

go *TOGETHER*

A 40-day study on
community, perspective, and mission.



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Each one of us is at a different place in our spiritual growth. You see, when God saves us from our sin, He doesn't save us and leave us there, but He begins to work in us to make us more like His Son, Jesus Christ! (See Romans 8:29-30) Some of us have been Christians for a long time, and we've seen first-hand how God is working in us and transforming us. Then some of us are pretty new to this whole thing—we're just beginning to discover what it means to live under the grace of God.

Wherever you are in your growth as a Christian, God doesn't want to leave you there. He wants you to take a step! That's what this 40-day study is all about.

Our prayer is that during these seven weeks, you will ask the Lord how He wants to grow you and mature you more into the likeness of Christ. Ask Him how He wants you to serve the church and serve your community. Then, trust Him. Trust Him to give you the strength and the ability to do what He's asking you to do. As we do this, we believe that our whole church will grow in our love for and reliance on the Lord.

The best part is, you're not alone! We're all in this together. As we seek Him together, we believe that the Lord will use this time to challenge and grow you in ways you never thought possible. We can't wait to see all that the Lord will do!



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WEEK ONE: WHY WE NEED EACH OTHER

D-GROUP STUDY

PASSAGE: Philippians 1:1-11

BACKGROUND:

This short letter to the church at Philippi is a letter of deep affection and unceasing joy in the midst of life's most difficult circumstances. Paul is writing this letter from a Roman prison and possibly facing the death sentence (1:12-13). At the same time, the Philippian Church is facing opposition to the gospel in the form of false teachers who are attempting to add circumcision as a requirement for salvation (3:2-3). The church is experiencing disunity and rivalry (4:2-3). They even had a leader in their church nearly die twice, once to illness and once for the work of Christ (2:25-30)!

Through these struggles, the Apostle Paul writes them with encouragement and instruction, because this community is both a blessing to him and critical for the advancement of the kingdom of God. The theme of the letter is that Christians, because of the grace of God, can have joy, even in the most painful circumstances.

It is clear that this body of believers has become a support to Paul throughout his ministry and through his imprisonment (1:5; 1:7; 4:10-14). Like Paul, this church has also suffered for the sake of Christ (1:29). In these first eleven verses, Paul expresses his deep love for the Philippian Church and his thankfulness for their partnership with him in the gospel. This reflects the way a church community should work. A church is not an organization, a business, or an event we attend on Sundays. A church is a group of people who partner with one another for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. The people of the church should support one another through their joys and sorrows. They work together for the common goals of the Kingdom, bear one another's burdens, and share in one another's sufferings.

READ: Philippians 1:1-11

1) In verse 1, Paul addresses the letter to “all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi.” Who are “saints”? Why might it seem strange to consider yourself to be a saint?

2) In verses 3-11, notice how much Paul truly loves the Philippian church. What specifically do we see in this passage that tells us why Paul has this deep love and gratitude for them?

3) In verse 7, Paul describes their common salvation by saying, “for you are all partakers with me of grace.” While this common salvation means that all Christians will be together forever in the New Heavens and New Earth, how does the reality of our common salvation affect the way we should act toward one another now?

4) Paul makes clear that they are also united in the common purpose in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. How might Christians need one another for this task? In other words, why is this not a solo effort?

DID YOU KNOW?

Greek keyword: *koinonia* (koy-no-nee-uh)
This word shows up six times in this letter (1:5, 1:7; 2:1; 3:10; 4:14; 4:15). It can be translated “fellowship,” but it carries the connotation of “partnership” or “share.” Today, we often think of fellowship as merely spending time together. But when the Bible speaks of fellowship it is much more than this. Think of it like “The Fellowship of the Ring,” from *The Lord of the Rings*. They weren’t just hanging out together, they shared in a common belief and a common goal. For Paul, Christian fellowship means sharing in a common salvation and a partnership in a common purpose.

5) Re-read Philippians 1:9-11. The Philippian church is facing some difficult circumstances, including false teaching and persecution. Why is Paul's solution to pray that they would abound more and more in love? How does knowledge and discernment aid this growth?

