

Is God at Work in Your Life? Philippians 1:1-8

Introduction:

1. Have you ever been driving down the road and you come to a sign that says, "Warning: Men at work"?
2. I'm wondering if some of us should have a sign hung around our neck that says, "Warning: God at work." Is God actively at work in your life?
3. One of my favorite verses in the Bible is verse 6. I love this. Paul was absolutely confident that God was at work in the lives of these Philippian believers.
4. As Paul wrote this letter, keep in mind that he knew these people personally because Paul is the one that started this church. vs. 5; **Acts 16:12-40**
5. What a wonderful thing to know that God is at work in your life! How can you be assured that God is at work in your life?

First, by accepting His grace. vs. 7

1. Paul said that it was meet (fitting) for him to think that God was at work in their lives, but why? Look at the end of the verse: "...ye all are partakers of my grace."
 - Paul is referring to the gospel of grace that he had proclaimed to them.
2. This grace that Paul preached centered in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross for sin. **Ephesians 3:2, 7-8**
 - Christ lived a perfect, sinless life and then made a full payment for our sins on the cross. He died for us. Because of Christ giving Himself as a sacrifice for sin, you and I can now be set free from the penalty of our sins and completely forgiven. **Ephesians 1:7**
 - Notice, it is all based on God's grace (end of verse 7). When you believe that Christ died for your sins, and you appropriate it to your heart by faith, you are saved and completely forgiven of all sins at that very moment. **Ephesians 2:8-9**
3. Immediately God places His Spirit in you (**Ephesians 1:13**) and you are now in Christ. **Philippians 1:1**
4. Where does God begin His work according to verse 6? **In you.**
5. If God is to **work** in you, He must first **live** in you. And the only way for God to live in you is for you to accept the grace of God by placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Second, by getting connected to a local body of believers. vs. 1, 5

1. Why was Paul so confident that God was at work in the lives of these believers? As you read this, Paul knew they were all together and looking out for one another.
vs. 1
 - Saints - those who have trusted Christ and are no longer in their sins, but in Christ.
 - Bishops - pastors who provide spiritual instruction and accountability to the flock
 - Deacons - men who assist the pastors in taking care of the needs of the saints.
2. In verse 5, Paul refers to their "...fellowship in the gospel..." The word "fellowship" means "to share, to have in common."

- **Illustration:** If somebody comes to your house for fellowship, you **share** the same table, **share** the same food, and **share** your lives with one another.
3. A local church is simply a group of people who share a common faith. Everybody shares common faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. All are partakers of the same grace.
 4. Paul was confident that God was at work in their lives because he knew that the Philippians were a connected body of believers.
 5. If you are a believer, it is crucial that you get connected to a local assembly of other believers. There is a difference between attending meetings and getting connected to a body of believers. Here are some practical suggestions:
 - Publicly identify yourself with a local assembly. Don't be on the fringe and be an FBI undercover Christian (slip in and slip out of church). Come to our next membership meeting and take that step of commitment.
 - Become a part of a L.I.F.E. Group. Small group Bible studies are where you get to really know people and can share your lives together. This is true fellowship.
 - Get involved serving God with fellow believers. Volunteer for a ministry and experience the joy of co-laboring with other believers.
 6. If you want God to work in your life, you can't be an island unto yourself. Just like these Philippians, you need to get connected with a local body of believers.

Third, by developing a relationship with a more mature believer. vs. 3-4, 7-8

1. It is obvious from this text that Paul had a very special relationship with these people.
 - Paul was constantly remembering them in his thoughts and prayers. vs. 3-4
 - Paul said, "...I have you in my heart..." vs. 7
 - Paul described himself as longing after them. vs. 8
2. Can you imagine the impact this must have had on these people? To have someone like Paul teaching them, writing to them, caring for them, praying for them. Paul was like a spiritual father to them.
 - Is it any wonder that Paul was confident that God was going to work in their lives?
3. Did you know that we all need a Paul in our lives?
 - We need somebody who is more mature in the Lord who can be there for us when the going gets tough - somebody who can be there to answer our questions - somebody who demonstrates the Christian life by the way they live life - somebody who we know cares about us and is praying for us.
4. Do you have a person like that in your life? If not, you need to pray that God will provide somebody like that in your life. But then you need to get proactive and do some things that will make it more likely for you to find a friendship like this.
 - You can begin with the suggestions I gave you under point number two.
5. As you establish a relationship with a spiritual mentor in your life, it can bring unbelievable spiritual growth in your life.

In Conclusion:

1. Do you desire for God to work in your life in 2008? Wouldn't it be great to be able to look back next January and see clearly how God has worked in your life?

2. Review these three points from Philippians 1, and ask yourself:
 - Have I accepted His grace?
 - Have I gotten connected to a local body of believers?
 - Have I found a spiritual mentor in my life?