

Small Group Discussion Guide - Philippians 2
Available online at www.summitchurch.cc/summitlife

Philippians 2

Leader's Notes

This chapter gives us A LOT to cover! Many bible scholars point to this chapter as one of the most theologically rich in all of scripture. So, to help you out, we are going to focus this study on 2:1-18. We encourage you to read 19-30 to get an understanding of what is happening since we will not be covering it here. As always, answers (limited but hopefully helpful) are on the next page.

Discussion Questions

1. What does Paul mean by "encouragement in Christ?" Why is this encouragement the place where Paul starts with teaching about humility?
2. Verses 2-5 speak to our identity in Christ. Observe the text...what characteristics does Paul say identifies a group of believers...more specifically a local church. Why is it important that your life gives evidence of these character traits? Follow up: does your group look like this? How?

NOTICE VERSE 5: IT IS A HINGE THAT CONNECTS 1-4 to 6-11. HOW IS DOES IT CONNECT THE 2 SECTIONS?

3. In verses 6-8 Paul connects the attitude he wants us to display (cited in verses 2-5) with the attitude and actions of Christ. Look at the actions of Christ to see what attitude Christ is displaying. Why is it important for Paul to connect our attitude and actions to the actions of Christ?

3.5 - What Paul wants people to see is that Christ humbled himself so that ultimately God would exalt him above everything and everyone and give him authority over creation... for his glory. (1 Peter 5:6)

4. What does Paul want the Philippians to do? Why? And what is the key to it all?

Answers:

1. Paul is talking about both Christ's example of humility in the cross (as we see in the coming verses) and more importantly what our position is in Christ as a result of that act of humility. This is critical because our "encouragement" towards doing anything must stem from an understanding of the grace shown to us. Otherwise our humility will ultimately be self-driven and futile. Our ability to do the things he tells us to do doesn't come from practicing them a lot but from our standing in Christ.
2. These traits include unity of mind, unity of sacrificial love, no conceit or rivalry (not competing for recognition or acknowledgement), caring about interests of others over self-interests. These make up our "mind in Christ." This reflects a true transformation through an acceptance and belief in the gospel.
3. actions: v.6: he was in the form of God → v.6 didn't count equality with God a thing to be grasped. He let go of something valuable there (his attitude was not to cling to those things). → v.7 he made himself into a servant in the likeness of men → v.8 even worse he chose to die → v.8 even worse he chose to die the worse death there was...death on a cross. Do you see what happened? Christ went from the most highly exalted position to the most humiliating position. His attitude is humility based on considering "others more significant than himself" (VERSE 3!)

The purpose of OUR attitude is to mirror the attitude of Christ so that we can explain the actions of Christ...which is the gospel. Our attitude opens the door to explaining the source of such attitude which is of course our "encouragement in Christ."

4. Paul sums up all of the first half of Chapter 2 in the action step found in v.14 – "Do all things without grumbling or questioning." Why? Verse 15: that they will live and speak the gospel to those unbelievers in their generation. What is the key? Verse 16: holding fast to the word of life. That will sustain them even if Paul himself is killed.