6) Re-read Philippians 1:3-7. What is the "good work" that God began in the Philippian church (v.6)? How can Paul say that the Lord will complete that work in them with that amount of confidence? What does this say about God's faithfulness to you?

7) What are some ways that people in the church today can have this kind of partnership in the gospel with their pastors and church leaders?

8) How will your D-Group 1) support you this week in the work of the gospel, and 2) be a joy and encouragement to you this week?

PRAY:

Pray that the Lord will give you opportunities to advance the Kingdom of God this fall. Pray also that the Lord will use your D-Group as a support and a "home base" as you work toward advancing the Kingdom of God through the gospel.



SERMON NOTES #1: "WHY WE NEED EACH OTHER"

PASSAGE: _____

Multiple horizontal lines for taking notes.

The Main Point That I Heard Today

Words To Look Up Later:

Things I Should Remember or Do



D-GROUP STUDY

PASSAGE: Philippians 1:12-18

BACKGROUND:

Put yourself in the shoes of the Philippian Christians. It had been at least four years since they saw Paul, their mentor and the one who helped start their churches. They heard rumors that something may have happened to him and they were worried. The lack of news may have caused the church to wonder: is Paul still in prison? Has he gone to trial yet? Did he become sick? Has he been martyred for his faith in Christ? The Philippians had no way of knowing the answers to these questions.

Finally, news arrived about Paul in the form of a letter—the same letter that we have in our Bibles today. Many of the rumors were true. Paul was in chains and his future was uncertain. But what is certain is that God had ordained this incredibly difficult and shameful circumstance in Paul’s life for the glory of God and Paul’s ultimate good (Romans 8:28). Paul knows this, and with this perspective he can look at his time in a Roman prison as God’s providence for the ultimate good. But how does Paul know that God will use this difficult circumstance for good? Jesus said so.

Read Luke 21:10-19.

During Jesus’ earthly ministry, Jesus predicted that followers of Christ would be persecuted, put in prison, and even brought before kings and governors in order to bear witness about Him. This is precisely what happens to the Apostle Paul. Acts records that after he completes three missionary journeys, Paul returns to Jerusalem only to be seized by the Jewish leaders and unjustly arrested by the Roman government. In a shrewd move, Paul appeals to Caesar (Acts 25:11). This gives him an audience with King Agrippa (Acts 26) and the Jewish leaders in Rome (Acts 28:17-24). Finally, Paul lands in a Roman prison where he writes this letter while he waits to speak with the emperor. Paul makes use of each opportunity, not to defend himself, but to proclaim the gospel to these leaders.

READ: Philippians 1:12-18

1) Look again at verses 12-14. As Paul preached the gospel in prison, the guards and the prisoners became aware that Paul's imprisonment was for Christ. What result did their new perspective on Paul's imprisonment produce?

2) Read John 15:18-21. How might Jesus' words help Christians when they experience persecution?

3) Have you experienced persecution for your faith? What happened? How did the persecution you experienced affect your faith in a positive or negative way?

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION IS HAPPENING NOW...

On June 4, 2020, Hindu fanatics in Odisha state burst into the home of 16-year-old Samaru Madkami and kidnapped him. They then took Samaru and other Christian villagers they had kidnapped to a wooded area. Although the other Christians managed to escape, the Hindus overpowered and killed Samaru, burying him nearby. Police arrested the killers the following day. Samaru and his family came to faith in Christ a few years ago, along with two other families. A visiting pastor had led worship for them on Sundays, but he eventually stopped visiting the village after local Hindus threatened him. After that, Samaru led worship for the group. Pray for Samaru's father and sisters.



4) Re-read Philippians 1:15-18. In verse 16, Paul claimed that the purpose for his imprisonment is "the defense of the gospel." Read 1 Peter 3:14-17. Do you think the defense of the gospel should be a goal for every Christian? Why or why not?

5) Paul rejoiced when people who preach out of selfish ambition preach Christ. But in other passages (such as Galatians 5:11-12), Paul wished that those who preach a false gospel would stop. How do we synthesize scripture's teaching on this?

6) How does the grace that God has given us help us to overlook the selfish actions and motives of others? What should our response be?

