

PHILIPPIANS

LIFE IN CHRIST

LEADER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION



LECTIO™

UNVEILING SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

TIM GRAY

Nihil Obstat: Currently Under Review

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

Copyright © 2017 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Ashley Crane, Kris Gray, Cathy Loh

Media: Steve Flanigan, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, Ted Mast, Jon Ervin, Matthew Krekeler

Print Production/Graphic Design: Jeff Cole, Brenda Kraft, Jane Myers, Christina Gray, Ann Diaz, Julia DeLapp

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

www.augustineinstitute.org/programs

(866) 767-3155

augustineinstitute.org/lectio

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9982041-4-7

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PHILIPPIANS LIFE IN CHRIST

Welcome to LECTIO for Leaders	1
Session 1 Paul and the Philippians	8
Session 2 Partnership in the Gospel	14
Session 3 Friendship in Christ	20
Session 4 The Mind of Christ	27
Session 5 Imitatio Christi	33
Session 6 All Things in Christ	39



WELCOME TO LECTIO

Welcome to the LECTIO Study Series. In these sessions of LECTIO, your participants will begin to discover the profound importance, meaning, purpose, and beauty of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, as seen through the eyes of the Church.

LECTIO studies are designed for adult faith formation, to help unveil both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. The Latin word *lectio* means “reading” and often refers to a careful and prayerful reading of Scripture. These studies cover a wide variety of topics, including individual books or letters of the Bible, the lives and writings of the saints, Church teaching, and topics to help serve the formation of Catholics living out the call of the New Evangelization.

The Leader’s Resource Guide, Study Guide, and Session Videos are the three components you will be using for each LECTIO session. All three work together to enable a small group to receive the truth of the Catholic Faith and apply it to their everyday lives. We’ve found that when these resources are used along with your personal witness to the Faith, you and your participants can better grow together in knowledge of the Faith and in relationship with Jesus Christ. By leading a LECTIO study, you can help participants encounter Jesus Christ and his Church in their own lives, and help them share the Faith in the lives of others.

LECTIO CAN BE USED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS:

- **Men’s & Women’s Groups:** For groups of men and women within the parish to grow in the Faith through study, discussion, prayer, and service
- **Bible Study Groups:** To explore the profound connections between the Sacred Scriptures and the teachings of the Catholic Church
- **Before/After Mass:** To enrich Catholics’ understanding of the Faith and the mysteries of the liturgy
- **Advent & Lent:** To enhance efforts for ongoing conversion, especially during the seasons of Advent and Lent
- **Catechist Training:** To give those who teach the Faith in the parish a more complete and cohesive understanding of the Catholic Faith and to help them express the Faith more clearly to those whom they teach
- **Small Christian Communities:** To deepen the spiritual lives of parishioners as they participate in a variety of subgroups and apostolates within the parish
- **Families:** As an in-home tool to help parents raise their children to be lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ
- **Individuals:** As a resource for anyone who wants to better understand the Catholic Faith and be equipped to better live it out and explain it to others

LEADING A LECTIO SESSION

The Study Guide takes participants step by step through each session, both the small group gathering and video teaching, as well as five days of follow-up study. The resources are carefully crafted to lead participants through an opening of their hearts and minds to God's Word and the Traditions of the Catholic Church.

The Leader's Resource Guide begins with an introduction of the key points to be covered in each session and includes suggested answers for each of the discussion questions.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN EACH LECTIO SESSION:

CONNECT

- 1. Opening Prayer:** For this study on St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians, we have chosen the Prayer to the Apostle St. Paul for the Jubilee Year of St. Paul (2008-2009).
- 2. Introduction:** The leader starts with a brief overview of the topic, including the key points for the session. This helps contextualize the topic, show its relevance for daily life, and inspire participants to delve into the particular aspect of the Faith that is being presented.
- 3. CONNECT Questions:** These first "ice-breaker" questions are provided to get your group talking. As participants watch the video teaching, they will soon find that these questions connect to a theme or topic of the current session.

VIDEO

- 4. Video Teaching:** The video segments present teaching that delves into and makes relevant the Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition of the Catholic Church. The video teachings for the study on Philippians are presented by Dr. Tim Gray, president of the Augustine Institute. The Study Guide includes a brief outline of the key points in the teaching.

DISCUSS

- 5. DISCUSS Questions:** Each video segment is followed by questions in the Study Guide to help participants discuss and apply what they have learned to their lives. If you have a large group, consider forming smaller groups for the discussion, with team members facilitating and keeping each small group on track.

