

Chapter 1: Fellowship

Philippians 1:1–11

In the beginning, God created human beings for relationships. In the pristine splendor of the Garden of Eden, God identified only one thing that was *not* good: Adam's isolation from any other creatures like him (Gen. 2:18). After God gave Adam a companion in the woman Eve, the man rejoiced at this “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” whom God had given him “at last” (Gen. 2:23); however, the joy of human companionship did not remain untroubled for long. When Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator to eat of the Tree of Knowledge and Good and Evil, they first lost their unashamed freedom with each other (Gen. 3:7), and then they lost their loyalty to one another shortly afterward (Gen. 3:12). Ever since that moment, relationships have been not only the source of our deepest pleasures, but also the source of our deepest pains.

Nevertheless, human beings have never lost our instinctive drive toward relationships. We yearn for mutual affection, respect, admiration, and care. We deliberately seek out shared experiences, shared resources, and shared culture. We define ourselves in terms of our relationships, and social scientists have even demonstrated that the unraveling of our most intimate relationships (e.g., parent/child, husband/wife) literally kills us. It is not as though we merely *feel* like we are dying (although that is true), but strained marriages (for example) lead directly to higher rates of psychological problems, heart disease, and immune deficiencies.¹ In fact, research suggests that “emotional isolation is a more dangerous health risk than smoking or high blood pressure.”²

As a pastor, one of the most frequently recurring themes I hear from people is that they are *lonely*. We all know that we need relationships, but because of the Fall, relationships do not come easily. What kind of relationships should we have? What does the gospel say about our relationships?

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, we find a relationship of deep friendship. Paul's close relationships with the Philippians church are so thoroughly enmeshed throughout this letter that one scholar explicitly classifies Paul's letter to the Philippians into a genre of letter writing known in the ancient world as a “letter of friendship.”³ Although there is some debate about that literary classification, no one disputes the idea that Philippians reflects a deeply intimate spiritual friendship between Paul and the church at Philippi.⁴ While this letter addresses several different topics as Paul demonstrates what it looks like to live the cruciform life, we will see that he treats those themes within the context of his deep friendship and fellowship with the Philippians.

People (Phil. 1:1–2)

When Paul and Timothy write to “all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi” (Phil. 1:1), the recipients of their letter are not anonymous to them. Rather, these are church planters writing to a church they had planted many years earlier. This greeting is short, but it reveals a profound level of relational depth, commitment to the future of the church, and devotion to the core message on

which the church was founded: the gospel of Jesus Christ. In this brief greeting, we see a snapshot of a healthy relationship between Paul and the Philippians—and more importantly, a snapshot of what healthy church (and inter-church) relationships ought to look like. While our ultimate end in life is to glorify and enjoy *God* forever,⁵ our relationships with *people* make up an inescapable, non-negotiable part of the Christian life.

To understand exactly what Paul is saying in this greeting, we need to understand the well-developed customs and expectations that ancient letter writers and recipients had for the greetings of their letters. Typically, ancient letters began with three elements: (1) the name of the sender, (2) the name of the recipient, and (3) a well wishing greeting.⁶ Paul's introduction here in this letter to the Philippians generally follows this standard outline, but Paul makes significant tweaks that make this greeting unique.

Relational Depth

To start, Paul opens the letter by listing not only his own name as the sender, but also Timothy's, even though Paul himself was the sole author of the letter. When we compare the 51 uses of "I," "my" and "me" language of Philippians 1:3–11 with the "we," "our," and "us" language of other letters (e.g., 2 Cor. 1:3–11; Col. 1:3–14; 1 Thess. 1:2–10; 2 Thess. 1:3–4), there is no doubt that Paul wrote every word of this letter, without involving Timothy as a co-author.⁷ Why would Paul include Timothy in the sender line at all, then?

It is unlikely that Paul includes Timothy simply because Timothy was *with* Paul when the apostle was writing this letter, since there were also many other "brothers" who were also "with" Paul (Phil. 4:21–22) as well. Also, while some Bible scholars have speculated that Timothy perhaps transcribed the letter from Paul's dictation,⁸ the man named Tertius who transcribed Paul's letter to the Romans does not include his name in the sender line of that letter, but only in a postscript at the end (Rom. 16:22). A different reason must have elevated Timothy to be included as a sender.

