

**PART 2**

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# **CONNECT GUIDE**



*Letter From  
a Jail Cell*

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**WALLACE MEMORIAL  
BAPTIST CHURCH**

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# AS WE BEGIN

## A READING PLAN

### WEEK 5

- Day 1: Philippians 1
- Day 2: Philippians 2
- Day 3: Philippians 3
- Day 4: Philippians 4
- Day 5: Acts 16:1-10

### WEEK 7

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### WEEK 6

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- Day 4: Philippians 4
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# WEEK FIVE

## DAY 1: PHILIPPIANS 1

UUPG Prayer Focus: Kumbra in India / Egyptian Arabs in Iraq

In the first half of our study, we worked on finding the themes of Philippians. This helped us tie together all four chapters of the letter and understand the unique teaching that Paul is showing us in his letter to the Philippian church. To summarize, we learned that this letter tells us we can have joy, even as we go through hardship because of our Gospel partnership with Jesus and His church. It's always important to start by understanding the overall context of what we're reading before we start analyzing individual verse, otherwise we could focus so narrowly that we might accidentally take an individual verse out of context and ask it to say what it was never intended to say. Philippians 4:13 is one of the best examples of a verse that is often taken out of context. Quite simply, if we can't relate each verse to the overall themes of joy, hardship, and partnership, then we don't yet understand the verse and we need more study.

You might be reading that thinking; "Ok... but that's a lot of work. Like that would require me to spend time finding context, reading broadly, and then putting the pieces together like... every day." Well, yes, and Paul tells us in Philippians chapter 1 that we should stick with it because this is God's plan. Chapter 1 verse 6 says "I am sure of this, that He who started a good

work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." The moment you put your faith in Jesus and trusted Him for your salvation, God saw His righteousness instead of your sin. In terms of judgment, you switched places with Jesus, and you were saved from the wrath of God in that very moment. Ok... but Paul said Jesus is "going to" carry it on to completion... so, am I totally saved or not?

That instant moment of salvation is what we call "justification." It happens instantly, and it's permanent. It happens on the basis of you putting your faith in what Jesus has done for you. We all know that day-to-day life doesn't feel perfect though, and we all fail at living righteously every single day. That's because the other part, the part that we call "sanctification" is a lifelong process of personal and spiritual discipline where we respond to the conviction and teaching of the Holy Spirit. God is merciful, so He doesn't reveal all our sin to us all at once. Instead, He calls us to embark on a journey of daily self-analysis with the Holy Spirit where we learn, feel conviction, repent, change, and ever so slowly we begin to look more and more like Jesus.

So, when Paul tells us that God will see His work in us through to completion, remember: You're not outsourcing your spiritual growth. God's not just doing this for you while you go do as you please. You're not a passive member in your sanctification. God absolutely could do this on His own, but instead He's chosen to invite you into the process. So, let's commit to learning and

growing every day. Yeah, it will be hard, but even in those difficult moments we can have joy because God has invited us into a partnership.

- What do your personal daily disciplines look like?
- Is there something more, or something different you need to commit to in your spiritual growth?

## DAY 2: PHILIPPIANS 2

UUPG Prayer Focus: Deaf Burmese in Myanmar / Kotokoli in Togo

Philippians chapter 2 verse 3 says: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves." This is a verse that's so easy to say, but so hard to live out. It's also a verse that can be manipulated and misunderstood if we don't pay close attention.

When Paul says, "do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit," he doesn't mean that you shouldn't take care of yourself. As humans, we often love to find an idea like this and take it to an extreme, and this isn't new, it's been happening in the church for a couple thousand years at this point. It's actually this idea that caused many people to see christianity as a calling to reject society, family, interaction, and even their own health. As early as the 200s we have records of people who moved to the desert and lived their entire lives in isolation in the name of being closer to God. Most of them just went insane. Paul is not

rejecting basic self-care. As a Christian you should absolutely still brush your teeth. You should eat well, get enough sleep, go on a walk, pet a dog, or take a break. Taking care of yourself IS NOT selfish ambition. In fact, if you aren't taking care of your own health and well-being then you won't be able to live out what Paul calls you to do in the rest of this letter. God designed your body to work when you take care of it, and so He expects you to do that.

It's vitally important to know this before moving on to the second half of this verse. "In humility, consider others as more important than yourselves." Once again, we have to establish what this DOES NOT mean. It absolutely doesn't mean that we should dislike, disparage, or harm ourselves in any way. God created you. He created your likes and dislikes, your passion, your tastes, and all the little weird things that make you who you are in this world. He looked at you and said "yeah, I like this person I've created." Yes, we all have sin and so it's vitally important to separate who we are inside, from the sin that has corrupted God's design. This verse doesn't mean hating yourself so other people can be more important by comparison, it means that we need to view every single person the way God does. We need to love and accept each person the same way their creator does. This means we value every aspect of someone's life and personality, while desperately praying for the Holy Spirit to convict them of sin... just like we do for ourselves. It's often been said that the true meaning of humility isn't thinking less of yourself but just thinking of yourself a little less.

Why go to such lengths to define what this verse doesn't mean? Well, it's because so many people in the history of the church have used verses like this to say we should create our own pain and suffering so we can receive validation. If our definition of denying ourselves means abandoning basic self-care, then we become the creators of the very suffering that God wants to heal in humanity. If we put others first by causing pain and hardship for ourselves then we aren't helping anyone, we're just creating more problems. If we act humbly in a way that cries out for validation and attention then we're actually doing all of this for vain, selfish, and conceited reasons! Life is going to be hard enough; you don't have to create your own suffering. We definitely don't need to incapacitate ourselves and cause hardship for others. So, when we read this verse let's commit to loving each and every person the way our Creator loves us. Let's take care of ourselves and others in a way that glorifies God, and not in a way that focuses the attention on what we're giving up. Let's take care of each other and encourage each person to take care of themselves so we can have joy, even on the days when it gets difficult.

- What is the line between taking care of yourself and being self-centered?
- What is the difference between putting others first and self-deprecation?

## DAY 3: PHILIPPIANS 3

UUPG Prayer Focus: Kebu in Uganda / Egyptian Arabs in Kuwait

Have you ever noticed that cult leaders are often charismatic, charming, and actually kind of interesting? Have you ever noticed that most false interpretations of Christianity and false teachings are like ninety percent right, and its only small changes they make to twist the truth? If you go back and read Genesis 3 you'll absolutely notice that the serpent doesn't tempt Adam and Eve with death, struggle, and pain. He tempts them with knowledge and status. False teachers don't walk in the room and let you know they're false teachers. They know how to present their twisted corruption in a way that sounds fun and enticing. That's why it works. Paul warns the Philippian church in chapter 3 to "watch out for evil workers, and those who mutilate the flesh." In this particular context, he's referring to a group called "the Judaizer's," and they are a great example of how false teachers blend their lies with the truth to pull people away from real Christianity.