7) How does having a God-centered perspective on suffering help you to rejoice in the midst of your own painful or difficult circumstances?

8) What prevents you from fulfilling the mission of proclaiming and defending the gospel? How might you bear witness to the truth of God's love and mercy in your situation?

PRAY:

Take time to pray for boldness in the proclamation of the gospel. Ask the Lord to use your D-Group to advance the Kingdom of God right here in Greenwood and Central Indiana.



SERMON NOTES #2: *"COURAGE UNDER FIRE"*

PASSAGE: _____

The Main Point That I Heard Today

Words To Look Up Later:

Things I Should Remember or Do



WEEK 3: "A WIN-WIN SITUATION"

D-GROUP STUDY

PASSAGE: Philippians 1:18b-30

BACKGROUND:

Death is inevitable for all of us. If the Lord Jesus Christ does not return first, our bodies will die and our spirits will go to be with the Lord. The knowledge of this is sobering, growing a sense of urgency within our hearts. In a beautifully poetic fashion, King David writes about the depth of God's knowledge of us, including the day of our death which He has set. Psalm 139:13-16 reads,

- ¹³ For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.*
- ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*
- ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*
- ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.*

For the unbeliever, this sobering statement presents the understanding that their Creator, who knows them perfectly, is sovereign over the day of their death. Thus, this is a call to repentance and to give their allegiance to the Lord. But for the Christian, this passage gives confidence in our sovereign God who knows us and loves us. It should also give peace in the knowledge that our death is something that is fixed. This means that if we live or die, it is part of God's greater plan, and it has a purpose for our good and His glory.

Here in Philippians 1:18b-30, the Apostle Paul presents how this knowledge has shaped his thinking and gives commands about how Christians should live in light of it.

READ: Philippians 1:18b-30

1) In Philippians 1:18b-24, Paul writes about the tension he feels between two options—continuing to live and dying. What are the benefits that Paul mentions for both options?

2) Read 2 Corinthians 5:6-10. Here, Paul expounds on the tension he feels between life and death. What new insights do we gain from this passage about Paul's thinking?

3) Why is this perspective so foreign to our culture and hard to accept, even for Christians?

4) Read Philippians 1:25-26. Paul's confidence in the Lord's salvation shapes his thinking and his actions. How should confidence in our salvation (that when we die we will be with the Lord) shape our perspective and actions?

5) Read Philippians 1:27-30. Paul begins this paragraph by imploring them to live in a manner worthy of the gospel. What four things does Paul mention in this paragraph that describe what he means by this?

6) Re-read verses 28-30. What two things has God granted to the Philippian church? How might the knowledge of these things strengthen the church for the mission?

7) Do you struggle with the idea of assurance of your salvation? If so, why is that a difficult thing to believe or grasp?

8) Living in the confidence of the Lord's salvation, what next step should you take in furthering the mission of spreading the gospel? How can your D-Group support you in that step?

PRAY:

Spend time praying for these specific things: 1) the Lord would give assurance of salvation to your D-Group where that is lacking, 2) the Lord would provide opportunities and empowerment for your D-Group to spread the gospel, and 3) the Lord would unite our church in one spirit, one mind, and one mission together.



SERMON NOTES #3: "A WIN-WIN SITUATION"

PASSAGE: _____

The Main Point That I Heard Today

Words To Look Up Later:

Things I Should Remember or Do



WEEK 4: "WHAT KILLS COMMUNITY AND BUILDS IT"

D-GROUP STUDY

PASSAGE: Philippians 2:1-11

BACKGROUND:

There is no perfect church. A church is not a place where the perfect, sinless people come together to celebrate their sinlessness. Rather, it's a place where sinners come together to celebrate their rescue. This means that when the church comes together, there will be problems and disagreements because each of us still has sin which dwells in our flesh (Romans 7:25). Charles Spurgeon wrote,

If I had never joined a church till I had found one that was perfect, I should never have joined one at all. And the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us.