Does Paul perhaps want to deflect attention away from himself by elevating Timothy, his co-worker in the gospel?⁹ Or, perhaps is this to soothe the sting of the Philippians who might have been expecting to see Timothy, rather than Epaphroditus, delivering this letter to them (Phil. 2:19–30)?¹⁰ What is the threshold that causes someone not merely to be included in the final greetings of one of Paul's letters, but to be listed as a co-sender of the letter? Scholars have spent much time debating this question, but ultimately, Paul's criteria for naming someone as a co-sender is of little importance.

Instead, by focusing our attention on what we *do* know about Timothy's relationship with the church at Philippi, we come to a much more fruitful line of inquiry. Namely, while we don't know exactly why Timothy was included as a sender, we do know that Timothy's inclusion reflects the reality of a longstanding, ongoing, deep relationship with the Philippians. From the book of Acts, we know that Timothy joined Paul on his missionary journeys in Acts 16:1–5, and that very soon after, Paul headed to Macedonia after a vision (Acts 16:6–10), coming first to the city of Philippi (Acts 16:11–40). This means that Timothy had been there when Lydia came to faith (Acts 16:11–15), when Paul cast the demon out of the fortune-telling slave girl (Acts 16:16–18), and when Paul and Silas were imprisoned (Acts 16:19–24), led the jailer to Christ (Acts 16:25–34), and then been released (Acts 16:35–40). In all probability, Timothy had also visited the Philippians at least one other time after that initial journey (Acts 20:3–6). Finally, Paul writes later in this letter that Timothy's involvement with the Philippians continues all the way up to this point in time (Phil. 2:19–24).¹¹

The first element that we should recognize from this healthy church and healthy church relationship, then, comes in the depth of relationships between Paul, Timothy, and the Philippians. If the Philippian church was planted in 49–52 AD, and this letter was written some time around 60–62 AD, then these relationships have grown over the course of roughly a decade.¹²

Sometimes, we get frustrated at how slowly our relationships grow with the people in our own churches, or with our partners in the gospel at other churches. When we get frustrated—and especially when we get tempted to quit and start over at another church or with another partnership where the grass might grow greener, faster—we need to remember that good relationships require a tremendous amount of time. Building trust, collegiality, and affection does not happen quickly. Paul didn’t write this letter after a single weekend retreat with the Philippians, but after nearly a decade of committed ministry with them—sometimes in person, and sometimes from a distance. Relational depth requires much *more* than time, but never *less* than time.

Mutual Deference

Second, Paul deliberately plays down his own authority while playing up the authority of the leaders in the church. After listing the names of the authors, Paul identifies both Timothy and himself as “servants of Christ Jesus,” rather than leading with his credentials as an apostle. In other letters, Paul specifically asserts his apostolic office when he is authoritatively teaching doctrine or commanding certain practices (e.g., Rom. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1;), or when he must correct errors, whether ethical or theological (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1). Here in Philippians, however, Paul emphasizes the *servant* nature of his ministry.

But while Paul does not identify his own authority, he specifically acknowledges the office-holders of the Philippian church in his greeting to the entire congregation. When Paul lists the recipients of the letter (the second major element of an ancient letter), he addresses his letter “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons” (Phil. 1:1). Biblically, the title “overseers” is a word used interchangeably for “elders” (e.g., compare Acts 20:17 “elders” to Acts 20:28 “overseers”; or, Tit. 1:5, 7), and it refers to those who exercise shepherding oversight (hence, “overseers”) within the church.¹³ As R. C. H. Lenski explains, “‘Elder’ expressed the dignity of the office, ‘overseer,’ the work.”¹⁴ The word “deacon” is a word referring to a servant ministering to the physical needs of the congregation.¹⁵ In no other letter does Paul honor the overseers and deacons at a church by directly acknowledging them in the list of recipients, which is especially remarkable when we consider that Paul here identifies himself simply as a bondservant—that is, as a household slave.¹⁶ The contrast between Paul’s honor toward the Philippians and his humility among the Philippians is extraordinary.

