

Upward Living in a World Gone Mad

Leader's Guide

Paul lived in a world gone mad ... literally! Our culture's philosophies and its actions can also be called increasingly "mad." In Philippians, Paul's purpose was to direct the Philippians from a downward focus to an upward focus. He wanted them to walk their destiny! Your purpose will be the same.

Paul knew that an upward focus would lead to the complete surrender of every area of their lives to God. God's peace and strength would then sustain them in the midst of the present and future crises, difficulties and persecution. Moving from self-focus, they would be able to daily live their destiny and walk as light and salt in a world filled with darkness. A victorious walk would have to be a surrendered walk. There was no other way for them to walk in victory and destiny, and there is no other way for you or your group members.

This study is literally a revolution of thinking and living!

For a group study, *our suggestion is that you use this material over a six-week time period, using Class One as an introduction.* A six-week study allows you the opportunity to complete and discuss the first devotion together in your first session's small group time. Students are to finish the other four devotions, themselves, before the next class. Each week, thereafter, the students will be encouraged to complete five devotions each week. We hope this scenario makes the students be more motivated to actually complete the remaining daily devotionals on their own, as scheduled. For a six-week study, you will begin with the Leader Notes "Introduction."

If you don't have six weeks, **you can cover the study in five weeks**, but you will need to pass out the workbooks several weeks before the first class, and urge your group members to complete the first five devotionals **BEFORE** the first class, so you can actually discuss those devotions that first week. Thereafter, students are to complete five devotions each week. For a five-week study, you will begin with the Leader Notes "The Surrender of Upward Living."

This workbook leads the student on an in-depth journey through Paul's letter to his beloved Philippians, written while he was imprisoned, chained day and night to a soldier.

Upward Living in a World Gone Mad provides you and your group members with thought-provoking Word studies and devotionals to guide you in a daily personal study. Urge your students to complete the daily assignments, meditating on the powerful Scriptural truths that surface, as a way to enhance their daily time alone with God. In doing so, their lives and thinking will be revolutionized, as will yours!

Get ready to live Surrender's Joy, Strength and Destiny!

Introduction

(Six-Week Study)

Group Leader,

You've been faithful to do your own prayerful study. The study has been promoted in your church. Calls have been made to prospects. Now you will need to trust God to bring just the right people. Praise Him for the group He brings, for those are the ones He has chosen. God has great things in store!

Some of your group members may be going through serious crises. Feel free to share with them the crises I experienced, as related below:

As we were editing this study, I was told I might have cancer. It was such a shock. I was faced with a crisis and called upon to walk in Surrender's Trust and Peace.

For weeks, I continued to work full-time in sales and to juggle a continuous flow of doctor's appointments, medical tests and procedures, and as I waited for the results, I prayed. Friends and co-workers offered prayer and support as our family waited. Then, the verdict came, "You have cancer which will require surgery followed by possible chemotherapy and radiation treatments."

A surgery date was set. More prayer requests went out. I had seen many people instantaneously healed. I truly believed that God could do it for me, but I had to trust His plan for me, even if it included surgery and healing using what He had revealed to the medical profession instead of miraculous healing.

Day by day, I continued to work, waiting for the surgery date. Generally, I was able to walk and work in Surrender's Peace and Joy, but sometimes a wave of grief would overtake me as I thought of the body-altering surgery I was to undergo. Overwhelmingly, though, God proved Himself to be faithful. Hundreds of friends and co-workers contacted me with words of encouragement and promises to pray. I don't know how they found out I was in a physical battle, but they did, and their caring words and actions were much appreciated.

The day of surgery came and went and began my recovery. As a result of the continual sense of God's Presence and the outpouring of love, God did a miracle of healing in my heart and emotions. It was a healing I didn't even know I needed ... but He knew. I will be forever thankful. Truly, He took the ashes of an unexpected crisis and accomplished something wonderful. He can do the same for you.

The letter to the Philippians has become a letter written to us. Paul wants us to live today's destiny in the light of our hope. Paul saw himself, not as a victim, but as a victor: "I'm not chained to them. They are chained to me! They are a captive audience for a presentation of the Gospel!"

Our world has lost its way and does not know where it's going. We have the answer. Surrender's Joy allows us to be light and salt in a desperate world. Surrender's Joy only comes, though, if we are surrendered. Paul was in prison, but prison was not in Paul!

