

# CONVERSATION GUIDE:

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

- What's something you tend to complain about repeatedly?
- When is it fun to complain and grumble?
- When have you seen someone's positive attitude make a real difference in a difficult situation?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Paul connects grumbling with missing God's work in our lives. How have you seen this play out in your own experience?
- What is your "internal dialogue?"
- What does it mean to "shine as lights" in today's world? How can we do this practically?
- How does remembering God's goodness help combat our tendency to complain?
- Why do you think Paul connects our witness ("shine as lights") with our attitude ("without grumbling")?

## PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- Reflect on your typical response to difficulties. Are you more likely to look for God's work or focus on the problems?
- Consider one area where you need to shift from grumbling to gratitude.
- Think about how your attitude might be affecting your witness to others.

## GROUP FOCUS:

- Share testimonies of God's faithfulness in difficult circumstances.
- Pray for each other to maintain perspective on God's larger story in our lives.
- Discuss ways to encourage one another to "shine as lights" in your community.



## WEEK 15 THE JOY OF SHINING (PHILIPPIANS 2:14-16)

## TODAY'S VERSES:

Philippians 2:14-16	Deuteronomy 32:5	Psalms 62:11
John 1:1-2	Daniel 12:3	Matthew 5:43-45
Exodus 16:2	Isaiah 65:23	
Genesis 17:1-2	Habakkuk 3:18	

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## WEEK 15 THE JOY OF SHINING

If you were able to look through the last few weeks of Philippians, you would see this progression to where Paul lands today. He has spoken about Christ's humility saving us, how we seek to restore relationship with one another, and now he says we can/should do that without grumbling or complaining. Paul tells us to live this way, because in so doing, we will shine as lights in the world. The NIV translates this poetically with, "*Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky...*"

We have to be careful that we don't miss the communal nature of the Scriptures, why we work through them together in community. When we meet with others and don't understand parts of the Bible, they can be explained to us so that we can grow and subsequently help others. Paul relates all he says to a deep understanding of the Old Testament:

- Grumbling (complaining) – Exodus 16:2
- Blameless and innocent (or pure) – Genesis 17:1-2
- Crooked and twisted generation – Deut 32:5
- Shine as light (like stars) – Daniel 12:3
- I did not run or labor in vain – Isaiah 65:23

Paul has loaded the passage in Philippians with references to history. Some people in Philippi wouldn't know Paul is referencing all of these things; it is why they needed others to explain it.

**Grumbling** is like a secretive debate: *Gongysmos*. It has been translated as "reasoning that has ulterior and malicious desires." It is someone who has lost their way and has made up all sorts of reasons to try to reinforce that nothing is their fault as they try to justify their innocence. **We grumble when we forget to remember God's goodness.** The way

Paul is talking is meant to lead us to ask, "Why do they keep repeating the same things?" Because **we** also tend to forget and repeat the same things!

**Disputing** starts in an internal dialogue and moves outward: *dialogismos*. If we get our strength from ourselves, at some point, we will grow weary, lose heart, and grumble. Instead, we are called to repeat and remember what God has done; when we do, we will be refreshed. We were saved by God from our sin, that's grace. **What is our internal dialogue?**

**Shine as lights in the world** – If you read through Jesus' words and the words of the early church fathers, they focused on our lives *here*—not some future day. Grumbling and disputing reveals the unbelief in our hearts about God's goodness. There is a lie that makes us believe that how it is now is how it will always be, and that leads to a grumble that prevents us from shining like stars. *Phil 2:16 so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.*

- **Run refers to a marathon, not sprint.** "Run" means it is time to grow up and realize, whether people cheer us on or not, we are to shine in the world.
- **Labor refers to a hard work.** Not a work to earn our salvation, but a working together.

God's salvation, how we grow, and how we come to shine like stars, is not seeing our hardships as God's absence, but signs and invitations of living in His strength.

What does it mean to shine like stars in the "everyday stuff"? It means we reflect the reality of Gospel as it infuses and changes us.