

A STUDY FROM JERSEY CHURCH

PRAYER CARE SHARE

A dark, grainy aerial photograph of a city at night, showing a dense grid of buildings and streets with scattered lights.

JERSEY
CHURCH

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Prayer Care Share

February 8-22, 2026

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DEVOTIONALS

PRAYER

DAY 1

Psalm 5:1–3

*Listen to my words, LORD;
consider my sighing. Pay attention to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God, for I pray to you.
In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;
in the morning I plead my case to you and watch expectantly.*

Most people have a routine they follow every morning. Maybe coffee is your first stop, or you jump in the shower before anything else, others may scroll through their notifications, sports, news, or weather. Whatever schedule you adhere to, an interruption to your routine may throw the whole day off.

David started his day by spending time with the Lord. Before he faced the issues of the world, the people around him, or the challenges of the day, he focused on his relationship with God. And David's words to God were ordinary. God doesn't expect us to be fancy or impressive. He values our heartfelt honesty. We are invited to bring our deepest thoughts and feelings to Him because He loves us and desires a relationship with us.

There is also an air of expectancy to David's prayer. He believed God cared and God could act. Daily prayer can shape how you function throughout the rest of your day. Your prayers matter to God because you matter to Him.

- **How does it change your prayer to remember God hears and responds to you daily?**
- **Ask God for an expectancy to your prayers, believing He hears, He cares, and He has power to act. Thank Him for loving you and desiring a relationship with you.**

DAY 2

Luke 19:10

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.”

When was the last time you lost something valuable or misplaced something you needed urgently? Maybe it was your keys, your wallet, some cash, or a favorite item that you value. A frantic feeling often accompanies the realization that something important is missing. If it is important enough, you won't stop searching until it is located.

Jesus shared a similar mindset about those who don't know Him. His posture toward the lost is intentional and urgent, like one looking for a cherished lost item. It is important to note that Jesus didn't come to earth to casually observe humanity. He came to seek and save the lost. Every miracle, conversation, and interaction He had on earth reflected His mission to seek and save people who are far from God.

When you pray for lost people, you are joining in the mission of Jesus. Prayer is a way of cooperating and aligning with the heart of Christ. Your prayer for the lost matters but the power to save is not dependent on you. As we pray for others, we trust God to change hearts.

• **Who do you know that needs a relationship with Jesus?**

• **Ask the Lord to give you a heart for the lost. Commit to praying faithfully for those who are far from God.**

DAY 3

Hebrews 4:16

Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

How do you approach a person with earthly authority over you? Do you boldly knock and open the door? Do you investigate the climate in the office before deciding to approach? Do you hesitate because you are uncertain how you will be received? It is normal to consider how and when to approach someone who is more powerful than you. Compare that with stepping into the presence of the living God. There is no one with more authority or power.

But for those in Christ, approaching God need not be like hesitantly stepping into your boss's office or a tense meeting. We are invited to approach the throne of God with confident boldness. Prayer is the vessel through which we approach the Lord, and we are welcomed by Him any time and any place. This assurance frees us to pray boldly, honestly, consistently, and expectantly.

The confidence described in Hebrews is not based on arrogance, or pride. It is based solely on Jesus. Our place in Christ is the assurance that gives us the confidence to speak up boldly. Bold prayers lead to bold obedience. Confident intercession leads to changed lives.

- **What keeps you from approaching God with confidence and how does this verse challenge that?**
- **Thank the Lord for inviting and welcoming you into His presence. Ask Him to teach you to pray boldly and confidently.**

DAY 4

Ezekiel 22:30

I searched for a man among them who would repair the wall and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land so that I might not destroy it, but I found no one.

If you have traveled in London, you may remember hearing a phrase repeated at the train station regularly. As incoming trains are announced at different platforms, the PA speaker usually reminds travelers to “mind the gap.” This public service is helpful, so people carefully navigate over the gap created between the platform and the train car. If you are traveling with someone else, he or she might step across to the train and assist and steady you as you board. It is always nice to have someone stand in the gap for your support.

