

A blurred, blue-tinted photograph of several people in a modern office or public space. The figures are out of focus, appearing as dark silhouettes against a bright, overexposed background. They seem to be engaged in conversation or walking through the space. The overall mood is professional and contemporary.

CITIZENS

— PHILIPPIANS —

Philippians will

CHALLENGE

ENCOURAGE

COMFORT

TEACH

INSPIRE

us how to live as CITIZENS of
Heaven as residents in this world.”

- *Michael Davis*

USING THIS GUIDE:

Group Leader Instructions

In preparation for each study, take a few moments to read through the instructions below.

BEFORE THE GROUP MEETING:

1. Spend some time in prayer before your group.
2. As you prepare for the study, read over the questions and think through how answering them for yourself could help you better walk with God.
3. Then, try developing two to three practical steps that would help members of your group also walk better with God. Avoid the temptation to simply recount information, but thoughtfully arm your group members with something tangible that they can do throughout the week.
4. In the closing moments of your preparation, ask the Lord to move mightily in your home or group setting. Without the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing, and we are utterly dependent upon Him showing up!

DURING THE GROUP MEETING:

1. Begin with prayer. Ask for the Spirit to be present during the group.
2. Attempt to summarize this week's message, in a few, succinct, thoughts. (See summary below for an example)
3. Assign readers to read various Scripture texts (When applicable).
4. Walk your group through the discussion questions. (Don't feel like you have to cover every question. Some questions will naturally be more relevant to your group than others and will naturally produce more fruitful discussion. Be sensitive to the flow of conversation and either redirect or dwell longer upon a topic when it is necessary).
5. In response to questions, share stories and personal examples of how this has played out in your life. What did you learn? How did it help you walk with God? What fresh stories of God's power, love, mercy, or grace do you now have because you trusted Him?
6. Draw others out to share their own personal stories. What did they learn? What would life look like if they were able to live out this week's truth consistently?
7. End in a time of prayer, thanking God for the truths that He has revealed, and for the people that He has brought to your group.

SERMON SUMMARY

WEEK 1: THIS IS NOT OUR HOME

Series Purpose:

If you are a Christian, which simply means a follower of Jesus, then you are a CITIZEN of Heaven! This is not something you are working towards, but a REALITY of who you already are in Christ. And as CITIZENS of Heaven, we are called to promote the vision and values of Heaven, even while we are residents here on earth. In this series, we want to look at what heavenly our citizenship looks like and how we can begin living that out in the places that God has called us to reside.

This Week's Summary:

In today's sermon, we began by looking at how citizenship naturally effects the way that we live. For the people of Philippi, who were given the official status as Roman citizens, every part of their life was modeled after the culture and values of Rome, because being a citizen naturally effected all of who they were and all of how they lived. For us as Christians, since we have been given the official status as citizens of heaven, every part of our who we are and how we will live can also be modeled after the culture and values of heaven.

How can this begin happening? Just like the people of Philippi, who had an ongoing relationship with the Roman Caesar, we have an ongoing relationship with the King of Heaven, who will give us everything we need to live as a citizen of His Kingdom. This means that we do not have to remain stuck in behaviors and patterns of living that are contrary to His Kingdom, but that we can trust that He will give us everything we need to live consistently as a citizen of heaven today.

What is even more amazing than that, is that we did not have to do anything to earn our citizenship. We simply had to become a slave to Christ. We actually had to give up trying to earn things and simply trust that Jesus would earn it for us!

And why is this amazing? Because slaves do not normally become citizens! But, for some reason it has pleased the King of heaven, to grant us a greater freedom than we could ever earn by becoming a slave to Christ. This not only ensures that we will get to enter the gates of heaven, but that we will be set free to follow our King here on earth. As we submit as slaves to Christ we become free!

QUOTES TO CONSIDER:

“The appetites and attractions of this present world have a powerful way of blurring our vision of this spiritual reality. We must learn how to effectively live “in the world,” while not being “of the world,” yet faithfully carrying out our God-given mission “to the world.” – Lindsey Garmon

“On January 12, 1723. I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had to God; to be for the future, in no respect, my own; to act as one that had no right to himself, in any respect. And solemnly vowed, to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else, as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were.” – *Jonathan Edwards*

“We think by clinging to and hanging on with tooth and nail to our lives and to our agendas we gain our lives. We think by loving ourselves – by putting our self-interest and our agendas at the center – we are doing the best possible thing we can do for ourselves. And we are entirely wrong. We so need to develop a vision for God, surrounded as we are by monuments to man.” – *Stephen J. Nichols*

VERSES FOR REFLECTION:

Philippians 1:27: "Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven..."

Philippians 3:20: "But we are citizens of heaven..."

Philippians 3:12: "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own."

Acts 16:40: "When Paul and Silas left the prison, they returned to the home of Lydia. There they met with the believers and encouraged them once more. Then they left town."

Philippians 1:1-2: "This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How has being a citizen of this country (or your country of birth) naturally effected the way that you live? What are some of the values of this culture that contradict the values of Heaven?
2. Since you are citizens of Heaven, which is a far greater Kingdom to be a citizen of, how then will that citizenship begin informing, changing, and shaping the way that you live today?
3. How would you define being a citizen of Heaven? What are some of the values and behaviors associated with this?
4. The text for today says that we are slaves to Christ, which means that every part of our life belongs to Jesus. What about being a slave is hard for you? What areas are hard for you to turn over to Christ?
5. Can you think of a recent example of when Christ called you to do something? What did He call you to do? Were you obedient to Him? What was the outcome?
6. What are some of the fears, reservations, or obstacles that are keeping you from giving more of yourself to Christ?

POSSIBLE PRAYER TOPICS:

- Prayers of thankfulness to the King of Heaven
- Prayers for His Kingdom to grow in our land
- Prayers for us to learn how to submit ourselves as slaves to Christ so that all of who we are would come under all of who He is!
- Prayers for group participants and any prayer requests that were shared

CITIZENS

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All Scripture quotations from the NLT
Tyndale House Publishers,
Carol Stream, IL, 2013.