The Judaizer's essentially believed that Jesus' sacrifice gave people a second chance to follow the law. (Yes, I know that's an oversimplification. This is a daily devotion, not a history book.) They would enter a church and initially agree with everything. They would praise Jesus. They would take communion. They would build relationships, pray with people, and live lives that kind of looked like how Christians were supposed to live. The



difference is that they weren't depending on grace. They were depending on the law and their ancestry for salvation... and they were there to convince churches to do the same. They didn't love Jesus; they were simply using His name to convert people into making their lives more culturally Jewish.

This is why Paul gives the reader so many warnings to watch out for them in the New Testament. They worked hard to make their argument sound convincing, and if you aren't careful, you'll get swept up by false teachers today who do the same. Prosperity preachers quote Scripture. They just remove it from the context and twist the meaning. Universalists prey on our sense of compassion to convince us evangelism isn't necessary. Political manipulators will try to convince us that God prefers certain cultures, nations, or skin colors more than others, all the while appealing to a misguided desire for safety, order, or "our way of life." We live under a constant assault of messages telling us that God's design for gender or marriage is "antiquated" or that "love is love" in any form. These are all false teachings, but they are presented in a way that sounds like we should believe it.

Paul is warning us too. We need each other. We need the church. When the false teachers come, (and they will, just open a social media app if you don't believe me.) we need our church community to help us stay on track. We need trusted brothers and sisters to help us watch our blind spots. We need well-trained pastors and teachers who know which lies to

watch for. Above all, we need the Holy Spirit who will point all of us back to Scripture so we can stand against false teachers.

- Why do you think so many well-intentioned believers fall for false teaching?
- If a fellow church member is falling for a false teaching, how would you try to help them?

## DAY 4: PHILIPPIANS 4

UUPG Prayer Focus: Bairagi in India / Pila in Benin

There are a lot of difficult commands in the Bible. Some are more difficult than others based on your personality type. Some are more difficult because of your cultural context or moment in history. Others are more difficult because they just fight against everything in our nature. Paul's command to "not worry about anything," in Philippians 4 is difficult for all of those reasons put together.

We have to keep in mind that Paul is not writing directly to us, and in this case, he's writing to the Philippian church. Their city would have been on the edge of modern-day Greece, right near the coast. They had worries that you and I don't necessarily have. For instance, we don't often have to worry about pirates, but they were within a day's trip of multiple pirate lairs. You and I rarely worry about an invading army,

but being on the outer edge of a Roman province this was a constant worry for the Philippians. We have refrigerators and freezers where we can store enough food for a month. Most Philippians would have never seen ice. Even if they did have refrigerators, most people in the Roman Empire rarely had enough money to buy food for more than a day at a time.

While many people in our culture do face threats of violence, or food insecurity, these problems are far more rare in our time. Most of our worries are psychological. Pavement and screens have disconnected us from the world God created and from each other. Social media, TV, streaming services, and 24-hour news channels fill us with more information, advertisements, and collective trauma than anyone should ever face. So yeah, we may not be quite as worried about pirates, but our worries are very real. The biggest difference is we typically pay a monthly subscription fee to enjoy those worries.

Whether the problem is first century physical safety, or 21st century overstimulation, the advice is the same. "In everything, through prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God." It's extremely important to note that Paul isn't dismissing their worries. He's been hungry, shipwrecked, beaten, imprisoned, and beaten again. He's not belittling their concerns; he's just reminding them that God is bigger and eternity is greater. Paul knows that everything won't be easy, he's sitting in prison as he writes this. Paul himself prayed for God to take away his recurring physical ailments. This means

that if something is troubling you, the Bible calls you to take that request to God, not to just forget it.

Like anything, the cares of the world can be crushing, and depending on God is a long-term discipline that we only develop through practice. Paul isn't shunning those with clinical anxiety. By all means, if you're struggling, talk to a counselor or your doctor, because they are blessings from God too! He's simply saying that as we mature our demeanor should shift from nervous to trusting as God continually proves Himself. This is also why God gave us our fellow church members. We need each other. We need to be comforted and reminded when things look bleak. We need sounding boards, pep talks, and affirmations from each other when we don't have the mental strength to keep going ourselves.

So, let's adopt the attitude of Paul. Be the reason that your fellow church member can face the worries of tomorrow. Don't dismiss the small concerns, encourage the person instead. Don't shy away from life threatening concerns. Stand by their side and remind them Jesus is too. All worries will be temporary, but the pain in the moment is real. As a church let's be the encouragement that allows each person around us to face tomorrow.

- What are your biggest worries?
- Who have you encouraged recently? Who encourages you?

## DAY 5: ACTS 16:1-10

UUPG Prayer Focus: Tausug in Malaysia / Jharkhandi Nai in India

As we read through this letter, it's obvious that Paul has a long history with the Philippians church. In Acts we get to see that history. Paul picks up a few missionary partners (including Timothy) and heads east. After a number of failed directions, Paul receives a vision telling him to Go south to Macedonia. Philippi is there on the coast, in what would be modern day Greece. This is where the Philippians church begins.

This whole process might seem fantastical and strange to us, but it's the same way we plant churches today. Like Paul, many pastors and missionaries feel the call to take the Gospel to the far reaches of the world. They got through a process of figuring out where to go. They recruit a team of volunteers, and they set out to plant a church. This is how the church has been spread for several thousand years now.

In our first week of this study, we asked, "what are you doing to help advance the Gospel?" Well, if you want to advance the Gospel then church planting is a great place to start. We partner with several church planters. Paul went to a big city on the coast. We partner in a similar place with Trenton Mueller and the abiding church in Los Angeles. More of an open space and small-town person? Then we'd love to connect you with Joseph and Carissa Smyly in Livingston, Montana. Don't have the time to go across the country? Then we can happily connect you with Matt and Sarabeth Crabtree at SoKno city right here in Knoxville.

At the end of each week in this second half of the study, we'll look at Paul's efforts to follow the Holy Spirit in planting the Philippian church and remind you that church planting is within your reach too.

So... what are you doing this week to advance the Gospel?