Items Needed

Extra workbooks, small group study areas, nametags and "mad world" articles from Internet news sources.

Before the Group Session

1. Prayerfully complete each devotional, making extra notes in the margins, or on a notepad, regarding what the Lord is speaking to you as you study and meditate. Highlight items you want to be sure to comment on or draw to the group's attention.
2. Be ready to highlight some of the background introductory material.
3. Prepare to have tables at which class members can sit.
4. Try to memorize the names of those on your group roster.
5. Prepare to provide nametags and pens.
6. Pray for the group members.
7. Pull some articles and surveys from the Internet that illustrate how our world is a "mad world."
8. Arrange for someone to take up the money and distribute the Student Workbooks.

During the Session

1. Strongly encourage the class participants to get a Student Workbook and do the nightly devotionals which will take only approximately 20 minutes a night. (The best way to learn God's Word and to be transformed by its revelation, is to study it yourself.)
2. Present the background materials in the introduction portion of the Student Guide. Be prepared to present the articles and surveys you pulled that illustrate the ungodly mad mindset and actions prevalent in our society.
3. Follow the discussion guidelines below.

Discussion

(If you are only having five group sessions, use the discussion questions from the next Leader's Guide lesson, at this point, instead of following the discussion plan below.)

Discuss: In what ways is our society similar to Paul's time period?

Have a student read Philippians 1:1-11.

Complete the Day One devotion as a class, together, using the devotional questions as a stimulus for class discussion. Encourage them to fill in that part of their workbook as the class discusses and reads the listed scriptures.

After the Discussion

1. Read the proclamation of faith they will be learning this first week:
*Grace and peace are mine from God my Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
He who began a good work in me will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
I will walk in love and righteousness based on real knowledge and discernment to His glory.*
2. Direct the class participants in praying for needs. If your group is large, break them up into small groups to pray.

Session One – The Surrender of Upward Living

Philippians 1:1-11

In 2 Corinthians, Paul describes some of hardships he endured during his service to the Lord. In all, he suffered seven beatings and seven years of unfair imprisonment, for no legitimate cause. His only offense was that He unashamedly proclaimed Christ and set spiritual captives free! In spite of this unfair treatment, Paul walked in peace and joy and reminds us to do the same.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28 (NASB)

Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches.

Paul was in prison, but prison was not in Paul!

Encourage your students to be faithful in completing the devotions. The increasing stresses of life and the growing animosity globally toward Christianity make it crucial that Christians practice upward living, as did Paul.

Needed

Extra workbooks, small group study areas, nametags.

Before the Group Session

1. Prayerfully complete each devotional, making extra notes in the margins, or on a notepad, regarding what the Lord is speaking to you as you study and meditate. Highlight items you want to be sure to comment on, or draw to the group's attention.
2. Prepare to have tables at which class members can sit.
3. Prepare to provide nametags and pens.
4. Prepare to have a way to display the indicated scriptures using an overhead projector or laptop.
5. Pray for the group members.

During the Session

1. Repeat the short personalized scriptures given under the "Memorize" portion of Devotion Five.
2. Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-29 together and allow a few students to share their thoughts in regard to Paul's hardships as compared to their own.
3. Display the indicated portions of Philippians on an overhead or laptop and have someone read them before asking for discussion of specific questions.

4. Discuss the questions on the next page.

Workbook Discussion Questions

(Before discussing a particular question, read the indicated passage from Philippians, chapter one.)

Day 1 – Philippians 1:1

What does the word “bond-servant” communicate about what our attitude should be in regard to our relationship with Christ?

Day 2 – Philippians 1:2

What does it mean to say that through Christ we can have peace *with* God and the peace *of* God?

Day 3 – Philippians 1:3-6

What were the two reasons Paul felt joy when he prayed for the Philippians? What can we be confident of in regard to our own lives? (Re-read verse 6, then read the Greek definitions of “Confident,” “Good,” “Work” and “perfect.”) What are your thoughts in regard to this verse? (Have one or two people read their own version of verse six, where they replace the word “you” for “me.”)

Day 4 – Philippians 1:7-11

How can love abound in “real knowledge” and “all discernment?” What is the difference between real knowledge and false knowledge? What does the following statement mean: “Surrender’s Joy is based on truth. You must do more than listen to truth. Truth needs to be IN you.”