In Ezekiel, God used the imagery of a person standing in the gap. Israel was spiritually collapsing from corruption, idolatry, and injustice. God sought someone to stand in the gap for His people, but sadly He found no one.

Intercessory prayer is a means of standing in the gap for someone else. When you pray for those who are hurting, stressed, drifting, confused, or lost, you are stepping into a spiritual space on their behalf. When you ask God to intervene, convict, restore, rescue, or speak to their heart, you are loving them and caring for them in the best way possible.

God still looks for people to stand in the gap today. The kingdom movement we are praying for requires people who are willing to intercede for those we seek to reach with the gospel. As we step forward in prayer, we are joining God in reaching the people He loves and that Jesus died for. Will you stand in the gap?

- **Who has stood in the gap for you and who are you standing in the gap for currently?**
- **Thank the Lord for people who have stood in the gap on your behalf. Ask Him to give you a sensitive heart to recognize who you need to stand in the gap for and the courage to obey His prompting.**

DAY 5

Luke 18:1-8

Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up. “There was a judge in a certain town who didn’t fear God or respect people. And a widow in that town kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ “For a while he was unwilling, but later he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or respect people, yet because this widow keeps pestering me, I will give her justice, so that she doesn’t wear me out by her persistent coming.’” Then the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. Will not God grant justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay helping them? I tell you that he will swiftly grant them justice. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

Those with a green thumb know the value of persistence, even when there is no visible evidence that watering or weeding matters. A true gardener knows that faithfully, patiently tending to the planted seeds will eventually pay off.

Persistent prayer trusts that God is working even when we don’t see anything yet. Prayer requires persistence because we may not see immediate results. Remember the seed buried in the ground. Though you can’t see it, the water, sunlight, and weeding all work to grow the seed until it breaks through the surface of the soil and the growth becomes visible.

Persistent prayer forms patience, deep compassion, and aligns our hearts with God’s timing. Kingdom movements don’t typically happen overnight. They grow through faithful, persistent, obedient prayer that doesn’t quit when the soil looks dry.

- **Where are you tempted to give up in prayer and how does this parable change your mindset?**
- **Ask the Lord to give you strength to endure and faith to persist in prayer even when it appears that nothing is changing. Pray for increased trust to expectantly wait for His timing and transformation.**

PRAYER

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

FEBRUARY 8, 2026

MAIN POINT

Prayer is an important discipline for Christ followers as it aligns our hearts with God and positions us to experience His work in our lives.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

Have you ever been on a phone call only to realize the call dropped minutes earlier? You may have been so caught up in what you were saying that you had no idea they weren't listening any longer because the signal was gone. It can be frustrating to not be heard when we feel like we are sharing something important. Thankfully, we can know that is never the case with prayer. We have complete access to the Father in prayer because of Jesus. The signal doesn't fail, and the call never drops. Prayer is not just a gift; it is a command that we are called to for the sake of our relationship with the Father. While prayer is often a last resort, it should be our first instinct.

- **What is frustrating about realizing you aren't being listened to when sharing an important message?**

- **How does it encourage you to remember God never ignores you or misses what you've said?**

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> **Have a volunteer read 1 Timothy 2:1-7.**

In his letter to Timothy, Paul used strong language to emphasize the importance of prayer for believers. Prayer is to be a top priority in our relationship with God. We live in a world where we are constantly told what is important and even urgent, yet none of those things are as vital as prayer. Prayer fuels kingdom mission work and prayer aligns our hearts with God's heart. Paul reminds us that we don't win people with our strength or persuasion but by asking God to move, acknowledging He is the One who saves.

- **When you think about the mission of Jersey to reach 5,000 people, is your first response: pray or stress? Why?**
- **What would change if prayer became your first priority in kingdom work?**

Paul specified we should pray for those in authority over us. In that day, rulers and authorities were not sympathetic to the Christian cause and some were directly hostile. Prayer for unjust leaders may impact them personally, but it also impacts the way we view them and where we seek strength and dependence. We are also to pray for our friends, neighbors, enemies, coworkers and others. The goal is to ask God to soften their hearts and prepare the way for gospel-centered

conversations. Prayer works behind the scenes and often accomplishes more than we can imagine or orchestrate.