# DISCUSSION GUIDE: MARCH 1, 2026

## WEEK FIVE: PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

This week we walked through all four chapters. We talked about the work that is necessary to discover the context as well as the benefits available when we do. We defined what selfish ambition is and is not. We also looked at why false teachers are so dangerous and so convincing. Today in our service we will further explore the theme of ministry partnership. Make sure to pay close attention to how you can be a ministry partner to your fellow church members.

### ACTION STEP

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How will I live out the action step this week?

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# SERMON NOTES

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# CONNECT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK 5

- Have you ever had family or friends that lived somewhere far away? What was it like when you got to see or hear from them? How did you keep up with them while you were apart? Based on what we see in Philippians chapter 2, Paul treats his mission partners like family. How can we also treat our missionary and church planting partners like family?
- In verse 20 Paul says that "all seek their own interest, not those of Jesus Christ." He says that his mission partners however, have proven character. How can we change our perspective to have proven character instead of self interest? What does that look like on a day to day basis?
- In verse 29, Paul says we should treat people like Epaphroditus with honor. What exactly did Epaphroditus do that was specifically deserving of honor? How can we show honor to those like Epaphroditus? How can we do this as a church and as individuals?
- What can you do as a group this week to show "honor" to a church planter or missionary like we see in this text? Make a plan with the group to do something tangible and immediate to encourage one of our partners.



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# WEEK SIX

## DAY 1: PHILIPPIANS 1

UUPG Prayer Focus: Sudanese Arabs in Saudi Arabia /  
Dheevara in India

If you've been in church for a while, you've probably heard the phrase "growing in your faith." This is a phrase we can hear, easily agree with, but then sadly dismiss. Why is that? Well, our human nature often pushes us to take spiritual terminology and define it in the loosest way possible. When we do this, it makes it easy for us to pretend we have accomplished the goal, because we defined it in such a nebulous way. We describe growth in broad sweeping ways that cover everything so we can pretend that any effort we make is enough to check the box and move on. We don't do this with ill intent, or for the purpose of manipulation. We do this because generalities feel easy, and specific objectives feel scary, because... what if we fail?

We've already covered that chapter 1 tells us that God Himself will be faithful in completing the work that He started in us. We don't have to stress or worry about achieving a goal, because we're not on our own. We've been invited to participate with the Holy Spirit. The slow difficult process isn't because God needs extra time, it's a mercy from God for your benefit! God is merciful in letting us develop slowly, and His patience with us as we fail and try again is unending. Unlike us, the Bible isn't vague about what Spiritual growth looks like. Philippians

1:9 says that Paul hopes that our "love will keep growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment."

This verse gives us three clear steps on how to grow spiritually. First, we need to make sure that our love is expanding. This isn't just any type of love though, in fact one of our cultures has often defined "love" as whatever makes a person happy. This is why we continually have to stand for truth in matters of biblical marriage and relationships. No, the love Paul is talking about here is our love for Jesus. If we love Jesus, then we will naturally love what He loves as well. We'll love the people He died and rose to save. We'll love the mission He has for us. We'll love the commands of God.

"But how do I know more about Jesus and the commandments of the Father?" That's why we have the second step. We must grow in knowledge. Left to our own devices we'll love whatever our personality, our traditions, or our ever shifting culture loves, but if we dedicate ourselves to reading the Bible and learning more about who Jesus is and what He came to do then our knowledge will fuel our love for Him.

The third step is the hardest though; discernment. We can know all the stories, memorize all the facts, and quote all the verses, but if we don't commit to the discipline of learning how to apply those principles in our world then we can't live our daily lives as believers. This is why we can't just read a page and be done. We have to pause. We have to spend time listening to the Spirit and meditate on the words of Scripture.

We have to put real, deep, humble thought into what it looks like to live as a Christian right where God has placed us in this world. So don't cheat yourself. Don't live with immature faith. Trust that God will complete His work in you and joyfully take up disciplines like Bible reading and prayer so you can participate with the Spirit in your own growth!

- Why is it easier to achieve a vague goal instead of a specific one? Do you have specific spiritual goals?
- What can you do to fight your natural instinct to stay busy and instead meditate on the Scripture and listen to the Holy Spirit?

## DAY 2: PHILIPPIANS 2

UUPG Prayer Focus: Maran Nairs in India / Bestha in India

Philippians 2 asks us an uncomfortable question. Are you willing to take the form of a servant? Paul is telling the Philippian church that to identify with Jesus, we have to follow Jesus in His actions. Being a Christian is much more than just a confession. You can know who Jesus is, and what He's done, but putting our faith in Him means we have to be willing to reject our own priorities and take the form of a servant.

This thought is diametrically opposed to everything in human nature. We love to "earn our place," or make sure "we're getting what we're owed." The Christian worldview, however,

says that each of us has only earned death and eternal punishment because of how we've acted on our sinful urges. Christianity says there are no VIPs, and no one has earned a pass. The humility to accept that we are helpless in the face of judgement is required to accept the sacrifice of Jesus. It's that same humility that leads us to rejoice when we receive the free gift of salvation from the work of Jesus. When we understand how much we were given, even when we had nothing to offer, then we can't help but live a lifestyle of humility and devote ourselves to Jesus and His kingdom.

Jesus was the only person that could have ever earned the right to be praised. He's the only man to ever walk the Earth that earned the right to be revered. He's the only person that could ever even be accused of being good, but instead of basking in His accomplishments, he washed feet, ate with sinners, confronted the corrupt religious elites, and traded everything He earned for the chance to absorb our punishment. Even when He earned everything Jesus chose to serve, and the call to be saved is inseparable from the call to imitate Him.

"Ok, but how do I do that?" Great question. It might look like changing diapers in your church nursery. It might look like feeding the poor. It might look like going on a mission trip and rebuilding after a natural disaster. It might even look like absorbing hate and disdain from the very people we're serving, just like Jesus did. Being a servant takes many forms, but it's something we do to make sure we're following in the

footsteps of Jesus and offering His gift to anyone who would receive it. If we want salvation, but don't want to be servants then we're just asking to exploit Jesus. The call to be saved is also the call to humble yourself.

- Why do we love the idea of merit and "earning it" so much?
- How can you be a servant to someone this week?

