

Union Baptist Church
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PROMISES OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lesson 9: The Promise of God's Completing Work

Scripture: Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)

"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"

Paul wrote Philippians from prison, with his own future uncertain and the possibility of death before him. It was from that place of confinement that he wrote with joy, confidence, and pastoral assurance. Philippians 1:6 is a promise spoken by a man whose faith had been tested in suffering. Paul was encouraging the Philippians from chains, declaring that the God who begins His saving work in His people is faithful to bring it to completion.

The church at Philippi had been born in hardship and grace. Paul first preached there after being led by God to Macedonia, where Lydia's heart was opened to receive the Gospel, and where Paul and Silas were later beaten, imprisoned, and delivered by God. From the beginning, the Philippians learned that following Jesus involved both suffering and divine faithfulness. Years later, as they faced opposition, internal tensions, and uncertainty, Paul reminded them that their perseverance did not rest on their own strength, but on God's faithful work. Philippians 1:6 assures them, and us, that what God begins by grace, He will complete by grace.

The promise of Philippians 1:6 speaks directly to the fear of incompleteness, the concern that faith may not endure, joy may fade, suffering may overwhelm, or personal failure may cause God to abandon the work He began. This anxiety touches the deep places of insecurity and may drive believers toward performance-based religion, where they try to control their standing with God through effort. Paul answers this fear with emotional encouragement and a theological declaration: the believer's hope rests on the faithful character of God, who does not begin a work of grace only to leave it unfinished.

Paul does not give Philippians 1:6 as a random encouraging verse. He says it after thanking God for the Philippian believers and their faithful partnership in the Gospel "from the first day until now." They had shown real spiritual growth and commitment over time, but Paul's confidence was not mainly based on how strong they were. His confidence was based on God. When Paul says he is "confident," he means he is fully convinced, not just hoping things will work out. God was the One who began the good work in them, and because God started it, God would be faithful to finish it. If salvation depended only on human effort, believers would have reason to worry because people get tired, fail, and fall short. But since salvation is God's work from beginning to end, Christians can trust that God will keep His promise and complete what He started.

Explanation of the Verse

Philippians 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.*"

This verse functions as both a personal declaration of confidence and a theological anchor for every believer who fears that their spiritual journey might end in failure. Let us examine it phrase by phrase.

1. "*being confident of this very thing...*"

Paul begins with settled confidence, not wishful thinking. His assurance is not based on emotions, circumstances, or personal performance, but on a specific truth about God's faithfulness. This phrase challenges believers to ask where their confidence really rests: in their changing feelings or in the unchanging God who began the work.

2. "*...that He who has begun a good work in you...*"

God is the One who starts the saving work in the believer's life. This "good work" includes regeneration, justification, and sanctification — the full work of grace by which God gives new life, declares the believer righteous in Christ, and continues shaping them into Christlikeness. Believers participate in spiritual growth, but the work ultimately belongs to God and depends on His faithfulness, not their flawless performance.

3. "*...will complete it...*"

Paul declares that God will bring His work to full completion. This is not a possibility or a hopeful prediction; it is a promise grounded in God's character. The assurance that God will finish what He started does not encourage spiritual carelessness, but gives believers strength to persevere, return after failure, and keep trusting God even when their own faith feels weak.

4. "*...until the day of Jesus Christ.*"

The work God began continues until Christ returns and God's redemptive purpose is fully completed. This means God's commitment to His people lasts all the way to the final day. Present struggles, failures, and seasons of weakness do not mean the work has failed; they remind us that the work is still in progress. The promise is that God will carry His people through every season until the work reaches its full and glorious end.

Contemporary Summary

Philippians 1:6 speaks powerfully to what many Christians experience today. We live in a world where people often quit when things become hard. Products get discontinued when they stop making money. Relationships sometimes end when they become inconvenient. Commitments are often changed when they become costly. Because of this, many believers may start to think God works the same way. They may wonder if God's patience will run out, if His love depends on their performance, or if too much failure will cause Him to give up on them.

Philippians 1:6 tells us that God is not like that. God is not looking for a reason to abandon His people. He is a faithful Father, a caring Shepherd, and a Savior who loves His own to the end. When God begins His work of grace in a person's life, He does not walk away when that person struggles. He does not start a work He plans to leave unfinished. He does not call people to Himself and then throw them away when they become difficult.

At the same time, this promise belongs to those in whom God has truly begun His good work. It is for those who have come to Christ in repentance and faith, who have been given new life by the Holy Spirit, and who show signs of spiritual life, even if they are still growing, struggling, and imperfect. The promise is not that God will finish a work He never began. The promise is that He will complete every work He has truly started.

This lesson calls every believer to respond to Philippians 1:6 in three clear ways:

Rest in the One who began the work.

Salvation began with God, not with you. You did not create your own faith or make yourself spiritually alive. God worked by His grace to bring you to Christ. Because God started the work, your confidence rests on His faithfulness, not your perfection. You do not have to treat your relationship with God like something you must hold together by your own strength. You are called to trust the God who began the work in you.

Keep going through the process.

The promise that God will complete His work does not mean the Christian life will always be easy. Paul was in prison, and the Philippians were facing real pressure. Believers still struggle with temptation, discouragement, suffering, and weakness. But the promise is not that God will keep you from every hard place. The promise is that God will bring you through. So keep going. Keep trusting. Keep returning to God when you fall. The One who began the work is still working, even when you cannot see it.

