

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

AND

INSPIRE US

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 4: I WILL LIVE FOR JESUS

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, Michael began by asking: "WHY are we following Jesus?" which is a question that defines our level of commitment and determines how compelling we will be to others. For Paul, this question was answered because Jesus was worth it. He understood "To live is Christ and to die is gain" and as a result of Paul's deep convictions for Christ, he was incredibly compelling for Christ. For us today, the more deeply we are convinced about Jesus, the more compelling we will be to others for Jesus.

Next, Michael asked: "How then do we follow Jesus?", which he called followership. Followership is the life long process of following Jesus, in whatever direction He's leading, instead of asking Him to follow us wherever we want to be going. And, in today's text (Phil. 1:21) there are two incredible truths that will help us follow Jesus, as citizens.

TRUTH #1 - Living for Jesus means dying, everyday, so that we can live everyday for Jesus. Why do we need to do this? Because we all have this incredible ability to resurrect. Each day, when we lay our old selves down, at some point in the day that old self rises back up! So, to live for Christ means dying everyday so that Jesus can live more fully through us!

TRUTH #2 - Living for Jesus also means allowing other people to see Jesus in us every single day and in every single circumstance. In our text, Paul could not control his circumstances (prison), or the outcome (getting released), but what he could control was who he was in midst of his circumstances. And, who Paul was, was a man who faithfully lived out Christ, by dying to himself, so that other people would get to see Christ in him!

For us today, we need to know that this is not radical. This is not the way super heroes follow God. This is normal, wonderful and beautiful Christianity that God calls each of us to. He calls us to die everyday so that Jesus can live more fully through us. He calls us to live out Christ wherever we are, so that other people can see Jesus more fully. This is not radical; this is what God is calling ALL of us to!

QUOTES TO CONSIDER:

“Most people in most churches think they are following Jesus, but I’m not sure. They may think they are following Jesus, but the reality is this: they have invited Jesus to follow them.” - **Mark Batterson**

“When my flesh yearns for some prohibited thing, I must die. When called to do something I don’t want to do, I must die. When I wish to be selfish and serve no one, I must die. When shattered by hardships that I despise, I must die. When wanting to cling to wrongs done against me, I must die. When wishing to keep besetting sins secret, I must die. When wants that are borderline needs are left unmet, I must die. When dreams that are good seem shoved aside, I must die. Thankfully, the gospel teaches me that dying is not an end, but a beginning. On the other side of each layer of dying lie experiences of a life with God that are far richer, far higher, and far more intimate than anything I would have chosen otherwise.” – **Milton Vincent**

“Someday you will read in the papers that D.L. Moody, of East Northfield, MA is dead. Don’t you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now!” - **D.L. Moody**

“Our normal is so subnormal that normal seems radical. To the first-century disciples, normal and radical were synonyms. We’ve turned them into antonyms.” - **Mark Batterson**

VERSES FOR REFLECTION:

Philippians 1:21: "For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better..."

Galatians 2:20: "My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me."

Philippians 1:22-24: "But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live."

Philippians 1:25: "Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why are you following God? (i.e. what are the reasons, promises, hopes, dreams and expectations you have for following God?)
2. Michael taught us that the more convicted we are for Jesus the more compelling we will be to others. How has this been true in your life? Also, how has this truth been true or untrue when your conviction for Christ goes down?
3. What is followership and how was that a helpful concept for walking with God as a citizen of heaven?
4. What are some of the ways that you die to your self daily? Can you give an example of when, why, and how you needed to die to yourself? Can you give an example of how this has helped you walk with God?
5. What are some of the ways that you have been living out Christ for others? Can you share a story of how God has used you in someone else's life?
6. Michael said that we need to redefine a new normal, in regard to being a Christian. What did he mean by this and what do you think normal Christianity should look like? Is your view of "normal" a Biblical one? Is it defined by comfort or faithfulness?

POSSIBLE PRAYER TOPICS:

- Asking God to give us a Biblical and faithful view of what normal Christianity is.
- Acknowledging that we do not want to live this way (time of repentance)
- Thanking Jesus and celebrating that He lived this way (He perfectly laid down His life and perfectly lived so that others could see God)
- Asking the Holy Spirit to work on us and to help us live like this.
- Asking for opportunities and for situations so that we can show Christ to others!

CITIZENS

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