

Practice Guide for November 10th, 2024

Philippians, pt. 2— Shine Brightly

Suggested Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

What's a unique talent or hobby you have that people might not know about?

Opening (10 minutes)

Begin with 2 minutes of silence to focus on God's presence. Afterward, ask someone to open in prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your hearts toward understanding how to live in a way that stands out by exemplifying Christ-like love and unity.

Opening Question: Can you think of a time when someone's kindness or selflessness really stood out to you? How did it impact you or those around them?

Reflecting On Scripture (15 minutes)

Have someone read **Philippians 2:1-16** out loud for the group.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Paul writes a beautiful poem about Jesus' humility and His choice to take on the nature of a servant. How does this depiction of Jesus' divinity and humanity challenge our understanding of status and self-sacrifice?
2. What does it mean to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (v. 12), especially in light of the next statement that "it is God who works in you" (v. 13)? How might this concept shape our approach to faith?
3. What do you think Paul means by "shining like stars" in a "warped and crooked generation," and what does he suggest it takes or requires from the church to shine in this way?

Community Practice (25 minutes)

Read aloud this quote from Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird":

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."

Take 5-7 minutes to journal your response to these questions:

1. Think about a recent time when you disagreed with or misunderstood someone. How might seeing the situation from their point of view change your attitude or response?
2. How can focusing on Jesus' example of humility help you respond to others with patience and empathy, even in challenging situations?

Share your answers in groups of two or three.

Group Discussion:

- How does selfless humility, as demonstrated by Jesus, help foster unity within our community and world?
- What are practical ways to shine God's light in a world that feels fractured by fear, division, and uncertainty?
- What does it mean to "hold firmly to the Word of Life" in our daily lives, and how does this help us shine brightly in the world?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

As we conclude our discussion, have someone read this prayer, often called the "Fragrance Prayer," by John Henry Newman:

*Dear Jesus,
Help me to spread Your fragrance wherever I go.
Flood my soul with Your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly,
that my life may only be a radiance of Yours.
Shine through me, and be so in me
that every soul I come in contact with
may feel Your presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus!
Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others.
The light, O Jesus, will be all from You; none of it will be mine.
It will be You, shining on others through me.
Let me thus praise You the way You love best,
by shining on those around me.
Let me preach You without preaching,
not by words but by my example,
by the catching force of the sympathetic influence of what I do,
the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to You.
Amen.*

Further Reading:

- *Philippians (BECNT)* by Moisés Silva
- *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters* by N.T. Wright
- *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* by Michael Gorman