

Philippians Series

Lesson #008

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Dean Bible Ministries

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Philippians

What Work Does God Begin and Complete?

Philippians 1:5–6



Php. 1:5, “for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,

Php. 1:6, “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;” ~NKJV

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Two questions we need to answer:

1. For what is Paul thankful?

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Two questions we need to answer:

1. For what is Paul thankful?

2. For what is he confident?

Two Interpretations:

- 1. By far the most popular way to understand this verse is that it relates to salvation. The “good work” mentioned either refers to Phase 1 Justification or Phase 2 Sanctification.**

Three Stages of Salvation

PHASE ONE



Justification

PHASE TWO

Spiritual Life

Text

PHASE THREE

Glorification



**Saved from
Penalty of Sin**
“you were saved”

**Saved from
Power of Sin**
“you are being saved”

**Saved from
Presence of Sin**
“you will be saved”

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Two forms:

- a. God graciously works in the believer’s life to enable them to grow, if they are willing.**

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Two forms:

- a. God graciously works in the believer’s life to enable them to grow, if they are willing.**
- b. A genuine believer in Jesus Christ who is truly regenerate, will persevere in faith and good works, until God glorifies them following their death or the Rapture.**

Three Problems with This View:

- 1. Salvation, either as Phase 1 Justification or Phase 2 Sanctification, is not mentioned in this opening introduction or prayer. Neither are in the context.**

Three Problems with This View:

2. **Second, it must be observed that Paul writes of a singular “good work,” not of plural “good works.” Further, Paul states he is confident of this thing, a singular noun, most English translations supply the singular “it” referring to this good work, to be more understandable.**

Eph. 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that by grace through faith salvation is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

Eph. 2:9, “not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Eph. 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” ~NKJV

Three Problems with This View:

- 3. The context is Paul's gratitude for their partnership in the gospel, specifically their financial partnership with his ministry, which is not the same as either Phase 1 Justification or Phase 2 Sanctification.**

Outline

- 1A Introduction: Paul's concern for the Philippians, Php. 1:1–11**
- 1B Greeting, Php. 1:1–2**
- 2B Paul's concern and prayer for the Philippians, Php. 1:3–8**
- 3B Paul's prayer that their spiritual growth will result in the praise and glory of God, Php. 1:9–11**

- 2A Paul's joy for the expansion of the gospel, Php. 1:12–26**

- 6A The conclusion, Php. 4:10–20**

In a *BibSac* article (1984):

The *ergon agathon* (“good work”) in verse 6 must be interpreted by the koinōnia of the previous verse. This exegetical point is frequently noted by commentators, though few of them consistently restrict it enough to this sense. This writer holds that verse 6 refers *restrictively* [italics original] to the perfecting of the Philippians as workers for the gospel, and to the perfecting of their works in the cause of the gospel. Many exegetes, failing to note this, have thus failed to see that verses 3–6 contain a *thematic summary* of the entire epistle [italics added] ... Verses 3–6 then, are a cameo of the entire epistle. They introduce the main theme, the Philippians’ partnership in the gospel.

Furthermore, another author writes perceptively:

... we seem to have evidence of an inclusio which binds the whole letter into one unit. First of all, the idea of partnership is strongly expressed at the beginning and the end. Thus in [Php.] 1:5 Paul is “thankful for your partnership (κοινωνία) in the gospel”; and in [Php.] 4:15 he records that “no church entered into partnership in giving and receiving except you only.”

Furthermore, another author writes perceptively:

This partnership is reiterated in another parallel: in [Php.] 1:7 the Philippians are sharers (συγκοινωνοὺς) of grace with Paul; in [Php.] 4:15 they are sharers (συγκοινωνήσαντες) with him in his trouble. At both beginning and end we have the same idea expressed in different ways: the longstanding partnership of the Philippians with Paul: “from the first day until now” ([Php.] 1:5), and “in the beginning of the gospel” ([Php.] 4:15). And finally the reciprocal attitude of sympathy between Paul and the Philippians is expressed in the same phrase: in [Php.] 1:7 he says “it is right for me to feel this about you” (τοῦτο φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν), and in [Php.] 4:10, “You have revived your concern for me” (τὸ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῖ φρονεῖν).

