

# LifeGroups

Do Life Together



STUDY GUIDE

# **Finding Joy in Uncertain Times**

A Study Through Philippians

# Session 1: Getting Started

**KEY QUOTE:** "For your LifeGroup to be a powerful experience, you have to be authentic with one another sharing your hurts, pains, and problems. It doesn't mean that each week the same people unload, but it does mean that everyone takes a turn in sharing what's going on in their life."

**THE BIG IDEA:** Welcome to the Philippians LifeGroup 6-week study! This study is designed to help you find joy in all circumstances of your life. However, today is all about getting on the same page, and getting organized. In this session you will pick up a few tips to better prepare you for your LifeGroup.

**ICEBREAKER:** What do you find most awkward about meeting new people?

**VIDEO TEACHING:** 11 minutes

Make sure everyone in the group has a study guide and a pen. Watch the video and fill in the blanks.

## 3 PIECES TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL LIFE GROUP...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## HELPFUL TIPS:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Someone \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Someone \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Someone \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Someone \_\_\_\_\_

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What was the most thought-provoking concept you heard in this session?

2. Read Acts 2:42-47. How would you describe the community of believers in this letter?

Historical...It's just history.

Utopian ...like an imagined ideal place.

Fictional ...these type of communities don't really exist.

Possible ...It can happen.

Other

3. Luke , one the disciples, recorded the early church in Acts 2:42-47. What was his purpose of documenting these details of the churches beginning?

4. Why do you think the early church was so attractive to people who didn't know Jesus?

5. What can your group learn from the early church about living life together in Christ? After sharing this, challenge one another to live out these aspirations in your LifeGroup.

6. Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Being part of a LifeGroup is an exercise in faith and trust. What's one way this group can help you grow in this area?

7. What are you hoping to get out of your LifeGroup this semester?

**NEXT STEPS:** Now, that you and your group have made a commitment to live in community, make sure and encourage one another through texts, and emails. Also, take some time to fill out the LifeGroup agreement, and your LifeGroup Planner.

**PRAYER:** James 5:16 tells us “the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” So, make sure and write down prayer requests, and praises! Also, invite someone to close in prayer.

# Session 2: Finding Joy in GRACE & PEACE

Philippians 1:1-11

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** *“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:2*

**THE BIG IDEA:** Welcome back to the 2nd week of the study in Philippians! Today we will be diving into chapter 1. While Paul is in dire circumstances and his future remains uncertain, he continues to write with great joy to the church at Philippi! In this session you’re going to see the power of living a life in the grace and peace of Jesus.

**ICEBREAKER:** How do you usually say hello to your friends? In your family, how important are greetings in affirming each other?

**VIDEO TEACHING:** 12 minutes

Make sure everyone in the group has a study guide and a pen. Watch the video and fill in the blanks.

Observations in Finding Joy in Gods Grace and Peace....

1. With \_\_\_\_\_ you can have \_\_\_\_\_ at any time.

2. GRACE is \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”  
Philippians 1:2*

3. Inner \_\_\_\_\_ is a natural outcome of the \_\_\_\_\_ in you.

4. Everything God \_\_\_\_\_ he \_\_\_\_\_.

*“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.” Philippians 1:6*

5. God wants us to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ his goodness in our lives.

*“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight” Philippians 1:9*

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Who has been, or is a friend like Paul to you in your life?

2. Read Philippians 1:1-11. How would you describe the tone of this letter?

\_\_\_ Scholarly ...like a professor

\_\_\_ Fatherly ...like a parent

\_\_\_ Stern ...like a drill sergeant

\_\_\_ Friendly ...like a text message

\_\_\_ Other

3. Why did Paul begin this letter with the words GRACE and PEACE? And what impact does that have on it?

4. Paul wrote the book of Philippians as a letter of encouragement to the church at Philippi. After reading chapter 1, how do you believe it encouraged the church to have joy in all circumstances. How has it encouraging you today?

5. Pastor Mike said, "The more of God you have in your life the more grace and peace you will have in your heart." On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the Grace and Peace you give to the people in your life?

6. Based on your score above, this week, what would it take to increase the amount of Grace and Peace you offer to others?

7. What do you hope to gain from going through the study of Philippians?

\_\_\_ I would like to grow closer to God.

\_\_\_ I would like to have joy in all circumstances.

\_\_\_ I would like to dive into God's Word on my own.

\_\_\_ I would like to belong to a group that will encourage me to grow.

\_\_\_ Other.

**NEXT STEPS:** This week ask God to help you demonstrate more grace to others, and to walk in His peace. Even when you don't feel like it each morning make a decision to offer everyone, especially those who frustrate you or have hurt you, God's grace and peace.

**PRAYER:** Someone in your group log all prayer, and praise requests. Next, ask someone to pray this prayer out of Philippians for the group.

