

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.

Philippians Chapter 1

Philippians 1

It is widely held that Paul wrote this letter while under Roman house arrest awaiting trial, (**Acts 28:30-31, Phil. 1:13**). As we will see, the central theme of the letter is that of rejoicing, joy, and encouragement.

Discuss how personal circumstances often affect our attitude and outlook:

V1 ~ *bondservants* - "doulos" - "devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests." (Thayer Definition 1c). Paul gives a simple introduction followed by identifying the recipients of the letter- *saints*- "saints" speak of "holy ones", or as another translation describes it; "God's holy people". It is not man, nor man's performance that provides sainthood, it is the finished work of our Lord! (**Philippians 3:9**)

V2 ~ *Grace and peace* are often mentioned together in the New Testament and it will always be Grace that leads to peace.

V3 ~ As we observed last week in Acts 16, Paul had some challenging, yet rewarding times in Philippi. Note that Paul thanked God for the people who were in his life. (It is important that we practice this also).

V4-11 ~ In this letter we get a glimpse also of Paul's prayer life; joyful, confident, united with other believers.

v.4-11 Discuss how these verses can be an encouragement and instruction to us in our prayers.

V12-14 ~ Outwardly it appears that Paul was stopped, yet we see he was given a whole new group to speak to. And not only that, other people were encouraged by his love and courage.

Open discussion: _____

V15-18 ~ Paul recognized that some had the wrong motives in their efforts, yet he could see the message was more important than their motives. This takes maturity and wisdom to not let your feelings or someone's childish intentions distract you from the main thing. (This holds true in many areas of life.)

V19 ~ Our prayers, His presence, divinely blended together ... produces confident assurance in Him!

V20 ~ Paul possessed a determination that no matter how much the personal cost, even death of the body, *Christ will be magnified.*

V21-26 ~ The true heart of a bondservant is to do and see the will of the Master. Paul was eager to go home to Jesus, yet he knew God could and would use him to bless others. May we learn to simplify our lives and model this mindset for the rest of our lives.

V27 ~ It is Paul's desire to find them doing well when he comes to Philippi. *Striving-Working*, laboring together for the furtherance of the gospel.

V28 ~ Jesus' adversaries were amazed that He was not afraid; Pontius Pilate, as well as the centurion at the cross. (Matt.27:14, 23, 24, 54)

V29-30 ~ The New Testament speaks often of the sufferings we will experience. Revealed in the life of Jesus, experienced by the 1st centuries Christians and every generation to follow, we must be aware that in this life we will suffer. (2 Timothy 3:12).

Paul had grown to the point that his circumstances did not define his relationship with God. That attitude is a great benchmark for us to reach for; loving God, living for God, learning from God, leaning on God. Meditate this week on what God is showing you from chapter 1 and then prepare for next week by reading and thinking upon chapter 2.

My Memory Verse for this week: _____

Thoughts/notes/determinations/decisions:

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ...”

PHILIPPIANS 1:6