

# SMALL GROUP STUDY

## The Epistle of Joy

Paul accomplished much from prison. This letter to the Philippians is one of four letters he wrote from prison. You might expect a man in prison to be depressed and to bemoan his condition. This was not Paul; he found joy in his condition. Prison did not put his Christian walk or ministry on hold--quite the opposite--his imprisonment furthered the gospel! In his letter to the Philippians Paul provides the model of a Christian life; keeping his eyes on the furtherance of the gospel, not his own condition.

## The Marvel of the Christian Life ~ Love (chapter 1)

Although Paul was mistreated and almost died in Philippi, he viewed the Philippians through the eyes of love. Christians are all part of one big family and Paul models the love we should have for one another.

### *Discussion Questions:*

- a. What was Paul thankful for regarding the Philippians?
- b. How did Paul's imprisonment further the gospel?
- c. Examine your heart: Do you feel chained to something? What reasons can you find to glory in your difficulties?

## The Model of the Christian Life ~ Christ (chapter 2)

Paul points to Christ as the model for our life, "...made Himself of no reputation..." Phil 2:6 Paul looked at his life through the lens of what was best for other people, not for himself.

### *Discussion Questions:*

- a. Examine your heart: Are you humble?
- b. How can lowliness and humility grease the gears of relationships?
- c. What did Jesus empty himself of when He came to earth as a man?

## The March of the Christian Life ~ Forward (chapter 3)

Paul was teaching them to go forward in grace, and warned them of the Judaizers.

### *Discussion Questions:*

- a. Examine your heart: Do you live your life looking back at what could have been?
- b. What was Paul warning the people about? Who were the dogs in their midst? Who are the dogs in our midst today?

## The Marks of the Christian Life ~ Peace, Joy (chapter 4)

Despite Paul's chains he had peace and joy.

### *Discussion Questions:*

- a. Why did Paul have peace and joy in prison?
- b. Examine your heart: Are you content?
- c. How often and for what does Paul say we should pray?