

Monday:

Welcome to Missions! Obviously we are thrilled you are here to hang out with us at Snowbird for a week. If you have never been here before you are going to experience something at this place that you might not have ever been a part of before – that is, at Snowbird, we operate as a living, breathing, community of believers that have the common goal of serving Jesus and doing all things for the glory of God! Your church is probably like that also – and your youth group should definitely resemble something like that as well – but you may not have recognized this blessing for what it is. If you have been here before than welcome back – you’re basically family.

In school you are **expected** to learn algebra, calculus, Spanish, geography, but when it comes to God’s word – many of us have mentally checked out. We use excuses that we can’t understand or that it is too wordy. Our eyes glaze over at the thought of trying to process scripture. This week we are going to walk through Philippians. We are going to cover some difficult thoughts – you may not initially understand, but we are going to do our best to not dumb it down. In this family we are **expecting** you guys to become students of God’s word! Otherwise what is really the point? To know the Pythagorean Theorem and not know how to use for God’s glory is a waste of knowledge. To know where Zimbabwe is on a map, but not know whether they have heard the gospel is simply a waste of time.

Your leaders brought you to Snowbird not because we have the best band or the most renown speakers, but because the word of God is taught here, and because of the relationships that will be developed during this week of camp. We pray you will experience real community this week.

Join us as we learn what it means to not waste the life God has given us. What does that even look like in light of the gospel. How do we really love our neighbor as ourselves? How can we practically operate in this mind set in the community God has placed us in? We **expect** you to walk away with some cool insight into doing “real” missions for the glory of God not just hit-and-run missions to feed the flesh.

Use this book as a devotional tool that will go along with the things that will be taught to you in the morning mission sessions. This space is for you to write out your thoughts about this week- why you came, and what you want to see God do in your life this week:

Tuesday: The gospel at the center of our relationships

Read Philippians 1:3-8

Don't be tempted to skip the intro! Many times when we come to an intro we brush over it because we think they are just saying hello, but let's see what all we can learn from these few verses.

*Who wrote this book? _____

* Who was it written to? _____

* These guys have a "**partnership in the gospel**" with the Philippians. In your own words what does that mean?

* From what you read was this a good partnership? _____ Do you think they got along? _____ Operated in community? _____

Did you know that the word partnership used in this passage has a commercial meaning. It was a "partnership" of shared vision. These people had financially supported Paul and Timothy. They believed in what these men were doing. They committed to these men and they proved it by their actions. Basically they rolled up their sleeves and got involved.

* Can you give an instance when you joined with a ministry to further the gospel? (HINT☺ Your doing it this week!)

* Vs. 6 - describes evidence of a true believer write that verse here:

Paul knew these guys had a genuine faith. Endurance in the faith is proof that you are truly a Christian. Check out Hebrews 3:14 and John 8:31 these verses support this thought. Also check out Mark 4:16-17.

* What does your Christianity look like when you are with your friends? Does it persevere? _____

When Paul is talking with the Philippians at the center of his conversation is the story of Jesus, what Jesus is doing, the miracles Jesus is doing in and through him and Timothy, and the burdens they want the church to be praying for.

What ties us together? What do we talk about when we meet, even after a church service?

The weather? Sports? School? None of these topics should be left out from Christian conversation, but what must tie us together as Christians is this passion for the gospel, this is keeping the gospel at the center of our relationships. (Paraphrased from a quote by D.A.

Carson)

In summary – this week as we serve together, lets practice talking about Jesus, and what He’s doing, and what we need from Him to make it through each day. This is one HUGE way to build community in your group. Sharing these things with each other builds a bond that cannot be easily broken. Sharing your burdens with your friends- lightens the load. **Describe how you are doing this in your church youth group :**

Wednesday: The gospel at the center of our prayer life

Read Philippians 1:9-11

If you glance back at Vs. 4 we see that Paul is praying the gospel over the church in Philippi. He does this in three segments.

#1 - He prays that their love may _____ and _____.

Also read 1 John 5:1- 3

No matter how great the community is in your youth group, church or family, a growing love for others, for each other, and for the gospel is essential to growth. The moment we get complacent - dissention can creep in and destroy.

#2 - How does he pray their love will grow? In _____ and _____ of insight.

He doesn't just mean knowledge of history or sea turtles, but knowledge of God. This requires us to quit being SELFISH! We are all capable of this.

When we get the idea out of our heads that we are the big deal - then we can really focus on knowing God and serving others and loving our neighbor can become a reality. Just growing in love is not enough - but also in the knowledge of God. These two ideas together produce a growing Christian!

#3 - Write Vs. 10 here:

He wants them to experience this level of freedom and success in their walk with Christ. This prayer for perfection is also followed up by the call to righteousness. This is a must because pride in perfection lurks outside the door. In verse 11 - he ends it with once again giving all glory to God.

What do you pray for? Are all your requests self-centered? Is it all about what you think you need? The Bible tells us **to come boldly**, with **anything**, but when was the last time any of us prayed "that our brothers and sisters in Christ would abound in love more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that they might discern the best things and prove them out in their own experiences, being filled with the fruit of righteousness, to the glory and praise of God?" (paraphrased from D.A. Carson)

If God's glory is our heartbeat then even our prayer life will be filled with petitions that further the gospel.