*"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."*  
**Amen**



## Session 3: We Are Better Together

Philippians 2:1-11

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.”*  
**Philippians 2:1-2**

**THE BIG IDEA:** When we live in a spirit of unity with other followers of Christ, we have access to a kind of joy, comfort, encouragement, and compassion that is only available in that community. The Philippian church lived in that way and were able to impact the world through Paul’s ministry. As a church, New Hope has had an amazing impact on the community around us because we work together “To Know Christ and Make Him Known.” And there are plenty of opportunities to continue this impact when we continue to live and work together!

**ICEBREAKER:** Happiness is a temporary feeling, while joy stays with us wherever we go. Food makes us happy. Grandkids bring us joy! What are some of the things in your life that have brought you joy? How do you usually say hello to your friends? In your family, how important are greetings in affirming each other?

**VIDEO TEACHING:** 15 minutes

Read Philippians 2:1-11. Watch Session 3 and fill in the blanks.

1. Together we find \_\_\_\_\_

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Phil 2:3a

2. Together we \_\_\_\_\_

...not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. Phil 2:5

3. Together we \_\_\_\_\_

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What was the most impactful concept you heard this session?
2. In Philippians 2:1, Paul describes four qualities that mark unity with Christ; what are they? And practically speaking, what might these look like in everyday life?
3. Being a part of a community of Christ-followers changes how we live. How are you different because you are part of a church? If you've ever spent a significant period of time out of church, how were you different during that time?
4. Pastor Jeremey said, "we are better together."
  - a. What does he mean by that?
  - b. Do you believe this statement?
  - c. On a scale of 1-4, how well are you living like this?
5. Read Philippians 2:5-11. How would you describe the attitude that Christ had toward others?
6. Is there a part of your attitude that needs to look more like Jesus?
7. In Philippians 2 Paul reminds us that Jesus came to serve. How can your LifeGroup, like Jesus, serve your community in the form of a micro-mission.

**NEXT STEPS:** At the end of this study, we want to encourage your group to plan a micro-mission. Choose one person from your group who will begin to organize your mission.

**PRAYER:** *“Lord, thank You for the example of Jesus Christ, who humbled Himself to bring us life. Help me to follow His example and choose humility over selfishness. Thank you for this great community of believers where we can find joy, encouragement, compassion, and tenderness. Help us to become less so that You can make us more.”*

## Session 4: Joy Comes From Humility

Philippians 2:12-30

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** *Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. Philippians 2:14-16*

**THE BIG IDEA:** This is the third week of our study where Paul examines Christ as our model of humility, and explains how humility, and our willingness to choose it, is the key to finding JOY.

**ICEBREAKER:** Do you know many people that you would consider humble, or quick to place others needs above their own? What stands out about them? Do you think this quality is hard to find?

**VIDEO TEACHING:** 12 minutes

Read Philippians 2:12-30. Watch the video and fill in the blanks.

The Call of Christ is \_\_\_\_\_ .

The Reward of \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ .

A Life of \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_ .

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Why do you think JOY is such a universal desire, yet so few people seem to have it?
2. How does Paul's idea that Jesus called us to a life of humility sit with you? Is it difficult to make choosing humility your life's focus, when the world is all about living your best life now?
3. Scripture is clear we don't earn our salvation by our works. What did Paul mean in verse 12 when he writes, "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling?"
4. Since we have responsibilities to both, our families and the people we serve; how do we balance what is best for us vs. what is best for others?
5. Have you ever found joy in serving others if so, give examples? How can grumbling and complaining undermine your service?
6. What did you find impressive about Epaphroditus?
7. When we recognize the impact of humility, how can we leverage that with pointing the way to Jesus? Can we bring people to Christ by serving them? How would that work?

**NEXT STEPS:** This week ask God to help you identify people in your life that you can serve. Is it someone in your family, or someone at work? What can you do for them, and how can you give the glory to God and not be self-seeking?

**PRAYER:** *“Lord, help us to recognize that the world’s version of winning, is not the same as the Bible’s. The highest idea we can ascribe to is humility. The same humility that Jesus modeled for Paul, and Paul for Timothy and Epaphroditus, is the humility that has been modeled for us. Help us to realize that calling, and through that lifestyle we can find the joy that can only come from serving. Open our eyes to opportunities to serve others, and to You be the glory.” Amen*

## Session 5: Joy in the Lord

Philippians 3:1

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** *“Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.” Philippians 3:1 (NLT)*

**THE BIG IDEA:** We miss out on the joy that comes with faith when we put too much confidence in our own righteousness rather than the righteousness found in Christ.

**ICEBREAKER:** If you were to write a spiritual resume to impress God, what personal accomplishments attitudes, or skills would you be sure to include?

**VIDEO TEACHING:** 15 minutes

Read Philippians 3:1-21, watch Session 5 and fill in the blanks.

