

# Live the Journey

## Living the Journey

## Leader Guide

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. <sup>14</sup> Do all things without grumbling or disputing, <sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. <sup>17</sup> Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup> Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

### Context

Paul is not certain that he will see the Christians in Philippi again. Although later in chapter 2 he expresses his hope to be released from prison, there is a good chance that he will not be. In this spirit, he writes these words to the church, encouraging them to 'work out' the salvation they received in Christ, so they can stand firm when he (Paul) is not around anymore.

**1. What does Paul mean when he says 'work out your own salvation' in verse 12? Does he mean that the grace of God is not enough and we need to work for it as well? What is our role in this?**

Most certainly not. He makes it clear in the following verses by saying that even the will to work for a good cause is a gift from God to us. Our salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the liberation from the power of evil over us, these are all given to us without merit. It is God's work, not ours, and it cannot be earned.

So when Paul asks them to work out their own salvation, he is asking them to exercise it, to stretch it, to develop it. In other words, because we have already received everything from God, we have now the confidence to spread the good news

of love and forgiveness to people around us. Working out our salvation means extending its benefits to others around us, through both words and deeds.

For example, when we forgive others with the hopes that this will earn us forgiveness, we are trying to earn salvation. When we forgive because we know that we have been forgiven, we are extending grace and working out our salvation.

**2. Can you think of practical ways in which you can exercise your own salvation?**

When we walk with the confidence that Jesus is now king, and evil will not prevail in the end, we become empowered to live like Jesus did. This could take on many different expressions, depending on your own circumstances. It might mean forgiving someone that did you wrong, or being more generous with your resources, or more intentional on your patience and kindness towards others, etc.

**3. In verse 14, Paul asks them to do all things without grumbling or disputing, in order to be 'without blemish'. Why do you think he puts such emphasis on these things when talking about exercising our salvation in Christ?**

This passage seems to carry a reference to the Israelites that were liberated from slavery in Egypt. Although their liberation was a gift from God, the first generation did nothing but complain in the desert before they arrived in the promised land. That made them a 'twisted' generation.

Grumbling and disputing are usually attitudes of people that are discontent with what they have, and are trying to put others down so they can get what they want.

It should be clear to see that, if anyone truly embraces the free gift of salvation in Christ, there is no space in their heart for constant complaining or disputes. Ultimately, a saved heart is a satisfied heart, even when the present circumstances are

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not favorable. Thus, it is not that 'grumbling and disputing' will make you lose your salvation. If they are a constant presence in our life, they are just evidence that you might need to fully embrace the gift given to you by God.

**4. Paul says that the church is a 'light to the world'. he is referring here to both Daniel 12:3 and Jesus' own words in Matthew 5:14. What does it mean to be a light in the world? What does a light do?**

The most striking characteristic of light is not that it changes the environment around it, but that it changes the way we see the environment. This is one of the main roles of the church. By ourselves, we cannot always change the circumstances around us, or the hearts of people around us. Ultimately this is God's role.

The one thing we can do is let people see what salvation looks like when lived out in this world. Under the same circumstances, which include the presence of evil, people should see in us that a different life is possible, and in that regard, people should be able to see their own lives under this new light.

**If it were possible to lose my salvation, I would lose it.**

**John MacArthur**

**All change comes from deepening your understanding of the salvation of Christ and living out the changes that understanding creates in your heart.**

**Timothy Keller**