We have included possible responses for the DISCUSS Questions in this Leader's Resource Guide (toward the back of this guide), which can help to get a discussion started, bring greater clarity to the study topic, or answer a difficult question.

- 6. Memory Verse:** The participants are encouraged to memorize and reflect on a Scripture verse for every session so as to nurture the faith that has been deepened through your catechetical session.
- 7. Closing Prayer:** The Closing Prayer in your Study Guide has been chosen to reflect back to God an appropriate response to his loving action in the session.
- 8. For Further Reading:** Your participants should be encouraged to check out other resources that will help them throughout the week to nurture their faith.

9. Quotes, Tips, and Definitions: We have also included throughout the study interesting quotes and excerpts from saints, Catholic documents, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to help further understanding of a particular topic. The leader can choose to share this information during the session or direct the participants to it after the session.

COMMIT

The Study Guide includes five COMMIT reflections that will help participants more deeply explore the main topics of each session—and more firmly commit to following Christ in their daily lives. These reflections include more information on Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, as well as topics such as geography, history, and art. These reflections will also include times of prayer, including the practice of Scripture meditation known as *lectio divina*.

AN OVERVIEW OF LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio divina is an ancient practice of enhancing one's prayer life through the power of God's Word. The term itself means "divine reading" of the Sacred Scriptures. It is our hope that by using these simple steps each day as they study Sacred Scripture in LECTIO, participants will develop an effective way to study and pray with God's Word and hear God's voice in their daily lives.

Here is a brief description of each step of *lectio divina* for your reference as you guide participants through the practice:

- **Sacred Reading of the Scriptures (*lectio*):** The reading and rereading of the Scripture passage, with close attention to words, details, themes, and patterns that speak to you.
- **Meditation (*meditatio*):** Meditating or reflecting on what you've read to gain understanding. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you as you spend time pondering what you have read and striving to understand it in meditation.
- **Prayer (*oratio*):** A time to bring your meditative thoughts to God in prayer. Talk with God about how the connections and implications of your meditation on the Scripture affect your life and the lives of those around you.
- **Contemplation (*contemplatio*):** A time of quiet and rest, we listen and await God's voice. Contemplation allows one to enter decisively and more deeply into the Mystery of God—this is no small endeavor, so be patient as you engage this step and strive to be receptive to God's voice speaking into your life.
- **Resolution (*resolutio*):** A call for resolution and action, inviting you to respond to the things you have read in Scripture and have prayed about and to put them into practice.

To learn more about *lectio divina*, refer to Dr. Tim Gray's *Lectio: Prayer* study, available at www.augustineinstitute.org/programs, or his book, *Praying Scripture for a Change*, available at www.AscensionPress.com.

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

The LECTIO Study Series Leader's Resource Guide provides opportunities for small group discussion. Leading a small group discussion does not mean you have to lecture or teach—a successful small group leader facilitates, getting group participants to interact with each other as they make new discoveries. Here are some tips to help you get started as you lead and facilitate your small group:

ENVIRONMENT

- **Make It Friendly:** Set up your meeting space so discussion and conversation happen naturally. Avoid sitting at tables or desks; instead arrange chairs in a circle or meet in a living room environment that encourages casual, friendly conversation. Choose a meeting space that's free of distractions and that offers a fair amount of privacy.
- **Prep Ahead:** Set up and test your audio/video equipment ahead of time. Cue videos so they're ready to go to avoid losing valuable discussion time.
- **Consider Refreshments:** Depending on your meeting time, consider offering a light snack so participants won't be distracted by growling stomachs. Even if you don't offer any food items, always have water available for participants.

LOGISTICS

- **Provide Name Tags:** Especially when you first begin meeting, have participants wear name tags so you can easily address them by name and other participants don't have to worry about trying to remember everyone's names.
- **Bring Supplies:** Always have extra pens on hand for people to take notes. Also consider having highlighter pens, paper, and extra materials or Bibles available for participants to use.
- **Be Prompt:** While you can encourage a time to mingle at the beginning of your meeting time, don't let it get out of control so you have to rush through materials and discussion. If people know you're dedicated to starting on time, they'll begin to arrive a bit early to socialize. Likewise, reserve your meeting space for 30 minutes after you're scheduled to end so people can mingle afterward. Be diligent in starting and ending on time.

BEFORE YOU MEET

- **Prepare:** Look over discussion materials and preview video segments before your meeting time. Go through the questions to make discoveries about how they apply to your own life—this will help you to be more credible as a leader.
- **Pray:** Take time to pray for group members individually and lift up any needs they've expressed during previous meetings. Pray specifically for the Holy Spirit to open the participants' hearts to spiritual growth, renewal, and new discoveries.
- **Evaluate:** As you get to know the needs of individuals and your group's dynamics, evaluate your discussion materials and highlight information or questions that you think would be particularly helpful and insightful for your group.

