

# We Haven't Finished Yet

*"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

*Philippians 1:3-6 (NIV)*

*A Five-Day Journey Through Paul's Promise*

## Day 1: The Neuroscience of Sacred Memory - When Remembering Becomes Thanksgiving

### Read: Philippians 1:3

*"I thank my God every time I remember you."*

### Biblical Analysis

The phrase *epi pasē tē mneia hymōn* literally translates "upon every remembrance of you." The Greek *mneia* (remembrance) is not passive recall but active, intentional memory-making. Paul uses *eucharistō* (I thank) in the present tense, indicating continuous action, he is constantly converting memory into gratitude. The possessive "my God" reveals intimate, personal relationship within the act of remembering.

Paul is describing what we now understand as "memory reconsolidation with positive affect." Every time we recall a memory, it becomes labile open to being reformed. By consistently pairing memories of the Philippians with gratitude, Paul is literally rewiring his neural pathways, creating what we call "gratitude-enhanced memory networks."

We often see clients stuck in negatively-valenced memory loops. Their remembering triggers anxiety, shame, or anger. Paul models a therapeutic intervention: intentional gratitude based memory reconstruction. He's not denying difficulties (he's writing from prison), but he's actively choosing how to hold his memories.

The phrase "We haven't finished yet" takes on profound meaning here. Our brains remain neuroplastic throughout life capable of forming new neural pathways. Every act of remembering with gratitude is part of God's ongoing work of transformation in us. We're not finished because our capacity for gratitude-transformed memory continues to develop.

I've seen profound healing when people learn to hold even difficult memories with gratitude for survival, growth, or lessons learned. This isn't toxic positivity but it's what I call "integrated remembering," where we acknowledge pain while recognizing the resilience, growth, and grace woven through our stories.

### Therapeutic Exercise

Tonight, practice "memory reconstruction." Take a difficult relationship or situation. Find one element you can genuinely thank God for perhaps the strength you developed, the empathy you gained, or simply that you survived. Notice how gratitude begins to reshape not just the memory but your present emotional state.

**Prayer:** My God, not a distant deity but intimate companion, teach me to remember with gratitude. Show me how even my unfinished stories, my incomplete healings, my in-process relationships can become occasions for thanksgiving. I'm not finished yet, and neither is Your work of transforming my memories into testimonies. Amen.

## Day 2: The Psychology of Joyful Intercession - Community as Therapeutic Milieu

### Read: Philippians 1:4

*"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy"*

### Biblical Deep Dive (The Big Words!)

The Greek reveals remarkable intensity: *pantote en pasē deēsei mou hyper pantōn hymōn* - "always in every supplication of mine on behalf of all of you." The repetition of *pas* (all/every) creates what rhetoricians call "polyptoton" - emphatic universality. The word *deēsis* implies prayer born from deep need, yet Paul adds *meta charas* (with joy). This is need-based prayer saturated with joy - a psychological paradox.

### Reflection

Paul demonstrates what we might call "secure attachment manifesting as intercessory joy." His ability to hold others in mind with consistent positive regard, even while imprisoned, reveals profound psychological integration. In object relations terms, he's internalized the Philippians as "good objects" - internal representations that generate joy even in their physical absence.

We often see that healing accelerates within what Irvin Yalom called "therapeutic milieu" - a community context of mutual care. Paul isn't just praying for the Philippians; he's creating an intersubjective field of joy that transcends physical distance. His joy in prayer creates what we might call "quantum entanglement of souls" - a mystical but psychologically real phenomenon where emotional states transfer across space through intentional, loving attention.

The "We haven't finished yet" theme emerges powerfully here. Joy in community is both evidence of ongoing transformation and catalyst for continued growth. We're neurobiologically wired for co-regulation - our nervous systems literally sync with those we hold in loving awareness.

