

Discussion Guide on Philippians 3:12-4:1

The following is a suggested discussion guide for you to use with your family, small group, or Sunday Morning Bible Study as we walk through the book of Philippians. Feel free to use what is helpful in this guide to lead you in discussion.

Introduction

Begin with an opening icebreaker question. An example question related for this week's study could be: "As you look back on your life, which accomplishments are you most proud of? What level of commitment and work did it take to enjoy your success?" Be sure to share prayer requests and pray together before or after the lesson.

Video

Watch the video for Philippians 3:12-4:1, which can be found at www.mbbc.org/home-church.

Discussion

In Philippians 3, Paul helps us navigate the road of the Christian life. This path is marked with guardrails on both sides. Last week, we talked about one guardrail, the guardrail of legalism. The Judaizers were teaching that circumcision was required to be part of the family of God. This week, Paul is going to talk about the guardrail on the other side of the road – a teaching known as antinomianism.

Ask, "How did Ben define this teaching in his study?" Explain that antinomianism is the teaching that, because grace abounds, we can live however we want. This guardrail is important for us because, though salvation is by grace through faith, and is a free gift, the process of sanctification, of becoming like Christ, is one that takes work and striving. Paul uses athletic metaphors to remind us that we are called to strive after sanctification, to work for it, to lean forward and press on to the finish line – while we realize that it is not of our accord, but the grace of God working in and through us. Much like our icebreaker question, we realize there are things in life that are worth striving for – and of all things, the pursuit of the Christian life and growing in our faith is worth it.

Paul also encourages the Philippians to look to him and to other Christians who are modeling the way of Jesus, because this is the path of discipleship. **Ask, "In your life, who has modeled the path of discipleship for you? How are you modeling this path for others?"**

Point out that Paul gets emotional toward the end of the chapter (3:18) as he talks about those who are enemies of the cross. **Ask, "How does Paul characterize these people?"** Paul recognizes that, as these people are grabbing hold of their freedom and living as they want, their destiny is destruction. If you live that way and sin has consumed you, death is the end. Their god is their stomach – they are all about pleasing themselves. Their glory is in their shame – they are focused on earthly things that end in death, but our citizenship is in heaven and we are waiting for Jesus.

Paul warns us against being tempted to legalism, but at the same time, he also reminds us that for freedom we have been set free, but our freedom is not for us to abuse, for our own glory and joy and doing as we please. We

are to continue to learn, to grow, to train ourselves toward discipleship and toward being like Christ. Some of us may be tempted toward legalism, but others of us are likely tempted toward antinomianism.

At the end of the video, Ben calls us to examine our own hearts. In these days, when we look out at the world and see all that is not as it should be, we might be tempted to want to change other people, but our first focus should be looking at our own hearts – the ways we behave and the ways we act – and asking ourselves where God would have us to change, so that we better match the pattern of Jesus.

Ask people to silently reflect on these questions in closing: “What spots in your life need a little extra attention, work, and discipline? What parts of your life can you bend to the finish line, straining to arrive at the end? Between now and when Jesus comes back, what work do you need to do to be ready for His arrival?”