

STACEY WEEKS

# YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME

*A short study on  
Philippians 1:1-18*



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Philippians 1:1-18

Disney's animated film, Toy Story, made Randy Newman's song, *You've Got a Friend in Me*, famous. The catchy lyrics<sup>1</sup> croon traits we long for in friendship. When the road is rough and we are far from home, we want a friend. We want someone who understands our troubles, has our best interests in mind, and who will support us forever.

There is nothing like the encouraging words of a friend to lift a weary heart and remind you of God's goodness. There is nothing like a sweet friend walking alongside through the journey of life. You cheer one another onward. You laugh, cry, worship, and pray together. It is a gift.

Maybe you don't yet have a friend like that. Maybe you are praying for the Lord to bring that kind of friend into your life. While you wait, be that friend to someone else. Be the friend who rejoices in the Lord in good and hard times. Be a friend who speaks life and sees God's mighty hand at work even in the midst of trials. What does that look like? Open your bible to Philippians 1:1-18 and read on to find out.

### Deepening Friendship

1. What makes a good friend? See if you can list four characteristics of a good friend.

1.
2.
3.
4.

2. Which of Paul's words in verses 1-5 convince you that he is a good friend and mentor to the saints in Philippi? How many of those actions made your "good friend" list above?

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<sup>1</sup> Genius. You've Got a Friend in Me (Toy Story), <https://genius.com/Randy-newman-youve-got-a-friend-in-me-toy-story-lyrics>, accessed March 19, 2019.

3. Paul is writing to the saints in Philippi, meaning he is writing to believers for whom he cared deeply. Fill in the chart below to help you discern if you are reading this passage as a fellow believer in the Lord Jesus Christ (v1).

Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”	How is a person saved?
Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”	What is faith?
1 John 2:3, “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep his commandments.”	What are the evidences of faith? Which evidences of faith are present in your life?
2 Corinthians 13:5a, “Test yourself to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!”	<p>What does this ‘test’ reveal about you?</p> <p>If you are not a ‘partaker of grace’ with Paul (v7), what is stopping you from responding to God in faith right now?</p>



7. Paul cares about the spiritual growth of his friends in Philippi. He longs for them and prays for them (v8-9). What do your priorities, actions, and habits reveal about your desire to grow in the type of maturity Paul encourages his friends to pursue in verses 9-11?

### **Declaring the Gospel**

8. What are the unexpected results from Paul's imprisonment (12-13, 14, 15-17, 18)?

God was able to radically move the message of the gospel forward despite Paul's imprisonment. In fact, what the enemy meant to hinder the gospel and cause Paul distress (v17), God used to bring him joy (v18). Paul shared his joy with the saints in Philippi to encourage them to look beyond their circumstances and see the greater work God was doing.
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9. What trials or oppositions do you currently face that *appear* to have no possibility for joy, and how do verses 17-18 provide hope?

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14. The kindest thing a friend can do is point another to Christ first for salvation and then for daily encouragement and victory over sin. What words or phrases does Paul use to encourage his fellow believers and redirect their focus to Christ (v6-18)?

15. Think about your current friendships. Write down the name of a friend or the name of person to whom you'd like to extend friendship.

Write down two acts of service you can do this week to bless or encourage this friend. It can be as simple as sending them an encouraging a message, telling them you are praying for them, dropping off a beverage for them at work, meeting up for tea and a visit, or sharing the gospel.

Act of service / encouragement 1:
Act of service / encouragement 2:

*Remember: Paul illustrates what it looks like to be a good friend and mentor, however our best friend, the one who will never let us down, is Christ. When others fail us, we find rest in the One who will never fail us. Jesus is the friend who sticks closer than a brother, laying down His life so that we might live.*