

November 15, 2020

Pastor Steve Hardy

“Attitude Toward the Saints”

Philippians 1:1-11

Series: “Philippians”

Based on Paul’s introductory “grace and peace”, Andy provided a great overview of this key theme in the book of Philippians, our attitude. Imbedded in that introductory salutation of 1:1-2 is a little word that takes on great significance in the next section, 1:3-11. Paul writes to all the saints in Philippi, so the attitude expressed toward that collective body applies to all the individuals. These verses reflect a right attitude toward all fellow believers.

- I. We ought to have an attitude of **GRATITUDE** toward fellow believers, 1:3-5.
  - A. Gratitude is because of their **FELLOWSHIP** in the gospel.
  - B. Gratitude results in **JOYFUL PRAYER**.
- II. We ought to have an attitude of **CONFIDENCE** toward fellow believers, 1:6-7.
  - A. Confidence rests in the work **GOD** is doing.
  - B. Confidence is the result of seeing evidence of grace in their **PARTNERSHIP**.
- III. We ought to have an attitude of **EXPECTATION** toward fellow believers, 1:8-11.
  - A. Expectation is sourced in a deep **EMOTION**.
  - B. Expectation leads to **PRAYER** to God who works transformation.
  - C. Expectation anticipates specific **OUTCOMES** in the lives of believers.
    1. Growing **LOVE** characterized by knowledge and discernment.
    2. Recognition of what is **EXCELLENT** resulting in a right life.
    3. The fruit of **RIGHTEOUSNESS** that will bring glory to God.

Sometimes it is difficult to maintain a right attitude toward all fellow believers. Stay tuned—next week we will see that keeping in mind what is most important helps, and through this letter Paul will share other aspects of becoming like Christ that enable this right attitude. But apply this by thinking and praying very specifically about your fellow believers, and perhaps especially about any you may find “difficult,” for whatever reason.

## **Family Time:**

In a way that is age-appropriate, have a conversation about attitudes toward others when it is difficult. The context might be any collective group: the school classroom, a church group, even (dare we say it), a family. What kinds of things make it difficult to have a consistently good attitude toward some people? Who is in control of our attitude? Together review Matthew 5:43-48 and note how likeness to the Father (v. 48) is evident in love for even enemies. John 3:16 and Romans 5:6-11 are a good place to go to consider his love.

## **For Further Study, Thought, and Discussion:**

1. Paul's gratitude for all his fellow believers is rooted not in their likeableness, but in the work God has done to save them by grace. Why is it important to look beyond the person to see God's grace at work in a fellow believer? How do you think Paul's self-awareness, reflected in 1 Timothy 1:12-17, contributed to his ability to have a right attitude toward other believers?
2. Who begins the "good work" of salvation in the life of a believer? Why is it important to bear in mind that the same one continues that work to perfection? What relationship does this have to prayer for fellow believers? Considering this, how does this impact our attitude toward a believer who has wronged or failed us in some way?
3. List some of the implications of the idea that all fellow believers share a "partnership" or "fellowship" in the gospel.
4. Paul makes an interesting link between love (agape, Christlike love that seeks the good of the beloved) and knowledge and discernment that leads to the approval of what is excellent (probably morally superior). How do love, knowledge and discernment go together? And what is their relationship to the outcome sought, a pure and blameless life that brings glory to God through righteousness?

**NEXT WEEK:** Philippians 1:12-26, "Attitude Toward My Life"

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