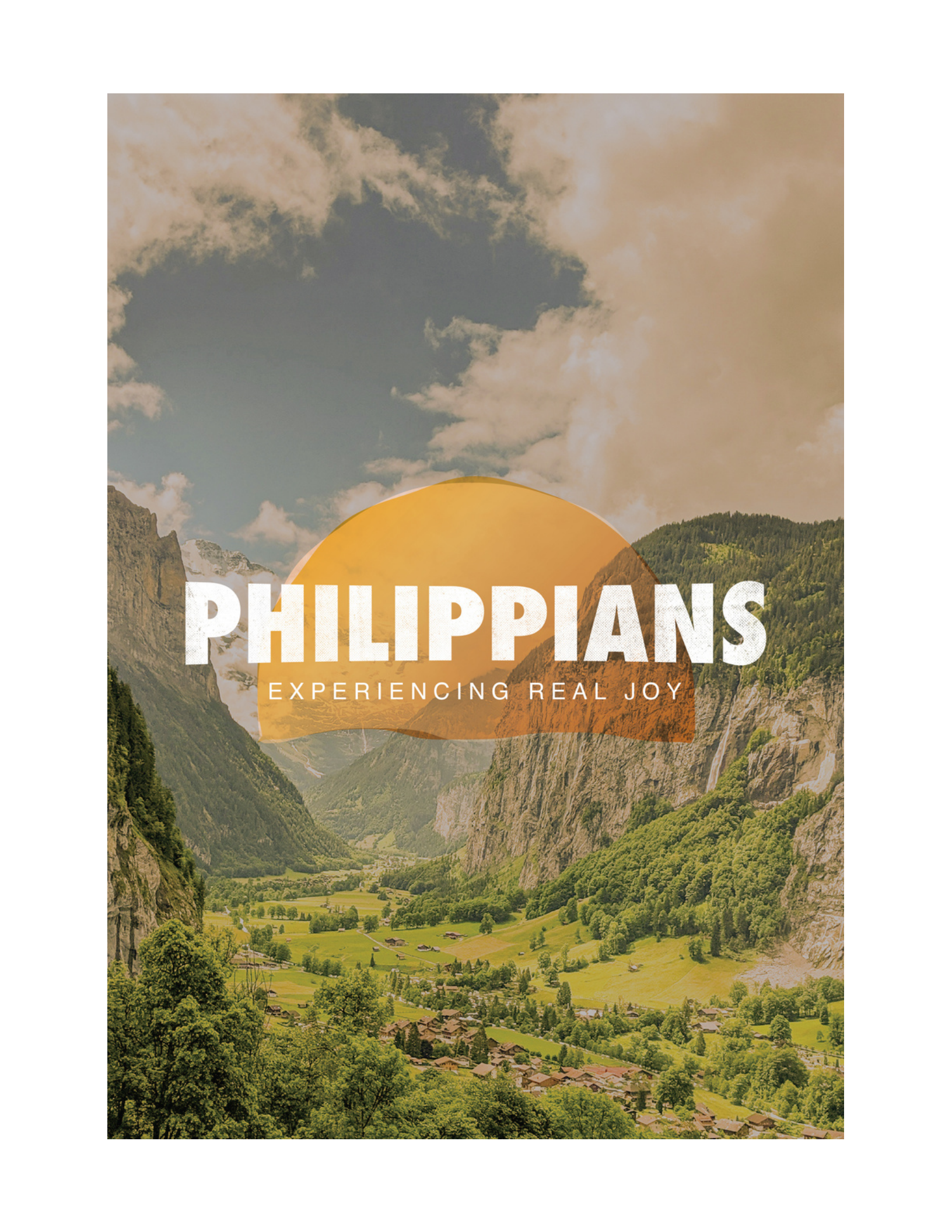




PHILIPPIANS

EXPERIENCING REAL JOY

*“REJOICE IN THE LORD
ALWAYS. I WILL SAY IT
AGAIN: REJOICE!”*



PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION

How are you feeling? Happy, sad, tired, exasperated, or (hopefully not) bored? Our complicated lives bring us many wonderful experiences, causes for celebration and gratitude. But we also suffer many painful blows. Life is a mixture of happiness and sorrow.