The net result is that Paul builds up the officers in honor within the congregation that they serve. Rather than clinging to or flaunting his own apostolic authority, Paul shows deference to the leaders of the church at Philippi. Although Paul can and will cite his own authority as an apostle over against congregations who are drifting from the gospel (1 Cor. 9:1–2; 2 Cor. 11; Gal. 1:1, 6), he eagerly lays aside his own authority for the building up of the local church officers when those local officers stand firmly in the gospel. Paul uses his power for a purpose, and not as an end in itself. He will leverage his authority as needed for the defense and the building up of the church, but his ultimate goal is to see new leaders trained, ordained, and installed to carry out the ministry of the gospel at the local level in ways that he cannot do from afar.

In our own churches—and especially in our relationships with other churches—those with authority sometimes feel tempted to cling to our power. We are reluctant to allow qualified individuals into the “inner circle,” or we try to micromanage people, missionaries, or churches. The biblical pattern, however, is for leaders to steward, multiply, and give away as much authority as possible to other leaders in the recognition that Jesus Christ alone is the King of his church. For, as we will see later in Paul’s letter, even the eternal Son of God willingly emptied himself of his power for the sake of his people and for the glory of God (Phil. 2:1–11). There is a time for close oversight and even for rebuke, but the goal is *always* to empower other godly leaders who can faithfully increase and expand the reach of the reign of King Jesus in his kingdom on earth.

Core Commitment to the Gospel

Finally, in the third element of ancient letters, Paul offers his greeting. While a standard Greek greeting used the word *charein* (“Greetings!”), Paul tweaks this standard greeting to form his own, gospelized, greeting:¹⁷ “Grace (*charis*) to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:2). In this context, the words *grace* and *peace* both convey something significant. Gordon Fee contrasts these words in terms of God’s *activity* toward us and the *benefits* we receive from him:

The sum total of God’s activity toward his human creatures is found in the word “grace”; God has given himself to his people bountifully and mercifully in Christ. Nothing is deserved, nothing can be achieved. The sum total of those benefits as they are experienced by the recipients of God’s grace is “peace,” God’s eschatological shalom, both now and to come. The latter flows out of the former, and both together flow from “God our Father” and were made effective in our human history (through our “Lord Jesus Christ.”)¹⁸

From first to last, beginning to end, God is at work advancing his gospel by grace for the purpose of bringing about true peace.

Additionally, while Paul does not use the word “gospel” here, this phrase nevertheless reflects the message of the gospel. We will spend more time digging deeper into Paul’s understanding of the gospel later in this letter to the Philippians (especially in our study of Phil. 3:1–11), but it will suffice for now to say that the gospel represents God’s saving work for his people accomplished by the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, which we receive by faith through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Paul opens his letter with a clear statement of the significance of the gospel, and the gospel will remain at the forefront of Paul’s mind as we study the remainder of this letter. The gospel is not a secondary issue for Paul; rather, the gospel stands at the core of the partnership that he enjoys with the Philippians. Transcending all our races, languages, ethnicities, or cultures, the gospel unifies God’s people.

The Philippian Church as a Model

Right from the outset, we see the unique relationship that Paul and Timothy have with the Philippian church. To be clear, the Philippians are facing big challenges, but Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi does not suggest that this is a church in need of comprehensive doctrinal instruction, as Paul’s letters to the Roman, Ephesian, Colossian, and Thessalonian churches do, or of

outright rebuke like the Galatians and the Corinthians. Rather, in the letter to the Philippians, Paul needs to reaffirm the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus that he preached “from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:5) in the face of some specific concerns that the church is facing. Furthermore, Paul’s letter to the Philippians overflows with mutual love and admiration for this church who has partnered so generously with Paul, a church for whom Paul “yearn[s]...with the affection of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:8).

