

CONVERSATION GUIDE:

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- When you think about God's glory, what comes to mind? Is it something abstract or concrete for you?
- How would you describe the kind of community you've experienced in church settings?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How does God being completely God centered differ from human self-centeredness, and why is it right for God to be centered on His own glory?
- Paul singles out believers in "Caesar's household" in his greetings. Why is this significant, and what does it tell us about the Gospel's power?
- How does Paul's emphasis on grace at both the beginning and end of his letter frame everything else he discusses?
- How does God's grace both condemn sin and provide forgiveness at the same time?

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- Reflect on areas in your life where you might be seeking your own glory rather than God's. What would it look like to reorient those areas toward God's glory?
- In what ways do you struggle with accepting God's grace in your own life? Why might this be difficult for you?

GROUP FOCUS:

- In what ways might our group be more intentional about extending grace to those outside your community?
- Which of these five points of true fellowship can your group work to grow in this week?

PRAYER FOCUS:

- Thank God for His grace that comes to us through Jesus. Pray that we would increasingly understand the true depths of God's grace. Pray that the Gospel would continue to advance even in the most unlikely places (like "Caesar's household") in our day.



WEEK 33 THE JOY OF GOD'S GLORY, TRUE FELLOWSHIP, AND GRACE (PHILIPPIANS 4:20-23)

TODAY'S VERSES:

Philippians 4:20-23
John 9:3
Isaiah 48:11
Ezekiel 36:22-23
Ephesians 1:6
Romans 15:8-9

John 12:27-28
Philippians 1:1, 5,
7, & 29
Philippians 2:1
1 Corinthians 12:13

2 Corinthians 13:14
Philippians 3:10-11
Philippians 4:14-15
Romans 5:8

SEPTEMBER 14, 2025

WEEK 33

THE JOY OF GOD'S GLORY, TRUE FELLOWSHIP, AND GRACE

Today we finish the book of Philippians and there are two main themes: God's glory and Christian fellowship. Paul ends his letter with, *"To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen."* This closing emphasizes that God's glory is the ultimate purpose of all things. He reminds us that God Himself is the most God-centered being in the universe.

God's Glory: God's glory is central to everything—including our joy. If you were to echo the words "amen" after Paul said something, it meant you were taking these truths as your own. To God be glory...not us. John Piper writes, *"The role of the Holy Spirit is to burn in me what He has been burning for all eternity: God's love for God."* Christ died to glorify the Father and to repair the defamation we had brought upon His honor. God is committed to being God BEFORE He is committed to anything else and so is Paul.

True Fellowship: Philippians begins and ends the same way, with Paul addressing the "saints." We become a saint not by our own work, but by God's work in Christ. This is why it is good news. There are five times Paul will use the word "fellowship" to show how we are meant to live with one another and live as "saints."

- **True fellowship rises from our mutual commitment to the Gospel** (Phil 1:5). Together, with a focus on Christ, we become a community of brothers and sisters bound together in Christ.
- **True fellowship rises from our mutual hardships that arise from the Gospel** (Phil 1:7). Suffering for the Gospel is a grace in Paul's thinking and theology.
- **True fellowship comes when we walk in/with God's Spirit** (Phil

2:1). Fellowship should be part of our continuing existence.

- **True fellowship happens when our life and hope are found in Christ's work** (Phil 3:10-11).
 - **True fellowship brings about a generous sharing of our material substance for the proclamation of the Gospel** (Phil 4:14-15).
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Paul reminds the Philippians that the power of Rome can't stop the power of the Gospel. This, for Paul, is a way to encourage the Philippians, because as they stand for the Gospel in their city, they will encounter opposition and yet God is still faithful.

It is all grace – Phil 4:23 *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

God brings to us grace and peace and we then extend that to the world around us. Kent Hughes says grace *"is the wellspring and the heartbeat of the Christian life."* Miroslav Volf wrote that, *"To forgive is to name and condemn the misdeed. The same is true of God. God doesn't just condemn and then forgive. God also condemns in the very act of forgiving."* God doesn't ignore our sin; He faces it fully and shows how Jesus had to DIE for it.

Tim Keller defined grace as: *Favor granted to an undeserving person by an unobligated giver.* The Gospel results in us finding favor in the sight of the only One who really counts. Paul ends his letter saying EVERYTHING is God's grace, including our renewed fellowship with one another.

Paul's closing greetings highlight the fellowship that exists among believers, demonstrating how the Gospel creates true community across all boundaries. Paul concludes with, *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,"* bringing his letter full circle and reminding us that everything in the Christian life flows from, and returns to, God's unmerited favor toward us.