

Free to Encourage

Philippians 1:1-11

“Current Status” Questions: Get your group talking by asking both questions:

1. Are you currently feeling trapped by life? Share with your group what your “prison walls” are (physical sickness, family drama; economic hardship, or mistreatment by others, etc..).
2. How do you usually respond when you are feeling imprisoned by circumstances?

Paul’s Example: Read Philippians 1:1-11, then choose 3-4 of the following questions to discuss:

3. Paul introduces himself as a “servant of Christ Jesus.” What comes to mind when you hear the word “servant?” Are there any ways you might associate “freedom” with servanthood?
4. **Read verses 3-8.** Encouragement is thankful and affectionate. Discuss the emotions that Paul expresses towards the Philippians. How did he express those emotions?
Consider your life: Is it difficult or easy for you to tell others how much they mean to you? Share with your group about one person who has encouraged you and supported you in your Christian faith (other than your spouse). What kinds of things did they do to encourage and influence you?
5. Pastor Dave talked about praying from a posture of joy and gratitude first, rather than a posture of wanting something. What difference does gratitude make? What are some specific ways you incorporate gratitude into your prayers?
6. **Read verses 9-11.** Encouragement is optimistic. What specific things does Paul pray for the Philippians? What results would this love, knowledge, and discernment have in their lives, if they applied them properly (v. 10,11)? What can we learn from this?
7. **Read verses 6-7.** Paul reminds the Philippians that the God of all goodness and all blessing is at work in them. How does that confidence free us to “live out” TRUE FREEDOM, **even in the midst** of our “prison walls” of life?

“LIVE IT OUT”: Encourage your group members to complete the “Live It Out” Mission challenge; then choose 1 additional question to end your group time:

8. In the week ahead, complete “Live It Out” Mission # 1 (found on The Chapel’s Small Groups page). Next time you meet, check-in and hold each other accountable by sharing your stories!
9. Paul sets an example for us to follow: from the midst of a prison cell, he thought about and encouraged others! What are some specific things we can do to prevent our outward circumstances from controlling us inside? Pray to live out this type of “true freedom” no matter what your circumstances may be.
10. End your group time by encouraging one another: invite group members to share words of encouragement, as they feel led. How do you see God working in and through one another? What do you really appreciate about one another?