This initial window into the relationship that Paul has with the church at Philippi accomplishes more than simply providing historical background. Much more, we see here a model for our own churches, and especially a model for how our churches partner with other churches. Whether we are interacting with other faithful churches in our communities or other churches in our denominations or presbyteries, or even pursuing strategic relationships with likeminded churches across the world, we need to pursue long-term relational depth, mutual deference, and a non-negotiable, resolute commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Partnerships (Phil. 1:3–8)

We talk often about the fact that relationships require work, but when we do so, we are usually talking about the need to work *on* the relationship. That is, relational work usually involves revealing and understanding, confronting and caring, forgiving and seeking forgiveness. Certainly, those elements to relationships are essential. And yet, relationships that attain to the kind of mutual affection that Paul describes here in Philippians also require work *beyond* the relationship. Christians are on a mission, after all, so it should never surprise us that our deepest relationships in Christ will develop in the trenches as we labor alongside one another for the gospel. As C. S. Lewis writes,

Friendship arises out of mere Companionship when two or more of the companions discover that they have in common some insight or interest or even taste which the others do not share and which, till that moment, each believed to be his own unique treasure (or burden). The typical expression of opening Friendship would be something like, “What? You too? I thought I was the only one.”...It is when two such persons discover one another, when, whether with immense difficulties and semi-articulate fumbling or with what would seem to us amazing and elliptical speed, they share their vision—it is then that Friendship is born. And instantly they stand together in an immense solitude.¹⁹

Ultimately, Christian friendship develops through common commitment to the *mission* of Jesus Christ.

The relationship Paul has with the church at Philippi—which he calls a “partnership” or a “fellowship” (*koinōnia*; Phil. 1:5)—has clearly emerged from exactly this kind of mutual love for the gospel of Jesus Christ. This idea of *koinōnia* stands behind not only this section, but behind this entire letter. Paul’s relationship with them is far more than an acquaintance, and even beyond mere friendship. Paul and the Philippians share the intimacy of *koinōnia* that has been forged in a long-term, hope-filled, enduring partnership in ministry. As Paul recounts their relationship in Philippians 1:3–8, he touches on three themes that characterize the spiritual friendship and partnership that they have enjoyed.

Faithfulness

First, Paul's partnership with the Philippians develops through *faithfulness*. As we talked about above when we looked at the relational depth reflected in Timothy's inclusion in the sender line of this letter, Paul further describes the way that his own relational depth with the Philippians is marked by long-term, consistent faithfulness.

On Paul's side, the apostle piles up the word "all" (in Greek, various forms of *pas/pan*) to describe the effusiveness of his love for the Philippians, writing, "I thank my God in *all* (*pasē*) my remembrance of you, *always* (*pantote*) in *every* (*pasē*) prayer of mine for you *all* (*pantōn*)..." (Phil. 1:3–4). Paul's prayers for the Philippians are marked by their exceptional quantity as well as by their quality, since Paul describes his ability for "making my prayer with joy" (Phil. 1:4). Every time Paul remembers these people, he lifts them up in prayer *with joy*.

Paul then describes the reason for his extensive prayer: it is "because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1:5). From the very beginning, they had *partnered* or *cooperated* with Paul in his gospel ministry, first by believing, but eventually in their own service to advance the gospel. Peter O'Brien warns that we should avoid narrowing the scope of this partnership too far:

This cooperation is to be understood in a wide sense. It is not to be restricted to monetary assistance, though this was obviously in the apostle's mind, having been referred to in v. 3. It probably includes the idea of their actual proclamation of the gospel message to outsiders (see on 1:27, 28), their suffering along with Paul for the gospel's sake (cf. 1:30; 4:14–15), as well as their intercessory activity on his behalf (cf. 1:19), an activity in which the apostle knew they were engaged at the time of his writing to them.²⁰

Indeed, laboring in the trenches for the gospel stretches us in ways we never expect at the outset, for it is through shared suffering that God brings about the most growth in us personally in our relationships with one another. Later, Paul will explain that we share in suffering not only with each other, but with Jesus Christ himself (Phil. 3:10).

Like Paul, the Philippians dedicated their lives to spreading the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ, whether that meant by spreading that news personally, or helping Paul in his own efforts, or in anything else at all that they could do to help.

Hope

Second, Paul insists that the work that he and the Philippians have entered into in their partnership is not a lost cause. Instead, God himself will bring it to fruition and completion at the day of Christ Jesus (Phil. 1:6). In the very next verse, Paul reveals that he is imprisoned as he writes the letter (Phil. 1:7), which we might think would damper some of his enthusiasm and confidence. On the contrary, Paul is confident that, regardless of what his situation looks to be from a human perspective, the Philippians and he are fighting on the winning side so that they can in no way lose.