In the midst of these various experiences, most of us are seeking happiness. We want to experience a good life. However, almost no one can agree on how to find lasting happiness. Even when we seem to have found it, an unforeseen pain seems to snatch it away again. Our pursuit of happiness is often futile or fleeting. We have lost the ability to pursue deep, lasting satisfaction because we chase the shallow, false pleasures of sin. We have lost real joy.

What does joy really mean anyway? The Bible speaks about joy frequently, promising it as the result of knowing God. Psalm 16 promises,

*[The LORD] makes known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (Psalm 16:11)*

But why can real joy seem so elusive?

Paul's letter to the church at Philippi shows us the key to experiencing real joy even as we endure the suffering of this life. Paul wrote one of his most encouraging and joyful letters, even as he was waiting in a Roman prison and facing the real possibility of execution. Despite these circumstances, he shows the secret of being content (4:12), delighting in the advance of the gospel (1:15-18), willingly renouncing earthly honors (3:7-11) and even facing death without fear (1:21). He experiences joy amid sorrows.

Philippians shows us true joy is not based on distractions, comforts, or security. It is found in union with Christ. If we have Christ, then we can consider everything else loss. If we have Christ then we can find contentment in plenty and scarcity. If we have Christ, then we can declare with Paul that to live is Christ and to die is gain. Then we can experience real joy.



PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION

Using This Study

The next thirteen sessions move through the book of Philippians following our sermon series. Each week includes:

- **The Sunday Sermon** which teaches expositionally through Philippians.
- **Teaching Videos** that provide biblical and theological insight.
- **Discussion Questions** to encourage conversation and application

Watch the sermon and then read through the passage before your group meeting. Then write the sermon's big idea on your discussion guide.

Each session pairs a section of Philippians with a corresponding scripture passage. Read through this passage with your group and then answer the discussion questions together.

Our prayer is that these passages, sermons, and discussion questions help you to grow in your relationship with Christ, and experience the real joy that is found only in Him.



READING PLAN

Session	Sermon Passage	Group Passage	Memory Verse
Week 1	Philippians 1:1-6	Acts 16:11-40	Philippians 1:6
Week 2	Philippians 1:7-11	Romans 12:1-2	Romans 12:2
Week 3	Philippians 1:12-19	Acts 28:16-31	Philippians 1:18
Week 4	Philippians 1:20-26	2 Corinthians 5:1-10	Philippians 1:20-21
Week 5	Philippians 1:27- 2:4	Acts 4:13-37	Philippians 1:27a
Week 6	Philippians 2:5-11	Hebrews 12:1-3	Hebrews 12:1b-2
Week 7	Philippians 2:12-18	1 John 5:1-5	1 John 5:2-3
Week 8	Philippians 2:19-30	1 Timothy 4:11-12	1 Timothy 4:12
Week 9	Philippians 3:1-9	Matthew 13:44-50	Philippians 3:7-8a
Week 10	Philippians 3:10-14	2 Timothy 4:1-8	Philippians 3:10-11
Week 11	Philippians 3:15- 4:3	Hebrews 10:19-25	Hebrews 10:24-25
Week 12	Philippians 4:4-9	Matthew 6:25-34	Philippians 4:4-6
Week 13	Philippians 4:10-13	John 4:1-15	Philippians 4:11-12
Conclusion	Philippians 4:14-23	<i>*No Group*</i>	-



WEEK 1

GOD'S WORK IN THE PHILIPPIANS' LIVES

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-6

1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:
2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God
every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. 5 because of
your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he
who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Acts 16:11-40** and discuss the following questions with your group. These verses describe the founding of the church at Philippi.

1. Who are some of the people Paul and Silas interact with in this passage? Describe their interactions with the three members of the church (Lydia, the slave woman, and the jailer).
2. What might these interactions tell us about the church at Philippi? What challenges might they have faced after Paul's departure?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

Read Philippians 1:1-6

3. How do we see God 'beginning the good work' in the three individuals from Acts? What changes did they experience because of the gospel? How might this have affected their lives in the future?
4. Where do you see God continuing the good work He began in your life (see Phil 1:6)?

In Philippians 1:4, Paul tells the Philippians that he consistently prays for them with joy. This will become a major theme in the letter.

5. How would you define joy in your own words? What do you think leads Paul to pray for the Philippians with joy?
6. Write down one way these passages should increase joy in your life?