## DAY 3: PHILIPPIANS 3

UUPG Prayer Focus: Ansari-Momin in India / Fezara in Sudan

A difficult part of the Christian life is the constant self-analysis that we must perform. Since we are called to conform our lives to God's will and look more like Jesus every day, we have to look at our actions, our feelings, our intentions, even our very nature and separate that which is sin from that which God created us to be. This gets even more difficult when the Bible contradicts the culture we live in. It forces us to make a decision: "Am I going to prioritize my culture and its norms, or am I going to submit to the Bible and be changed?" I bring up this conflict because Paul's message in Philippians chapter 3 causes us to face that exact decision.

As 21st century westerners we love the idea of the "self-made man," we love celebrities of achievement, we love the idea of being judged by merit and assigning our value as a direct match to our contribution. American lore presents this as the

archetype of the ideal person. The Bible, however, tells us that we must admit our need, our shortcomings, and our incapability to receive the gift of salvation. We can't believe what Jesus said and simultaneously believe we're good enough on our own. We can't put our confidence in Jesus if we have it all stored up in ourselves.

Paul was in a great place to prove this point. In chapter 3:4-11 Paul tells the Philippian church that if anyone was going to be good enough to earn it it would have been him. Paul was everything the religious establishment of first century Israel held dear. He was the prototype Pharisee, he had the best tutors, his pedigree and lineage were unchallenged. In the end though, he considers all to be worthless in comparison with Jesus. That's because Jesus offers hope, while our list of achievements only offers further condemnation. God's standard is perfection. Perfect action, perfect thought, perfect intention. Paul came closer than anyone he'd ever met in terms of the law, and by his own words it was still laughably insufficient.

If Paul's achievements didn't impress God then we can be assured that ours won't either, and if we continue trying to impress God, then our good works become little more than a rejection of God's standards and a demand that our ways are better. Even a good deed done for the wrong reason is sin, and if we declare it's not then we are putting ourselves in the

place of God. Eli Servies, one of our ministry interns recently summed this principle up when he said, "stop trying to build a resume for God." I don't think I've ever heard an application put more clearly. God doesn't want a resume; he wants our trust. God doesn't want our list of achievements; He wants our prayers of repentance. We can't glorify Him if we're too busy promoting ourselves. So today let's do the hardest thing imaginable. Let's give up.

Let's give up our vain attempts to earn value. Let's toss out our resume and replace it. We aren't valuable because of our contribution, we're valuable because God loves us and He declared that we're valuable. As a church let's be defined by our submission to Jesus and dependence on His grace, not our resume.

- Why do you think submission and dependance are so hard for us?
- What are some practical ways we can let go of our innate desire for self-justification?

## **DAY 4: PHILIPPIANS 4**

UUPG Prayer Focus: Moor in Niger / Gangawar in India

If you are able to memorize any verse in this Philippians

study, I really hope it is chapter 4, verses 8-9. While every verse of Scripture is relevant and valuable, these verses have particular importance at our moment in history. Paul's instructions here on how to categorically think about things that are good for you will turn out to be some of the best advice you ever receive. In the first century, Rome, there were tumultuous events. They had openly corrupt leadership, constant threat of invasion, consistent food insecurity, and none of the comforts we enjoy on a daily basis. Rome knew they needed to distract the people with entertainment and debauchery so they wouldn't dwell on the difficulty and become discontented to the point of rebellion. To this end, the Romans built bathhouses, chariot racing stadiums, gladiator arenas, taverns, and brothels. Rome knew that if they offered temporary and distracting pleasures, they would be able to control their people. Paul has seen most of the Roman world and he knows how this works, so he offers a third way. Neither despair nor distraction, but a focus on a kingdom beyond this world. Paul's instructions about what to think on aren't just a happy encouragement, they are a blueprint for guarding your mind against the onslaught of despair and distraction.

If the Romans got to experience 21st century American culture, they'd be in awe of the distraction machines we have created. We have 24-hour news channels designed to keep us angry and fearful. We've digitized brothels into online videos. We don't even have to build gladiator and chariot stadiums because we can pipe them right into our houses. Our leadership



doesn't build grand distractions for us, they created a tiny distracting box that overloads us with information, robs us of our ability to process it, and now with artificial intelligence is even costing us our connection to reality. In return, we're spending everything we have to pay for it and fuel a culture of consumerism and materialism.

Our minds are the origin of every action we take and every goal we set to accomplish. Our thoughts are a spiritual battlefield that the world and the devil target to make us ineffective. Paul knows that our thoughts are the first thing we have to protect if we ever want to live out our Christianity. This is why we have to take our thoughts seriously. We have to do the daily work of participating with the Holy Spirit to renew our minds (Rom 12:2).

No, I'm not saying to throw away your phone and get rid of your TV. (Although I am saying that we should be skeptical and cautious with any form of AI) It's not a reality for most of us to shun technology and become Amish and living that way might prevent us from ever having the chance to share our faith with the world. I am saying that we must desperately cling to Paul's advice and guard our thoughts, because we want the type of mind that invites the work of the Holy Spirit. So next time you pick up your phone to doomscroll and absorb the collective trauma of the world, maybe take a second instead to think on what is true, honorable, just, pure, and morally excellent.

- What's your biggest distraction?
- How can we live in a technological world without being enslaved by it?

## **DAY 5: ACTS 16:11-24**

UUPG Prayer Focus: Palestinian Arabs in Saudi Arabia / Doms in Egypt

Paul received his vision to go to Macedonia, and after a few boat rides he ended up in Philippi. Paul's about to start a church so surely, he started by renting a building. No, he didn't. Oh, well then, he must have planned a large service as an event to attract newcomers. No, not at all. Paul and Silas didn't set out to create an organization or an event, they went to where people gathered and began having spiritual conversations. They let the gospel do the work. That's when the first person in the Philippians church is converted.

They're not done yet though. They didn't make a charter and bylaws, or file paperwork with the city. Instead, they recognized where someone was in need and offered help. Paul was a scholar; he could have found religious people to debate with. Paul was a Roman citizen, so he could have asked for a meeting with the officials to gain clout. Most importantly though, Paul was a follower of Jesus, so he sought out those who were in need.

Paul focused on the people, not the organization, or the buildings, or the advertising. So of course, God blessed this approach with people by the droves! Wrong again, instead of an easy victory Paul and Silas were taken to court, beaten with sticks, and thrown into jail. Planting churches isn't easy. It's a slow process where you often pay a price even for doing the right thing. That's why we do so much to support our church planting partners. When they hit difficult times, we want to be there with encouragement, man power and lots of resources. This is one of the many things we're following Jesus in to advance the Gospel!

