

“Joy In The Everyday: Signature Traits The Sequel”

Growth Group Guide

August 9, 2026

WELCOME *(Connecting with each other)*

It's natural to look for the security net when we contemplate taking a risk, but what about when God has asked us to do something that seems risky? Discuss the benefit of a “security net” and how it makes risk taking easier. Discuss how God fulfills this role for us when we depend on Him.

WORSHIP THROUGH PRAYER *(Connecting with God)*

Open in prayer. Celebrate that God, in Christ, by the Spirit, will accomplish His work in and through us by our dependence on Him, even when it seems impossible or like taking a bold risk.

John 4:34 ESV. “...’My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.’”

Romans 15:18 NLT. Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them.

Deuteronomy 30:19b-20a ESV. ...Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days...

WORD *(Letting God speak to us)*

1. **Read Galatians 3:28.** Paul is fully Jewish, Timothy is part Jew and Gentile, and Epaphroditus is likely fully Gentile. What does this verse say makes it possible for these 3 men to have such a tight bond? What can we apply to relationships with our spiritual brothers and sisters?
2. **Read Philippians 2:25-30.** What stands out to you in these verses?
3. **Read verses 25-27 again.** Epaphroditus, like Timothy, depended upon God, and because of that dependence, he genuinely cared for others and was trusted. How are these traits seen in these verses?
4. Based on these verses, how would you describe the relationship between Pastor Epaphroditus and the Philippian church? How is this sort of pastor/congregation relationship possible today?
5. Paul is led of the Spirit to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi. It isn't easy because Paul says he's my brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, your messenger, and minister to my need. Based on Paul's description, how do you view Epaphroditus? Are his qualities for all Christians?
6. Paul's praise for Epaphroditus was possible because he lived dependent on God, completely at God's disposal. He lived ready, watching for God's guidance, and was willing to serve and do anything needed. He didn't specialize in an area but could help wherever, no task was too high or too low. We could say he was balanced as a Christian. What would this look like in action today?

7. **Read Philippians 2:28-30.** Epaphroditus had so given up his independence, expectations, rights, and his own life even for a life of full dependence on God. He didn't regard his life as something to hold onto (the Philippians 2:5-14 path of normal Christian living. See July 19th's guide). Risk like this scares many, maybe even most, of us. Why? How does Epaphroditus encourage us to move past this fear?
8. Risk taking and doing things for God (even needed things) can be attempted out of the flesh or done by the Spirit. Even though they aren't the same, how might they look similar? How might they show themselves to be different?
9. Paul sends Epaphroditus back as a joy gift to the Philippians. He encourages them to honor him. What do you think his return was like?

WALK *(Living out God's purposes)*

- ✓ **One Big Idea:** Living dependent on God, we can take risks because we've relinquished everything and are ready to do what's needed since we are at God's disposal. Epaphroditus' example of taking a risk in dependence on God encourages us to live with no claims on ourselves, so that we might do whatever God guides us to. He shows us that anything God asks us to join Him in is possible when God does the inviting and we do the depending. Have you been invited by God to something that feels risky, whether small or big? Focus your conversation with Him this week on discerning between what walking this venture out spiritually vs. fleshly looks like for you. This will help you aim toward what He truly has for you as you obey...Him as your source of life, as your safety, and power to bear fruit in His name.
- ✓ Who is a joy gift to you? How can you honor or bless them this week?

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

“Oregon's housing crisis disproportionately impacts people at the lowest income levels—those living on fixed incomes, exiting homelessness, recovering from medical events, or rebuilding after trauma. Traditional affordable housing development often fails to reach this population. God has blessed Everyone Village with funding for a new project to address these concerns: the MicroVillage Housing Project. This pilot project introduces a small-scale, neighborhood-oriented residential model that provides private living space with shared on-site supports from Everyone Village. The co-location will allow residents to stabilize more quickly, rebuild income, health, and community connections. The MicroVillage is designed not as a one-off project, but as a replicable housing solution for municipalities and nonprofits statewide (8/5/26, from www.everyonevillage.org/micro-village-housing).” Please continue to pray for this project, for smooth building processes, communication, and God's grace and peace over it. Pray for the villagers at Everyone Village as they transition to a bigger neighborhood experience. Pray for all the staff that they will see God's hand over them and all the day in and day out activities.

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