Day 5 – Philippians 1:7-11

Read the Greek and English definitions for “discernment” and “wisdom.” What types of things might be “excellent” things? How does discernment help us to “approve the things that are excellent?”

After the Discussion

1. Read the proclamations of faith they have learned this week:

Grace and peace are mine from God my Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who began a good work in me will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

I will walk in love and righteousness based on real knowledge and discernment to His glory.

2. Direct the class participants in praying for needs. If your group is large, break them up into small groups to pray.

Session – Surrender’s Fruit

Philippians 1:12-30

Sixteen was a significant time for me. It was a time during which God did a special work in my life, reminding me that it wasn’t my effort that had brought me into relationship with Him. It was all about His grace!

Sixteen was also a time I came face to face with some areas of my life that I was very unhappy with. I remember listing these areas and asked God to change them. I didn’t want to be so shy and awkward. I didn’t like my temper and ... the list went on. I placed the list in an old Bible I was using at the time, and soon forgot about it. Life went on. I went to Bible College, served on a church staff, and, several years later, went to Belgium to work with a ministry there. In preparing to leave, I packed that old Bible.

I remember it well. It was my first day to serve as a part of that ministry. I stood at the organization’s door, in Belgium, my old Bible in hand. As I stood there, something caused me to drop the Bible and a piece of paper was thrown from its pages. It was the list I had written as a teenager. In curiosity, I picked up the Bible and the list I had written long ago. Tears welled up in my eyes as I realized that God had done in me everything that I had requested. Literally, He had transformed my life, making me into a new creation. Old things had passed away. I knew that the future would bring more change. I was glad He was not done with me yet, but I was so happy for what He *had* done!

Thankfully, God is still not done with me or you. And, He wasn’t done with Paul, even in the midst of his many crises. It is God’s business to do a good work, even in a world gone mad. **God’s work is always good. God has done, and will do, a good work in you.** “He will perfect it.” He’s not done with you yet.

Needed

Extra workbooks, small group study areas, nametags.

Before the Group Session

1. Prayerfully complete each devotional, making extra notes in the margins, or on a notepad, regarding what the Lord is speaking to you as you study and meditate. Highlight items you want to be sure to comment on, or draw to the group’s attention.
2. Prepare to have tables at which class members can sit.
3. Prepare to provide nametags and pens.
4. Prepare to have a way to display the indicated scriptures using an overhead projector or laptop.
5. Pray for the group members.

During the Session

1. Repeat the short personalized scriptures given under the “Memorize” portion of Devotion Five.
2. Display the indicated portions of Philippians on an overhead or laptop and have someone read them before asking for discussion of specific questions.
3. Try to pace the discussion, not allowing one person to dominate, so that you can cover all the material before your time together is over.

Workbook Discussion Questions

Day 1 – Philippians 1:12-17

How did God use Paul’s difficult situation to bring about good? How has He done the same for you, in the past?

Day 2 – Philippians 1:15-20

What about Paul’s situation made it important for him to “take his thoughts captive? How would his ministry have been negatively impacted if he had not done this? What happens to us when we allow our negative thoughts to run wild?

Day 3 – Philippians 1:21-23

Ask the class members to look up Matthew 22:37-40 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 in their Bibles. Have one person read these verses, then allow some students to read what they wrote down as being their primary God-given purpose. Ask everyone, “Are we all living to fulfill our primary God-given purpose?”

Day 4 – Philippians 1:24-26

According to Matthew 22:37-40; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Exodus 9:16 and Galatians 5:22-23, what are the good things that can come from our “remaining” on earth?

Day 5 – Philippians 1:27-30

Conclude by reviewing some key points in this devotion, and what stood out to you. Allow class participants to comment, if there is time. Share with the class what the Lord has taught you, personally, this week.

After the Discussion

1. Read the proclamations of faith they have learned the past several weeks:

Grace and peace are mine from God my Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who began a good work in me will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

I will walk in love and righteousness based on real knowledge and discernment to His glory.

As Christ is proclaimed, I will rejoice. For me, to live is Christ, to die is gain!

I will stand firm in one spirit, with one mind, working to further the gospel, thinking of others as more important than myself, having Christ’s servant attitude.

2. Direct the class participants in praying for needs. (If your group is large, break them up into small groups to pray.)

