Mind Trap

The Book of Philippians - Discussion Guide

Week One - It's Not All Up To Me - May 31

Ice Breaker: Share about a time when you took on more than you could handle. It may have been a project you didn't have skills for, a schedule you didn't have time for, or an expense you didn't have money for. How does that responsibility feel when you don't have the time or the means to complete it?

1. Read Philippians 1:1. What do you think Paul means when he refers to himself and Timothy as *servants*? How could viewing yourself as a servant, rather than the one in charge, be helpful to your life today?
2. Why is it important to understand that Jesus is the one who does the work? Consider Philippians 1:6. How did Jesus begin the work, and how will He end it? Consider also Hebrews 12:2.
3. In Philippians 1:12, Paul refers to the things that have *happened* to him. How is Paul's perspective on these *happenings* helpful for those who feel helpless in their situation?
4. How can Paul confidently say in Philippians 1:21, *to live is Christ, and to die is gain*? How can we live like we have the victory through Jesus?

Week Two - It's Not All About Me - June 7

Ice Breaker: Have you ever had that awkward situation where you think someone is waving to you, but they're actually waving to the person behind you… When someone is talking to you, but they're actually talking on their phone… When you thought your name would be called, but someone else was selected… Share about a time when you thought the situation was about you, but ended up having nothing to do with you!

1. According to Philippians 2:1-2, what values should mark Christian community? How does selfishness fit within such Gospel relationships?
2. How does Paul define humility in Philippians 2:3-4? What are some practical tips on thinking less about yourself and more about the concerns of others?
3. How did Jesus exemplify humility in Philippians 2:5-8? How did God respond to Jesus' humility in Philippians 2:9-11?
4. We know it's not healthy to put ourselves at the center of the story, or to make life all about us! So how should we view our place in God's story according to Philippians 2:12-15?

Week Three - It's Not About My Past - June 14

Ice Breaker: Backing up a vehicle doesn't come naturally to everyone, especially if you're unsure how to use those mirrors! Share about a time when your focus was not in the direction you were going and how that worked out for you. Why is it difficult to move forward while staring in the rear view?

1. Consider what kind of person Paul had been in the past as you read Philippians 3:4-6. How could he boast about his past, and what might cause pain from his past?
2. According to Philippians 3:7-11, what perspective does Paul have on his complicated past? Is he stuck there? What does he mean by repeating the phrase *count everything as loss?*
3. Paul practiced letting go of his past, but what future goal was he reaching toward? Consider Philippians 3:12-14. Paul mentions *forgetting* the past… How is that possible?
4. Read Philippians 3:17-21. How does a focus on the glory of Heaven to come, change our mindset on the here and now?

Week Four - It's Not All Bad - June 21

Ice Breaker: They say every cloud has a silver lining! Maybe it's the difficult move that introduced life long friends… The health scare that brought a fresh perspective… Or the cancelled plans that led to cherished memories! Share about a situation which, at first, seemed really bad, but actually turned out to be really good!

1. Philippians four begins with Paul addressing a fight between friends in verses two and three. Relational conflict can certainly cast a dark shadow over your day! How can these friends find grounds for agreement according to Paul?
2. Philippians 4:4 is a well-known verse! The Greek word for *rejoice* includes the word *grace*. How does grace shed light on the reasons why we can rejoice always?
3. Read Philippians 4:6-7. Why is thanksgiving so important when telling God about problems? Can you have peace without thankfulness?
4. Paul outlines the types of things we should think about in Philippians 4:8. How could we use this list as a filter for our thoughts?
5. What's Paul's secret for practicing gratitude from prison? Consider his claims in Philippians 4:11-13.