### Therapeutic Insight

I've observed that folks who develop capacity for joyful intercession, holding others with loving regard even amid personal struggle; show remarkable resilience. This isn't codependence but what I call "differentiated connection" - maintaining self while remaining joyfully engaged with others' wellbeing.

### Reflection:

- Who do you struggle to pray for with joy? What might shift if you could?
- How might your incomplete healing be connected to isolated suffering versus communal joy?
- Can you identify moments when someone's joyful prayer for you was almost tangibly felt?

## Day 3: Partnership as Developmental Process - The Koinonia of Becoming

### Read: Philippians 1:5

*"because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now"*

### Greek Theological Concept

The word (partnership) is far richer than English conveys. It implies shared participation, mutual indwelling, common life. The phrase ("from the first day until now") emphasizes continuity across time. This isn't static partnership but dynamic, evolving co-participation in something larger than themselves.

### Reflection

Paul describes what we call "interpersonal neurobiology" the reality that we literally develop within and through relationships. The Philippians' partnership from "first day until now" represents what attachment researchers call "earned security" the gradual development of secure patterns through consistent, attuned relationship over time.

We see how "We haven't finished yet" is always a communal reality. Individual therapy has limits because we're wounded in relationship and we heal in relationship. The gospel Paul describes is essentially therapeutic community, a holding environment for ongoing transformation.

Consider the psychological sophistication: Paul doesn't thank them for their completed work but for their ongoing partnership. He recognizes that spiritual and psychological development is process, not product. The Philippians aren't finished yet, and that's precisely what he celebrates their continued engagement in the process of becoming.

People who frame their healing journey as "partnership" rather than "solo work" show better outcomes. When we recognize healing as communal process involving a therapist, community, family system, and Divine presence, we tap into what systemic therapists call "the wisdom of the system."

The gospel partnership Paul describes mirrors the therapeutic alliance. It's not technique but relationship that heals. We haven't finished yet because we're still in partnership, still becoming together.

### Integration Practice

Map your "partnership network" those who've been part of your becoming from various "first days" until now. Notice how different people have facilitated different aspects of your unfinished growth. Give thanks for the ongoing nature of these partnerships.

**Prayer:** God of *partnership*, thank You that I don't have to finish alone what You began in community. Help me recognize the partnerships You've woven into my becoming. I'm not finished yet, we're not finished yet, and that corporate incompleteness is itself a grace. Amen.

## Day 4: The Confidence of Incompleteness - Trusting the Process When You Can't See Progress

### Read: Philippians 1:6a

*"being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you"*

### Biblical Analysis

The Greek (being confident) is a perfect participle, indicating a settled state resulting from past action. Paul has become convinced and remains convinced. The phrase (the one who began) uses an aorist participle, pointing to a definitive starting point. The "good work" echoes Genesis creation language - God declaring creation "good" even in its incomplete, unfolding state.

### Reflection

Paul articulates what I call "sacred incompleteness." He's confident not because the work is finished but precisely because it isn't. The confidence rests in the Beginner, not the beginning; in the process, not the product.

We encounter what I term "the middle space of becoming" that uncomfortable zone where old patterns are dying but new ones aren't fully formed. People often say, "I feel worse than when I started therapy." This is what depth psychologists call "necessary regression in service of the ego" things often feel worse before they feel better because defense mechanisms must be dismantled before authentic self can emerge.

Paul's confidence amid incompleteness reflects what we call "growth mindset" elevated to theological virtue. He trusts the process because he trusts the Processor. "We haven't finished yet" becomes not lament but liberation we're still in process, still held by the One who began.

### Therapeutic Reality Check

I've observed that breakthrough often comes when clients shift from "I should be finished by now" to "I'm exactly where I need to be in my process." This isn't complacency but what I call "active acceptance" embracing incompleteness while remaining engaged in growth.

The word "confident" here isn't naive optimism. Paul writes from prison, aware of suffering and setback. This is called "tragic optimism" maintaining hope despite and within life's inevitable incompleteness and difficulty.