Session – Surrender’s Humility

Philippians 2:1-30

When I think of people who have impacted my life in a dramatic way, the first faces I see are those of my Uncle Charles and Aunt Norma. A faithful committed minister, my uncle’s life was changed forever, at age 50, when he suffered a stroke that paralyzed him on the right side of his body. That stroke took more than his body. It took his pastoral occupation and changed his way of looking at himself. For a period of time, Uncle Charles “lost himself.”

Aunt Norma tells how their lives were turned upside-down, from that point on. She went through their retirement fund quickly and became concerned about how they would survive financially. For several months, they were supported by the gifts of friends and family. Knowing that she had to do something to bring in an income, Aunt Norma opened a daycare in her home. She worked and trusted God to take care of them.

Day after day, the children came and she lovingly cared for them. Unable to do much, Uncle Charles sat in a chair and just held those sweet, soft-skinned, bright-eyed, innocent children. As he held them, God began to heal him emotionally. Though he had been a fine faithful man before, he became something more ... someone uniquely and powerfully exuding the Presence of God to all who came near. And God provided ... as faith grew.

Eight years passed. Every day Norma and Charles prayed that he would be physically healed, but nothing happened. She opened a daycare in a separate building and hired help. God provided ... prayers kept flowing ... love grew deep ... faith matured and the healing came!

One evening, Norma and Charles were sitting in a church service, when all of a sudden something like electricity touched his right side! Yes, there was feeling in that side that had been numb! The side that had been like a dead weight was vibrating with life! He was healed!

Matured in his faith and excited by his healing, Uncle Charles threw himself into ministry tasks ... and people’s lives were changed.

Another physical trial was around the corner. This time it would affect Aunt Norma.

Several years had passed since his healing, when Uncle Charles received incredible news that shook him. Strange symptoms and x-rays had revealed that his precious wife had a brain tumor and needed immediate surgery! Immediately, he and his friends went to the Lord in prayer. Some prayed all that night for healing. Within days, their prayers were answered. Another x-ray revealed that the tumor was gone!

By this time, our families had been doing things together for a few years. We had grown to love them dearly. In fact, we were getting ready to drive to Oklahoma to go camping with them, when we got a scary call. Uncle Charles had suffered another stroke and had been rushed to the hospital! He was now 70 years old.

Day after day and week after week we prayed and called to get progress reports. Finally, Aunt Norma told us that she was taking care of him at home. He was weak, was being fed through a tube and could not talk. The stroke had left his vocal cords paralyzed!

Too weak to be very active, Uncle Charles spent the greater part of his days sitting in a recliner. He communicated with his wife by hand signals or by writing notes. Unable to speak, he spent hours reading the Bible and meditating on the things of God. Discouraged by his situation, and

wanting to verbally share his faith with others, he was still a silent testimony to the sustaining power and Presence of God. Feeling that his ministry had been halted, he did not recognize the powerful impact he was still having on hundreds of people!

As the time for their fiftieth wedding anniversary came around, my aunt and uncle began to receive hundreds of cards and letters and visits from friends and family who told them how much their ministry had meant. Certainly, their journey of faith and faithfulness touched our family deeply.

I remember the last time I saw Uncle Charles. Right before we got ready to drive back to Texas, we prayed together. I prayed for his healing and encouragement, and he prayed for us, though we could not understand his words. Then, he and Aunt Norma quoted a Psalm together they had been memorizing. It was hard to understand what he was saying, but we recognized the spirit, and we felt the Presence of God. Some months later, God healed him by taking him home and giving him a vibrant, energetic, perfect new body! My uncle's body may have seemed like a prison, at times, but there was no prison inside. Eternity was in his heart!

Needed

Extra workbooks, small group study areas, nametags.

Before the Group Session

1. Prayerfully complete each devotional, making extra notes in the margins, or on a notepad, regarding what the Lord is speaking to you as you study and meditate. Highlight items you want to be sure to comment on, or draw to the group's attention.
2. Be prepared to share about a Christian who has made an indelible, positive impression on your life and why.
3. Prepare to have tables at which class members can sit.
4. Try to memorize the names of those on your group roster.
5. Prepare to provide nametags and pens.
6. Prepare to have a way to display the indicated scriptures using an overhead projector or laptop.
7. Pray for the group members.

During the Session

1. Repeat the short personalized scriptures given under the "Memorize" portion of Devotion Five.
2. Display the indicated portions of Philippians on an overhead or laptop and have someone read them before asking for discussion of specific questions.
3. Try to pace the discussion, not allowing one person to dominate, so that you can cover all the material before your time together is over.

