



## Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

# Short Study 066: Philippians Part 1 – An Epistle of Affection

Study Author: Michael Button

## Read Philippians 1:3-11

**Introduction:** Paul's letter to the Philippians contains some of the most personal references of all his canonical\* letters. A study of these passages will provide an insight into Paul's mind as a church founder and his relationship with the believers in those churches.

**1:3-11 Affection for the believers.** Paul was ill-treated on his visit to Philippi on his second missionary journey. He was beaten and imprisoned (Acts 16), yet his memories of the Christians there are full of joy (v4).

(i) See what he prays for them:

v3 Thanks for the memory. Read Acts 16:11-34. What do you think would have been happy memories for Paul?

v5 Their help in spreading the Gospel. How might they have done this?

v9 Their love will abound in knowledge and discernment. Why is knowledge and discernment important in showing love?

v10 They may approve the things that are excellent. The NLT puts it "understand what really matters." What sort of things really matter?

v10 They may be sincere and without offense. It is unclear whether Paul is referring to giving offence or taking offence. Both are important.

v11 They may be filled with the fruits of righteousness. What might these 'fruits' be?

(ii) His confidence in them (v6). What work would you say the Lord started and will complete (in the Philippians and in you)?

(iii) Gratitude for their partnership (v7). The Philippians remained supportive of Paul and his ministry through thick and thin (see also 4:15-19). Consider the importance of maintaining support of Christian workers.

(iv) His affectionate longing (v8). What do you think Paul was longing for?

**4:1 Paul's joy and crown.** What does this mean? See what the commentaries say.

**To think about:** There is already a lot to think about in this Study. But also reflect on what affection you have for other believers, both in your home church and others further afield.

**To dig deeper:** Read about how Paul came to visit Philippi and his experiences there, in Acts, Chapter 16 and commentaries on this passage. Find out what you can about Lydia, and the Philippian jailor.

\* Included in the Bible.