

## Pray Together

**Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.**

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

## Read Together

Paul's letter to the Philippians was most likely written from a Roman prison around A.D. 61. The Apostle had first visited this Macedonian town during his second missionary journey in A.D. 50 and returned again during his third missionary journey in A.D. 55 and 56. Throughout the years Paul maintained a strong, loving relationship with the Philippian church and they, in turn, loved and supported their father in the faith.

Of all his letters, Philippians stands out as Paul's most personal correspondence. A reader quickly encounters themes which permeate each chapter of the letter: growth, thanksgiving, unity, joy, brotherly commendation, and peace. There are no sharp rebukes given, only preventative warnings. There are no coarse divisions or false teachings that threaten the church. Instead, Paul is free to celebrate the very thing that unites their hearts: Christ and His Gospel.

It is the Gospel of Christ that allows Paul and the Philippians to stand firm in one spirit, with one mind as they strive side by side for the faith of the Gospel.

### Outline of Philippians

1. Philippians 1:1-11 — Introduction
2. Philippians 1:12-26 — What is happening with Paul?
  - a. Philippians 1:12-18 — God is using Paul's circumstances to advance the Gospel
  - b. Philippians 1:19-26 — Paul expects that God will deliver him
3. Philippians 1:27-2:18 — How should the Philippians continue to grow in their faith in Christ?
  - a. Philippians 1:27-30 — Stand together in one Spirit against the attacks of the Enemy
  - b. Philippians 2:1-11 — Stand together in one Spirit with the humility of Christ
  - c. Philippians 2:12-18 — Stand together in one Spirit to shine as lights in the world
4. Philippians 2:19-30 — What is the future of Gospel ministry in Philippi?
  - a. Philippians 2:19-24 — Paul is sending Timothy to encourage the church and minister in his absence
  - b. Philippians 2:25-30 — Paul is sending Epaphroditus to testify how God restored his life
5. Philippians 3:1-4:3 — How can the Philippians have their joy renewed in Christ?
  - a. Philippians 3:1-11 — Beware of legalism
  - b. Philippians 3:12-21 — Beware of licentiousness
  - c. Philippians 4:1-3 — Beware of broken relationships
6. Philippians 4:4-19 — Why does Paul rejoice in God's gracious provisions?
7. Philippians 4:20-23 — Conclusion



## Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.

- In various places throughout the New Testament, Paul uses the word “persecutor” to describe himself before his encounter with Christ. Read Acts 7:54-8:2, Acts 9:1-2, Acts 22:3-5, and Galatians 1:13-14 and paint a picture of Paul’s life before Christ became his Lord. What word would you use to describe your life before Christ? Perhaps you’ve not yet trusted Christ to be your Lord and Savior. If you were to be honest with yourself and others, how would you describe your life?
- In Philippians 1:1, Paul now describes himself as a “servant” or “slave” of Christ. Why would Paul boast in this title? What can a 21st Century North American Christian learn from Paul’s antiquated and culturally offensive title, “servant” or “slave” of Christ?
- “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Phil 1:2) Some scholars suggest that the words “grace...and peace” express a condensed form of the essence of Paul’s theology (See Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:2; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 2:2; Titus 1:4; Phm 1:3). How does God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give grace and peace? How does a person receive the grace and peace that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ gives? Provide scripture to support your answer.
- Read Philippians 1:3-5, 27. Paul celebrates the Philippian Christians and their “partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now”. How would you describe someone who is a partner in the Gospel? Who would you consider your partners in the Gospel? Give specific reasons why these men or women fit this description. Who considers you a partner in the Gospel? Why might you fit that description for someone?
- Neither Paul nor the Philippians are the heroes of this letter; God is. God began the work; He will complete it. Paul is confident that God’s work cannot be thwarted. And yet, he states that the divine plan needs willing partners to unite together. Through this ongoing cooperation, the partners would celebrate the Christ, advance His Gospel, defend the Gospel, and confirm the presence and power of the Gospel to many in Philippi and throughout the region of Macedonia. In smaller groups of 2-3, pray that God will reveal how He might be calling you to join in with others in His great work.

## How I must obey Christ...

- Examine yourself. As a result of this study, identify a specific area in which you need to obey Christ this week.
- How do you specifically need to obey Christ in this area this week?
- How can Jesus redeem this area? How has He proven that in Scripture?
- Who will keep you accountable to this commitment this week?

## Pray Together

Read and pray through Philippians 1:27-28.

