

Small Group Study Winter Semester Week Two:

Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the questions that are not. And let the conversation flow naturally.

Optional Ice Breaker(s)

- a) Did you have a pen-pal growing up? Who were they and what did you write about?
- b) What is the best letter / piece of mail that you have ever received?
- c) What percentage of the mail you receive, would you say, is junk?

Passage and Discussion

Read *Philippians 1:1-8*

- a) What stands out to you from this passage, upon first reading?
- b) This Sunday we took a bird's eye view of the book of Philippians. Why do you think it is important to understand the context of the letter, before we dig into it? Is it important?
- c) How does knowing that this section of scripture is a letter (rather than history, law, propetic, apocalyptic, gospel, wisdom literature) affect the way that we should read this text? How does this knowledge impact our interpretation of it?
- d) What is one Bible verse, that you can think of, that could be abused or misleading, if it is taken out of context?
- e) In the introduction of the letter (v1), Paul and Timothy refer to themselves as "bond-servants" or "slaves" of Christ. In what ways is a servant different than a slave? How does this understanding change how Paul and Timothy are identifying themselves?
- f) What would it look like for someone to be a "slave to Christ" today? How would their life be different from everyone else?
- g) Would you say that you simply 'serve God' or that you are literally owned by Him? What is one thing in your life that would change today, if you transferred the ownership deed for your life, to Him?
- h) Re-read the text for today. It is evident in this passage of scripture, that Paul cares deeply for the Philippian church. How do you respond differently to words of instruction from a loved one, as opposed to a stranger or acquaintance? Why?
- i) Paul often gets a bad rap, but notice how much of an encourager Paul is in this text. He praises the Philippians for who they are and for their righteousness. How are you at praising and encouraging others when they hit the target, or prove to be faithful?
- j) Paul calls the church his partners. If you are honest, do you see yourself as a 'partner' of the church, or do you view yourself more like a consumer (or something else altogether)? What would a step towards partnership in the gospel look like?

- k) One of the lenses through which we are invited to hear Paul's words to the Philippian church is through the lens of a 'Temporary World'. Would you say that you live your life (think about values, pursuits, happiness, anger, etc.) as though this world is temporary? How would you do things differently if you did?
- l) How does knowing that 'this is not all there is', change the way we can / ought to live our lives?

Take it Home (Optional Ideas for Response this Week)

- a) As mentioned in question (i), Paul encourages the behavior that he wants to see – by praising the Philippians for their service and faithfulness. Who is someone that you can encourage this week? Plan to encourage and honour those around you when they are faithful. *Parents – consider praising your kids* this week – not for their accomplishments, but for their hearts.
- b) As you think about Paul's identification as 'Property of God', consider who you have been property of, and invite God to take ownership, ahead of those other things.

Optional Ideas for Prayer Time

- a) Pray for each member in your group – that God would help them realize what it looks like to be a Slave to Christ, and to fill them with the Spirit, to enable them to do so.
- b) Pray for the needs of one another. But pray also, that God would remind each one that *this is not all there is*. Pray that God would help you all focus on the Day of Christ that is coming.

Announcements / Service Opportunities

a) Daybreak Women's Study – Winter Session

Tuesdays from **January 28 - March 24** at 9:00 a.m. Daybreak is a Tuesday Bible study community where women meet together to enjoy time with one another as they learn more about God. We will be studying "The Armor of God" by Priscilla Shirer. Children's programming is available. Cost: \$25. Sign-up online or in the foyer on Sunday.

b) Men's Hockey Night

Saturday, February 1 from 4:00 – 10:00. Come hang out, play floor hockey and games, eat supper, cheer on the Jets to victory, and get to know other men in our community. Cost \$10. Sign-up online or in the foyer on Sunday.