

Philippians 1: Participant Guide

SCRIPTURE READING QUESTIONS

Before diving into the group discussion, consider these four questions as you read the text:

- **What does this passage say about God, who He is, and what He does (Father, Son, and Spirit)?**
- **What does this passage teach me about me?**
- **What comfort/challenge can I take away from this passage?**
- **How will I respond or live differently because of what I've read?**

PART 1: THE FOUNDATION

Loving God's People (The Community Lens) Paul writes with deep affection for the Philippians, noting his "partnership in the gospel" with them from the first day until now (Philippians 1:5, CSB). This reflects our "One New Family" identity where we support one another's spiritual progress.

- **Key Question:** "How are you pursuing authentic community with other believers right now?"
- **Key Question:** "What gets in the way of community with other believers?"

Looking to God's Word (The Truth Lens) Our "Wealth in Christ" is found in the certainty that "he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6, CSB). Our identity is rooted in God's faithfulness, not our own strength.

- **Key Question:** "How is God's Word challenging you?"
- **Key Question:** "What can you do to prioritize God's Word?"

PART 2: THE WALK

Listening to God's Voice (The Prayer Lens) Paul prays that the church's love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment (Philippians 1:9, CSB). Walking in the Spirit involves discerning what is best so that we may be pure and blameless.

- **Key Question:** "How is God directing you?"
- **Key Question:** "What do you need to quiet in your life to hear God better?"

Living Sent (The Mission Lens) Paul views his imprisonment as an "everyday opportunity" that has actually served to advance the gospel (Philippians 1:12, CSB). He prioritizes "sending capacity" by rejoicing whenever Christ is preached, even in difficult circumstances.

- **Key Question:** "What everyday opportunity have you used to point someone to Jesus?"
- **Key Question:** "What opportunities did you miss to tell someone about Jesus?"

GROUP PRAYER & SUMMARY

- **Closing Thought:** Philippians 1 teaches us that our identity in Christ allows us to find joy and mission in every circumstance, whether in chains or in freedom, because "to live is Christ and to die is gain."
- **Final Action:** Choose one challenging circumstance in your life this week and look for one specific way to use it as an opportunity to point someone to the hope of Jesus.

PAGE 3: FACILITATOR CHEAT SHEET

The Structural Lens

Indicative vs. Imperative: The **Indicative** (the fact) is that God is the one who began and will complete the work in us (v. 6). The **Imperative** (the command) is found in verse 27: "Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ". Lead the group to see that we live "worthy" not to earn God's favor, but because He has already secured our completion.

Facilitation Tips

- **Redirecting on Suffering:** If the group focuses heavily on the unfairness of Paul's chains, redirect them to his perspective in verses 12–18. Ask: "How does Paul's focus on the mission change his emotional response to his situation?"
- **Defining 'To Live is Christ':** This phrase (v. 21) can feel abstract. Help the group ground this by asking what it looks like to make Christ the "center" of a normal workday or family interaction.

Leader Insights

- **Community:** Paul's joy is tied to the Philippians' partnership. True community isn't just "hanging out"; it's being "all-in" together for the sake of the Gospel.
- **Truth:** Knowledge and discernment (v. 9) are the goals of the Truth Lens. We study the Word not just to know facts, but to love more intelligently.
- **Prayer:** Notice Paul prays for their *love* to grow. Prayer is the primary way we ask the Spirit to align our affections with God's heart.
- **Mission:** Paul's "sending capacity" was high even while he was stuck in prison. This proves that mission is a mindset of the heart, not a result of favorable geography.