



Philippians Group Discussion Guide - Week 1

Begin by praying and asking God to open your eyes to see things in His Word, to receive what He says with eagerness and to follow Him for your joy and His glory.

Remember that we are seeking to follow the Bible Study method that we outlined. We will ask three large questions then pray together in response. The three questions are: what does the text say? What does the text mean? What am I/we to do? Then we will pray by asking: what is there to praise God for? What sin is there to confess? What can we ask God for? So let's get started!

Read Philippians 1:1-11.

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons. 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

What does the text say? In this section we are seeking to make as many observations as we can. I encourage you to mark up the text above you (underline, circle, draw lines connecting verses/words, write short comments, etc).

- What is the context? Who wrote the letter? Who is he writing to?
 - Go to Acts 16 and read that to understand the beginning of the church at Philippi. What do we learn about Paul and this church from Acts 16?
 - How does Paul feel about this community of believers?
 - Look at the intro in verses 1-2. What is the significance of these titles? “servants of Christ, saints in the Lord, in Christ?” What is significant about the presence of overseers (another word for elders) and deacons?
 - He calls Jesus “Lord” in verse 2. Why is this significant (remember they are in a Roman colony which means everyone would have called Ceasar “Lord”)?

- What are key words/phrases in the passage?
 - What are the repeated words/phrases? Why are they significant? Try to identify at least five words/phrases and explain why they are significant.
 - What are important connecting words? Connecting words are prepositions (in, by, during, before, after, on, over, to from, about, with, etc) and conjunctions (for, and, but, or, because, if etc).
 - How does the “because” of verse 5 help us understand why Paul is so filled with joy?
 - Why is “because” and “for” there in verse 7?
 - How does the “so that” of verse 10 help us understand the relationship between love and knowledge? Paul wants them to grow in love and in knowledge...how are those two related?
 - What is the significance of “with joy” in verse 4?
 - What themes or ideas are being emphasized? Develop a list of at least 5 ideas/themes. In other words, what are the different topics Paul addresses or points that he is making?
 - What does this passage say about God? Man? Sin? These might be things directly said or implications we can glean from what the text says.

What does the text mean?

- Describe Paul’s main point in a sentence or couple sentences. What is the big/main idea?
 - I (Brian) suggested that Paul celebrating the Philippians partnership of the Gospel and the advancement of the Gospel is the big idea of this text. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- What are some of the subpoints? In this part, try to discuss Paul’s thought process. You already have discussed the big idea and some of the themes/ideas in the passage. Now put all of that together to explain Paul’s flow of thought.
- What other passages could be helpful in understanding this text better? Two examples are Acts 16 and Philippians 4 (to understand what Paul means by partnership). What are others?
- How does this passage fit into the biblical story? How does it point us to Jesus?

How do I/we apply this passage?

- What are we to think/feel/do?
- What sins does this passage expose in you/us?
- How does this passage challenge you in your commitment to the advancement of the Gospel and in your quest for joy?
- How can you/we specifically work towards the advancement of the Gospel?

Pray

- Why is it helpful to pray after studying God’s Word?
- What is there to praise God for from this passage?
- What sin(s) is there to confess?
- What is there to ask God for?