



WEEK 5

May 20 - 21

Your Only Hope For Joy

This Discussion Guide should be used the week following the sermon it supplements. If you are using the guide in your small group, try to work through the questions on your own before you meet. You might not get to all of the questions, and that's okay. If your small group does not meet one week, walk through the guide on your own so that you can stay in sync with the series.

MAIN TEXT: Philippians 2:19-30

SUMMARY: Re-read Phil 2:12-18. In vv. 19-30, Paul gives us two examples of what this should look like in our lives. Christ-first lives. Service-centered lives.

GETTING STARTED

Whether it was a job or a volunteer opportunity, have a couple of people share a time when it was grueling to serve in that role.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Paul
 - a) Paul served the people of the church at Philippi. In prison, he is waiting for exciting news from Philippi. What does Paul want to hear about? What and where is Paul's focus?
 - b) Where was Paul able to find "joy" in Timothy and Epaphroditus?
 - c) Describe a time when a boss, teacher or other person in authority express appreciation for your service. How did that make you feel?
2. Timothy
 - a) Read verse 2:20-21 – What was Timothy's focus? Was he wrapped up in his own world or focused on Christ Jesus?
 - b) What was Timothy's "work"?
 - c) Where was Timothy able to find "joy" in serving Paul?

"What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

2 Timothy 2:2

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Serving others may be hard for children to learn. But, it is what we were created for. Think of ways to let the children serve the adults. Don't worry about the spills and mess. As Paul praised Timothy and Epaphroditus, praise those who serve you. Let them find the joy in taking care of others. Do they have a pet? Let them serve the pet and be responsible for taking care of its needs. A purr or a lick can bring great joy.

3. Epaphroditus
 - a) What did Epaphroditus risk for the sake of the Gospel? (vv.26-28, 30)
 - b) Where did Epaphroditus find "joy" in enduring and pushing through?
 - c) How does serving others bring joy? Can you share a time with the group when you felt this?
4. How do these 3 examples that depict men in a serving role show the image of Jesus serving us through his death and resurrection (remember 2:12-18)? How does that motivate you to serve others and find joy in it?

Additional discussion: It is believed that Epaphroditus became ill on the way to deliver a letter from the Philippian church to Paul. He could have turned around and gone home. He could have – but didn't. He pushed through an illness that usually led to death. Why? What was so important?

NEXT STEPS

- We are to serve each other in the church and serve the world. Do you approach your church family with a heart that says "How can I serve? How can I sacrifice?"
- The church on earth is supposed to be a group of people who represent the image of Christ. Find ways to reflect and honor that image.
- Ask God to show you – honestly – if there are attitudes and actions that need to be laid bare or repented of? Act on what He shows you!

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