- **Who in your life seems unlikely to engage in a spiritual conversation?**

- **How might God work in their lives as you pray?**

The Lord desires for all to come to saving faith through Jesus and that is why we are praying toward reaching such a huge goal. Our mission reflects God's heart and when we pray for the lost, we are joining with God in longing for salvation.

- **How does knowing God longs for the lost to be saved change your approach to prayer?**

- **Who is someone God has laid on your heart to be praying for by name?**

As we pray for people, God works in our hearts as well. In prayer, we reiterate our own need to become more like Jesus and to trust Him more fully. Prayer shapes us into the kind of people who care deeply and share boldly. Prayer is the first step that tunes our hearts to God and prepares us for our prayer, care, and share mission.

- **How does praying for someone affect the way you see that person?**
- **How might prayer prepare you to take the next step in our mission to reach 5,000?**

APPLICATION

Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.

- **What barriers have kept you from praying for those you consider “too far” from God?**
- **Where do you need to surrender control and trust God to work in another’s heart?**
- **What one change can you make to establish prayer as a more consistent discipline in your life?**

PRAY

Thank the Lord for inviting you to be part of His mission to reach the lost. Commit to praying for those around you, asking God to work in their hearts as well as your own.

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

Paul urged that “requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone.” Prayer is an exceedingly important part of the church’s worship. The apostle stresses the importance of special prayer for persons in high places of authority in the state.

Prayer is addressed to God “who wants all men to be saved.” Paul here cited three basic truths of the gospel. (1) There is only one God. (2) God can only be approached through the Man who was God in the flesh, the man Christ Jesus. (3) This man gave himself as a ransom for the human race. Paul was not teaching universalism for salvation is possible only for those who know the truth through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

DEVOTIONALS

CARE

DAY 1

Psalm 34:18

*The LORD is near the brokenhearted;
he saves those crushed in spirit.*

Life can be hard. We have all had times when everything seems difficult and we feel completely overwhelmed. Today's verse is a powerful reminder that God is close to the brokenhearted. Knowing that God not only sees our pain but He moves toward us in our pain is encouragement for our souls. He doesn't avoid our brokenness, but actually draws near to it.

Too often when someone is hurting, we keep our distance and tell ourselves we don't know what to say or how to help. One of the greatest ways we can reflect God's heart is by noticing people that feel unseen or isolated. Daily, we interact with others who are carrying burdens we can't see. When we slow down and take a look, we find the opportunity to love like God—with intention and compassion. Care opens doors for ministering to others and softens hearts to respond to the God we reflect.

- **What would it look like to intentionally care for someone you may have overlooked previously?**
- **Praise the Lord for drawing near to you in your pain. Ask for sensitivity to see those around you who long to feel seen and cared for.**

DAY 2

Luke 10:33–34

But a Samaritan on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion. He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Many people build their day around efficiency and a goal to get as much accomplished in a certain time as possible. When we approach our days like that, interruptions feel like obstacles keeping us from our goal.

In this parable of the Good Samaritan, an interruption was met with compassion. The man didn't plan to stop. But when he saw the need, he allowed his plans to take a backseat and put the needs of the stranger ahead of his schedule. Care may cost time, comfort, or convenience. That's why so many people walk by those in need or hurting instead of engaging with them.

Kingdom care is about responding faithfully when God places an opportunity in front of us. The Samaritan did what he could with what he had. When we allow compassion to interrupt us, we reflect the heart of Jesus, who routinely paused for those others ignored.

- **What kinds of interruptions frustrate you most and how can you prepare to show care as God gives you opportunity?**
- **Ask the Lord to help you loosen your grip on your schedule, so you are ready when He gives you opportunity to minister to others.**

DAY 3

James 1:19

My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger . . .

Who is the best listener you know? Consider the difference you feel when another person focuses on you and is present without being distracted. This stands out in a way that makes you feel valued and seen.

