Grow Group Study – Philippians Week 2

### Summary (Group Lesson)

Paul begins this section with an urgent call for the Philippians to live lives worthy of the gospel of Christ. What did he have in mind? A life of engaging in struggle for the advancement of the gospel. But in the midst of suffering how are we to stand firm in the struggle? Paul’s answer is that we stand firm together. The only problem is that suffering not only keeps people from struggling for the gospel but it also makes them less willing to look out for each other.

Paul’s solution to this is that we are freed to look out for each other because God is looking out for us. Christ demonstrated this mindset when he empties himself of glory to serve us knowing that God was serving him and would restore him to his rightful glorious place.

**Big Idea:**Community in the struggle for the gospel.
**Fallen Condition Focus:**We fail to support each other in the struggle to advance the gospel because in the face of suffering we begin looking out for ourselves only.
**Christ-Centered Solution:**Christ looks out for our interests so that we feel free to concern ourselves with supporting others. He also modeled this when he went to the cross.

### Launch

Have you ever had to accomplish a really difficult task? How did you see community play a role in your ability to follow through? Or how did a lack of community affect you?

**Explore – Read 1:27-­30 [The Role of Unity in a Life Worthy of the Gospel]**

1. (vs.1:27-30) Paul says we are to live our lives worthy of the gospel of Christ. What did he mean?

2.  According to this passage, what are some ways unity plays a role in the spread of the gospel? How have you seen disunity hinder the spread of the gospel?

3.  What kind of suffering can we expect for the sake of following our Lord Jesus. (See 2 Tim.3:12) How might this cause disunity among a church?

 **Explore – Read 2:1­-4 [The Help of God Which Leads To Selflessness]**

4. (vs.1) Paul begins by mentioning four aspects of the Christian experience, what are they?

5. (vss.2­-4) Paul gives the Philippians a number of commands. What are they? Just list them for now.

 **Explore ­ Read 2:5­-11 [Christ Our Example of Faith & Humility]**

6. (vs.5-11) What do we learn about Christ’s nature from these verses? How is understanding Christ’s nature significant to his example of humility?

7.  How does Christ’s relationship with the Father influence His willingness to look out for the interests of others and not just his own? How is this a model for us in our relationship with God?

### Apply

1.  What struggles in life make it difficult to take “the form of a servant” and what beliefs form in our mind that cause us to turn to selfishness?

2.  What attitude and character do you see in Jesus from this passage that would help you serve the interests of others while you are experiencing hardship?

3.  Who are the people in your life that God is calling you to be in unity with? How are you cultivating this? Do you view doing this for the sake of advancing the gospel?

4.  Are there frightening opponents in your life right now? How can our Church community stand with you and strive with you for the faith of the gospel?

**Part 2 - Phil.2:12-30**

### Summary

In this section, Paul is concluding his stream of imperatives calling us to live a life worthy of the gospel. Paul’s final plea is for the Philippians to obey God regardless of whether Paul is with them or not. He insists that it shouldn’t matter whether he himself is at work among them or not because God always is. It doesn’t matter if Paul is there to keep tabs on their obedience, but they should work out their salvation with fear and trembling because God is in them and among them.

In other words, he is calling them to integrity. But integrity shows itself in several ways, so he also calls them to have attitudes which match their actions. The integrity Paul calls them to is possible because God truly is at work among those who hold fast to the word of life, the gospel.

**Big Idea:**
Integrity is central to a life worthy of the gospel
**Fallen Condition Focus:**
We are prone to act “Christian” only under scrutiny, or we act “Christian”, but our hearts are really discontent with our Christian situation.
**Christ-Centered Solution:**
Since we have received the word of life, God permanently lives and works in us for his pleasure and ours.

### Launch

Have you ever noticed about yourself that you are a different person in public as opposed to in private, or with your friends as opposed to with authority figures, or around Christians as opposed to around non­-Christians? Or have you noticed that you present yourself to others differently than you feel on the inside?

### Explore - Read 2:12-13 [The Ever-Present Help of God in Us]

1. In the last section, Paul talked about Christ’s “obedience” (2:8). Paul now calls us to be obedient. (vs.12) Paul insists that the Philippians should “obey”, or “work out their salvation”, not only in Paul’s presence but much more in his absence.

First, what did Paul mean “work out your salvation”?

Why did Paul have to insist on their obedience in his absence? Why might a group of people be more prone to disobedience when their leadership is away?

2. (vs.13) Paul says that God is at work in the Philippians. How would an understanding of this reality motivate or empower the Philippians to obey even in the absence of their leadership?

### Explore – Read 2:14­-18 [Outwardly and Inwardly Joyful Children of God]

3. (vs.14-15) What is it about grumbling and questioning, that makes it impossible for a person to be “blameless and innocent”, even when they are doing “all things” they have been asked to do? Why is it so important that our attitudes match our speech and actions?

4. (vs.16) What is “the word of life”? How would holding fast to the word of life enable the Philippians to remain joyful as they obeyed God?

### Explore – Read 2:19-­30 [Two Examples of Genuine Christianity]

5. (vs.19-25) Paul tells the Philippians that Timothy is uniquely qualified for certain important tasks. Paul tells the Philippians to honor Epaphroditus. What caused Paul to esteem these men?

6. (vs.27-30) Paul mentions Epaphroditus got sick and almost died. God healed him, but Paul revealed a possible reason he got sick which is reveals a balance in our servanthood.

### Apply

1.   When are you most tempted to act differently around certain people?

2.  What triggers grumbling or complaining in you? What lies are you believing about God, yourself, your situation that drive your negative attitude in these situations?

3.  What areas of your new life in Christ need to be worked out of you so that you “shine as lights” in the midst of a crooked and perverse world? How does knowing that God is at work in you motivate you to obey Him?