# DISCUSSION GUIDE: MARCH 8, 2026

## WEEK SIX: PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

This week we learned about what it means to “grow” in our faith. We also learned about taking the posture of humility as we serve and analyze ourselves. Finally, we talked about how we desperately need to guard our minds against the onslaught of an ever encroaching world. Today, Pastor John will go into further depth explaining what it means to suffer and endure hardship in the name of Jesus. Pay close attention to what you can do to support and encourage others as they go through difficult times.

### ACTION STEP

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How will I live out the action step this week?

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# SERMON NOTES

[illegible]

# CONNECT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK 6

- Paul begins a section on suffering and hardship with a command to rejoice. How can we still rejoice even in difficult times? Have you ever had a bad situation where you were still able to find joy and hope?
- Several times in this passage, Paul uses the phrase "confidence in the flesh." What does that phrase mean? What does it look like in our time to have "confidence in the flesh?" Where should we place our confidence instead? How do we do that?
- Paul had many achievements, studies, and qualifications that ultimately helped him along the way in ministry, yet he says he counts it all as "dung" so that he may gain Christ. Does this mean we should quit going to school and work so we can know Jesus better? How can we count all things as loss and still live our day to day lives?
- At the beginning of this passage, Paul warns the Philippians church to watch out for the false teachers and evil workers. The Judaizers of his time believed in salvation by following the law. The Pharisees believed they were saved because of their ethnicity and ancestry. The mystery cults believed Jesus was just a spirit who gave guidance. Do we have similar false teachings in our culture? How are they phrased and presented differently to us?
- How can you comfort and encourage someone who is going through difficulty this week?

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# WEEK SEVEN

## DAY 1: PHILIPPIANS 1

UUPG Prayer Focus: Manga Kanuri in Nigeria / Rohingya in Saudi Arabia

Have you ever had an unexpected difficulty? You had a plan. It was well thought out. You felt really good about what you were going to accomplish and then something went wrong. It's happened to all of us, and it will probably happen again. That type of situation can often feel extremely unfair, especially if what we were planning involved missions or evangelism. It's very easy in a situation like that to get frustrated, give up, or even blame God for not facilitating your plan.

What if that difficulty was actually an opportunity? This is actually a recurring idea in the book of Philippians. Paul gathered his mission partners and wanted to go to Asia, but the Holy Spirit forbade him. He tried several other directions and was blocked in those as well. It would have been really easy for Paul to just give up, but instead he kept trying new directions and ended up planting the church in Phillipi. He was probably deeply disappointed when his first plans fell through, but he had partners with him, and he trusted Jesus, so he was able to endure the difficulty because of his connection to Christ and the church.

We see a similar situation in chapter 1 of his letter to the Philippians. Paul has given his life to sharing the Gospel, but because of his efforts he has ended up under arrest in Roman custody. It would have been easy for Paul to feel betrayed in this moment and ask God why He didn't offer protection and freedom, after all Paul was out doing God's work. This, however, is part of the wisdom that Paul is offering to his friends in the Philippian Church. Paul is mature enough in his faith to trust God even in the detours and difficulties. He's letting the Philippians know that his imprisonment has resulted in the Gospel moving forward, both among the local believers and even among the Roman guards.

Paul is showing the Philippian church, and us by extension, that when we trust in God our perspective changes and we can see everything, even the unexpected detours, as an opportunity to advance the Gospel. So, this week, when your plans get a little off track, take a moment and look for opportunities to share the Gospel with those around you.

Why are we so attached to our own plans when God knows more than us?

How can you train yourself to look for Gospel opportunities in difficult circumstances?



## DAY 2: PHILIPPIANS 2

UUPG Prayer Focus: Hima in Uganda / Lonar in India

Every now and then, we come across a verse that really steps on our toes. Philippians 2 contains several of those verses. For most of us, the call to do everything without grumbling or complaining is an almost insurmountable task. There is something about our human nature that causes us to look at our circumstances, the actions of others, or even the choices we've made and just start complaining. Maybe it's because we had a particular vision in our mind and the reality doesn't look exactly like we want it. Maybe it's because we're insecure so we make ourselves feel better by poorly evaluating everyone else's effort. Maybe it's because we just want things to work in the best and most efficient way possible and we're frustrated. Regardless of why, our natural human tendency is to grumble and complain whenever something isn't perfect.

Now, we won't actually admit that we're complaining. We'll call it venting and then go off on a tangent about how we could do it better. We'll excuse our own rude condescension as "just telling the truth." We might even have the audacity to call our grumbling a "prayer request." Neither God, nor the world around us is fooled by our sad attempts to reclassify our arrogant and entitled attitudes we often fall into. This is why we have to be very thorough in our own self-analysis. We need to be honest with ourselves when our attitudes fall

short and don't reflect the joy and humility of someone who has received eternal forgiveness.

No, I'm not talking about embracing toxic positivity and pretending that everything is great. We've done that far too often to cover our mistakes, rewrite history, and ignore injustice. We're not talking about putting on a fake smile or dismissing the pain of others. We're talking about having the right perspective on our difficulties. Paul didn't enjoy being imprisoned. I doubt he had a great time being shipwrecked. The anger and frustration over false teaching is evident in almost every letter he writes. However, Paul also continually reminds us that none of these temporary problems will seem significant when we stand face to face with Jesus on the brink of eternity. (Romans 8:18!!!)

So, don't be afraid to acknowledge difficulty. Don't dismiss or overlook the struggles of the people we're called to love. Yet at the same time greet all of these problems with the knowledge that this world is temporary, and our hope is found on the other side of this life in the presence of Jesus. The call to stop grumbling and complaining isn't a call to ignore reality, it's a call to live in the reality of the kingdom where we will live in our complete form unseparated from the love of Jesus for all eternity.

- Why do you think complaining starts so easily? Why is it so hard to stop?

- What's one complaint you can change your perspective on this week?

## DAY 3: PHILIPPIANS 3

UUPG Prayer Focus: Aoka in China / Rath in India

Following Jesus can be hard work. It requires constant self-evaluation. It requires us to make sacrifices and put others first. It requires us to draw moral distinctions and live in a way that may cause us to be left out in a world of consumerism, pleasure seeking, and self-justification. Most of all it's hard, because once you know the truth you can never go back, you know you have to pick up that cross and follow every single day. When this gets difficult, we start to think "when will I get there?" "When will I finally be a good Christian?" Well... I have good news and bad news.