James encouraged believers to be quick to listen and slow to speak. This is a fundamental characteristic of godly caring. Listening communicates dignity, respect, value, and love. Consider how many times Jesus asked questions of those He encountered. It wasn't because He needed information, He knows everything. He listened as a way of showing love and care. In our culture full of noise and commotion, attentive listening stands out. As people feel heard their trust grows and their hearts are more engaged. The simple act of good listening might be the path God uses to open hearts to the gospel.

- **How well do you listen without distraction and how can you be more “quick to listen” this week?**
- **Thank the Lord for listening to you and ask that He teach you to listen to others as well. Pray that you will continue to grow in your ability to be “quick to listen” and focus on others without distraction.**

DAY 4

1 John 3:18

Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth.

Small acts can make a big difference when done in love and care. John reminds us that love isn't just what you say but also in what you do. Care becomes tangible when it moves beyond words to action. These moments give opportunity to display that our faith makes us different and compels us to act counter to the world's way. We are called to serve others like Jesus did. When we serve others in Jesus's name, we show them who our Savior is and teach them that He cares about every area of their lives.

Loving in deed helps people see what Jesus's love looks like in real life. These acts serve as evidence to display the gospel to the watching world. Kingdom movements are fueled by ordinary people loving in practical ways.

- **What simple act can you do to communicate the love of Jesus to someone else?**
- **Ask the Lord to show you practical ways you can demonstrate His love to others every day.**

DAY 5

Colossians 4:5–6

Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.

Words carry weight. The childhood rhyme about “sticks and stones” is not particularly accurate because words can cut deeply. The flip side is also true though. Words of grace and affirmation also carry weight in the lives of others.

Care shapes the way we speak and live around others. When people experience kindness, respect, and compassion from believers, they may become curious as to what makes us different. Caring for others is a bridge that connects us relationally and spiritually.

When our lives back up our words, our words have even more impact. God uses care to prepare the soil of hearts for the message of Christ to land and grow for the sake of lasting transformation.

- **How does your level of care affect the way others receive your words? What needs to change?**
- **Ask the Lord to show you ways you can demonstrate more care in the way you speak with others for His glory.**

CARE

MARK 10:46-52

FEBRUARY 15, 2026

MAIN POINT

Christ followers are called to love and care for others because every person is loved and valued by God.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

When was the last time you felt overlooked? When was a time you felt especially noticed? Most people can remember a time when someone truly saw them. There is something about the feeling of being seen when you are asked a real question, listened to without eyes wandering, or cared for without interruption. Kingdom movements thrive off these types of interactions. Before people listen to what we say, they typically watch how we care. Today, we will study how Jesus demonstrated genuine care that is intentional, personal and compassionate.

- **How have you been pointing to God's care for you through the care of another?**

- **What are some ways we might detract from others seeing God's care if we do not extend care to them?**

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> Have a volunteer read Mark 10:46-52.

As Jesus approached Jericho, He encountered a blind man named Bartimaeus, a beggar who usually went unnoticed by the crowd. Bartimaeus represents the overlooked, easy to ignore, and inconvenient of our world. Though others ignored the beggar, Jesus stopped. True care won't happen until you are willing to pause your busyness and interrupt your schedule to notice the people around you, even when no one else does.

- Who are the people in your daily life that others quickly bypass and overlook? How might you be intentional to not do this?**

When Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus, the crowd responded with irritation. They viewed him as an inconvenience and disruption to their plans. But Jesus saw him as a person. Showing compassion over convenience goes against the culture and promotes the values of God's kingdom.

- What daily distractions or pressures make it hard for you to stop and care for others? Where might God be calling you to make space for His purposes in these areas?**

Not only did Jesus stop near Bartimaeus but Jesus addressed him and asked him a question. Jesus knew Bartimaeus's need but by asking him a question, Jesus extended further dignity

and love to the beggar. Genuine care listens and values the input of others, and it validates those who may feel marginalized by the world.

