

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Living Worthy of the Gospel (Pt. 2)*Joy Made Complete* | Philippians 1:28-30

REVIEW

Paul wrote Philippians for the sake of unifying the church in the enjoyment and advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Unity in the gospel births communal joy that results in the advance of the gospel to the lost. As we partner together in the gospel, the result is **joy made complete**.

In verses 27, Paul calls for a robust, active unity inside the Philippian church. This unity is not uniformity, in that everyone fits a pre-existing mold. This unity is not superficial in that we find the lowest common denominator and call people to that. This unity is not passive and something that just comes along with little or no effort. This unity is in the Spirit and encompasses all that think and do in and for Christ – one mind. This unity is an active process as we continually stand firm in the faith striving side by side for the advancement of the gospel.

APPLY // PHILIPPIANS 1:27

Consider practical ways to apply the text of Scripture. Think about implications at the individual and corporate level remembering God's word shapes our beliefs and our behaviors.

1. Read Philippians 1.
2. Explain some times you've seen those around you "Live in a manner worthy of the Gospel." What would lead you to conclude that?
3. Why is unity so important to the Lord and to Paul in the midst of a local church?
4. Why do you believe the Lord wants us to "strive side by side for the faith of the Gospel?" Why not just strive alone?
5. What is it about the "side by side" that the Lord wants to encourage in His people?
6. Why is it important to realize unity is not a passive, but active as we stand firm and strive?

STUDY // PHILIPPIANS 1:28-30

Study the passage of Scripture aiming to faithfully interpret and apply what you observe. Remember we study God's word not just to increase our knowledge, but to increase our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.

1. Re-read 1:27-30. (Focus on verse 28-30 this week)
2. What does it mean to "not [be] frightened in anything by your opponents"?
3. Who are the "opponents"? Why shouldn't the Philippians be afraid of them?
4. How is this connected to living a life worthy of the gospel?
5. What are some ways we might be tempted to be fearful in this way?
It appears the call for fearlessness is part of living a life worthy of the manner of the gospel. Notice that Paul's call is significant – not afraid of anything by your opponents.

First this means, that naturally speaking there was something to fear. Paul is not saying, “There’s nothing here to worry about because everything is just peachy.” The circumstances are not great, but in spite of that don’t fear –that’s the call. Paul is saying, “Don’t panic. Keep your cool. You’re a citizen of heaven. God is in control. He’ll complete what he started. Don’t be intimidated.”

Get the group to think about why we should not be fearful and how this is connected to living a life worthy of the gospel. Get the group to think about this same type of fear – that is, fear arising out of living explicitly for the gospel of Jesus (not just any type of fear).

6. In verse what does the “this is a clear sign” refer to?
 - a. How is “this” a sign of the destruction of the Philippian’s opponents?
7. How is “this” a sign of the Philippians salvation? Notice the words at the end of verse 28 – “and that from God.” What does this mean? Why would Paul insert them here?
“This” either refers back broadly to “living a life worthy of the gospel” and all that encompasses (unity, striving, side by side, fearlessness), or more specifically back to living without fear. You could make a case for either one – and the meaning does not hinge whether “this” is broad or specific.

The clear sign doesn’t mean their adversaries would immediately recognize their doom, but it’s a sign of their coming judgment – that is, it shows their unbelief for which they will be judged. On the other hand, living united in the gospel without fear is a sign (that is, it shows), the Philippians truly trust Christ alone and are willing to suffer personal defeat to magnify his name.

To quote DA Carson:

“Your change in character, your united stand in defense of the gospel, your ability to withstand with meekness and without fear the opposition that you must endure, constitutes a sign. That sign speaks volumes, both to the outside world and the Christian community. It is a sign of judgment against the world that is mounting the opposition; is a sign of assurance that these believers really are the people of God and will be saved on the last day.”

8. According to verse 29, what has been granted to the Philippian church? Discuss the importance of each in the life of the Christian.
9. Why have these things been granted?
10. What is the conflict Paul is engaged in and how do the Philippians share in that conflict?
11. How does this help us preserve in our faith?
Paul says the Philippians have been granted two things: salvation and suffering. Take a minute and discuss what each mean. What is the belief reference here? [Trust in Christ alone for salvation, cf. John 1:12] What type of suffering is Paul talking about? [Suffering directly for Christ OR suffering in a way that points to Christ – we could say suffering because of Christ or to the glory of Christ].

And notice twice Paul says it for the sake of Christ/him. This is ultimately about Jesus. Salvation and suffering are twin gifts to the Christian to magnify the name of Jesus Christ, which is the name that satisfies our soul. That’s why these are gifts – they are gifts to turn us from ourselves to make us rely on Jesus, in whom we find the greatest delights.

The opposition Paul is facing is opposition for sharing the good news of Jesus. And all who desire to live a godly life will be persecuted (cf. 1 Tim. 3:12). So even if the

Philippians (or us) won't be put into prison for preaching the gospel, we will face opposition.

The Philippian partnership in the gospel called them to suffer together for the gospel. The understanding that suffering and salvation are both gifts of grace from God is essential to helping the Philippians (and us) persevere in the faith. It reminds us that salvation is from God and cannot be taken by others. It reminds us suffering is from God, not a sign of God's neglect but proof of his grace at work in us.

12. General Bible study questions:

- a. What does this passage teach me about the character of God?
- b. What does this passage teach me about myself and my need for God?
- c. How does this passage teach me that God has met my needs in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
- d. How should I respond with my affections and my actions?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other help apply the gospel to your lives.

QUESTION: Where have you been encouraged in striving side by side for the faith for the gospel? Are there areas in your life where you are not striving side by side with others? If so, what might that begin to look like for you?