MEMORY VERSE

[I am] confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6 NIV



WEEK 2

DEVELOPING DISCERNMENT

PHILIPPIANS 1:7-11

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 1:7-11** and discuss the following questions with your group. Here Paul continues to express his confidence that God will continue working in the Philippians' lives (see Phil 1:6).

1. What are some reasons why Paul feels such affection for the Philippians? How are Paul and the Philippians connected?
2. As Paul prays for the Philippians, what do you notice about the content and focus of his prayers? How could his example influence the way you pray for people in your life?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

3. What do you notice about discernment in Paul's prayer? How do we develop discernment? What does it produce in believers? What should it cause believers to pursue?

Read **Romans 12:1-2**. In this passage, Paul also describes discernment.

4. What are some similarities between Paul's description of discernment in Philippians and Romans? What more do we learn about discernment from Romans?
5. The opposite of being transformed is remaining where we are - conformed to the pattern of the world. Where do you see Christians having a hard time turning from the pattern of the world?
6. In what practical ways can Christian discernment influence your daily decisions, relationships and priorities? Can you think of an example in your own life?
7. How might growing in discernment increase joy in your life?
8. Why is it often difficult to know God's will in our lives? According to Philippians 1:7-11 and Romans 12:1-2, what helps us to recognize God's will?

MEMORY VERSE

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 NIV



WEEK 3

JOY IN THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-19

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 1:12-19** and discuss the following questions with your group.

1. What challenges is Paul facing in Philippians 1:12-19? How would you describe Paul's attitude in this situation? What do you think allows him to have this attitude?
2. What do you notice about Paul's passion for the gospel? In your own life, how do love for Christ and fear of others compete when you have opportunities to share your faith?
3. What are some common distractions from the gospel and its proclamation?

Read **Acts 28:16-31**. These verses describe Paul's imprisonment in Rome which is probably where he wrote the letter to the Philippians.

4. Based on Acts 28 and Philippians 1, what ministry opportunities did imprisonment open for Paul? How did he capitalize on these opportunities?
5. Despite imprisonment, Paul was able to share the gospel with "boldness and without hindrance (vv30-31.)" When have you been able to share the gospel with boldness and joy? How do you think you can grow in your boldness with the gospel?
6. Paul was clearly hindered in some ways - he was in jail! What do you think the text means when it tells us Paul proclaimed Christ "without hindrance?" How can this encourage us when we face distractions and difficulties?
7. Think of the opportunities God has given you to share the gospel. Pray for an opportunity to joyfully share Christ with someone this week.

MEMORY VERSE

The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Philippians 1:18 NIV



WEEK 4

JOY IN THE FACE OF DEATH

PHILIPPIANS 1:20-26

20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 2:20-26** and discuss the following questions with your group. As a prisoner in Rome, Paul faced the real threat of execution. In these verses, Paul considers the possibilities of either release or death.

1. What does Paul consider to be the advantages of dying? What are the advantages of continuing to live?
2. How should this passage shape a Christian's attitude toward death? How would you compare this mentality to the attitudes about death that we see in our culture?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

Read **2 Corinthians 5:1-10**. Here, Paul once again compares our earthly life against our eventual departure to be with Christ

3. How does Paul describe our present life? How can this description give us a different perspective on our lives?
4. Paul longs to depart and be with Christ. What do you see in this passage to explain why Paul sees this as the more desirable option? What do Christians have to look forward to at the resurrection?
5. In verse 5, Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as a “deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” How does this statement provide joy to believers in both this life and the next?
6. Paul also affirms the value and importance of our lives here and now. How are Christians to approach the lives “in the body” (v9-10) and what does this look like practically? How does Paul’s relationship to the Philippians remind him of the value of his current life (Phil 1:24-26)?
7. How does Paul’s perspective shape the way you think about your influence in the lives of other believers?
8. What is one way you can apply these truths this week to experience the joy God offers?

MEMORY VERSE

20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:20-21 NIV



WEEK 5

JOY IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION

PHILIPPIANS 1:27-2:4

1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

2:1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 1:27-2:4** and discuss the following questions with your group.