- **How can you practice intentionally listening to those you're praying for? Why is it important we do both?**

Bartimaeus answered Jesus honestly and was healed. In this instance, care happened before transformation. Jesus didn't demand anything in advance of acting on behalf of Bartimaeus. Instead, He showed compassion, met a real need, and restored hope. Showing care for others can prepare the hearts of people for the gospel message and a kingdom movement. It also leads to connection—Bartimaeus followed Jesus. The goal of our care is to point to connection with Jesus.

- **Who is someone God is calling you to reach out to in care?**

Care doesn't have to be as dramatic as healing. It can be as simple as presence demonstrated by showing up, checking in, remembering names, and generally doing life together. Our care reflects God's compassion and kingdom movements grow when ordinary believers genuinely care for those around them.

- **What is a simple act of care you can show to someone you are praying for this week?**

APPLICATION

Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.

- **Who have you typically overlooked in daily life? How might that change this week?**
- **How might you take time to show the care of Jesus to at least one other person this week? How can we encourage one another in this as a group?**
- **How might caring for others give you opportunity to tell them about Jesus?**

PRAY

Thank the Lord for caring for you when you have felt unseen and overlooked. Ask for eyes to see people as Jesus does and wisdom to show care more intentionally. Pray that your care for others will demonstrate the love of Christ and draw people into relationship with Him.

MARK 10:46-52

10:46 The city of Jericho lay seventeen miles northeast and 3,500 feet below Jerusalem. The large crowd was made up of Passover pilgrims.

10:47–48 This is the second time Mark identifies him as Jesus of Nazareth (1:24), and the only time in Mark that someone addressed Jesus as Son of David, a messianic designation based on 2Sm 7:11–14 (cp. Mk 11:10; 12:35–37).

10:52 In contrast to his healing of the blind man in 8:22–25, Jesus simply announced your faith has saved you, and Bartimaeus could see.

DEVOTIONALS

SHARE

DAY 1

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

In today's verse, Paul spoke bold words that challenge, encourage, and motivate believers to speak up about their faith. He proclaimed that the gospel is the power of God for salvation. This truth is both freeing and empowering. Salvation is not dependent on your personality, knowledge, or perfect delivery of the message. It is the Holy Spirit who brings about impact through the message of the gospel. That takes the pressure off us while also calling us to pursue advancing the kingdom. If you hesitate to share your faith, believing you need to be impressive or persuasive, then Paul's reminder is for you.

God often uses everyday moments to open hearts and draw people to Himself. As we share with others, we trust that God works through simple truth spoken in love. When this happens, even small conversations can have an eternal impact. When we believe that the power to save is found in the gospel and not us, we become more willing to speak up.

- **What fears keep you from trusting the power of the gospel?**
- **Thank the Lord that the power to save isn't dependent on you. Ask for wisdom and courage to speak up with confidence and love as He gives you the opportunity.**

DAY 2

Colossians 4:2–6

Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, so that I may make it known as I should. Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.

Paul made a direct connection between praying, caring, and sharing, as we have been focused on. Prayer ties directly to opportunity. Paul urged believers to stay devoted to prayer while being alert to the doors God opens. Prayer prepares the hearts of others as well as our own.

Paul also stressed the need for wisdom and gracious speech. Caring shapes how we speak and affects how others receive what we have to say. When people feel valued, they are more open to hearing the truth. Sharing is about paying attention to the moment God creates and having the wisdom to listen and discern the situation at hand. The tone of your words and the posture of your heart and body all play a part in gospel conversations. As prayer and care work together, sharing becomes a natural byproduct of your faith.

- **Who might God be preparing right now through your prayers and your care?**
- **Ask the Lord to teach you how to take advantage of the open doors He places before you. Commit to staying prayerful and attentive to the opportunities He gives you to share with others in truth and love.**

DAY 3

Psalm 66:16

*Come and listen, all who fear God,
and I will tell what he has done for me.*

It has been said that people can argue theology, but they can't argue with a changed life. People may take issue with many historical details of Christianity or individual doctrines, but it is hard to dispute the true transformation in a person's life through Jesus.

