



DISCIPLESHIP | **EXPLORED**

WHAT'S THE BEST LOVE
YOU'VE EVER KNOWN?

LEADER'S HANDBOOK

Key

 Discuss

 Watch a film

 Read a Bible passage

 Pray

 Follow Up



SESSION 1

CONFIDENT IN CHRIST

☰ Welcome to Discipleship Explored! We're about to see Episode 1. As you're watching, have this question in mind: "How can I be confident that I really am a follower of Jesus?" You can find that question, with space for notes, on page 7 of the Handbook.

▶ **Confident in Christ** (Philippians 1:1-11, 14 min 36 sec)

Note: The following talk summary is on page 8 of the Handbook.

- God in his goodness is completely in control of everything – not just when things are going the way we want, but also when they aren't.
- We see this played out as Jesus was dying on the cross: the greatest imaginable good was being achieved by God even when human beings were doing their very worst.
- Because God is in control, we can be confident that nothing can prevent him from completing the good work he has begun in every believer (Philippians 1:6).
- We can be confident that God is working to change us internally if our lives start to reflect this externally.
- Because God is at work in us, we won't be passive. We'll want to respond by growing in our knowledge and love of him (Philippians 1:9-11).

Christ (v 1) | A title meaning “God’s anointed one.” Sometimes translated as Messiah.

God’s holy people (v 1) | Those who God has set apart for himself. This is often translated as “saints.” Every follower of Jesus is a saint. The collective description for God’s holy people is the “church” (see Philippians 3:6 and 4:15).

Overseers and deacons (v 1) | Church leaders (1 Timothy 3:1-13).

Grace (v 2) | God’s goodness to people who do not deserve it.

Gospel (v 5, 7) | The good news that Jesus Christ lived, died, was resurrected, and ascended so that we can be reconciled to God and enjoy him forever.

Day of Christ (v 6, 10) | The day when Jesus Christ will return to judge the world.

Righteousness (v 11) | Perfect goodness. To be righteous is to be “pure and blameless” (v 10). Righteousness can only come “through Jesus Christ” because only he – as God come to earth – has lived a perfectly pure and blameless life.



Let’s read Philippians 1:1-11.



1. According to Philippians 1:6, what is Paul confident about?

Paul is confident that God has begun a good work in the Philippian believers, and that he will finish it. In other words, their growing Christian maturity and ultimate salvation are assured.

2. How can he be so confident? (See verse 5.)

Because of their “partnership in the gospel.”

3. What do you think that phrase means, in practical terms? (See Philippians 2:25 and 4:14-16.)

The Philippians took care of Paul’s needs and “shared in his troubles.” This isn’t just about sending money, but also care and compassion expressed in other ways.

4. So how can we be confident that God is working in us? What might that look like in your life and in your day-to-day relationships?

It's a good sign when we find ourselves wanting to serve fellow believers in our church, wanting to help share the good news about Jesus, showing hospitality, caring for others, etc.

5. Someone might say, "If God will finish this work he started, why do I need to do anything?" What would you say to them?

If we don't want to do anything, it's doubtful God is working in us. One of the signs God is working in us is that we have a desire to serve him (and others) better.

6. A Christian friend is going through a tough time. They don't feel confident that God loves them and is in control of what is happening to them. Is there something from the film or our discussion that might encourage them?

One encouragement might be Philippians 1:6: "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion."

Another encouragement is what happened at the cross, which is the ultimate proof of God's love for us. God the Son willingly took the punishment we deserve, so that we can be reconciled to him and enjoy him forever. He sees us as we are, yet he still loves us – enough to give up his life for us!

The cross is also the ultimate proof of God's control. Even those who killed God's Son only succeeded in bringing God's loving plan to pass. (See Acts 4:27-28.)

7. (If time) What has been most striking for you during this session?

This question helps you move naturally into one-to-one conversations after the session has ended.

 **In verse 9, Paul prays for the Philippians. Let me pray that same prayer for us now.**

Father, thank you for bringing us here today. Thank you for your great love. I pray that our love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that we may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ. We ask these things in Jesus' name and for your glory and praise. Amen.

→ There's a Follow Up section on page 11 of your Handbook. That's a daily plan to help us discover more about the theme of this session. Let's aim to finish that before next time and we'll discuss it then. Thank you for coming!

(Note to leader: The Follow Up studies are printed below to help you prepare for the next session.)

Paul is confident in Philippians 1:6 that God will complete the "good work" that he began in the Philippians. This "good work" is salvation. The Follow Up activities this week focus on how we can be confident of salvation.

☰ **Sunday:** Think over what you heard in church this week. What did you find most helpful?

📖 **Day 1: Philippians 1:1-11** (Most Bibles have a contents page at the start to help you find particular books.)

If you can, memorize this key verse:

"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6)

 **Day 2: Ephesians 2:8-10**

1. Look at verse 8. How are Christians saved?

By grace, through faith.

2. Can Christians save themselves? Why or why not? (See verses 8 and 9.)

No. Even faith is a gift from God.

3. What cannot save us? (See verse 9.)

Our “works.”

4. Are “good works” (i.e. doing good things / not doing bad things) still important for us to do? (See verse 10.)

Yes. We are “created in Christ Jesus to do good works.”

If you’re a Christian, thank God that he has given you the “gift” of faith (verse 8). Praise him for his amazing grace. Ask your Father for growing confidence in him, rather than in your own “works.”

When you pray, one helpful model to have in mind is ACTS: **A**doration (praising God for who he is), **C**onfession (speaking honestly about what we’ve done wrong), **T**hanksgiving (expressing gratitude for all God is doing in your life), and **S**upplication (this is what Paul means in Philippians 4:6 when he says, “Present your requests to God”).

 **Day 3:** *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* (Jesus, speaking in John 14:6)

Think about what this verse means for you. Try to memorize it if you can.

 **Day 4: Read Jesus' words in John 10:27-28.**

In this part of John's Gospel, Jesus describes himself as "the good shepherd," and his followers are described as his "sheep."

1. In verse 27, how do "sheep" respond to Jesus?

"My sheep listen to my voice ... they follow me."

2. Look at verse 28. What will Jesus give to those who follow him?

Eternal life.

3. How confident can we be of salvation, if we follow Jesus? (See verse 28.)

Very! Jesus says, "They shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand."

4. Look at verse 27. What is it about us that shows we are followers of Jesus?

We listen to his voice. In other words, we obey Jesus.

Thank God for this stunning promise: "No one will snatch them out of my hand" (verse 28). If we belong to Christ, we can be sure of our salvation. We can trust him completely. He is stronger than anything or anyone else, and he will not let us go.

 **Day 5:** Re-read the passages you've read this week. Pick a verse you found particularly helpful and write it down below.

 **Day 6:** Get ready for *Discipleship Explored* by reading Philippians 1:12-26.