

“Joy In The Everyday: Obstacle or Opportunity?”

Growth Group Guide

May 10, 2026

WELCOME *(Connecting with each other)*

Ever had an obstacle that turned into a great opportunity? One that had God’s fingerprints all over it. Share the story with your group. Share how God invited you to join Him so your story worked for your good and the good of others around you.

WORSHIP THROUGH PRAYER *(Connecting with God)*

Open in prayer inviting the Spirit to lead your time of discussion. Celebrate that God’s plan is to never leave an obstacle in our lives untouched by His Grace and good work.

Colossians 1:11-12 (Living Bible) We are praying, too, that you will be filled with his mighty, glorious strength so that you can keep going no matter what happens—always full of the joy of the Lord, and always thankful to the Father who has made us fit to share all the wonderful things that belong to those who live in the Kingdom of light.

Psalms 64:9-10 (LB) Then everyone shall stand in awe and confess the greatness of the miracles of God; at last they will realize what amazing things he does. And the godly shall rejoice in the Lord, and trust and praise him.

WORD *(Letting God speak to us)*

1. Paul had wanted to see Rome (see Acts 19:21) and preach in Rome (see Romans 1:15). Has there been a place you’ve ever wanted to visit? Why? Have you ever gotten to a place you wanted to be by a route you didn’t expect?
2. Read Philippians 1:12-14. What words or phrases stand out to you and why? Why do you think it was important for Paul to let his brothers and sisters in Christ know what was happening with him?
3. Reread Philippians 1:12. Paul ended up in Rome as a prisoner. If you were a part of the Philippian church and didn’t know anything about how he was, what might you think about his mental state or how effective he was in sharing the gospel in Rome? What does this verse actually tell us?
4. Paul says his arrest and imprisonment actually advanced the gospel into new territory despite the obstacles he was experiencing. What do you think the Philippian’s reaction was to this news? How does it reframe your view of situations personally, and in the world today, where it might seem hopeless for God to work?
5. God isn’t limited by any constraint. With Him all things are possible (see Matthew 19:26). What tempts us to think the opposite? What truths about who God is would help counteract these temptations?

6. Reread Philippians 1:13. The way Paul lived, not just what he said, showed he wasn’t a criminal and was in prison for Jesus. How does this show us the importance of inside out living?
7. Paul’s chains actually gave him access to a group of people he wouldn’t have reached otherwise. What figurative chains (obstacles) might we have? How might they connect us with other people?
8. Reread Philippians 1:14. Paul says most of the fellow Christians were emboldened by Paul’s example and began to speak without fear. The speaking they did wasn’t preaching but was sharing Jesus in everyday conversation. How does this change your perspective on what it means to share Jesus with others? What might be some approaches we could be encouraged to try?
9. God seems to work best in environments that are unfavorable to Him. How does that help us see opportunities in a world full of resistance to God? What obstacles do you see that you now see as opportunities?

WALK *(Living out God’s purposes)*

- ✓ **One Big Idea: When we depend on God, our obstacles become opportunities.** Are there obstacles you’ve been wrestling with in your life? Things you’ve been pulling against. How might God want to transform those into opportunities for Jesus’s grace to intersect your life and bring you joy, delight, and greater freedom? Talk to God about it. What might seem like it binds you, He can use to release His power in your life. He wants to work in and through you in ways and places He hasn’t been able to before. How joyful that is!
- ✓ What about Paul’s story in Philippians 1:12-14 emboldens and encourages you to share Jesus without fear and instead with joy? What holds you back? What might God desire to give you to help? Talk with Him about it.

WORLD *(Embracing God’s heart for others)*

A praise update from the recent *See The City* guide involves one of our own missionary partners - EveryOne Village (EV)! After losing some important local funding, EveryOne Village received a \$2.4 million federal grant to pilot a program in Eugene to provide low-cost permanent housing for people who’ve been homeless. The microvillage will allow 100 tenants to build rental history for \$300 a month, rather than the steep jump to fair market value rental. Pray for the Lord to lead the development! (See *The City*, May-August 2026 guide, pg.5)”

In addition, EV is actively exploring two exciting expansion opportunities: The Everyone Village Workforce Development Center and a potential partnership with a local landowner to revitalize a property into a mixed-use workforce development hub. Gabe Piechowicz, the founder of EV, will be with us next Sunday to share more about EV in person. Continue to lift this wonderful work and community up in prayer. Through our prayer and support we are a part of something truly remarkable. (May 7th Donor Update Email.)

[Copies of this Guide are available at <https://thurston.church/resources>]