Today's psalm is an invitation for others to hear what God has done. This is the simplest description of a testimony. To share how your life has changed because of your faith in Jesus is powerful. You do this by telling the truth about who God is and what He has done in your life. Any person who has trusted Jesus and is now guaranteed eternity in heaven has a powerful story of going from death to life. No matter your perception, every story of salvation is a miracle. Often, the problem is that we don't believe this to begin with. Who is waiting to hear your story?

- **How would you describe what God has done for you in simple terms?**
- **Thank the Lord for His work in your life and for giving you a powerful story of going from death to life in Him. Ask for the opportunity to share with others.**

DAY 4

1 Corinthians 3:6–7

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So, then, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth

Any seasoned farmer or gardener will tell you it is impossible to force anything to grow. The best a person can do is to provide the necessary elements for growth and trust the process.

Similarly, Paul reminds us God is the one who makes spiritual things grow. Our role is obedience and to trust in Him for the outcome. Many stop sharing because they don't see growth happening, and thus, it feels pointless. But spiritual growth often happens slowly and quietly. Prayer prepares hearts, care feeds and waters the seeds, and sharing points people to the light. Then, we trust God with the results.

God uses our obedience to pray, care, and share as the catalyst that starts life change and kingdom work. Faithfulness and obedience are our responsibility. Though you can't manipulate anything to manufacture growth, you can be faithful to do the things God commands. We can trust that God is always working, even when you can't see it.

- **How does trusting God's role in growth free you to keep sharing?**
- **Thank God that He is the one who provides transformation and growth. Ask Him to help you be faithful and trust His power for salvation.**

DAY 5

Matthew 28:19–20

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Jesus sent His followers into everyday life with an extraordinary mission. The command to go may mean leaving and taking a mission trip to another place, but it also applies to living intentionally wherever you are. As you go about life, share the good news of Jesus with the people you meet. Sharing the gospel is the calling of every believer, and it is carried out in ordinary places of life.

It changes everything when you see the places you go as your mission field. This includes the next table in the coffee shop, the other parents beside you in the stands at the game, the neighbors you haven't really connected with, and the people you interact with at work. There is not one person who doesn't need the truth about Jesus. We have all been given the responsibility to speak up and share the truth so that the light of Christ will continue to advance in the darkness.

- **How can you live more intentionally on mission this week?**
- **Ask the Lord to help you see your life as a mission field.
Thank Him for allowing you to join in His kingdom work.**

SHARE

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-20

FEBRUARY 22, 2026

MAIN POINT

Paul refused to let his circumstances hinder him from sharing the gospel and we should do the same.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

Excuses are part of life. Sometimes excuses are legitimate and other times they are used to defer responsibility. This applies to all kinds of situations including spiritual ones. When you choose not to obey God about something, do you quickly search for something to blame, or do you accept that you always have the choice to obey God regardless of the situation? We are all instructed to share our faith with others and yet many look for excuses to avoid being obedient in this area. Today, we wrap up our three-part series: Prayer, Care, Share, with our focus on sharing. All of God's people are called to share Christ with others.

- **What's an example of a legitimate excuse a person might give in life? What's an example of a poor excuse?**

- **Why is it dangerous to repeatedly make excuses for disobeying God?**

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> **Have a volunteer read Philippians 1:12-20.**

Although Paul was in prison, God's blessings and power were still with him. He addresses concerns that his ministry was restricted because of his situation. It is easy to get caught up in our own circumstances and blame our lack of serving or obeying the Lord on what is happening around us. Paul made it clear that not even the chains of prison were able to stop him from bringing God glory and sharing the gospel. Regardless of our circumstances, when we are pursuing God's will, He can use us to spread the gospel.

- **Why would the Philippians be concerned that Paul being imprisoned would hinder his ministry?**
- **What are some circumstances today we might consider as hindrances to sharing the gospel faithfully?**

Paul focused on how his difficult circumstances actually gave more opportunity to share Christ. Paul's faithfulness spoke strongly to the people around him, including the guards and others who witnessed him. His example also spurred on other believers in bold confidence because of how God was using Paul in prison. Paul's example remains for us today, no matter where we find ourselves.