The good news is that you're not being graded. God loves you at your best, but He also sent Jesus, who was willing to die for you at your worst. Your salvation, and your value have nothing to do with how good you're doing, they have everything to do with Jesus and what He has done for you. That's why we can rest. That's why we can have joy in the middle of a burning world that seems to be equal parts suffering and absurdity. Your motivation to keep on going is Jesus, because He's already won and He decided to share His victory with you.

The bad news comes from those earlier questions. "When will I get there?" "When will I finally be a good Christian?" You won't. There is no version of you in this life that will ever be able to say "Alright, glad I figured out that Christianity thing. Now I can move on to something else." Each and every one of us will have something to learn, something to change, and something to work on until the day we die.

"Wow... thanks for the uplifting message bro..." I know, it can sound difficult, but that's Paul's message in the middle of a book where he's focused on joy. In chapter 3, verses 12-14 Paul tells us that he has definitely not made it yet. He's not "reached the goal." At the same time He does get to look at his life and see that he's closer to Jesus today than he was yesterday and that's enough to keep him going. Paul is able to find comfort and motivation in the small lessons the Holy Spirit has shown him, and he's able to find joy in this process because in the end his reward is certain: he gets to live for eternity with Jesus.

He's also able to have joy in the moment, because he knows he's not alone in this process. Paul gets to do this as part of a community that has no geographical or national boundaries. A community that transcends time. A community that bridges all gaps in culture, race, and identity. So yes, it's a difficult task to follow Jesus, but we get to do this together and our victory is assured because Jesus has already won.

- What is the hardest part about daily Christian living for you?
- How can you encourage a fellow church member to continue on in their walk?

## **DAY 4: PHILIPPIANS 4**

UUPG Prayer Focus: Kho in Pakistan / Deaf Afghans in Afghanistan

As we've said numerous times throughout this study, one of the primary themes in Philippians is partnership. It's clear that Paul sees the Philippian church as if they are walking beside him in everything he does. It's this idea of connection and fellowship that gives him the motivation to remain in the world and continue on with his mission. At the end of chapter 4 he reiterates this affection for the Philippians and even tells them about how their concern continually comforts and motivates him. Let's keep in mind, this is Paul. Paul who happily gets beaten, imprisoned, and threatened for the Gospel. Paul is saying that he needs and craves encouragement.

If someone like Paul, who has spoken to Jesus face to face, needs this type of encouragement, then how much more do our missionaries and church planters need the same encouragement. Paul took the time to write a letter and then have someone walk for months at a time, risking their very lives

just to communicate encouragement back and forth. We live in a world where we can communicate instantly with almost anyone in the world. We often lament the woes of technology, and rightfully so, but we must also take advantage of the tools we're being given to support the kingdom.

Let's be practical today and make a list of the things we can do to support our missionaries and church planters. You could write them an email letting them know how you're praying for them. You could send them a text message telling them how much you appreciate what they are doing to spread the Gospel. You could send them a gift card or offer to financially support their ministry just like the Philippian church did for Paul. If you're geographically close to them you could babysit their kids, help with their housework, or even just take them a meal. Whether it's you alone, or even an entire group, you can do so many things to support our missionaries and church planters. It's not just nice, it's not just a good deed, it's the biblical model for encouraging those who are making huge personal sacrifices to advance the Gospel to the ends of the Earth.

- How can you support an international missionary this week?
- How can you support a local or North American church planter this week?

## DAY 5: ACTS 16:25-34

UUPG Prayer Focus: Moroccan Arabs in Western Sahara /  
Jordanian Arabs in Kuwait

Day 5: (Acts 16:25-34) At this point you and I would have probably given up. If Paul was a 21st century westerner, then we would probably be sending a rescue team after him. He's sitting in a jail just for trying to plant a church... and he's still not giving up. Paul is rejoicing because he has the opportunity to be part of this mission. It's right then, that the earth shakes and the walls crumble. Paul and Silas can walk free! Instead, they choose to stay. They are willing to give their own freedom just to show mercy and honor to the guard that is watching over them.

Church planting, evangelism, and discipleship are tasks. They ask a lot of us, and when we get even the slightest chance to have a victory, we take it. Paul, however, teaches us an important lesson right here. When we become servants and ambassadors of the church, we leverage our benefits for the sake of those we can bring to Jesus. Paul could have been free and still praised God, but instead he chose to look around and see who else he could offer that blessing to at that moment. Because he chose to do this. A Roman Guard and his entire family came to the Lord! We all have moments of blessing in our lives. What blessing and privileges can you leverage to show someone the love of Jesus?

# DISCUSSION GUIDE: MARCH 15, 2026

## WEEK SEVEN: PHILIPPIANS 3:12-4:1

This week we talked about how to shift our perspective and learn to see difficulty as opportunity. This is one more way we understand the total theme of the book. Sometimes having joy in the midst of difficulty is about changing the opportunities we are looking for. We also talked about the difficult work of continually following Jesus and understanding our eternal responsibilities in a temporary world. Finally we spent some time discussing how we can practically support missionaries and church planters as our partners in ministry. Today we will take a deeper look at what it means to understand how this world is temporary and how our focus is different as believers. Pay close attention and make good distinctions between where our priorities should be and what is ultimately a distraction.

### ACTION STEP

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How will I live out the action step this week?

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## SERMON NOTES

[illegible]

## CONNECT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK 7

- Have you ever had a task or a goal that took months or even years to complete? Did you lose interest and come back? How did you try and stick with this goal over such a long term? Paul says that he had not “taken hold of it” yet in his walk with Jesus. How can we stay focused on a task that won’t be complete in our lifetime?
- Although Paul says he hasn’t “arrived,” he can point to specific changes he’s made and ways his perspective has shifted (verses 13 and 14). Where have you grown and matured in your faith? How does your life look different than it did 5 or 10 years ago?
- Paul describes the “enemies of the cross” as being distracted by the temporary things of this world. How do we take our temporary responsibilities in this world seriously while still focusing on the proper eternal goals?
- In verse 17 Paul suggests that we imitate him as we follow Jesus. Who are some mentors and inspirations in your life? How have they taught you about following Jesus?

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# WEEK EIGHT

## DAY 1: PHILIPPIANS 1

UUPG Prayer Focus: South African Muslims in South Africa /  
Deaf Poles in Poland

There are times where we have to be very specific about what the Bible means by certain statements. Philippians one contains one of those verses. In verse 17 of chapter 1 Paul says that it doesn't matter if some preach Christ out of selfish ambition because either way Christ is proclaimed. He asks, "why does it matter?" Many have used this verse to let the false teachers of our day off the hook. People often look at prosperity preachers like Joel Osteen, or Creflo Dollar and say, "Well it's ok, they're still telling people about Jesus." People will excuse universalists like Rob Bell saying, "it's ok, he's just asking good questions about Jesus." To apply Paul's question of "why does it matter?" to teachers like this however is a misunderstanding and a rejection of the context.