Beyond injecting a note of confidence into this letter, Paul here sets up a theme that will run through the rest of the letter—that our salvation comes entirely as a free gift from God. Moisés Silva powerfully paraphrases Philippians 1:6 this way: "Do not misunderstand my commendation; it was

not you who began this work, but God, and he will complete it.”²¹ Paul does not give a thorough explanation of this confidence in the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ; he simply asserts it. As we will see to a greater degree in the next chapter, this is the riddle that permeates the entire letter: How is it that Paul can be confident when so many things are going wrong around him? With Paul, we will content ourselves to raise this question without yet offering an answer.

Endurance

Third, it is on the basis of this hope that Paul and the Philippians can labor not only faithfully, but with endurance that transcends even the most painful suffering. As mentioned above, Paul writes this letter from a place of suffering during his imprisonment (Phil. 1:7), but through the rest of the letter, Paul will also insist in no uncertain terms that the Philippians also must suffer with him (Phil. 1:29–30; 2:4, 11–12; 3:10, 17).

This does not mean that our suffering is nothing but horror and misery. Paul says that the Philippians have been “partakers with me of *grace*, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel” (Phil. 1:6). Paul’s imprisonment is *grace*, just as his contending for the gospel is *grace*. Frank Thielman explains that “The terms Paul uses for ‘defending’ (*apologia*) and ‘confirming’ (*bebaiosis*) are technical legal terms for providing a speech of defense before an official (Acts 22:1; 2 Tim. 4:16) and giving a guarantee that something is true (Heb. 6:16).”²² Whether defending the truth of the gospel in speech or confirming the gospel’s power through patient suffering, the Philippians have been “partakers” (*sugkoinōnous*; lit., “partners/fellowshippers with”) in Paul’s ministry. In good times and bad, the Philippians have walked with Paul through every step.

Is it any wonder, then, that Paul can write, “For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:8)? The Philippians have faithfully, hopefully, and enduringly partnered with him in the gospel. They are more than contacts, acquaintances, donors, or even mere friends. They are partners and partakers Paul in his ministry, and he *loves* them for it.

Teams, Not Individuals

Sometimes we imagine the great heroes of the Bible as solitary superheroes who overcome all adversity on their own for the sake of Christ. On the contrary, as Paul’s relationship with the Philippians helps us to see, true ministry is a team sport. No one is called to be a lone warrior Christian, out fighting the Lord’s battles on his or her own. Rather, Jesus calls us to remember that each of us is a single member of Christ’s body, joined to many other members who contribute different gifts alongside ours. Not a single Philippian shared Paul’s apostolic office—and more than likely, none would have been able to measure up to his relentless work ethic either—but the Philippians were nevertheless key, strategic partners in Paul’s ministry. In other words, *Paul would not have been able to accomplish all that he does without the partnership of the Philippians.*

Who are your partners? With whom do you experience fellowship through partaking together in ministry? What gospel work are you investing yourself, your time, your gifts, and your resources? If we do not develop partnerships in the gospel—both in our own local congregations and in other churches nearby and around the world—then we have forfeited Christ’s good, strategic gift to us in and through his body.

Prayer (Phil. 1:9–11)

Still, while we must forge partnerships to share in the work of the gospel, it is a fundamental point of Christian doctrine that *our* work is never the most *important* work. Ultimately, we believe that God is the one who *alone* can accomplish all things, so that our relationships with others must be characterized chiefly by prayer. We must work hard in our own ministries and with our partners, but we must even more importantly devote ourselves to prayer. In these final verses of this first section of the letter to the Philippians, Paul gives us two key prayer requests that we should lay before God as we co-labor alongside our partners in ministry.

Love through Knowledge

First, Paul prays that “your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and discernment” (Phil. 1:9). The word that the ESV translates as “with” is *en* in Greek. While “with” is one legitimate option, most Bible translations choose “in” instead (HCSB, KJV, NIV, NASB) which seems to capture the force of what Paul writes here a bit better. He is praying that the Philippians will enjoy the kind of knowledge and discernment that *leads* to love (“*in* knowledge and love”). It is not as though love is one thing, while knowledge and discernment are another, but that knowledge and discernment lead to the kind of love that Paul prays for among the Philippians.²³

God wants us to study his word for a very practical purpose. He does not want us to puff ourselves up with knowledge for its own sake (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1), but to shape our character and drive our service. God’s agenda in studying Paul’s letter to the Philippians is that we would grow in love for one another through our attentive reading of Scripture. As we study this unique, gospel-saturated partnership between Paul and the Philippians that has grown into deep, mutual affection, we should be praying that God would use this portion of his word to bind us together more tightly with our own fellow believers with love. What we learn from this letter must drive us on toward love.

