

Joy in Working Small Group Leader Notes

Welcome to another week of small group! As we look at Philippians 2:12-30, we see the Apostle Paul kick it off with another “therefore”. This is the third time in 12 verses he does so, making it evident that everything he is saying is linked. In chapter 1, he directed the Philippian church to have joy and unity regardless of their circumstances. He then connected that to believers being like-minded and having the same mind as Christ followed by proclaiming Jesus’ exaltation.

In this week’s passage, Paul connects everything he has said so far to a direct call to action. In this call, there are three things to understand: promise, obey, and power. The **promise** is that Christ is exalted (Phil 2:9-11). Ultimately, this promise applies to all Christians, as we will be exalted through the power of the gospel. It is because of this promise that we are **obedient** to God in all aspects of our lives (Phil. 2:12). However, we cannot do this on our own. It takes the power of the Holy Spirit, indwelling within us, to obey as we should. Fortunately, the **power** of God works in us to fulfill the call of obedience (Phil. 2:13).



Growing up, which of your parents’ expectations were the most difficult to obey?

Just a simple ice breaker question to get the discussion rolling.



Read Philippians 2:12-30. Once again, we see the word “therefore” at the beginning of our text. What concepts are being connected by the Apostle Paul?

Paul is connecting verses 9-11 to what he is about to say in verses 12-30. He is communicating that since Jesus is exalted, that every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is God. Because of this, we must live in humble obedience to Him. In Philippians 2:5-8, Paul gave the example of Christ’s humility that we are to emulate. Later in this passage, he will give Timothy and Epaphroditus as examples of godly living.



Paul tells us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (vs 12). What does he mean by this?

It is important to understand that Paul is not saying that we must somehow earn our salvation. Scripture makes it clear that salvation is a gift from God through faith, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). So, is Paul contradicting himself here? Absolutely not. While salvation is by grace alone (Ephesians 1:4), through faith alone (Galatians 2:16), in Christ alone (John 14:6), as revealed by Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17), to the glory of God alone (Romans 11:36), Paul is calling us to conduct our lives in a way that reflects Christ to the world around us. Again, Paul is simply saying that since Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:11), live out your faith by obeying what He has told us.



Spiritual growth requires our own intentional efforts and the work of the Holy Spirit within us (vs 13). In what ways are you intentionally knowing God better and living out your faith?

While salvation can only be accomplished by Christ, our spiritual growth (sanctification) is a team effort. The Holy Spirit guides, convicts, and instructs believers on how to live holy lives unto the Lord. This requires us to seek God and His will in His word regularly, to be in constant prayer, and to apply what we know about Christ in our daily lives. As we grow in our faith, our transformation in Christ becomes more evident to our Oikos.

The sanctification process is not easy. We will continue to have our sinful setbacks. Spend time talking about how each of you strive to grow spiritually, and even how accountability plays a role in your growth.



Read Philippians 2:14-18. We are specifically called to do all things without grumbling or disputing. Despite the differences we will have with other believers, why is it important for us to live in humble unity?

We have always had differences amongst believers. In today's age, those differences tend to be much more highlighted through social media. It is common to have differences in theology, politics, and social matters. On one hand, it is healthy for the world to see that believers can still be unified in Christ, despite their differences. On the other hand, grumbling and disputing over those matters, especially in a public forum, does not reflect the character of Christ, and does incredible harm to our testimony.



Read Philippians 2:19-30. Looking at the passage, how were Timothy and Epaphroditus working out their salvation? What characteristics of theirs did Paul commend?

Spend time as a group highlighting the things Paul commends Timothy and Epaphroditus on. The important thing to focus on is how both men were more concerned about others rather than themselves. Compare that “others focused” mindset of these two men to that of Christ back in Phil. 2:5-8.

Philippians 2:19-30 is much more than just some travel plans. Look at the progression of Paul’s thoughts thus far. We are first called to joy and unity in challenging times. He then points to Jesus’ example of that humble joy and unity. Then, he calls us to obedience so that we would demonstrate Christ well. And now, he points to Timothy and Epaphroditus as examples of that obedience. By commending these two men, Paul is encouraging the Philippian church, and Christians today, to follow their example.



As you think about the days ahead, share one way you can follow Timothy and Epaphroditus’ example of putting others first as you seek to work out your own salvation?

We want to encourage you to use this time to have your group share about someone in their Oikos that has not yet come to faith in Christ. Remind the group how important it is to be praying that the Lord would soften those individuals’ hearts, and that God would have the gospel in front of them in a way that would be irresistible. Encourage your group to be specifically praying for those individuals on a regular basis.