~William Dalton, “Integrity of Philippians” *Biblica*, 1979

Php. 1:3, 5, “I thank my God ... for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,”

Php. 4:15, “Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.”

Php. 1:7, “just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.”

συγκοινωνός (*synkoinōnos*)

Php. 4:15, “Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.”

κοινωνέω (*koinōneō*)

Php. 1:5, “for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,” κοινωνία (*koinōnia*)

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Php. 4:10, “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.”

Php. 1:5, “for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ~RD

Php. 1:6, “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;” ~NKJV

ἔργον ἀγαθὸν *ergon agathon*, good work

Though a synonym for kalos, it is a parallel

Phil. 1:3, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,”

Parallel with

Phil. 4:10, “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.”

Phil. 4:14, “Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.”

καλῶς ἐποιήσατε “you have done well (or good)”

Luke 6:27, “But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,”

James 2:8, “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well;

James 2:19, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!”

Php. 1:5, “for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ~RD

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Php. 1:6, “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”

Php. 4:17, “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.”

Php. 1:7, “just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.

Meditate on These Things

Php. 4:8, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

Parallels Between Philippians 1 and Philippians 4

Philippians 1:3–7	Philippians 4:10–20
1:3 <i>I thank my God</i>	4:10 <i>But I rejoiced in the Lord</i>
1:4 offering prayer <i>with joy</i>	
1:5 your <i>participation</i> [<i>koinōnia</i>] in the gospel	4:15 no church <i>shared</i> [<i>ekoinōnēsen</i>] with me in the matter of giving and receiving
1:5 your participation <i>in the gospel from the first day</i>	4:15 <i>at the first preaching of the gospel</i> , after I departed from Macedonia
1:6 He who began a <i>good work</i> [<i>ergon</i>]	4:14 <i>you have done well</i> [<i>kalōs epoiēsate</i>] to
1:6 [He] will perfect it <i>until the day of Christ Jesus</i>	4:17 <i>the profit which increases to your account</i> [<i>ton karpon ton pleonazonta eis logon hymōn</i>]
1:7 it is right for me <i>to feel this way about all</i>	4:10 you have renewed <i>your concern for me</i> [<i>to</i>
1:3 for all <i>your remembrance of me</i>	
1:7 <i>it is only right for me to feel this way</i> [<i>estin</i>]	4:8 whatever is <i>right</i> [<i>dikaia</i>], ... <i>let your mind</i>
1:7 <i>in my imprisonment</i> ... you all are <i>partakers</i> [<i>synkoinōnous</i>] of grace with me	4:14 <i>to share with me</i> [<i>synkoinōnēsantes</i>] <i>in my affliction</i> [<i>mou tē thlipsei</i>].

Php. 1:5, “for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,” ~RD

**κοινωνία *koinōnia* fem sing dat
fellowship, participation; society;
partnership**

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Partnership with God:

Acts 2:42, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and partnership with God, that is, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” ~RD

**κοινωνία *koinōnia* fem sing dat
fellowship, participation;
partnership; communion**

Php. 1:5, “for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,” ~RD

Partnership with God:

Rom. 15:26, “For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.” ~NKJV

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fellowship, participation;
partnership; communion**

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Partnership with God:

2 Cor. 6:14, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what partnership has light with darkness?” ~NKJV

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fellowship, participation;
partnership; communion**

Php. 1:5, “for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,” ~RD

Partnership with God:

2 Cor. 8:4, “imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.” ~NKJV

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partnership; communion**

Php. 1:5, “for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,” ~RD

Partnership with God:

2 Cor. 9:13, “while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your generous partnership with them and all men,” ~RD

**κοινωνία *koinōnia* fem sing dat
fellowship, participation;
partnership; communion**

Php. 1:5, “for your partnership in [*eis*] the gospel from the first day until now,” ~RD

Partnership with God:

Heb. 13:16, “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” ~NKJV

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Php. 1:5, “for your partnership in [*eis*] the gospel from the first day until now,” ~RD