### Reflection Exercise:

- Where do you feel most unfinished? Can you find confidence in the One who began rather than in your ability to complete?
- What would change if you trusted the process as much as you desire the product?
- How might your incompleteness be protecting you from premature closure of your growth journey?

## Day 5: Eschatological Time and Therapeutic Hope - Living in the Already/Not Yet

### Read: Philippians 1:6b

*"will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"*

#### Biblical Analysis

The Greek (will complete/perfect) is future indicative - certain but not yet. The phrase (until the day of Christ Jesus) places completion in eschatological time. Paul articulates the "already/not yet" tension central to New Testament theology the work is already begun, not yet complete, but certainly will be perfected.

#### Reflection

Paul addresses what's called "the anxiety of finitude." We live between beginning and completion, in what is termed - thrown into existence, aware of our incompleteness, moving toward an end we cannot fully grasp.

But Paul reframes existential anxiety as eschatological hope. The "day of Christ Jesus" isn't just temporal endpoint but qualitative transformation. This is called the "teleological pull" of the Self (capital S) drawing the ego toward wholeness.

In trauma work, we recognize that healing isn't return to pre-trauma state but "post-traumatic integration" moving toward a future self that incorporates but transcends the wound. "We haven't finished yet" because completion isn't restoration of past but creation of future.

I've seen profound healing when people grasp what I call "therapeutic eschatology" the ability to live hopefully in the tension between "already begun" and "not yet complete." This isn't passive waiting but what narrative therapists call "living toward preferred futures" allowing the not-yet to shape the now.

The Greek word for "completion" here implies not just finishing but perfecting, bringing to full functionality. In developmental psychology terms, it's not about reaching a static end state but about actualizing full potential. We haven't finished yet because we're still discovering what completion even means.

Notice Paul doesn't say "you will complete the work" but "He will complete." This addresses what I see as the core therapeutic issue: the exhaustion of trying to fix ourselves. Grace means the Beginner is also the Completer. Our job is cooperation, not completion.

"Until the day of Christ Jesus" means we live our entire lives in process. This isn't failure but design. We're meant to be unfinished, meant to be becoming, meant to need continued work. Our incompleteness keeps us open, humble, connected, growing.

**Prayer:** God who begins and completes, thank You that I don't have to finish myself. Thank You that "not yet" is not condemnation but promise. Help me live gracefully in the tension between already and not yet, trusting that You who began this good work in me will be

faithful to complete it. I haven't finished yet - we haven't finished yet - and that unfinishedness is itself Your gift, keeping me dependent on Your ongoing work. Perfect what You've begun, in Your time, in Your way. Until that day, help me rest in the promise that my incompleteness is held in Your completion. Amen.

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## The Therapy of Incompleteness

I find Philippians 1:3-6 to be one of Scripture's most psychologically profound texts about process, development, and the grace of incompleteness. Paul articulates what every effective therapy must embrace: transformation is process, not event; communal, not individual; and ultimately held by something greater than our own efforts.

"We haven't finished yet" is not confession of failure but declaration of hope. It means:

- We're still neuroplastic, still capable of change
- We're still in relationship, still held in community
- We're still in process, still becoming
- We're still held by the One who began and will complete

## Therapeutic Implications

I've learned to hold people with the same confidence Paul expresses - not confidence in their completion but in the process of their becoming. Every session is participation in God's ongoing work. Every intervention is cooperation with the One who began.

The intersection of biblical exegesis and psychological insight reveals this truth: our incompleteness is not pathology but promise. We haven't finished yet because we're designed for ongoing transformation, perpetual becoming, eternal growth.

## A Final Word

Whether you're in therapy, spiritual direction, recovery, or simply the messy middle of life, this text speaks hope: You haven't finished yet, and that's exactly as it should be. The One who began this good work in you - through relationships, struggles, joys, partnerships - will continue working until completion.

Trust the process. Embrace the incompleteness. Celebrate the "not yet."

You're still becoming, and that's the good news.