Live with the final day in view.

Paul says God will complete His work “until the day of Jesus Christ.” That means God’s work is moving toward a final goal. One day Christ will return, and God’s work in His people will be fully complete. Until then, every act of obedience, every prayer, every step of faith, and every choice to trust God matters. You are not drifting without purpose. You are being carried by the faithfulness of God toward the day when His work in you will be finished.

Philippians 1:6 is not an excuse to be careless in the Christian life. It is a reason to live with courage, joy, and perseverance. Because God will finish what He started, believers can face suffering without giving up, failure without being crushed by shame, and uncertainty without being controlled by fear. The outcome is secure because the God who finishes His work is faithful.

Discussion Questions

1. Paul wrote Philippians 1:6 from prison while facing an uncertain future. How does knowing Paul was suffering when he wrote this verse change the way you understand the promise? Does it make the promise feel stronger or more meaningful? Why?
2. Paul says God will complete His work “until the day of Jesus Christ.” What does it mean to live now with Jesus’ return in mind? How should knowing that Jesus will return help believers handle pressure, temptation, discouragement, and suffering?

3. Some believers feel that their failures are too serious or too repeated for God to keep working in them. How does Philippians 1:6 speak to that fear? What other Scriptures remind us that God is faithful, patient, forgiving, and committed to His people?
4. Philippians 1:6 teaches that God completes His work in believers. Philippians 2:12–13 teaches that believers must also “work out” their salvation because God is working in them. How do these two truths fit together? What happens when people emphasize God’s work but ignore their responsibility, or emphasize their effort but forget God’s grace?
5. Philippians 1:6 is based on who God is. What do we know about God from Scripture that helps us trust this promise? For example, how do God’s faithfulness, love, patience, power, mercy, and wisdom help us believe that He will finish what He started?

Memory Verse

“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.” Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)

Write it. Memorize it. Live it.

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STUDENT WORKSHEET

Lesson 9: The Promise of God's Completing Work

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Name: _____ Date: _____

SECTION A: MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the letter of the best answer.

1. Paul wrote Philippians while he was in a difficult situation. Why is that important for understanding Philippians 1:6?
 - A. Paul was writing during a peaceful time with no serious problems.
 - B. Paul was writing from prison, facing an uncertain future, yet still confident that God finishes what He starts.
 - C. Paul was writing after retiring from ministry and reflecting on his life.
 - D. Paul was writing only to explain church rules and leadership structure.
2. The church at Philippi began under powerful and difficult circumstances. Which answer best describes how that church began?
 - A. The church began with no conflict, pressure, or suffering.
 - B. The church began because Philippian leaders invited Paul to start a school.
 - C. The church was born through suffering, worship, and God's deliverance, including Paul and Silas being beaten, imprisoned, and delivered by God.
 - D. The church was first started by Peter and later visited by Paul.
3. When Paul says he is "confident" in Philippians 1:6, what does he mean?
 - A. He hopes things will probably work out.
 - B. He is fully convinced that God will complete His work.
 - C. He is confident only because the Philippians never had problems.
 - D. He is unsure, but trying to sound encouraging.
4. Paul says God "has begun a good work" in the believers. Why is it important that God is the One who begins the work?

- A. It means believers do not have to grow, obey, or participate in the Christian life.
- B. It means the work of salvation rests on God's faithfulness, not on the believer's perfection.
- C. It means only pastors can know whether God has begun a work in someone.
- D. It means salvation is mainly about church attendance.

5. What does "the day of Jesus Christ" refer to in Philippians 1:6?

- A. The day a person first joins the church.
- B. The day a believer is baptized.
- C. The return of Christ, when God's work will be fully completed.
- D. The day Paul finished writing the letter.

6. What does the phrase "will complete it" teach us about God's work in the believer?

- A. God may finish the work if the believer never struggles.
- B. God will finish part of the work, but the believer must finish the rest alone.
- C. God will bring His work to its full and final completion.
- D. God only completes His work in people who never fail.

SECTION B: TRUE OR FALSE

Write "TRUE" or "FALSE" on the line.

1. _____ Paul's confidence in Philippians 1:6 is based mainly on the believer's feelings and performance.
2. _____ Philippians 1:6 teaches that God will complete the good work He has truly begun in His people.
3. _____ Paul wrote Philippians from prison, yet his letter is filled with confidence and joy.
4. _____ Because God is working in believers, Christians do not need to pray, obey, grow, or persevere.
5. _____ Present struggles do not mean God's work has failed; they remind us that His work is still in progress.
6. _____ "The day of Jesus Christ" points to the final completion of God's work when Christ returns.

SECTION C: THREE RESPONSES TO PHILIPPIANS 1:6

Write one sentence explaining what each phrase means.

1. What does it mean to rest in God's faithfulness instead of trusting your own perfection?

2. Why should a believer keep trusting God even during hard seasons?

3. How should the return of Christ shape the way you live now?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Answer in 3–5 sentences.

Think about a time when you, or someone you know, felt unfinished, discouraged, or uncertain. How does Philippians 1:6 help you see that situation differently? What part of this promise gives you the most confidence right now?