- **Paul's life impacted those directly around him, like prison guards. Who has God placed directly around you and given you influence with?**
- **How does faithfulness of God's people in suffering encourage other believers also?**

Sadly, we live in a world where people use the gospel and ministry to promote themselves and gain personal influence and favor. This was no less true in Paul's day. But Paul made clear that there was value in the gospel being proclaimed further, even by those with impure motives. Paul's desire was the gospel advance, by whatever means possible.

- **What are some wrong motives we might have for sharing the gospel? How can we assess and guard against this possibility?**
- **How can it deflate wrong motives (including our own) when we stay focused on the mission of sharing the gospel without getting caught up in competition?**

Like Paul, we can trust that God will bless His Word being shared and if others have wrong motives, God will deal with them. It is not our responsibility to discern another person's heart. We are responsible for our own motives and should take care to make sure our hearts are in the right place so we too can say as long as the gospel is shared, we rejoice.

- **Why can we trust God to deal with the wrong motives of others? What makes this hard?**

Paul declared that Christ would be exalted in him through his life or through his death. When Christ is the center of our lives, fear loses its grip. Sharing becomes a natural overflow of devotion and boldness grows. Prayer prepares hearts. Care builds trust. Sharing speaks truth. Kingdom movements stall when we stop short of sharing Christ. Love without truth is incomplete.

- **Who have you prayed and cared for but not yet shared with?**

APPLICATION

Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.

- **How do you need to adjust any wrong motives you have identified in seeking to share Christ?**

- **What is one intentional step you will take to share?**

- **How can we rejoice in the gospel being shared faithfully, no matter the means?**

PRAY

Ask for wisdom to see how God can use you in anything and everything to share the gospel with the lost world.

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-20

1:12 Paul's attitude was that all that had happened to him served to promote the gospel. Advancement meant to blaze a trail (e.g., for an army). Paul's difficult circumstances opened new opportunities for gospel witness.

1:13 The first opportunity (see v. 12 and note) for gospel witness involved the imperial guard, an elite military force charged with protecting the Roman emperor and his concerns. As the soldiers rotated shifts, each heard Paul's message. Paul's imprisonment was for Christ (lit "a prisoner of Christ"). The guard knew that Paul's commitment to Christ had led to his arrest and imprisonment.

1:14–17 The second opportunity for gospel witness involved the church itself. Responding to Paul's imprisonment, Christians divided into those who supported him and those who opposed him. Paul's imprisonment spawned renewed enthusiasm for preaching in both groups, but the group that opposed him preached the gospel out of envy and rivalry. They hoped to cause Paul greater difficulty, perhaps an unfavorable trial verdict. Their motivation was selfish ambition, intending to cause ... trouble by social turmoil. Paul does not say what drove the rivalry, but apparently they felt Christianity ought to have a different spokesperson than Paul. The group that supported Paul was motivated by good will and love. They realized Paul was appointed (lit "set") by God for defending the gospel, especially to Gentiles. Neither of these groups is identified. Both seem to have held correct doctrine and proclaimed Christ, yet their disparate treatment of Paul indicates that even "correct" believers can behave wrongly.

1:18 Paul accepted the message and work of both groups. Trusting God's sovereignty, he refused to condemn improper motivations as long as the end result was Christ ... proclaimed.

1:19 Paul remained optimistic. Salvation may recall Job's attitude (Jb 13:13–18). Paul expected exoneration because Christianity was not illegal throughout the Roman Empire at this time. Paul hoped for prayers, the "human" side, and help, divine assistance. "Prayers" implies intense intercession. God answers prayers with help, either something the Holy Spirit provides (a resource), or the presence of the Holy Spirit (the "Comforter"). The grammar of this verse joins "prayers" and "help," indicating Paul's dependence on both working together.

1:20 Ashamed implies cowering, running from battle, or embarrassment. Paul expected that Christ would be highly honored in his body. The physical body symbolizes earthly life. On earth, if Christ is not glorified in the body, he is not glorified at all. Further, Paul hoped Christ would also be glorified in his death.

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