

2. What messages about “The Good Life” do we get from the world which seem solid on the surface, but in reality are hollow? Think of financial security, relationship compatibility, product reliability, or political promises, etc.

3. How do you think being members of God's family should affect the way we live?

4. What kind of person are you, typically - *task*-focused, or *relationship*-focused? How does this bent affect your interaction with other Christians?

5. If today you could speak from the pulpit about, or wave a wand and fix, any one major problem within your Christian community, what would that problem be?

Consider some of the problems which distracted the people of God from experiencing real community and how God instructed them to live: Psalm 133:1-3; Jude 16-22; Ephesians 4:1-6.

6. What good work (v.6) has God begun in you? Are you confident that He is perfecting you? What evidence do you see of that perfecting process?

## TAKING IT HOME

You've chosen to be part of a church community. That means you will experience and observe both good and bad behavior. Will you be in the stands booing those who fail you? Or, will you be cheering for them in how they bless you and others?

1. To really take this home in your group, take up the fourth action right now - pray for others. Spend time *“praying with joy”* following Paul's example for people in your group. Pray beyond the immediate physical or material needs - lift them up to God in areas like loving others, leading spiritually, forgiving authentically, maintaining purity, giving generously, sharing honestly, witnessing boldly, working diligently, praying powerfully, living selflessly, learning confidently - you can think of more.

2. Take time to pray this way once each day this week. Pick a person in your Christian community or family and commit to demonstrating one of the four actions: gratefulness, understanding, loving, praying. Share your commitment with at least one other person in your group - spouse, friend, or leader. You will experience fulfilling community!

## Community

### Philippians 1:3-11

Paul demonstrates **four actions that demonstrate value** for Christian community.

- **ACTION #1: DEMONSTRATE A CONSISTENTLY GRATEFUL ATTITUDE FOR THE GOOD YOU SEE IN THE MEMBERS OF YOUR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.**

*<sup>3</sup>Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. <sup>4</sup>I always pray for you, and I make my requests with a heart full of joy <sup>5</sup>because you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.*  
Philippians 1:3-5 (New Living Translation)

“Partners” = *koinonia* = sharing or participating together = close connection between believers.

*How I thank God through Jesus Christ for each one of you.* Romans 1:18 (NLT)

- **ACTION #2: EXPRESS UNDERSTANDING THAT ALL GOD’S PEOPLE ARE IN PROCESS.**

*And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.* Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

Sanctification = as we respond to God, we become more and more free from sin and more and more like Christ in our actual lives. (See 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Romans 6:22)

*<sup>2</sup>Yes, dear friends, we are already God’s children, and we can’t even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when he comes we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.* 1 John 3:2 (NLT)

- **ACTION #3: EXPRESS LOVE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE.**

*<sup>7</sup>It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. <sup>8</sup>God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:7-8 (New International Version)*

“Feel” = both feeling and thought

“I have you in my heart” = “You hold a special place in my heart.”

- **ACTION #4: PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE IN YOUR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.**

*<sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight <sup>10</sup>to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup>having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11 (New Revised Standard Version)*

*Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be. Matthew 6:21 (NLT)*

- **APPLICATION:** What is the Holy Spirit saying to you today? What is your attitude toward the community of God's people?

Discussion Guide

September 19-20, 2009



## The Good Life: Community

Philippians 1:3-11

### QUICK REVIEW

Beginning in Philippians 1, we read how the Apostle Paul demonstrates four actions that reveal the value of Christian community in the Good Life:

Action #1 = grateful attitude for the members of your Christian community

Action #2 = express understanding that all of God's people are in process

Action #3 = show genuine love for God's people, both in feeling and thought

Action #4 = earnestly pray for the people in your Christian community

### MY STORY

Tell of a time when you were a part of some activity that needed more than one person to succeed. Think of a memorable event where you knew 'it takes a group to do that!' You might have played an instrument in an orchestra or marching band, acted in a play or musical, played a position in a team sport, planned an event or reception, strengthened your family, had a part in weekend church services, or you helped to manufacture a Boeing jet?

### DIGGING DEEPER

1. Here in verses three and four, Paul thanks God and offers prayers for his fellow believers. Why do you suppose thankfulness is such an important characteristic of a Christian?

God's Word is full of reminders about being thankful for the family of God. Here are some examples: Psalm 35:18; Romans 16:3-4; 2 Corinthians 1:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3