



## Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!

If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions towards the end of the document.

- These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders.
- Use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group.

## Outline

- I. Introduction and Main Scripture Readings
- II. Group Discussion Questions
- III. The Journey Resources
- IV. Support for the Leader

## How to Use These Study Guides:

1. **Before the meeting:** Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
2. **Check In:** Begin each meeting with a short time checking in with one another.
3. **Read Scripture:** You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
4. **Ask Questions:** Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with and see how the conversation flows.
5. **End with Prayer:** Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

*If your group meets over Zoom:*

- Expect to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- Be sensitive to attention spans over zoom. Keep meetings shorter than they would be in person.

## Group Leader Support:

- Please reach out to your Campus Pastor if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic.
- If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor [Tim Ghali](#) from the Group Life team.

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## LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for Sermon given on May 19, 2024  
by Pastor Tom VanAntwerp

### PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL – Philippians 1:1-8;12-14;17



#### I. **Introduction**

Today we're beginning a new series called "Dear Church ... " We will be spending time in the book of Philippians, a letter that Paul wrote to a church that he planted in the city of Philippi. The circumstances that led to the writing of the letter and the letter itself clarified for Paul and for the church, the very nature of their relationship with each other. And as we go, it will help us to clarify our relationship to one another as well.

Questions: What does it mean to be partners in the gospel?

Bottom Line: Whatever relationships you have entered into, whatever work you're called to, whatever people you call family, take a step closer to the people of this church as together we are called to be partners in the gospel of the king.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

**Main Scripture Readings:** Philippians 1:1-8;12-14;27

**1** Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons<sup>[a]</sup>: **2** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3** I thank my God every time I remember you. **4** In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

**7** It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. **8** God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

**12** Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,<sup>[b]</sup> that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. **13** As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard<sup>[c]</sup> and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. **14** And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

**27** *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.* Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,<sup>[e]</sup> striving together as one for the faith of the gospel

## II. **Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Pastor Tom said that there are certain moments in life that bring clarity to the nature of a person's relationships. His example was that his daughter received a marriage proposal just a few weeks ago.
  - Can you think of certain moments in your own life that brought clarity to the nature of a relationship?
2. Lydia was a hungry spiritual seeker. Although she wasn't Jewish and she had not heard about Jesus, but she believed there was something behind everything and she gathered for prayer regularly with these women seeking and believing in God.
  - Do you know any spiritual seekers like Lydia at home, school, the workplace of your neighborhood? Describe this person to your small group and then brainstorm some ways you could introduce them to the gospel.
3. Read Philippians 1:27 together: *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.*
  - What does this mean to you?
  - Think about what you do every day. Are there specific actions or behaviors that Jesus would not approve?
  - What could you do to turn that around?
4. Have you just believed the gospel? Or are you a partner in the gospel?  
I just don't mean are you someone who tells other people about Jesus. I mean, is your life so captivated by the good pronouncement of Jesus' coming and present kingdom that you live to bring the qualities and characteristics of heaven to the place where you live and work and raise your families?
  - Ask your small group to give examples of how they live out their faith through their relationships with others?
5. In Acts 16, Paul was able to touch and forever change the lives of Lydia, a slave girl and a prison guard. Every moment, every circumstance of life, every relationship holds gospel potential.
  - Think about the people and the places that you see and visit every week.
  - Is there someone the Lord is putting on your heart to connect with? Who is that person? What could you do for or with that person to bring the kingdom here to earth?

**Take Home Message:**

The gospel is far more than truth that gives you entrance into heaven. It is the pronouncement that king Jesus is on the move – that Heaven is entering the world, and the we live our lives as partners in that endeavor. Every moment, every circumstance of life, every relationship holds gospel potential. *When God does a work in people – he brings people together who otherwise would never have known each other or had any sense of connection with each other apart from the call and work of Jesus.*

**Let's Pray****III. The Journey**

*We're all on a journey. Where is yours taking you?*

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it is good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus. It comes from putting them into practice.

Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The **with-God life** of our personal habits and routines;
- The **with-others life** of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The **for-the-world life** that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

**Launching by the end of September: The newly, revised Discipleship Planning Tool**

We invite your group to [take the assessment](#) and to spend a session to share about the practice and perspective you chose to focus on for the next three months.

#### IV. Support for the Leader

These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and opportunities in the life of our church.

##### **Teaching Points:**

- Philippians was a letter written by the apostle Paul to the church in Philippi while he was in prison in Rome around 60 AD
- The church in Philippi was the first church Paul planted outside of the Jewish world
- Pentecost Sunday celebrates the birth of the church – when the Spirit of God descended on those who were gathered in Jerusalem from all over the territory
- The Greek word Paul uses - the one translated as gospel – is the word *euangelion*
- In the Roman Empire, *euangelion* was the pronouncement of good will and good tidings, and would often accompany a ceremony of a town coming under the authority of the king
- Paul’s announcement of *euangelion* was about the reign and the rule of Jesus is at hand and his kingdom is making its way. This ragtag group of Jesus followers were the outpost of that kingdom living in an outpost of Rome
- The real gospel is about Jesus making claims over all of life – even all of creation. It stirs things up. It has real life implications. It establishes a new way of thinking, living, loving and serving. It quite literally changes everything

##### **Supplementary Scripture Readings:**

###### Acts 16:11-34

<sup>11</sup> From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. <sup>12</sup> From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district<sup>[a]</sup> of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

<sup>13</sup> On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. <sup>14</sup> One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. <sup>15</sup> When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

<sup>16</sup> Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup> She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the

Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.”<sup>18</sup> She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

<sup>19</sup> When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. <sup>20</sup> They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar <sup>21</sup> by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

<sup>22</sup> The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. <sup>23</sup> After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. <sup>24</sup> When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

<sup>25</sup> About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. <sup>26</sup> Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. <sup>27</sup> The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup> But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

<sup>29</sup> The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

<sup>31</sup> They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” <sup>32</sup> Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. <sup>33</sup> At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. <sup>34</sup> The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

<sup>35</sup> When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” <sup>36</sup> The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

<sup>37</sup> But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

<sup>38</sup> The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. <sup>39</sup> They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. <sup>40</sup> After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