Workbook Discussion Questions

Day 1 – *Philippians 2:1-4*

Why was Paul's joy not complete? What would make it complete? What does it mean to be of the "same mind" and "same love?" Why is this important?

Day 2 – *Philippians 2:5-11*

What does it mean when Paul talks about Christ "emptying Himself?" How does this compare to what the world tells us to do? How will our lives be different if we "empty" ourselves?

Day 3 – *Philippians 2:9-11*

Why is it important to note that upon Jesus was bestowed not just "a name" but "THE Name?" What does "THE Name" require of us? (*Answer: Worship*) Read Psalm 8:1-9.

Day 4 – *Philippians 2:12-17*

What does it mean to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," according to the workbook? Look at these verses again. Why do you think Paul also talks about doing all things without grumbling or disputing, being blameless and "holding fast the word of life" in these verses? How do these things all relate to each other, as well as the concepts we have already discussed?

Day 5 – *Philippians 2:19-30*

What was so significant about the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus?

After the Discussion

1. Share about another Christian who has made an indelible, positive impression on your life.
2. Read the proclamations of faith they have learned the past several weeks:

Grace and peace are mine from God my Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who began a good work in me will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

I will walk in love and righteousness based on real knowledge and discernment to His glory.

As Christ is proclaimed, I will rejoice. For me, to live is Christ, to die is gain!

I will stand firm in one spirit, with one mind, working to further the gospel, thinking of others as more important than myself, having Christ's servant attitude.

That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I will do all without grumbling or disputing, holding fast and forward the word of life.

3. Allow the group members to pray over needs.

Session – Surrender’s Rejoicing

Philippians 3:1-21

Our oldest daughter has just completed her third year of college. This year, she had to get a new roommate because her dear friend and roommate for the first two years of college is now living in a grass hut in Africa, on a mission to proclaim Christ to an unreached tribe. As you can imagine, my daughter’s friend had to adjust her whole way of thinking, living and doing. No running water ... no regular showers ... no electricity ... unusual food ... dust storms ... lots of bugs ... no predictable schedule of activities. Her blogs were interesting to read. Here’s one:

“I read in Voices of the Faithful this morning that it’s not about what we do for God. Life is simply about pleasing Him. This is a new understanding for me. For the past 7 or 8 years I have felt pressure to go and do all the time, but here I am learning that resting in Him means enjoying time with Him and waiting on His timing for whatever He’s got planned next. (Not always what I’ve got planned!) It’s not about what we do, it’s about joining Him in what He’s doing and loving it! “But thanks be to God who leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ in God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing (2 Corinthians 2:14-15).”

I want to emphasize that last part again: *“It’s not about what we do, it’s about joining Him in what He’s doing and loving it!”*

Paul was joining God in what He was doing and loving it! He was walking in hope of the prize, the upward call of God, the resurrection of the saints (3:11).

Needed

Extra workbooks, small group study areas, nametags.

Before the Group Session

1. Prayerfully complete each devotional, making extra notes in the margins, or on a notepad, regarding what the Lord is speaking to you as you study and meditate. Highlight items you want to be sure to comment on, or draw to the group’s attention.
2. Prepare to have tables at which class members can sit.
3. Try to memorize the names of those on your group roster.
4. Prepare to provide nametags and pens.
5. Prepare to have a way to display the indicated scriptures using an overhead projector or laptop.
6. Pray for the group members.

During the Session

1. Repeat the short personalized scriptures given under the “Memorize” portion of Devotion Five.
2. Display the indicated portions of Philippians on an overhead or laptop and have someone read them before asking for discussion of specific questions.
3. Try to pace the discussion, not allowing one person to dominate, so that you can cover all the material before your time together is over.

Workbook Discussion Questions

Day 1 – Philippians 3:1-7

What significance does “false circumcision,” “true circumcision” and putting “no confidence in the flesh” have in regard to us today?

Day 2 – Philippians 3:8-10

Why does Paul call his pedigree “rubbish?” What is of “surpassing value?” Why?

Day 3 – Philippians 3:11-14

What does it mean to “press on?” What is the “upward call?” What does this have to do with us today?

Day 4 – Philippians 3:15-19

According to the Study Guide, what does it mean to be “perfect” in these verses? What, then, would it mean to “have a different attitude?”

