



Week 7
Discipleship Study
Questions



Philippians

We live in a country that is divided by social and political issues. All around us is the evidence of division – in our families, our country, our culture, and even the church. How are God’s people supposed to live in these tension-filled times? The letter of Paul to the church in Philippi provides answers and gives direction. The Philippian church existed in its own hotbed of cultural and political tension. Paul encouraged them to lean into the tension with a specific mindset of Jesus, who humbled himself by consider the needs of others before his own. If we adopt this same mindset of humility as God’s people, we can ease the tension and fight for unity in the midst of division. Whose thinking and way of life should we follow? Paul makes the case for it to be Jesus – and we need Him now more than ever.

Read the Scripture:

Individual: Read the passage from two or three different translations.

Group: Have two different group members read the passage using different Bible translations.

Speak the Scripture:

Individual: Recite the story aloud from memory (as best you can) or tell it to a friend or family member. The goal here is to get the essence of the passage in your heart.

Group: Have someone volunteer to recite the passage aloud in their own words, as best they can.

Understand the Scripture:

Individual or Group: Use the Discovery Questions to help ensure you understand the passage.

Dig Deeper into the Scripture:

Individual: Work through the Digging Deeper questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member if you choose.

Group: Work through the Digging Deeper questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person’s life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

Small Group Guidelines

This is a Safe Group

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

No Crosstalk

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting etc.

Listen

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

No Rescuing or Fixing

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

Use "I" Statements

It's easy to talk about the issues of others, or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," but for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we want to use "I" statements.

Don't Over-Talk

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

Fight for Relationship

It's not if conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but when. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

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Background: Last week we read the linchpin of Philippians, the Hymn of Christ. Paul continues in Philippians by giving the church practical wisdom on how to live a life of humility, how to align our lives with God's will and God's ways, how to find true unity in the church, and how to present a compelling witness to the world around us. This week we are also introduced to two of Paul's fellow workers and examples we can also aim to emulate.

Read: *Philippians 2:12-30*

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What do we learn about what it means to be a follower of Christ in this passage?

What do you think the Holy Spirit might be teaching you personally through this passage?

Is there anything God is leading you to do after reading this passage?

Digging Deeper:

What does it mean to "work out your own salvation"?

Why is it so important that we do everything without grumbling and complaining? (v. 14)

Have you ever felt that you are laboring in vain? (v.16) How can we know that our efforts are not in vain?

What makes Timothy such a precious companion to Paul?

Have you ever known someone who risked it all for Christ, as Epaphroditus did? What can we learn from them?

End this time with a prayer.

Heavenly Father, living the Christian life is not easy. Thank you for all the examples you have given us to follow – Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and especially Your son, Jesus. When we are tempted to grumble, remind us of who we are and Whose we are, so we can shine like stars in the middle of this dark world. Give us endurance to run this race for as long as You call us to. In Jesus' name, Amen.