Practice praying this way tonight by praying these scriptures over the people we are working for this week. Pray these things over the people you are working beside. Pray these verses for your leaders that gave up their vacation time to walk through this week of missions with you. Leaders pray this way over each student in your group.

This will certainly revolutionize the way we function in our community!

Thursday: Advancing the gospel should be at the center of our ambitions

Read Philippians 1:12-18a

Paul feels the need to explain in these verses that his chains are a blessing from God. Apparently he had some critics that thought he had been needlessly bold in spreading the gospel. Maybe he should have remained underground where it was safe. Write verse 12 here:

In vs. 13 he says that the whole palace guard has heard about Christ. Paul was becoming a legend in this prison, but he says to them – better yet – Christ is becoming known because “I am in chains.”

In vs. 14 Paul gives a second reason to be excited about his prison sentence. What was it? _____

Sometimes the thought of persecution puts a backbone into an otherwise timid Christian.

The next few verses give us some insight into Paul’s critics. Paul says that some preach the gospel from envy and rivalry (vs. 15) but he isn’t concerned as long as the gospel gets preached. These men could have hurt Paul’s feelings because they simply misunderstood his boldness. They felt Paul should be more conservative – maybe take the edge off his preaching style. They had the mistaken idea that Paul’s ministry wasn’t being blessed because he was in chains. Do a little computer search on vs. 13 and we’ll quickly find that the imperial guard included some 9,000 men. Paul was given a captive audience while in chains. His chains were in fact a blessing!

Here’s a thought – Paul wasn’t praying to get out of prison this wasn’t his ambition or desire. He wanted to be **wherever** it would best to further the gospel! What are your ambitions or desires? To make money, get married, survive high school? These are not bad things, but if these things over shadow Christ as ruler of your life then you have to re-evaluate! Practically – that guy you keep thinking would be great for you – might actually keep you from telling others about Jesus. That sport that you love so much might actually be an idol in your life that is keeping you from knowing your savior. Your friends might be holding you back from a boldness for Christ in the halls of your school.

*If Christ is not at the center of your ambition than everything you are striving for is without eternal meaning. *The next step in this process is simply to deny the gospel and do our own thing.*

God may be calling you to be any number of things: a homemaker, a ditch digger, a doctor, a chemist. If you keep Jesus central in your life in all of those things - then you will be able to withstand persecutions that may come.

Take a few minutes and write out your desires and ambitions: What are your dreams? How can those dreams help further the gospel? How can others know more about Jesus through the desires of your heart?

Friday: Put others first – Love your brothers and sisters to the point of self-denial

Read Philippians 1:18b-26

Paul's one driving concern is NOT that he should be released from prison, or if he must die, he should have a relatively painless death, but that in life or in death he would not shame the name of Jesus.

Write vs. 1:21 here: _____

What can you possibly do to a Christian like that? Kill them?! So what? Death = Christ. Life = the glory of God. Read the verses again and look at Paul's struggle between life and death. Write his thoughts on the line: In vs. 22b he says which should I choose (life or death) _____!

Write a summary of his dilemma based on vs. 22-26 _____

What is striking is that Paul is convinced that his living would be better for other believers. His first thought is what would be best for the church! The body of Christ. The other guy in class. Better for that girl that doesn't dress like you.

Listen to this:

A missionary was planning to go to the South Sea Islands. "You will be eaten by Cannibals!" he was warned by a member of his church. He replied, "Mr. you are old yourself, and will soon be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you that if I but live and die for the glory of the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me if I am eaten by Cannibals or by worms; and on the day of the resurrection our bodies will arise the exact same way – so I choose to put the gospel first.

WOW! What a crazy choice to make! We are blessed to live in a country where loving our savior and sharing him with others is not necessarily going to cost us much. We have gone to church all our lives because our parents have gone to church all of their lives. Practical self-denial for us could be nothing more than not talking about that weird kid in youth group or gossiping about the football player that got drunk on Friday night after the game. How often do we just assume the gospel? We just take for granted our generational gift of knowing Jesus! It's gross! It grieves the savior for us to not take our faith seriously!

Let us challenge you in closing to **Wake up in your faith and don't waste your life!**

Serve Jesus. Love Jesus. Tell others about what he has done for you. Pray for your friends and lead them to your savior. Put aside your selfish behavior and serve others in your youth group. Love your neighbor as yourself! What happens when you do this?

#1 – you will bring glory and honor to God

#2 – you will be more like Jesus

#3 – you will experience real community in your church

What will YOU do with what you learned this week?

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow to attain the resurrection from the dead"

(Phil.3:10-11)

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*This devotional was written from a study called Basics for Believers : An Exposition of Philippians By: D.A. Carson. Most of the thoughts are his - paraphrased. Anything in Italics is definitely his words. This is the first chapter of the book only. It is a great study for anyone –leaders or youth. We recommend it! ~ Missions staff☺

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