1. Paul reminds the Philippians that they share in his ministry and should expect to face similar opposition to the gospel (v.28-29). Despite opposition they must live in a manner worthy of the gospel (v.27). What does this charge mean? Look at the rest of the passage for insight.
2. In verse 28, Paul reminds the Philippians of the ultimate fate for both believers and those who oppose the gospel. How can this encourage us when we are facing opposition?
3. In Philippians 2:1-4 Paul begins to discuss unity within the church. How does this connect to the threat of opposition described in 1:27-30? Which of the instructions from 2:1-4 sound challenging to you?

Read **Acts 4:13-35**. Here we see the early believers facing opposition from the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem.

5. When instructed to cease preaching the gospel, Peter and John refuse (Acts 4:19-20). What does this reveal about a christian approach to earthly authority? What can we learn from Peter and John's attitude and actions?
6. Read through the Christians' prayer in Acts 4:23-31. What encouraged them in the face of opposition? What about their response reveals joy, despite opposition?
7. How do the Christians in Acts 4 model the unity described by Paul in Philippians 2 (see Acts 4:32-35)? How did these Christians demonstrate joy? What can we learn from their example? As a result of these passages, what might you do differently this week?

MEMORY VERSE

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:27a NIV



WEEK 6

THE JOY OF CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 2:5-11** and discuss the following questions with your group. In these verses, Paul builds on his call for unity and humility (2:1-4), by directing the Philippians to the example of Christ.

1. Paul builds on his call for unity and humility (2:1-4), by directing the Philippians to the example of Christ. What mindset does Christ model for believers in this passage?
2. How should this lead you to rethink your relationships with other believers?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

3. What did Jesus accomplish on our behalf? In other words, what does Jesus provide for believers as a free gift? How does this change our relationship with other believers?

*Read **Hebrews 12:1-3** and discuss the following questions with your group. The book of Hebrews also directs believers to look to the example set by Jesus.*

4. What does it mean that Jesus is the “author and perfecter” of our faith? How does this inform our relationship with Jesus?
5. What does it look like to “throw off everything that hinders” (12:1) as a follower of Jesus? What are common hindrances and sinful entanglements?
6. How does Hebrews describe Jesus’ attitude toward suffering? How does this passage connect with the description from Philippians 2?
7. Based on these two passages, what attitudes should followers of Jesus have?

MEMORY VERSE

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1b-2 NIV



WEEK 7

JOYFUL OBEDIENCE

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 2:12-18** and discuss the following questions with your group.

1. What does the “therefore” in Philippians 1:12 refer to? How do the instructions in this passage build off of the description of Jesus in Philippians 2:5-11?
2. Look again at Philippians 2:12-13. What observations can you make about God’s work and human obedience in a believer’s life. How can we explain the connection between the two?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

3. At the end of Philippians 2:14-18, Paul says we should be glad and rejoice. What are some reasons he gives in the preceding verses for that joy?

Read **1 John 5:1-5**. Like Philippians 2:12-18, 1 John 5:1-5 describe the importance of joyful obedience for followers of Jesus.

4. How does John describe the lives of those who believe in Jesus? What visible evidence should identify Jesus' followers?
5. What might obeying God's commands be considered a burden? In your own words, why do you think John disagrees that obedience to God is burdensome?
6. How can 1 John 5:1-5 help us to avoid the "grumbling and arguing" described in Philippians 2:14?

Read **Matthew 11:28-29** - "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

7. Knowing that obedience to God's commands brings joy, freedom, and rest for our souls, how might this perspective shape the way you go about your daily life as a believer?

MEMORY VERSE

² This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. ³ In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome...

1 John 5:2-3 NIV



WEEK 8

MODELS OF FAITHFULNESS

PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26 For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29 So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 2:19-30** and discuss the following questions with your group. In *Philippians 2:19-30*, Paul updates his readers on upcoming travel plans, while also providing two examples of the “manner of life” he has been describing (*Phil 1:27-2:18*).

1. Look at Paul’s description of Timothy. How does he serve as an example to the Philippians?
2. Look at Paul’s description of Epaphroditus. How does he serve as a model for the Philippians? How did he suffer for the Philippians and for the gospel?
3. In fact, Paul says Epaphroditus “almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.” How would you explain this kind of love Epaphroditus has for Paul, the Philippians, and the gospel?
4. In v29, we see that Paul expects the Philippians to “welcome him (Epaphroditus) in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him.” People like Epaphroditus and Timothy who are beautiful examples of faithful Christians. Why do you think this would produce joy in the Philippians?

