul wanted their love to "overflow" (the meaning of "abound"). This means that it would move beyond the emotions into actions, which is what love does. Love, when it's God's love, takes action. The action Paul prayed that it would take was that they would grow in knowledge and judgment. This takes us to our final evidence that God is at work completing us.

### 4. The Growth (v. 10-11)

This is a sure sign that God's at work in someone's life.

When we approve what is "excellent," it means we choose it. This means we learn to avoid what is evil and cling to what is good.

Rom. 12:9 – "Love must be sincere. Detest what is evil. Cling to what is good."

This means when the Holy Spirit is truly at work in us, we learn to have an utter revulsion for what is evil and a passionate embrace for what is good.

To be sincere and without offense is the idea of being "unmixed" or "without wax." The image comes from a Roman statue that has been damaged and

wax was applied in the damaged places. When heat comes and time tests it, the wax melts. But when it's restored with clay and the clay hardens, it withstands time and heat. The statue is best when it is "without wax." Likewise, we are best when we are without offense and hypocrisy. Sin is like wax. We see what we're made of when heat is applied and when we're tested over time.

Offense is being caused to stumble or causing others to stumble. When we live a life without hypocrisy we will avoid stumbling or causing others to stumble.

Finally, the fruit of righteousness (v. 11) is the result of testing and chastening. The one God is working on as a true child will remain faithful (Heb. 12:11). When we learn to endure testing and come through with our faith intact, we can know that God is at work and He will perfect what concerns us (Ps. 138:8).