Day 5 – Philippians 3:20-21

Why is it correct to call Christians “people of two dimensions?” What are the characteristics of each dimension, and our responsibilities in regard to both?

After the Discussion

1. Read the proclamations of faith they have learned the past several weeks:

Grace and peace are mine from God my Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who began a good work in me will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

I will walk in love and righteousness based on real knowledge and discernment to His glory.

As Christ is proclaimed, I will rejoice. For me, to live is Christ, to die is gain!

I will stand firm in one spirit, with one mind, working to further the gospel, thinking of others as more important than myself, having Christ’s servant attitude.

That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I will do all without grumbling or disputing, holding fast and forward the word of life.

I will rejoice in the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. Lead the group in praying over needs, or break them up into smaller groups.

Session – Surrender’s Peace

Philippians 4:1-23

In his letter that has **transcended the time** in which it was written, Paul has spoken words straight from the mind and heart of God! Now, as he writes his concluding remarks, Paul wants to make sure his dear friends of the present (the Philippians) and of the future (us) completely understand the power of Upward Living’s total Surrender. Obviously, Paul had a premonition of the intense persecution that was to come to the Philippians. He also knew that crises come to people no matter the nation or time period, whether privileged or impoverished. Paul’s command is the same for everyone. We are to stand firm, rejoice and abide in the strength of His might and power!

Abiding involves our choice and action. Abiding involves **daily communion** with who He is over all and before all. Colossians 1:15-23 gives us a wonderful proclamation of who He is!

Colossians 1:15-23 (NASB)

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach – if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Needed

Extra workbooks, small group study areas, nametags.

Before the Group Session

1. Prayerfully complete each devotional, making extra notes in the margins, or on a notepad, regarding what the Lord is speaking to you as you study and meditate. Highlight items you want to be sure to comment on, or draw to the group’s attention.
2. Think of a time when God provided for you or worked in your life. (Often, you will not realize how God has worked for good in your life until “after the fact.”)
3. Prepare to have tables at which class members can sit.
4. Try to memorize the names of those on your group roster.
5. Prepare to provide nametags and pens.
6. Prepare to have a way to display the indicated scriptures using an overhead projector or laptop.
7. Pray for the group members.

During the Session

1. Repeat the short personalized scriptures given under the “Memorize” portion of Devotion Five.
2. Display the indicated portions of Philippians on an overhead or laptop and have someone read them before asking for discussion of specific questions.
3. Try to pace the discussion, not allowing one person to dominate, so that you can cover all the material before your time together is over.

Workbook Discussion Questions

Day 1 - *Philippians 4:1*

What does it mean to “stand firm” in the Lord? Read some of the verses pertaining to this topic.

Day 2 - *Philippians 4:2-3*

What does standing firm in the Lord have to do with living in harmony in the Lord? What does this have to do with us today?

Day 3 - *Philippians 4:4-7*

Look at each admonition. What is so amazing about Paul’s ability to personally follow each admonition in these verses? (Consider that Paul was unjustly imprisoned, separated from friends and family, in the hands of a mad ruler, foresaw a time of church persecution and the likelihood of martyrdom.) How does God’s peace serve as a “guard?”

Day 4 - *Philippians 4:8-9*

How can we guard our hearts and minds? Why is it important to do so? Define the following words: True, honorable, right, pure, lovely, good repute and worthy of praise. What does guarding our hearts and minds have to do with God’s peace?

Day 5 - *Philippians 4:10-13*

Conclude your time together by sharing your own story and allowing others to share their stories of God’s provision in their lives.

After the Discussion

1. Read the proclamations of faith they have learned the past several weeks:

Grace and peace are mine from God my Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who began a good work in me will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

I will walk in love and righteousness based on real knowledge and discernment to His glory.

As Christ is proclaimed, I will rejoice. For me, to live is Christ, to die is gain!

I will stand firm in one spirit, with one mind, working to further the gospel, thinking of others as more important than myself, having Christ’s servant attitude.

That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I will do all without grumbling or disputing, holding fast and forward the word of life.

I will rejoice in the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

I will press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

I will be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let my requests be made known to God.

If there is anything worthy of praise, I will let my mind dwell on these things.

I can do all things in Him who strengthens me.

And my God shall supply all my needs according to His riches in Glory in Christ Jesus.

2. Lead the group in praying over needs, or break them up into smaller groups.