Read **1 Timothy 4:11-12**. Christ is the ultimate example of faithfulness, but other believers are also needed as examples of joyful obedience to Christ. In his letter to Timothy, Paul instructs the young leaders to both teach the truth and model the truth to fellow believers (1 Tim 4:11-12).

5. Why do you think human examples are helpful for believers? Share an example of someone who has been a good example for you. How do we find good models to follow?
6. In what areas is Timothy instructed to provide an example? Why is it important for his conduct to match his teaching? What happens when these two do not match?
7. How can you serve as a faithful model to others? Choose one area to focus on this week. Spend a few minutes praying for this.

MEMORY VERSE

Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

1 Timothy 4:12 NIV



WEEK 9

JOY IN CHRIST ALONE

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-9

3:1 Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 3:1-9** and discuss the following questions with your group. In chapter 3, Paul warns the Philippians about Judaizers, teachers insisting that Christians needed to keep the Old Testament ceremonial laws in order to be counted righteous. They were confident of their standing before God because they strictly kept these laws.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

1. How does Paul compare and contrast himself with the Judiazers? What do these false teachers get wrong about christianity and the gospel?
2. How does Paul consider his “religious” accomplishments in comparison with “knowing Christ Jesus [his] Lord”? What kinds of accomplishments do we often place our confidence in? How might following Christ change your perspective on where to place your confidence?
3. Paul declares that our righteousness is not based on anything we do on our own, but a gift that comes through faith in Christ (see also Gal 2:1-21 and Eph 2:1-10). How might knowing this truth impact your relationship with God?
4. Look back at Philippians 3:1. What might be the connection between the command to rejoice (3:1) and the following warning against false teachers (3:2-9)?

Read **Matthew 13:44-50**. In this passage Jesus describes the kingdom of God with a series of parables.

5. What spiritual truth is Jesus communicating through these parables? What do they tell us about the gospel? How does this compare with Paul’s attitude in Philippians?
6. Look at the parable of the hidden treasure (13:44) and the parable of the hidden pearl (13:44-45). What was lost in order to obtain the valued object? What was gained? What would it look like for you to adopt the same attitude toward Christ?
7. Think about what you might be holding onto in this world that you would like to “lose” in order to “gain” more of the joy and peace Paul experienced through Christ?
8. Look at the parable of the net (13:47-50). The parable compares “good” and “bad” fish with the righteous and the wicked. What makes a person righteous or wicked according to Philippians 3? What does this parable communicate about the consequences of our decisions?

MEMORY VERSE

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

Philippians 3:7-8a NIV



WEEK 10

PURSUING CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 3:10-14

10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 3:10-14** and discuss the following questions with your group. Having described the true gospel and the righteousness found in Christ (3:1-9), Paul next describes his continued progress as a believer. This is referred to as sanctification. Let's look at some definitions:

- **Justification** = a one-time legal declaration that a believer is righteous through Christ
- **Sanctification** = a lifelong process of growing in holiness through the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

1. How is this different from being justified in Christ? Why might God want us to continue this lifelong process of growing holy?
2. What metaphor does Paul use to describe his continued progress in following Jesus? What might this “pressing toward the goal” look like in the life of a believer? What challenges have you experienced that make this difficult?

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8. Years after writing to the Philippians, Paul wrote a letter to Timothy near the end of his life. Again he speaks of pressing on toward the end of his life and ministry.

3. How does Paul charge Timothy to “press on” in his faith (2 Tim 4:1-5)? What challenges did Timothy face?
4. Near the end of his life, Paul states “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race” (2 Tim 4:7). What do you think Paul means? What is something the Lord is encouraging you to do in your sanctification progress so that you could say the same thing at the end of your life and ministry?
5. What do you notice about what Paul is looking forward to? Why do you think he can be confident in this future hope?
6. How could Paul’s attitude (2 Tim 4:6-8) encourage his protege Timothy? How does it encourage you to pursue Christ?

MEMORY VERSE

¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:10-11 NIV



WEEK 11

STANDING FIRM TOGETHER

PHILIPPIANS 3:15-4:3

3:15 All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

4:1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 3:15-4:3** and discuss the following questions with your group. In **Philippians 3:15-4:3**, Paul calls to the Philippians to stand firm together in the true gospel.