This is why we have to look at the very specific wording that Paul uses in these verses. If someone preaches or shares true and good doctrine about Jesus, but has bad motives, then let us agree with Paul in that instance and say, "who cares?" This however does not apply to false teachers who twist doctrine and teach lies about Jesus. Prosperity preachers, white supremacists, universalists, cults, and those who deny the supernatural aren't preaching a message that can glorify

Jesus, because they are deceiving the world and telling people that Jesus is someone He is not. We can't know someone's inner motivation, so we excuse a bad attitude if they are preaching biblical truth about our God, but we can analyze the message that someone is preaching and if it doesn't agree with the Bible about who Jesus is then it's our job as believers to distance ourselves from that message and denounce it.

This is why Paul warns and condemns false teachers in everything he writes. He knows that a lie about who Jesus is can condemn someone for all eternity, while a bad motivation will only affect the person who holds it. "Ok... but how do we know the difference?" This is why we are called to devote ourselves to study, and to partnership. We can't know how to distinguish truth from a lie if we've not studied the truth. We can always be misguided, confused, and manipulated, but if we have the type of Gospel partners that Paul is talking about in Philippians then we have a network of fellow believers to help us discern the truth and stay on the right path. So, in a world of televangelists, false teachers, political pundits, internet trolls, and scammers, let's embrace our study and our community. Let's be able to spot the difference between a bad attitude and a false doctrine because that could literally save someone's eternity.

- What false teachings are easy to spot? Which ones are more tricky?
- What steps are you taking to guard yourself from false teaching?

## DAY 2: PHILIPPIANS 2

UUPG Prayer Focus: Saudi Arabs in Kuwait / Pomak in Turkiye

Day 2: (Philippians 2) When it comes to the cosmic equation of salvation, you and I only contribute one thing... sin. It's not fun to hear, but it's a truth that we must come to terms with, or we will start to believe that Jesus owes us something. We've stated several times now throughout this study, that understanding what Jesus did for us should inspire service, humility, and the willingness to sacrifice. We learn to hate the sin we've corrupted ourselves with, but we don't take it as far as hating ourselves, because we're still people that Jesus loves and values enough to have died for on the cross. It's a hard tightrope to walk.

Each of us must deal with our own sin, and at times we may even have to lovingly correct our fellow believers and church members, but the majority of our time dealing with others should be spent in service and encouragement to others, as we each deal with our own sin. Paul proves this in Philippians 2 as he talks about Epaphroditus. He tells the Philippian church to treat him with great honor because of the struggle and sacrifice that he's willingly undertaking to spread the Gospel throughout the world.

Here we have a simple blueprint for praise and encouragement. We accept a humble attitude about ourselves, but we see

each and every person around us like Jesus, we focus on what we love about them and willingly give our lives for them like they were our own family. When we see someone growing and contributing to the church, we make sure they hear how obvious it is that God is working through them. When we see people like church planters and missionaries making huge sacrifices, and taking big risks to share the Gospel, we treat them with honor and support them at all costs.

The best news of all is that this isn't even difficult. It costs us nothing to give a word of encouragement. With modern technology it's simple to let a missionary or a church planter know you're praying for them. By giving to mission offerings you can physically support our mission partners in their day-to-day lives. By going on a mission trip, you can physically be there and join our partners in their efforts to tell the world about Jesus. So, let's stay humble about ourselves, then praise and honor our fellow church members and mission partners with reckless abandon. If you'd like to be connected with one of our mission partners to support and encourage them then please let us know and we'll get you in touch!

- How can we be humble without hating ourselves? How can we praise others while still keeping Jesus above all?
- What will you do this week to support and encourage someone?

## DAY 3: PHILIPPIANS 3

UUPG Prayer Focus: Xamir in Ethiopia / Palestinian Arabs in Qatar

Throughout this study, we've had to distinguish a number of fine lines where believers must walk in between two extremes without gravitating toward either side. That's because Christianity is not (and never has been) a form of extremism. It's never been about taking one idea and pushing it as far as it will go. Christianity has always been about rejecting the answers of the world and living in an actual and realized version of how God intended us to live and interact. At the end of chapter 3 we encounter this same type of idea where we must walk in the middle between two extremes.

In verses 18 through 21 of chapter 3, Paul explains that many still live as enemies of the cross. His description of their lifestyle is that "their God is their stomach, their glory is their shame, and they are focused on Earthly things." If we stop and think about this description, it's very different from how we would normally think of "enemies of the cross". We would expect an enemy to be described as violent, devious, or aggressive, but Paul is not describing someone with malevolent intent. He's describing someone who is... distracted.

"Their God is their stomach," it's a little too close to home for me personally. I love food, and I definitely look forward to

almost every meal. If we go too far to one side, we become like the monks who abandoned the world and thought they could perfect their morality through self-imposed suffering. Their isolation may have taught dependence on God, but they achieved this at the cost of participating in His mission of evangelism. On the other hand (especially in our culture) it's easy to fall into the pursuit of excess. We see how tasty everything looks and decide that if this world is temporary, we'll just find as much pleasure as we can while we're here. Then we chase money, food, and luxury while others suffer. Both are ways of death, for us and for those we refuse to serve. Instead, we should greet every joy, every meal, every good thing as a blessing from God. Gratitude isn't just a single action; it can be a powerful witness as well.

"Their glory is their shame." If we reject the ways of God to build our own kingdom then we are no different than those who built the tower of Babel thinking they had surpassed their need for God. I am deeply thankful for the blessing of medicine, technology, infrastructure, art, and recreation, but if those things are the final goal, then we have wasted our time. Yes, we should celebrate advancement, but we should do so by sharing those benefits with everyone and explaining that they are but a shadow of the glory to come. At the same time, we can also go too far the opposite way. If we begin to find our own glory in how focused, we are on our own spirituality then we immediately become like the Pharisees who believed they earned it themselves and no longer needed God. Either



way, what they thought they took glory in was ultimately their shame.

"They are focused on Earthly things." There was a movement that came to be called "the social Gospel." This described churches who no longer cared about sharing the message of Jesus as long as they took care of the physical needs of others. They were focused on feeding people, but then actively chose not to share the Gospel. They would cloth people but never invite them to believe. As believers we absolutely need to care for the needs of people. Jesus said over and over to care for the sick and the poor, but He also commanded us to share the kingdom of God with them at the same time.