As much as the Philippian church was known for their partnership in the mission of spreading the gospel (1:5), they also had some internal struggles. In Philippians 4:2-3, Paul writes specific instruction to the church to help two women named Euodia and Syntyche to come to unity. Although we don't know the nature of their disagreement, Paul, having deep love for this whole church, does not want to see the church divided. In this section, Paul gives specific instruction on how the church can preserve its unity even when there is disagreement.

READ: Philippians 2:1-11

DID YOU KNOW?

Some scholars read verses 6-7 and claim that Jesus was not fully God to begin with, but rather was born as a man and God granted him divinity. This view is becoming increasingly popular and is the topic of books like, *How Jesus Became God* by Bart Ehrman. However, this passage alone offers substantial evidence that the early church, even before the time of Paul, believed that Jesus was eternal and divine.

First, Philippians 2:7 states that Jesus "emptied himself." If Jesus emptied himself, that means he was in a previous state where he was not empty. This alludes to his existence and divinity prior to being born as a human. Second, Philippians 2:10-11 has become a famous verse in the church. But this verse is actually a quote from Isaiah 45:22-23. The Christ Hymn inserts the name "Jesus Christ" in the place of God. With verses 5b-11 being an early church creed or hymn, that means that the early church very clearly affirmed the divinity and pre-existence of Jesus.

1) What divisions among Christians make you the most sad or frustrated?

2) In Philippians 2:1-2, Paul gives three commands to the Philippian church in order to complete his joy: 1) be of the same mind (understanding), 2) have the same love (agape, covenant love), and 3) being in full accord with one another (one-souled). How would the unity of this church bring joy to Paul?

3) In verse 3-4, Paul offers more specific instruction on how to develop unity within the church. How would you summarize the main command that Paul is giving here?

4) The remainder of this section (verses 5b-11) is probably an early Christian creed or a hymn that the first century church sang. Scholars call these verses the "Christ Hymn" in which we see Christ's humility and exaltation. In what specific ways did Christ humble Himself? (HINT: There are more ways that are not mentioned in Philippians 2.)

5) Why is it so difficult for us to act this way toward others?

THINK ABOUT IT...

Philippians 2:1 begins this section by saying, "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy." These four gifts are referring to things that God has given to Christians by His grace. "Encouragement in Christ" is the knowledge that we are in Christ, saved by His mercy and covered by His blood. "Comfort from love" refers to both the love of God to us, but also the love that we have for God, both of which bring us assurance of our salvation. "Participation in the Spirit" literally means "fellowship," which is referring to the seal of God's promise to us with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Finally, "affection and sympathy" both carry the connotation of compassion that can only be produced by God in believers.

6) How might keeping in view the things Paul talks about (see above) help us to humbly love and serve others, even when they don't deserve it?

7) Is there a relationship that you have with a brother or sister in Christ where you need to do some repair work by humbling yourself to them? What can you do to start that repair?

8) How can your D-Group support you in this?

PRAY:

Pray for unity in our church among our church body, so that together we can keep our minds focused on the common mission of spreading the gospel to the world. Pray also for specific broken relationships that your D-Group members may have right now. Pray for healing and restoration of those relationships so that unity can be preserved and the mission can move forward.

PASSAGE: _____

The Main Point That I Heard Today

Words To Look Up Later:

Things I Should Remember or Do



D-GROUP STUDY

PASSAGE: Philippians 2:19-30

BACKGROUND:

As Paul was in prison, the Philippian church sent Epaphroditus, a trusted leader in their community, to visit Paul. He was probably the "messenger" (2:25) who sent word to Paul about the church's concern for Paul's well being. While he was with Paul, he became critically ill (2:26), nearly dying (2:27). Another time, he almost died risking his life to come to Paul and minister to him (2:30). Paul, in return, hopes to send Timothy back to the Philippian church (2:19) with Epaphroditus (2:29) as a trusted messenger and co-laborer in the gospel.

But in the midst of this update about travel plans, the Apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, describes several characteristics about these two men that he sees as fruit from their faith. While these two men were not perfect, they serve as examples for us in these characteristics because the characteristics are from God.

READ: Philippians 2:19-30

1) What reason does Paul give for hoping to send Timothy and not someone else to the Philippians?

2) In verse 20, Paul implies that people are generally not concerned for the welfare of others. Do you think this is true of all people, even those within the church? Why?