Rejoicing in the Lord can keep you from...

*“Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.” Philippians 3:1 (NLT)*

1. Falling into a \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil. Those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved. For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort.” Philippians 3:2-4 (NLT)*

2. Getting stuck in \_\_\_\_\_.



*"I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead. I don't mean to say that I have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." **Philippians 3:10-12 (NLT)***

*"Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us." **Philippians 3:13-14 (NLT)***

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. At the beginning of Philippians chapter 3, Paul calls his audience to do one thing: what is it, and why do you think Paul never got tired of repeating this command (3:1)?
2. Paul issues a strong warning to his audience in verse 2: what problem was he trying to address and what solution did he offer (3:2-3)?
3. Paul lists several of his spiritual accomplishments in Philippians chapter 3. Which of the six is the most impressive to you? What point was Paul ultimately trying to make about his list (3:7-8)?
4. We no longer live under the Jewish Law, but we can still be tempted to fall into the trap of a works-based faith. How can living to earn God's approval steal all the joy that comes from knowing Christ.
5. In verse 13 Paul wrote, "Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize." Knowing what you know about Paul's past (he was a persecutor of the church), how could Paul's past mistakes potentially have kept him from running the race God had planned for him?

Is there anything from your past that may be holding you back from embracing the future God has for you?

6. In 3:17 Paul tells the church at Philippi to follow his example. What is the connection between pressing on toward the prize and being in relationship with other believers? How has your LifeGroup encouraged your spiritual development?

7. Throughout chapter 3 Paul shared several obstacles that keep believers from finding joy in Christ. Look through the list below and decide what area you need to work on most.

\_\_\_ I need to put less stock in my spiritual credentials.

\_\_\_ I need to develop new habits that help me to know Christ and His power.

\_\_\_ I need to let go of some things from my past that are keeping me from experiencing  
God's best in the present.

\_\_\_ I need to start investing in others spiritually so that they can grow.

**NEXT STEPS:** Paul described our spiritual journey as a race in which we press on to take hold of the heavenly prize. Of course, if we run too fast, we might burn out. But if we run too slow, we might get discouraged and quit. This week, think about the kind of race you are running. What might you need to change to ensure you reach the prize?

**PRAYER:** *Use the space below to write down group prayer requests, and praises! Also, make sure and invite one or two people to close in prayer.*

## Session 6: Peace of God

Philippians 3:1

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 4:6-7***

**THE BIG IDEA:** "God is ready to give you a peace that "transcends understanding" when you pray and ask Him to do so. He will help ease your mind & guide you."

**VIDEO TEACHING:** 10 minutes

Read Philippians 4:1-9, and then watch session 6 . Get a pen or pencil ready for some notes.

Rejoicing in the Lord can keep you from...

Keys to rejoice in the Lord...

1. Remember the Lord is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Fill your mind with \_\_\_\_\_.

Tips to Handle Anxiety:

1. Pray for \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Start a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Let the little things \_\_\_\_\_.

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What's the most impactful statement you heard in this session?
2. Paul commands us to rejoice in the Lord always, how are we instructed to do this (see verse's 5-7).
3. Verse 6 says do not be anxious about anything – what are some things that make you anxious? How can you combat those things using the verse we went over today?
4. Verse 7 says that the peace of God will "Guard your hearts and minds" –what's the difference between praying to God, and praying with thanksgiving? How can these steps guard your hearts and minds?
5. Pastor Jordan encouraged you to write a list. What are some things in your life that match the descriptions found in verse 8?
6. When was a time that you trusted God with a tough situation that He was able to calm you down & guide you in that situation?
7. In verse 9, Paul tells us to put all these things into practice so we can have peace. What things on this list do you need to put into practice today?

**NEXT STEPS:** As the verse says – put it into practice! This week let's be praying and petitioning the Lord in our lives. In every situation we face, let's ask the Lord to guide us and give us His peace so we can act in a way that is a good example for Christ. As the video said: Make a list of the Good things in your life – Things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and praiseworthy – and during the week whenever we are tempted to think negatively, to gossip or cause drama, to fall into a dark place, to dwell on topics that are not good – take a moment and read over the list and thank God for those blessings.

**PRAYER:** Gather from the group requests that can be prayed over, and also remember to celebrate wins, and write them down.

Then have someone pray *“Thank you Lord for being present in our lives & willing to help us every day. Please give us your peace that transcends understanding whenever we face a challenging situation this week. Thank you for giving us so many things to be grateful for.”*

## LIFE GROUP PLANNER

Week Date	Who is Facilitating?	Where Are We Meeting?	What Are We Doing?	What About Refreshments	How About Childcare?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

## LIFE GROUP PLANNER

Week Date	Who is Facilitating?	Where Are We Meeting?	What Are We Doing?	What About Refreshments	How About Childcare?
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					





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