Sadly, right now we also have a lot of people in our culture who are perfectly willing to abandon compassion, morality, and even decency in the name of political power, economic prowess, white supremacy, and physical security. They are willing to slander, harass, belittle, oppress, imprison, and even kill those who philosophically disagree with them. Many people are even undertaking these actions and claiming them to be inherently Christian or claiming that Christianity is the property of their particular culture. They claim things in the name of Jesus that Jesus would have never tolerated.

Even worse, we have many in our churches who say "well, it's bad, but that's not my problem because I'm going to Heaven

eventually.” This type of apathy was never to be tolerated in the church and is definitely not what Paul is talking about here. Yes, this world is not our home, but we have been given numerous responsibilities in this world. We are called to seek good for every single person in this world, and to do that we must care about them as people with physical, spiritual, social, and emotional needs. Our home lies on the other side of this existence, but we must care for each person who is here right now, or else they may be left behind because of our apathy. We can’t be obsessed with temporal desires, and we can’t be apathetic toward our responsibilities here. As believers, we have to walk this difficult line between such deadly extremes.

- What distracts you in this world?
- Where do you find yourself too focused? Where do you struggle with apathy?

## **DAY 4: PHILIPPIANS 4**

UUPG Prayer Focus: Comorian Nzwain in Comoros / Kui in Thailand

Today marks our final study day in Philippians. If you’ve kept up with the reading plan, then you’ve read the entire book 8 times now. I hope that you’ve allowed the Holy Spirit to show you the depth of what can be said through the writings of Scripture, as well as allowing Him to convict you about the

places in your life where this book has called you to make changes and reform your life to look more and more like Jesus.

I also hope you carry the skills we learned in the first four weeks throughout the rest of your Bible reading pursuits. By understanding first century writing methodology and tracing the themes of biblical texts we can always get a deeper understanding of what we're engaging with and take a higher level of real-life application from the pages of Scripture. I would encourage you to track the repeated words and phrases and establish the themes whenever you begin a new book study.

The first theme we found was joy. I hope you could feel Paul's joy coming off the pages as he wrote to this church he loved so dearly. This type of affection for the church is an example we could all learn from. We live in a world where churches are often treated as businesses and expected to satisfy members as customers. A return to seeing the church as a family having joy and love will go a long way in correcting many of our perceptions.

The next theme was difficulty and hardship. As believers we know this world is fallen and so suffering and pain will always be coming our way. We should use wisdom and watch our conduct to make sure we aren't the authors of our own suffering, and when the inevitable difficulties of a corrupted

world do hit us, we should always remember we are not alone because Jesus walked this world and embraced the difficulty with us.

The final theme is partnership. Paul can have that joy even in the middle of his difficult situation because he has the Philippians by his side for encouragement and they are all equally partnered with Jesus. This theme reminds us of what the church should be. We should not be a group of strangers that exchange polite rituals once a week, but a group of people unified and focused on the mission of Jesus. We should show this by our consistent and unwavering attitude of hope in Jesus.

Above all, I hope you gained more than knowledge from this study. Paul asks the Philippian church to follow him as he follows Jesus. We've spent 8 weeks learning what that looks like. Let's do everything we can to put it into practice.

What is your biggest takeaway from this study?

What did you learn that you're actively putting into practice?

## DAY 5: ACTS 16:35-40

UUPG Prayer Focus: Rwandese in Uganda / Deaf Moroccans in Morocco

Here we see the end of Paul's missionary journey in Philippi. Paul's switch-in tone is a great treat for the reader. His audacious taunt of the magistrates gives the reader an insight into Paul's character and shows his discernment of situational tactics. He was so gentle and sacrificial with the jailer because he knew it was an opportunity to share the Gospel, but he stood boldly and called the magistrates to account because he knew they would think twice about harassing the church after this. Many of our church planters and missionaries often have to use the same type of situational judgment on the field. May we pray for them daily and ask the Spirit to guide them when they encounter these situations.

Paul also knew that he needed to leave the city for the good of the church. I'm sure he wanted to stay for a while to teach and guide them, but for their own good he had to leave. This wasn't just a practical decision though; it showed enormous trust in God. Paul's newly planted church consisted of a dye merchant, a recently freed slave, and a roman jailer. As he stated in his letter to the Philippians, he knew that God would be faithful to complete the work He began."

Many of our church planters and missionaries do the same. They often have to build relationships, share the Gospel, and trust the Spirit to continue leading the people. This is emotionally hard but cultivates their trust in God. This should also encourage us that every single person is important in the mission. The newly founded Philippian church probably wasn't the dream team of leadership, but as we've seen over and over; that's how God works. I hope this gives you the confidence to know that all you need to be in the pursuit of the Kingdom is willing. Offer your time, resources, and talents to advance the Gospel and God will be faithful to complete the work He began.

# DISCUSSION GUIDE: MARCH 22, 2026

## WEEK EIGHT: PHILIPPIANS 4:2-23

In our final week of this Philippians study, we learned about the difference between teaching with bad motivation as opposed to teaching improper doctrine. We discussed practical ways to show encouragement, and talked about how to focus on heaven without being distracted by temporary concerns. Finally we recapped the overall thematic emphasis of Philippians. Listen carefully this week as our pastor concludes this study and tells us how we can live out the lessons we've learned as a church.

### ACTION STEP

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How will I live out the action step this week?

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# SERMON NOTES

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## CONNECT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK 8

- Paul's first and most direct command in this passage is that Euodia and Syntyche need to get along. Have you had conflict with a fellow church member? How are you resolving that conflict? One of our core values is "we over me," how do we live this out in terms of conflict?
- Paul also commands the rest of the church to help these two women resolve their conflict and work together. How can you hold your fellow Connect class and church members to resolve their conflicts? How can you help hold fellow church members accountable for resolving their conflicts?
- In verse 8 Paul gives very specific instructions on how to guard your mind and your thoughts. In our time, what specific dangers exist that try to corrupt our thoughts? How can we use Paul's advice to guard against these dangers?
- In verse 10 through 20 Paul talks about receiving gifts of support from the Philippian church. He says this practically benefits him, and simultaneously trains and blesses the Philippians for giving. How are you personally giving to missions? What practical steps are you taking to support missionaries and church planters?
- What are your biggest takeaways from this series? What changes have you made to your daily life from what you've learned?

