
DEFENSE & OFFENSE

Some days are just so busy! It seem there's no time to do anything but chase the kids around, pick up their toys and attempt to get dinner on the table, none the less study God's word. I know it's even more important on these days to spend time in God's word! It's in the busy days that I forget to take time to be still before God and allow Him to guide me. When I stop striving to accomplish life on my own and turn to Him, He corrects my mindset. It's only then I can carry out my day on His terms. It's my prayer you are able to do the same.

Now, let's dive right in and begin by reading our key verses for today.

Philippians 1:6-8 says, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me, for God is my witness how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus."

As we saw yesterday, the introduction to Paul's letter to the Philippian believers was one of joy. He desired grace and peace for them as well as informing them that he prayed for them with joy because of their fellowship in the gospel. Paul's tone of joy and encouragement continues in verses six through eight.

Paul has confidence verse six tells us. Take a moment to think about that. Do we have confidence? What is our confidence in? Often times our confidence comes from the things we can see, touch, taste, smell and hear, earthly things that make sense to us. As Christians we should have confidence in more than just the physical realm. We should have confidence in the promises and character of God! We should have confidence that we are loved, that we will never be forsaken by God, that we have eternal life and that no matter what we do, we

can be forgiven. It's reassuring to know who God is because when we know His character, we can trust His promises!

Paul informs the believers at Philippi of one of God's promises. "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Do you believe this promise that God will never stop working on you? At our salvation and spiritual birth the Holy Spirit enters our lives and uses His abilities and His resources to carry out God's plan for us. It is our submission to God in and out of every moment that leads to fellowship with God and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. No matter how long we stray or how far we go, God will always take us back and continue His work in us. All it takes is our repentance and submission to Him.

Think about what gives you confidence. Write your answers here.

Are you confident in the Word of God and its promises? In what ways do they give you strength and guide you?

Paul goes on to say that he has seen evidence of this promise fulfilled in the Philippians because of their concern and care for him. Since Paul's imprisonment they continued to pray for him and provide for his physical needs. They also continued in both "the defense and confirmation of the gospel." Paul identifies that even though he was not physically there, he continued to see evidences of the good work God began in them while he was present.

Let's look at the words 'defense' and 'confirmation' and how they apply to us. As Christians our responsibility to spread the gospel and live the Christian life is both defensive and

offensive. In the defensive aspect of the battle we are commanded to put on the armor of God. Armor by nature is defensive.

Read Ephesians 6:10-17 and write down what it means to put on the armor of God.

When we put on the armor of God, we are using His word and the principles found in His word to protect us from the attacks of the enemy, Satan. His attacks come in many different forms, but all have one goal: to distract us from God and fellowship with Him. The reason this part of the battle is defensive is due to the fact that the armor of God, His word, and the promises found in His word, do all the work. They perform like any other outfit of armor. They block the attacks of the enemy. When we trust God, when we meditate on His word day and night, when we renovate our thought process with the Word of God, we are protected. God does not expect us to fight on our own, but instead, rely on Him. He will protect us.

Our part in the offensive battle is the confirmation of the gospel. First, we must confirm the gospel in our lives.

Explain how your actions and speech have changed since you became a Christian?

Read Romans 6:4, 6:11-13 and Ephesians 5:8. Each of these verses talk about what the Christian life should look like. **Write any thoughts here.**

Second, we confirm the gospel in our lives through harmonization with the word and with fellow believers. In our daily lives is there evidence that God is in control? Do our actions and speech harmonize with the word of God? What about our thought processes?

Read Ephesians 4:1-4 and Ephesians 5:1-5 and explain what it looks like to harmonize your life with the Word of God.

Paul's love and affection is evident as he explains in verse eight, "how I long for you all in the affection of Christ Jesus." Paul's love for them is the result of his affections for Christ. How much easier is it to love someone when you see them through God's eyes?! Rather than judge, condemn and question, it is our responsibility to love. We don't have to agree with their actions, but understanding their value as a human being created by God is something we are called to do.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and Philippians 2:3-4

Think of someone in your life who is "hard" to love. How does God want you to treat this person?

When we let God and His word direct us, those who are "hard" to love will become easier!

REVIEW

~Confidence: Where does our confidence come from? Do we have confidence in the character of God? Do we believe in His promises? Do we believe that He will complete the good work that He started in us, no matter what we do? Philippians 1:6

~Defense: We are in a battle! We must put on the armor of God for protection!
Ephesians 6:10-17

~Offense: Confirmation of the gospel requires a changed life. Romans 6:4, 6:11-13,
Ephesians 5:8

~Affection for Christ: Our love for others should result from our affections for Christ.
1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Philippians 2:3-4.