

Free to Love

Philippians 2:1-13

“Group Check-In:”

- Before beginning, please share any stories or experiences from Pastor Dave’s teaching from Week 2, regarding *True Freedom: Free to Suffer*.
- **Did you complete the “Live It Out” Mission Challenge?**
 - How did the Holy Spirit convict you this week to make a change?
 - What did you do, and what was the outcome?
 - How did it influence you personally; and how did it affect others?

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

1. If you are 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.). Consider behaviors and thinking which may be prison walls too.
2. When you are feeling imprisoned, how well do you love others? Even if you do not feel “imprisoned”, how do you believe or hope this message will change your approach to be free to love in the future?

Paul’s Example: Read Philippians 2:1-13, then choose 3-4 of the following questions to discuss:

3. **Read Philippians 2: 1-4.** The apostle Paul commands the Church to love by being humble and unified in the Holy Spirit. Cory noted that this passage refers to our mindset. C.S. Lewis stated “True humility is not thinking less of yourself; rather it is thinking of yourself less.” *Discuss ways that we can achieve the same mindset of Christ. How do you hold yourself aware of and accountable for your selfish tendencies, in order for the Holy Spirit to grow you to demonstrate God’s love?*
4. **Read Philippians 2: 5-11.** The apostle Paul calls believers to love one another, as Christ Jesus loved by lowering himself to serve humanity AND in obedience to God’s purpose for Christ’s life. This demanded Jesus to subject himself to earthly troubles and to be the Lamb of God who died and rose again to purchase eternal life for all who choose to repent, believe and follow Him. *Discuss what Christ-like humility looks like, and what does it NOT look like.*

In what areas are you struggling to humbly serve the people in your life for whom Christ died? Share with your group an example of the selfless godly love someone blessed you with, and if you were aware or unaware of this service at the time of this blessing. (Example: nudging someone to discover Christ, discipleship, etc.... would be “unaware, selfless service acts of love”)
5. **Read 1 Peter 5:6.** Cory noted that our culture is self-elevation focused. We all are impacted by the culture. Therefore, godly love which includes unified service with humility is foreign. We **may** experience gratitude from others when we love them with God’s love, but not necessarily. God’s blessings of character building, His affirmation which we sense, and the blessing of eternal life are His promise to us. *How does a Christ-follower radically love others? In what ways can loving, humble, godly acts or words be misunderstood? What does “humbling yourself under God’s mighty hand” mean for believers?*
6. **Read Philippians 2:12-13.** The apostle Paul notes in this letter to the Philippian church, that he knows they have obeyed. Yet he encourages them to continue to purposefully cultivate their spiritual lives and to live out their faith. Cory noted that good works do not “earn” salvation, but rather demonstrate our love for God and His power at work in our lives. Demonstrating love the way it is intended to be requires discipline. Cory encouraged us to allow God to transform us, primarily through reading God’s Word daily.

Share with your group how you spend time in God's Word daily. Is there something that works especially well for you? How has your time in His Word recently impacted your life? Which prison walls have you come to see in a different light?

Cory also noted that as we know God through His Word, our prayers are changed.

Have recent prayers about any of your prison walls changed, or have you seen any answers? How does God's Word and prayer transform how you love? Is your demonstration of love to others increasing as a result of your growing relationship with Christ & His Church?

"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:

7. In the week ahead, complete **"Live It Out" Mission # 3** (found on The Chapel's Small Groups page). Next time you meet, check-in and hold each other accountable by sharing your stories!
8. Paul sets an example for us to follow: from the midst of a prison cell, he thought about and encouraged others to love the way Christ intends. What are some specific things we can do to focus beyond any "prison walls" to the see and be part of God's bigger picture, to love others the way they are meant to be loved? Is there a service project you can do alongside your group members while loving someone else?
9. End your group time by inviting group members to share, as they feel led: How do you see God growing members' love for others? In what ways do you see each other "loving others"? What do you appreciate about one another?