

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Can You See More? | Philippians 1:1-11

Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To grow in our prayer life; increasing in our love, thankfulness, and dependence on God.

Icebreaker: Andrew Huberman shared that his prayer life brings him peace. If you're being honest, what words come to mind when you think about your relationship with prayer? Peace? Fear? Guilt? A blend?

Transition: In our passage today, Paul gives us a picture of a life dependent on God through prayer.

Read:

Philippians 1:1-11

¹ Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

THE **crossing** **small groups**

1. Paul is imprisoned as he writes a letter to the Philippians. Read the following verses for context of what imprisonment was like:
 - a. Philippians 1:7, 13-14 & Philippians 4:11-13
 - b. How does Paul describe his imprisonment conditions?

2. How does Paul's perspective challenge you to face hard circumstances differently?

3. Instead of getting trapped in complaints, Paul dives headfirst into giving thanks. We're going to follow Paul's direction and thank God first.

What are you grateful for? What can you thank God for? Set a 5-minute timer and list out both the mundane and grandiose things you're thankful for in the space provided:

THE **crossing** **small groups**

4. Complaining, if we're honest, is the easy quick response to hard circumstances. How can our small group be a place to gently challenge each other to see our circumstances more like Paul?

Paul likely had moments he was discouraged in prison. He might have been unsure of how God would use his interactions with people, his words, and his letters to early churches. But thousands of years later, Paul's story, Paul's imprisonment letters, Paul's suffering and execution for proclaiming the gospel, are all *still* being used to advance the good news of Jesus. No circumstance was wasted. God redeems hard things and uses them.

5. How is this a fresh and challenging perspective to what the world tells us? How does it challenge you to trust God more deeply?

Transition: Dave mentioned that prayer can feel tricky because God is in control of all things, so whatever he is going to do, he is going to do. He's sovereign. *And, even still, it matters that we pray.* This side of the new heaven and new earth, we won't fully understand this. Only God sees the full picture. But we're encouraged to lean into prayer, to pray because God hears us, and responds.

6. How have you seen God show up in response to prayer?
7. If your group has time, dig into Marshall Segel's article: "[What Difference Will Prayer Make](#)" – unpacking God's sovereignty and the power of prayer, highlighting Hezekiah's life. To hook you, here's a teaser:

"The sovereignty of God does not compromise or jeopardize prayer – quite the opposite. The absolute sovereignty of God – over all the kingdoms of the earth and over every detail of our lives – is the hope and foundation for our praying. If God is *not* sovereign, but simply waits on the whims of kings and armies and circumstances, then our prayers may well be in vain. But our God waits on no one."

THE **crossing** **small groups**

At the end of the sermon, Dave challenged us to consider how we could grow in our prayer lives and he gave three ideas:

1. Give thanks to God.
 2. Pray to love more, know God more, and grow more in depth of insight.
 3. Pick up a "Simple Prayers from Philippians" book.
8. Are you planning to try any of these ideas? How can our small group be a place for prayer accountability?

Sharing and Prayer:

How can we be praying for each other? For our personal lives? Our church? Our city? And for God's kingdom?