



Week 3 Discussion Questions

Thanksgiving and Prayer

Philippians 1:12-18

Icebreaker:

What is one thing you hope to get out of this sermon series and out of this community this Fall?

Read this week's passages: Philippians 1:12-18

What stands out to you from the passages or sermon this week?

Our society generally values self-confidence, while it also recognizes the downsides of over-confidence. What does it mean to have “confidence” in something and what kinds of things can/do people tend to put their confidence in?

Confidence is trust. To put our confidence in something is to trust it. In our world we often trust ourselves or other sinful and imperfect humans. We trust systems and leaders. Professionals and charlatans. Science and technology. We trust money and our ability to get enough of it. We trust that if we just work hard enough our work will pay off.

Reflect on life lately. Where have you put your trust when things are going well? Where have you put your trust when things are hard?

What is Paul's life situation as he writes the letter to the Philippians?

Paul is in prison, shackled to a Roman guard. He is there because of his unwavering faith in Jesus in the face of persecution. It is not wild to assume that Paul's arrest would be a detriment to his ministry and would instill fear in and test the faith of himself and other Christians in Rome.

In the midst of persecution and suffering, Paul says that his experiences serve an important purpose—advancing the gospel. How does Paul's imprisonment advance the gospel?

More people there and in other unlikely places come to faith in Jesus because of Paul's faithfulness amidst the trial. Paul's faith demonstrated before his literal enemies changes their lives and extends the Gospel more broadly to different groups of people he did not have access to otherwise.

How is it that Paul can have this perspective in such unthinkable circumstances?

Paul has genuinely experienced the faithfulness of God, he believes it to be true, and if the things he trusts and believes to be true really are, he has nothing to fear. Paul's belief in God's character removes himself from the center of his life and everything he does and experiences is shaped by God's glory and not his own.

Paul knows who God is and it shapes everything about his life. What are the things that stand out when you think of how God has revealed Himself and what do you consider to be God's defining characteristics?

Walk through the story of the Bible from the beginning, reflecting on God's character throughout his relationship with his people. What stories stand out and what do they

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A Philippians Mark-it-Up series

reveal about God's character? Exodus 3 and the story of the Burning Bush is a good passage to look back at to reflect on how God speaks about himself and defines himself to Moses.

How does knowing God and reflecting on His character shape your perspective on life and what impact does it have on your confidence?

What is the risk you face or fears you have when boldly trusting God in the midst of suffering or persecution?

Getting fired in the work place? Losing friends or family? Offending someone?

How does confidence in God give you the opportunity to advance the gospel?

While Paul's faith did result in offending some, it also drew others to faith in Christ. Paul's allegiance to God and not another man (Caesar) is what was offensive in his time, and his love and selflessness is what drew others to faith in Christ.

What contrasting motivations does Paul compare in these verses and which motivations does he urge the Philippians to have in their advancing of the gospel?

Paul compares envy, rivalry, selfish ambition, and insincerity with good will, love, and sincerity. Paul himself is motivated by love and good will toward God and toward others. Paul has sincerely experienced the transformation confidence in God brings and is urging his followers to have confidence in who God is so that our lives can be devoted to loving God and loving others, no matter the circumstances, to the praise and glory of God.