



Philippians Group Discussion Guide Week 2

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 1:12-26.

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. 14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. 16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

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).

- Summarize the context...what was said in the preceding verses? What is said in this passage that further helps us understand what is going on?
- What are key words/phrases in the passage?
 - What are the repeated words/phrases? Why are they significant?
 - What are important connecting words and how do they help us understand Paul's point?

- What themes or ideas are being emphasized?
- What does this passage say about God? Man? Sin?
- What questions do you have?
- Some other questions to help discover what the text says:
 - How does verse 12 help us understand why Paul is writing this letter?
 - Paul says that his imprisonment has helped to advance the Gospel? What does that mean that the Gospel is advancing? How does Paul see the Gospel advancing (he gives three examples in verses 12-18)?
 - How would Paul's imprisonment make people bold?
 - How are some people taking advantage of Paul's imprisonment? How can Paul still rejoice in that?
 - In the middle of the passage, Paul rejoices twice. What is he rejoicing over in each case (notice that one rejoice is for what he has already said and the other is for what he is about to say)?
 - What is the relationship between verse 20 and the verses that follow?
 - What does verse 21 mean?
 - Paul says that death is gain. What are some ways in which death is "gain" for a Christian?
 - What are the benefits of remaining "in the flesh"?
 - Paul suggests in verses 20-23 that he might be executed. Then in verses 24-26 he appears to be convinced that he will remain. Why the difference? *It seems that the difference is because he is sharing with the Philippians his thought process. He is weighing in his own mind the benefits of continuing to live or dying. He has determined that dying is better for him because he gets to be with Jesus but he decides that staying is the better course because it will help the Philippians to continue to progress in their faith. He is putting the needs of others above his own desires which is something he will tell them to do for others in chapter 2 just as Jesus did for them.*
 - What do these verses say about Paul's priorities, aims, concerns and joys?

What does the text mean?

- Describe Paul's main point in a sentence or couple sentences. What is the big/main idea?
- What are some of the subpoints? Summarize Paul's thought process and some of his supporting points.
- What other passages could be helpful in understanding this text better?
- 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

- What is there to praise God for from this passage?
- What sin(s) is there to confess?
- What is there to ask God for?