Love Bearing the Fruit of Righteousness

Second, Paul also prays that this love (the love that arises from knowledge) would not be an end in itself, but would influence their lives in countless scenarios. Notice that Paul explicitly defines purpose (“so that”) for his prayer in verse 9, writing, “so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1:10–11).

As with the relationship between knowledge and love, Paul sees knowledge and righteous living as integrally connected. The practical function of growing in the knowledge of God’s word is that we might better discern good from evil (“so that you may approve what is excellent”) to walk in purity and blamelessness, filled with “the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ,” so that God might be praised in the way that you live. True, Christian love through the Holy Spirit gives us both the motivation and the power to help us to live out what God’s word has taught us to be right.²⁴ The purpose for growing in knowledge and discernment is that we might abound in love, but the purpose for abounding in love is that we might be transformed people who love excellent things, who walk pure and blamelessly, and who are filled with the fruit of righteousness of Christ. Through the fellowship of our relationships, God conforms us to the image of Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Discussion Questions

1. What gospel partnerships do you have in your own life? In your church? With other churches? What practical steps might you take to cultivate deeper relationships within those partnerships? What practical steps might you take to develop new relationships for the sake of the mission of advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. How do your own relationships reflect the key elements of Paul's relationship with the Philippians? What role does long-term relational depth play? How do you exercise and seek to demonstrate mutual deference? How do you keep your commitment to the gospel at the forefront of your activities? How might you grow in these areas of your partnerships?
3. Would someone objectively categorize your life more as a team sport or an individual event? What specific things would they identify to make a case for each side? What practical steps might you take to transform your mindset and your lifestyle toward a team approach to ministry?
4. What is one way your own prayer life might grow in light of Paul's prayers for the Philippians? In what ways do you seek to grow in the area of knowledge? How do you see knowledge translating into love? Where is love bearing the fruit of righteousness? How do all of these elements combine to the glory and praise of God?

Notes

1. Sue Johnson, *Hold Me Tight* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008).
2. Johnson, *Hold Me Tight*, 24. Citing James House, Karl R. Landis, and Debra Umberson, "Social Relationships and Health," *Science* 1988 (vol. 241), 540–45.
3. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 2–7.
4. Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, BECNT, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 18–20.
5. Westminster Shorter Catechism, #1.
6. Silva, *Philippians*, 38.
7. Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 3. This does not imply that the "we," "our," and "us" letters necessarily have multiple authors, but by way of contrast, Paul's "I," "my," and "me" language in Philippians emphatically demonstrates that Timothy is *not* a co-author of this letter.
8. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 61.
9. Silva, *Philippians*, 39.
10. Silva, *Philippians*, 136–38.
11. William Hendriksen, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1962), 44.
12. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 5, 26.
13. See Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, rev. ed. (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1995), 31–34.
14. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 701.

15. See Alexander Strauch, *The New Testament Deacon* (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1992).
16. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 62–64.
17. “Here is a marvelous example of Paul’s ‘turning into gospel’ everything he sets his hand to.” (Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 70.)
18. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 70–71.
19. C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt, 1960), 65.
20. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 63.
21. Silva, *Philippians*, 45.
22. Frank Thielman, *Philippians*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 40.
23. “The central focus of Paul’s concern is knowledge that cultivates love. This emphasis is surely to be related to the Philippians’ struggle over the problem of unity..., and it prepares the readers for the more forceful words in 2:1–4. For the moment we should note the ease with which Paul intertwines knowledge and love. The apostle cares not for any (false) knowledge that fails to issue in love. But it is just as important to reflect that Paul does not view love as mindless. Quite the contrary: knowledge is the way of love.” (Silva, *Philippians*, 50.)
24. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 77.