

When coming to this study we ask that you pray first. Take the time to ask God to speak through his scripture. If you don't get to all of the questions but have spent time with God your task is accomplished.

Then before reading the questions read the word. You can use some of the notations below to track your reactions and thoughts as you go:

Inspire: write a (!) beside what stands out positively so far and write a note about why

Inquire: write a (?) beside what doesn't make sense. Ask why it's there. OR by what raises a question for you.

Irk: write a (#!?) beside what rubs you the wrong way or creates dissonance.

Require: write a () beside something that demands change within you

Underline or highlight phrases that stick out.

After you're done going through the passage. Take a few moments to review your notes.

Write one sentence off the cuff. Based on your first impression, what are you thinking? How may God be speaking?

Let these prompts below continue to guide your dialogue with God and lead you into deeper reflection on His word.

PHILIPPIANS INTRODUCTION

Philippians 1:3-11 (this is Paul's deep thanks for the church in Philippi and his prayer for them)

Philippians 1:3-8

- Where do people often look to find Joy? Is this similar or different from the Joy Paul is describing?
- How can prayer lead us to Joy?

- How do people think of “fellowship” here at Effort Baptist Church? Does it involve a mission or just hanging out?
- The word Paul uses for fellowship is *Koinonia*, a word that appears throughout Philippians (see 1:5, 7; 2:1; 3:10; 4:14, 4:15). Tony Merida writes, “In Philippians *Koinonia* refers to gospel-centered friendship...as well as a shared mission of gospel proclamation (e.g., 1:7, 12). We do well to dwell on these two aspects of gospel partnership: friendship and mission.”¹
- What are ways we can forward both our Christian friendships and mission?
- What are some of the enemies of enjoying biblical community?
- Does Philippians 1:6 encourage you? If yes, how so?
- Do you think much about “the day of Christ”? How can a daily reflection on this future event impact our lives?

Philippians 1:9-11

- Paul moves from expressing his love for people to praying for them. Are you expressing your love for others by praying for them? Do you have a list of people you pray for regularly?
- Take a moment and pray for some of those people now.
- Paul puts knowledge and love together in this prayer. Why is it important to keep these two virtues together? Are you submitting your life to the wisdom of scripture? Are you asking how you should love others based on God’s Word? Why or why not?
- Have you ever prayed for discernment?
- Stop and pray for discernment for both yourself and Effort Baptist Church. Pray that you would not only do what is right but you would also do what is best (and we as a church).
- Paul wanted to be able to discern what really matters, which leads to the question, what really mattered to Paul?
- What really matters to us?
- Stop and pray for yourself and for Effort. That you and our church may be passionate about the things that really matter.

¹ Merida, Tony, Francis Chan, David Platt, and Daniel L. Akin. *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016.

- Paul prays for believers to be filled with the fruit of righteousness. What does this mean? (Often we run to Galatians 5:22-23 to understand more deeply).
- Paul reminds the church that these virtues come through grace and come “through Jesus Christ” and they should be done for the glory of God. (Breathe deep knowing it is not in your own strength but God’s through you).
- Take a moment to thank God Christ for being united to Him. If you don’t proclaim Jesus as Savior take a moment and pray about why not.
- Pray and ask Jesus to empower you for faithful Christian living. Pray also that your life may be lived with radical passion for God to be glorified.