

# Philippians 3: Growth Group 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)** In Philippians 3, Paul warns the community against false teachers who cause division by shifting focus onto human effort and ritual. Our "One New Family" identity is protected when we mutually encourage each other to put no confidence in the flesh, running together toward the same heavenly prize.

- **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)** This chapter brilliantly details our "Wealth in Christ" (Indicative facts/identity). Paul counts all his worldly accomplishments as loss for the "surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Philippians 3:8, CSB). Our true identity is not built on our own righteousness from the law, but on the righteousness that comes from God through faith in Christ.

- **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 expresses a deep, prayerful yearning: "My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings" (Philippians 3:10, CSB). Walking in the Spirit means tuning out the distractions of past mistakes or past successes, listening for His voice, and pressing on toward the goal.

- **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 reminds us that "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20, CSB). Living as heavenly citizens exiled on earth directly fuels our "sending capacity". We look for everyday opportunities to invite others into this heavenly kingdom, standing out from those who "focus on earthly things".

- **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 3 challenges us to completely upend our value systems—trading self-righteousness and worldly status for the incomparable value of knowing Jesus and living out our true identity as citizens of heaven.
- **Final Action:** Take time this week to write down one dynamic area of your life where you tend to rely on your own performance or reputation, and explicitly pray to surrender it, choosing to boast in Christ alone.

## PAGE 3: FACILITATOR CHEAT SHEET

### The Structural Lens

**Indicative vs. Imperative:** The theological framework relies heavily on the **Indicative** of Christ's perfect righteousness imputed to us by faith (v. 9). The **Imperative** immediately drives the action: "forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize..." (v. 13-14). Remind the group that we do not run the race *to obtain* a righteous standing, but because Christ has already made us His own (v. 12).

### Facilitation Tips

- **The Trap of Legalism vs. License:** Group members might struggle with balancing Paul's rejection of legalism (v. 2-3) with his intense drive to "press on" (v. 14). If the group leans toward legalism, anchor them back to verse 9. If they lean toward complacency, redirect them to verses 17-19 to emphasize that grace transforms our desires and actions.
- **Past Regrets/Successes:** If members get stuck talking about their past failures, use Paul's personal testimony to guide them. Point out that Paul had to forget both his "good" religious credentials and his devastating past mistakes (persecuting the church) to run freely.

### Leader Insights

- **Community:** Paul encourages the group to "join in imitating me" and to observe those who walk according to his example (v. 17). True community needs visible, living models of gospel transformation, not just abstract ideas.
- **Truth:** The "Truth Lens" in this chapter exposes the danger of functional savior identities. Anything we rely on to justify ourselves apart from Christ is ultimately "rubbish" (v. 8).
- **Prayer:** Paul's language of "straining forward" and "knowing Him" reflects a deeply active prayer life. It highlights that prayer isn't just about requesting things, but a passionate pursuit of personal intimacy with Jesus.

- **Mission:** Knowing our citizenship is in heaven (v. 20) keeps us from nesting too deeply in worldly comfort. This clear identity is what gives us the spiritual stamina and "sending capacity" required to live sent every day.