

These verses can always be our confidence in praying for our fellow believers.

The work which His goodness began, the arm of His strength will complete;

*His promise is Yea and Amen, and never was forfeited yet.
Things future, nor things that are now, nor all things below or above,
Can make Him His purpose forgo, or sever my soul from His love.*

Augustus M Toplady

QUESTION 6

- a) Things happen in our lives that don't make sense. They knock our faith.
- b) Perhaps there is suffering.
- c) Sometimes we grow cold spiritually.
- d) God is faithful; and He will always finish what He has started. Even despite us! (**Hebrews 10:23-25**).

GROUP LEADER'S NOTES – STUDY 1

QUESTION 1

- a) He could have used the term 'apostle'; as he does in other letters. Instead he uses 'servant'; or 'bond servant' (see also **Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10**).
- b) The Greek word is 'doulos'; meaning 'slave'. It conveys the idea of ownership, possession, allegiance, dependence, subjection, loyalty.
- c) A slave belonged to his master.
- d) However; Paul is not demeaning himself. This was a willing subjection.
- e) His life has been bought by Christ. Jesus was his master (see **Romans 6:20-23**).
- f) The term 'slave' here is used to express a sense of privilege that he belonged to Christ and had been called into His service.
- g) Paul belongs to Jesus: body, mind and spirit. He wants to be subject to Him in everything (e.g. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**).

QUESTION 2

- a) The full title is 'saints in Christ Jesus'.
- b) It is a designation used in Scripture to describe all of those who have new life in Christ.
- c) In other words, all Christians are saints (see **Acts 9:13; 32**).
- d) It is not a title given to a select few who have lived outstanding lives
- e) Note that in scripture it is always used in the plural (e.g. **Romans 1:7**).
- f) Saints are those who have been born again (**John 3:3,5**). It means 'to be holy'; or 'set apart'.
- g) We are set apart. We are 'in Christ Jesus'. In other words, made holy by Christ's salvation.

QUESTION 3

- a) Although traditional greetings, Paul's words contain a depth of Christian meaning.
- b) Because they are saints in Christ Jesus, the two words go beyond the normal salutation.
- c) Grace points to God's undeserved favour towards His people; rather than human good wishes.
- d) It describes the way God deals with sinners. We do not earn or deserve the blessings of salvation (see **Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 11:6**).
- e) Peace was also a regular Hebrew greeting 'shalom'. In this context it is the fruit, or result, of grace.
- f) Because of that grace we have peace with God (**Romans 5:1**).
- g) That which makes us hostile to God has been dealt with by Jesus at the cross.
- h) This peace is more than the absence of conflict. It is complete well-being. It's an inner peace within the believer, regardless of outward circumstances (see **4:6-7**).

QUESTION 4

- a) Paul's introduction here demonstrates a close bond with this church.
- b) When he prayed, they would constantly come to mind; and he was thankful for them.
- c) Verse 4 contains the first reference to 'joy' in this letter. There are something like 19 references to joy, rejoicing, or gladness in Philippians. His relationship with the believers gives him great joy.
- d) This is a very personal letter. Paul writes about their 'partnership'; which means 'fellowship'.
- e) 'Fellowship' is more than enjoying one another's company.
- f) Paul was grateful for the fellowship he enjoyed with them through prayer, their concern for him; and their practical help.

- g) They had stood with him when he made a stand for the gospel and suffered for it. They themselves were suffering as well. This is fellowship!
- h) They were partners in the task of making the gospel known to others.
- i) He in turn was concerned about their spiritual progress in the Lord.

QUESTION 5

- a) What God starts, He finishes.
- b) This is not a confidence based on the Philippians' own abilities or achievements.
- c) It is based on the power and love of God at work in them and for them.
- d) The reference to a work 'began', is that of the redeeming grace that saved them when they became Christians.
- e) The completion here refers to heaven. We have security; whatever happens in this life. God will not go back on what He has done and promised.
- f) The 'day of Jesus Christ' is the time when Jesus returns in all His glory.
- g) All this implies that God is with us in-between that 'beginning' and that 'completion'.
- h) Paul is convinced that God will preserve his people despite sufferings and trials. That is why, in **1:27**, he urges them to stand firm.
- i) The 'in-between' time is not passive; as we see in **2:12-13**. God is continuing that work.

Cont.