

FOCUS GROUPS

FOCUS Groups are small group meetings that invite interaction and involvement within a pleasant and respectful environment. These groups meet to explore and understand the realities of this world in the light of God's love and truth.

The letter to the Philippians is a letter of tremendous encouragement and joy. Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, sends this letter to thank the church in Philippi for their support and to instruct them on some issues that needed to be addressed.

Philippians Chapter 4

V1 ~ *therefore* - So then, or 'in light of this...'. Considering who we are in Christ (**3:17-21**) we should be eager to reconcile and maintain unity within the body of Christ. "*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*" **Romans 12:18** *stand fast in the Lord* - Who we are in Christ enables us to resist or stand against temptation and opposition.

V2,3 ~ We are not told what the issue is between the two ladies, but it had the potential to bring division within the church. God simply instructs them to "*be of the same mind in the Lord.*" The beauty of true Christian fellowship is that we are different yet united. Unity with diversity was a New Testament truth before it was a contemporary cliché. When possible be a help and not a hindrance to reconciliation.

V4 ~ The key is that we rejoice *in the Lord*. Regardless of our pains, trials, or circumstances we have joy in Him. As the song goes; When we look to Jesus the "things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace." Choose to rejoice!

V5 ~ It is common place for criticism to be known, it takes thought and effort to let your *gentleness be known*. We really need to meditate and apply this! *Gentleness* ~ "means meekness under provocation, readiness to forgive injuries, equity in the management of business, candor in judging of the characters and actions of others, sweetness of disposition, and the entire government of the passions." ~ Dr. Macknight

V6 ~ *anxious* - "To be troubled with cares." Anxiousness or worry is an imbalance of thought which produces an uneasiness and restlessness. Worry weighs a person down, alters their personality and is a cause of illness, indigestion, headaches, muscle aches, etc... What do we do about it? Literally, give it over to God! Notice we are to be anxious for "No Thing." We are to give to Him everything. Simple in concept yet difficult in application, until we realize He will guard our hearts and mind.

V7 ~ The product of giving all to Him is that we experience His peace. A protective peace that guards our emotions and thoughts. To experience and maintain this, we must apply **v6**.

V8 ~ Upon giving all to God, we must realize the importance of *taking every thought captive* (**2 Corinthians 10:5**). Once we have given everything over to Him, it is essential to re-think the way that we think. Look at the list mentioned and then consider how such thoughts will shape your attitude and outlook.

V9 ~ Paul was not boasting when he drew attention to himself. As laid out in this letter, he knew what God had done in his life and encouraged others to live wholeheartedly for God also. Paul always gave God the credit for the good work done in his life.

V10 ~ Paul was glad to be reconnected with the Philippian church. Many believe that they had been separated for nearly 2 years and are now rejoined. Paul understood that even though there was no contact, there was still love.

V11-13 ~ This process of learning does not happen overnight. Paul learned that circumstances did not define his relationship with God. May we grow to understand this truth and speak humbly, confidently as Paul; *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*.

V14-16 ~ Jesus said *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”* (**John 13:35**). The Philippian church time and again supported the work of the ministry that Paul was doing. Paul was a hard worker and did not ask for handouts, he simply accepted gifts for the *necessities* so he could do God’s work. (**Acts 20:34, 35**)

V17 ~ Paul knew that the givers would be blessed by God, for God knows the heart and action of all His children.

V18 ~ *I have all and abound* - Paul is writing from jail and yet he knows the wealth of his Father. Here he graciously acknowledges the gifts sent to him.

V19 ~ Even though the Philippian believers made a sacrifice to give, God will supply their needs greater than they could imagine.

V20 ~ Don’t forget who gets the glory as our needs are met!

V21-23 ~ This warm greeting reflects the commitment and closeness seen throughout this letter. May we be examples and experience the same in our journey with Jesus.

My Memory Verse for this week: _____