

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

*Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.*

## PHILIPPIANS

### STUDY #6: Paul's Mission

#### BIBLE STUDY TOOLS ~ BIBLE STUDY METHODS

#### **LOOK FOR BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON BIBLE CHARACTERS**

The Bible is a book about people. We learn many valuable life lessons from the mistakes, accomplishments and faith ventures of God's people. Develop a biography by looking at every biblical reference on a person. Many study Bibles have this feature. The Life Application Bible, for example, has over 150 biographical sketches.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Share an event or characteristic of your life before you knew Christ personally. What or who helped you change?

#### **OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION**

*Note: If you do not remember Paul's (Saul) background and conversion, review Acts 22:1-11.*

#### **Read Philippians 3:1-11**

*Note: Dogs were not house pets, but shamelessly unclean scavengers that people hated.*

1. Who are the "dogs" that Paul is referring to? Why was their circumcision a problem?
2. Why does Paul have reason for putting confidence in the flesh? What do we learn from this short biography of his life before he met Christ?
3. What is Paul's attitude about his former life? How does that contrast with what he wants now?
4. Twice Paul says he wants to "know Christ" and once "gain Christ." Examining the context of these phrases (vv. 8-11), what do you think he means by this?
5. How do we tend to put 'confidence in the flesh'? How can we overcome this?

#### **Read Philippians 3:12-21**

*Note: Paul is not suggesting that we run to get to heaven! The Olympic runners in ancient Greece had to be citizens of the nation they represented. They also had to be free men, not slaves. The unsaved sinner is a slave, but the Christian is a citizen of heaven (3:20) and has been set free by Christ. Each Christian is given a special place on the "track" for his or her own service, and each one has a goal established by Christ. Our task in life is to "lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of us" (v. 13). Paul is not talking about salvation but sanctification—growth and progress in Christian life and service.<sup>1</sup>*

6. Where does Paul picture himself in the "race of life?" What is his commitment?
7. How does Paul describe the goal? (v. 14; see also vv. 20-21)
8. What contrasting set of role models does Paul offer in verses 18-19? Why would Paul mention 'tears' in verse 19?
9. How was Paul's life an example?
10. From these two passages (1-11; 12-21), which phrases describe Paul's mission? How did his goal influence and dictate his mission? What can we learn from this?

#### **APPLICATION**

- What do you need to give up (count as loss) to know Christ better? TV time? Your friends' approval? An addiction or bad habit? Some of your plans?
- How would you describe your mission?

<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 567–568). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.