1. What are some truths that Paul uses to encourage believers? What does it look like for a believer to “stand firm” (4:1)?
2. In what ways does Paul emphasize our need for other believers in this passage? How do other believers help us to stand firm?

Read **Hebrews 10:19-25**. The book of Hebrews also instructs Christians to stand firm in the assurance of the gospel.

3. In Hebrews 10:19-25, how does the author encourage Christians? What is the source of their confidence?
4. What does this passage teach about the responsibility Christians have to each other? How have you experienced this kind of encouragement from other Christians?
5. How are you challenged to “spur one another to love and good deeds”? Describe a time when someone did this for you. Think of someone who needs this kind of encouragement and commit to meet with them.
6. What might be some reasons Christians are prone to “give up meeting together”? What consequences can this have in the lives of believers?
7. What are some ways fellowship with other believers affects our joy in Christ?

MEMORY VERSE

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV



WEEK 12

REJOICING IN THE LORD

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 4:4-9** and discuss the following questions with your group.

1. How does Paul say a believer's circumstances shape the way we experience joy, respond to worry, and approach God in prayer? What does it look like to rejoice in the Lord during difficulty? How did Paul's circumstances inform his teaching in this passage?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

2. In verses 8-9, Paul directs believers to focus their thoughts on what inspires worship of God and service to others. Which of these descriptions stands out to you? Why? How can this kind of thought impact our anxiety? How might it help us to rejoice?
3. How would you describe the role of prayer in this passage? How does Paul connect prayer to peace?

Read **Matthew 6:25-34**. Paul's instructions in *Philippians* echo Jesus' teaching from the sermon on the mount.

4. In Matthew 6:25-34, what are some images Jesus uses to teach on worry and anxiety? How do these images help us to abide by Paul's exhortation "do not be anxious about your life"?
5. What common worries do you think Jesus would mention if he were speaking to a group of present day American believers? What worries do you find yourself dwelling on?
6. How does Jesus tell us to avoid worry and build our trust in God (see especially 6:33-34)? How is this similar to Paul's instruction in *Philippians* 4:8-9?
7. What are some steps you can take this week to let go of the worries of today and experience the "peace of God"?

MEMORY VERSE

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:4-6 NIV



WEEK 13

FINDING CONTENTMENT

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-13

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

SERMON BIG IDEA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read **Philippians 4:10-13** and discuss the following questions with your group.

1. How would you define contentment, and what would you say is the relationship between contentment and joy in the Lord? What are some of the reasons we can struggle to be content?
2. Philippians 4:13 is one of the most famous Bible verses. How have you heard this verse used out of context? What does the context around the verse tell you about its true meaning?
3. What secret does Paul reveal about learning to be content, and how might this shape your perspective?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.

Read **John 4:1-15**. Here Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman at a well and offers her living water.

4. What do you observe about the types of water being discussed?
5. Read John 7:37-39 to get a fuller understanding of what Jesus means by "living water." How would you describe the gift of God that Jesus is offering her (v.10)? How would you compare the literal water to the living water He is offering?
6. Jesus uses a metaphor of physical hunger and thirst to describe people's spiritual longings. They search for many answers to their "thirst," but none can ultimately satisfy. What are some ways you have observed people trying to quench their spiritual thirst?
7. Look at John 4:23-26. What does Jesus tell us is the source of true satisfaction?
8. Where might God be inviting you to find greater contentment in Him rather than in what He has given you?

MEMORY VERSE

¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

Philippians 4:11-12 NIV



CONCLUSION

PHILIPPIANS 4:14-23

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. 17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. 22 All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

SERMON BIG IDEA

PRAYER PROMPTS

Reflect on the book of Philippians and pray through the following prompts:

- Thank the Lord for His consistent work in your life, and his faithfulness to complete what He began (Phil 1:6; 2:12-13).
- Pray that the Lord would lead you to pursue Christ above all other priorities (Phil 1:21; 3:7-11).
- Ask the Lord to help you rejoice in Christ in all circumstances, and to learn the secret of contentment in Him (Phil 4:4, 10-13).
- Pray that God would create in you a life “worthy of the Gospel” (Phil 2:27; 4:1).
- Praise God for the work of Christ, and ask that he would continue to conform you to the image and example of Christ (Phil 2:5-11).