

PRAYING WITH A THANKFUL HEART

Philippians 1:3-11

IN JESUS'
NAME

LIFE GROUP HOMEWORK

MAY 28 & 29, 2016

Leading Off:

Describe a time in your life when your heart was so filled with gratitude toward someone that you couldn't wait to thank them or felt that you needed to thank them multiple times.

Digging In:

1. What reasons does Paul give for his abundant thankfulness for the Philippians? (hint: there are three reasons given in vs. 5-7) Is there anyone in your life that has evoked this same level of thankfulness towards God? Was it for similar reasons, or different reasons?

2. In verse 7 Paul tells the Philippians that they are "*partakers*" with him "*of grace*" both in his imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. What do you think that Paul means by "*grace*" and how does it relate to his imprisonment and the defense and confirmation of the gospel? Why is Paul so abundantly thankful for this partnership or fellowship that he has with them?

(Note: the word that we translate 'grace' has a basic meaning of 'a very generous and benevolent gift.' Paul uses it in reference to both the gifts that God gives **TO** us and the gifts that God gives **THROUGH** us. Sometimes it is used broadly in reference to God's entire plan of salvation, yet it is also used for the specific workings in the life of an individual. Take this into account when you discuss this.)

3. Notice that even though Paul was thankful for what God was doing among the Philippians, and was confident that God was going to continue to do great things, he still asked God for more (vs. 9-11). Based on what is said in this passage, what spiritual blessings did Paul desire to see abundantly increasing in the lives of those in Philippi? How often do we pray for these sort of things? (Remember, Paul prayed these things EVERY time he remembers them in EVERY prayer!)

4. In verse 9 Paul asks that their love might abound more and more in "*knowledge*" and "*all discernment*." Sometimes it seems like increased knowledge tends to result in a decrease in love. So what is the relationship between the increase in love that Paul is requesting, and the knowledge and discernment that he hopes will accompany that love? For example, does the increase in love result in the knowledge and discernment or vice versa? (See next question as well.) Can you share a time in your life when this love, knowledge, and discernment manifested itself in your life or the life of someone you know?

5. Verses 10 begins with the words “*so that...*” which implies that verses 10 and 11 reveal Paul’s desired result of increased love being combined with knowledge and discernment. How do these results flow out of abundant love with knowledge and discernment? Have you ever experienced these results in your life or observed them in the lives of someone else?

6. Why is Paul so urgent to thank God and ask Him for these blessings to be given to others? Is that same heart of thanksgiving present in your prayer life? What might make it difficult to maintain this heart of thanksgiving to God for others? What feeds this heart of thanksgiving?

Going Forth:

Share with the group about someone whose spiritual growth and participation in God’s grace has encouraged you. Take the time to lift that person up in prayer; thanking God for them and asking God to bless them even further.