3) Are there certain people, or types of people, for whom you would like to have more concern or compassion?

4) Think about the gospel—that Jesus submitted himself to death on a cross for sinners (Philippians 2:4-8). How might the reality of the gospel transform a self-focused person to have concern for others?

5) Name some people in your life who are like Timothy to you—people who do not seek after their own interests, but seek after the interest of Jesus Christ. How do those people in your life encourage you in your faith?

6) Re-read Philippians 2:25-30. In verse 25, Paul gives Epaphroditus the four honorable titles of "brother," "fellow worker," "fellow soldier," and "messenger and minister." What do you think each of those titles indicates about who Epaphroditus was and what he did?

7) What might a Christian do to be considered a fellow worker and a fellow soldier today?

8) Which of the four titles that Paul give to Epaphroditus do you want to grow in? How can your D-Group support that growth in you?

PRAY:

Pray for the desire for growth in each person. Also pray that your D-Group would not just be a place for learning and fellowship, but that it would also be a home-base for the ministry that each of you is doing—in your homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and at church.

PASSAGE: _____

The Main Point That I Heard Today

Words To Look Up Later:

Things I Should Remember or Do



WEEK 6: "MAKING DISCIPLES"

D-GROUP STUDY

PASSAGE: Philippians 2:19-22

BACKGROUND:

Timothy is a somewhat prominent figure in scripture, primarily because of his relationship with the Apostle Paul. Paul met Timothy while on his second missionary journey in the twin cities of Derbe and Lystra in the region of Asia Minor. Timothy was half Jewish, and already well spoken of by the Christians in his town (Acts 16:1-2). From there, Paul asked Timothy to accompany him on his mission to the gentiles (Acts 16:3). Shortly thereafter, Paul trusted Timothy so much that he left him with Silas to continue the work of ministry in Berea for a time (17:14-15).

Over the years, Timothy became Paul's trusted ally in ministry—his right hand man. Paul sent Timothy to Corinth to strengthen that church on his behalf (1 Corinthians 4:17). Paul includes Timothy as a co-author of the letters of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, and 1 & 2 Thessalonians. In addition, we have two beautiful letters that Paul wrote to Timothy himself.

In this final session, we are going to go back over the beginning of last week's passage to pull out another key point—that Paul's wonderful relationship with Timothy can show us more about our role in the church.

READ: Philippians 2:19-22

1) As we discussed last week, Paul has high regard for Timothy for the man that he is and the way he does ministry. How does Paul describe his relationship with Timothy in verse 22?

2) Even though Paul is Timothy's spiritual "father," he says that Timothy served *with* him in the gospel. What detail does the word "with" tell us about how Paul views Timothy?

3) How might Paul's view of being equals in ministry be informed by the gospel?

4) Read Ephesians 4:11-16. Here, the Apostle Paul clarifies that pastors and teachers aren't the ones who do the work of ministry. Instead, pastors and teachers exist to equip the saints—the people in the church—to do the work of ministry. What do you think the ministry that Paul is describing here entails for Christians today? (Hint: Be sure to let verses 13-16 help to guide your answer!)

5) Read 1 Timothy 4:12. Paul encourages Timothy by saying that he should not let anyone despise him because he is so young. Instead, Timothy should be an example to those he is ministering to. Since you have also been called to the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12), how might this instruction encourage you?

6) Does the fact that you are called to the work of ministry excite you or intimidate you? Why?

7) Other than people in your immediate family, who is one person in your life that you would like to train and disciple? Who would you like to be your "child" in the faith?

8) How can your D-Group encourage you and help you to do this work of ministry?

PRAY:

Spend some time praying for the people who your D-Group identified as those they would like to train and disciple. Pray for the Lord to open up an opportunity to talk with them about their faith. Pray that the members of your D-Group will have boldness to start those conversations. Finally, pray that these conversations lead to their salvation and an ever-growing love for God.



SERMON NOTES #6: "MAKING DISCIPLES"

PASSAGE: _____

The Main Point That I Heard Today

Words To Look Up Later:

Things I Should Remember or Do

go



stonescrossingchurch