

A PHILIPPIANS STUDY

DISCUSSION GUIDE

September 17, 2023

PHILIPPIANS (week 2) - Aaron McRae

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

What is a fun or unique skill that you have?

➤ EXPLORATION

This week we continue in Philippians chapter 1 as we explore the concept of confidence. According to author Henry Blackaby, "A God-centered life is found with someone who places confidence in God."

There are a lot of different ways we can define the concept of confidence.

Philosophical: "If you have no confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence, you have won even before you have started." *Cicero*

Therapeutic/Self-Help: "Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy." *Norman Vincent Peale*

Popular Thought: "Never dull your shine for somebody else." *Tyra Banks*

Would you consider yourself to be a confident person? Why? Why not?

When my confidence is in myself I think about myself a lot... What do I want? What do I need? When my confidence is in the Lord I want what he wants. I want to know what he says and I want to follow. I don't need more confidence in myself, I need confidence in God!

Philippians 1:3-6 (From your bible, read aloud)

Paul is expressing thankfulness that is rooted ultimately in the character and sovereignty of God. He prays with joy, not just for the Philippians, but for what God is doing in their lives. This is his expression of confidence in what God is able to do.

New Testament Says About Confidence

- 2 Corinthians 1:9 - this happened that we might not **rely** on ourselves but on God
- Mark 10:24-25 - how hard it is for those who **trust** in riches to get to heaven
- Luke 18:9 - those **confident** of their own righteousness and look down on others
- Romans 8:38 - **convinced** nothing can separate us from God's love

What attribute of God instills confidence for you?

CONFIDENCE THAT GOD IS WORKING FROM BEGINNING TO COMPLETION

At one time, Paul was absolutely convinced that Jesus was NOT the Messiah and that Christians were deceived. Paul actively persecuted Christians. However, after a radical encounter with God, Paul's confidence shifted from his own ideas to the truth of the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:3-7 (From your bible, read aloud)

Galatians 3:3 (From your bible, read aloud)

What skills, abilities or talents are you tempted to put your confidence in?

God's Work

God initiates
God accomplishes
God corrects
God leads

Our Work

We respond
We participate
We repent
We follow

We must stand up against the idea that we can earn our salvation. It is only because of the work God has done that we can be saved.

CONFIDENCE THAT GOD WORKS 'IN' AND 'WITH' YOU BEFORE HE WORKS 'THROUGH' YOU

We are masterpieces of God's creation, uniquely and individually formed, fashioned and purposed. God has no assembly line of manufactured duplicates, he is not into mass production. God wants to build your character NOT your platform. God is working to cultivate your integrity NOT your influence. Whether you are 17 or 97, God is working in your life to develop trust with you and finish what He started in you.

Philippians 2:12-13 (From your bible, read aloud)

There is a tension between the believer's accountability for their own spiritual conduct and their need to totally rely on God's grace to meet their obligations. There is no salvation that doesn't involve a transformed life.

"Grace is opposed to earning, but it is not opposed to effort, because effort is action and earning is attitude." Dallas Willard

How would you explain the difference between effort and earning in your spiritual life?

We must stand up against the idea that God only wants us to be busy for him. The truth is, God desires an intimate loving relationship with us.

CONFIDENCE THAT GOD IS WORKING TOWARD COMPLETION

You were divinely initiated by God. God made you. God works in you. God forms you. It all started with God. He has begun a good work in you and we can trust him to finish what he started.

Philippians 1:6 (From your bible, read aloud)

Philippians 1:9-10 (From your bible, read aloud)

Believers in Christ are people of the future who are also living lives in the present.

We can easily become discouraged when we focus solely on the problems and imperfections of the world. These things shouldn't be ignored BUT they also cannot be allowed to overshadow the incredible work that God is doing and the unbelievable promises of what is to come. When we take the long and hopeful view of all that God is doing, we have confidence for the present and the future.

What do you spend the most time worrying about? How might you release that to God?

CONFIDENCE THAT GOD'S LOVE IS BETTER THAN LIFE

Psalm 63:1-5 (From your bible, read aloud)

1 John 4:19 (From your bible, read aloud)

Philippians 1:7-8 (From your bible, read aloud)

Paul says here that "it is right" to feel this way, which suggests that there is a wrong way to think and feel. Throughout Paul's writings we see that he emphasizes the importance of allowing love to be the motivation for all that we do.

We don't become a loving person by direct effort, but by training over time. Author, Thomas Chalmers inspires Christians to remove the snares and tangles of sin—"not through legalistic obedience but through the power of a new and greater affection for God."

What will you do this week to develop a greater affection for God? Be specific.

> TAKE AWAY

Take some time this week to read through Philippians chapter 1, asking God to give you a greater understanding of his love and a deeper confidence in Him.

Take some time to pray for each other that our love for God and for each other would increase as you put your confidence in God.