DURING THE MEETING

- **Set the Tone:** Let group members know from the beginning that your time together is meant to be for discussion and discovery, not lecture. Also remind participants that every question is welcomed and worthy of discussion.
- **Encourage Involvement:** Work to invite all participants to engage in discussion. Don't be afraid of periods of silence, especially during your first few meetings. If one person begins to dominate the discussion time or gets off track, kindly acknowledge the person and invite him or her to explore that topic more after your group time. Ask questions such as "What do the rest of you think?" or "Anyone else?" to encourage several people to respond.
- **Use Open-Ended Questions:** Use questions that invite thought-provoking answers rather than "yes" or "no," "true" or "false," or a one-word, fill-in-the-blank answers. As a leader, your job is to get participants to think about the topic and how the Scriptures and reflections can be relevant and applicable to their daily lives.
- **Affirm Answers:** People are often reluctant to speak up for fear of giving an incorrect answer. Affirm every participant by saying things such as "Great idea," "I hadn't thought of that before," or "That's a great insight." These types of phrases communicate that you value everyone's comments and opinions.
- **Avoid Advice:** Remember, you're acting as a facilitator—not a college professor or counselor. Instead of giving advice or lecturing, when appropriate, offer how a Scripture passage or something in the video spoke to you personally, or give an example of how you've been able to apply a specific concept in your own life.
- **Be Flexible and Real:** Sometimes your group time may veer off-track due to something that's going on in our culture or your community (for example, a natural disaster strikes your area or a group member is experiencing a family tragedy). Use relevant topics as a time to model for participants how God is always with us and that we can seek guidance from Scripture, the Church's teachings, and the Holy Spirit in every situation. If you model relevant discussion and transparency, your group participants are more likely to do the same.
- **Transition to Life:** Toward the end of each session, transition discussions toward sharing how participants will apply what has been discussed to their lives in the upcoming week. Close your time together in prayer each time you meet. Invite participants to share requests, either verbally or in writing, so you know how you can pray for them throughout the week.

AFTER THE MEETING

- **Stick Around:** As the leader, make yourself available after your meeting time for questions, concerns, or further discussion on a topic that a participant may have been hesitant about during the scheduled time. If a question arises that has you stumped, admit that you don't have the answer and offer to contact someone who may be able to provide one, such as your parish priest, church deacon, or your diocese.
- **Follow Up:** Making contact with group members during the week will strengthen your relationship. Call or email to see how they're doing at making lessons relevant in their own lives, give a quick encouragement to engage in daily Scripture reading and prayer, or recognize a birthday or anniversary.

SAMPLE 90-MINUTE SESSION

Below is the suggested outline for an hour-and-a-half LECTIO session. Use the time allotments as a guideline; the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group.

	TIME	STEPS	OVERVIEW
CONNECT	5 minutes	Opening Prayer and Introduction	Begin with the Opening Prayer, then go over the Introduction of the session's key points.
	5 minutes	Review	Go over any follow-up questions that participants might have from the previous session's daily COMMIT reflections.
	15 minutes	CONNECT Questions	Present questions to introduce the topic for the current session.
VIDEO	30 minutes	Video	Play the video segment and then facilitate the DISCUSS questions that follow.
DISCUSS	30 minutes	DISCUSS Questions	After the video segment, facilitate discussion of the DISCUSS questions in large or small groups.
COMMIT	5 minutes	Summary and Closing Prayer	Summarize the main points from the study, and encourage participants to complete the daily COMMIT reflections.

SAMPLE 120-MINUTE SESSION

Below is the suggested outline for a two-hour LECTIO session. Use the time allotments as a guideline; the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group.

	TIME	STEPS	OVERVIEW
CONNECT	10 minutes	Opening Prayer and Introduction	Begin with the Opening Prayer, then go over the Introduction of the session's key points.
	10 minutes	Review	Go over any follow-up questions that participants might have from the previous session's daily COMMIT reflections.
	15 minutes	CONNECT Questions	Present questions to introduce the topic for the current session.
VIDEO	30 minutes	Video	Play the video segment and then facilitate the DISCUSS questions that follow.
DISCUSS	45 minutes	DISCUSS Questions	After the video segment, facilitate discussion of the DISCUSS questions in large or small groups.
COMMIT	10 minutes	Summary and Closing Prayer	Summarize the main points from the study, and encourage participants to complete the daily COMMIT reflections.

PHILIPPIANS

LIFE IN CHRIST

LEADER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

SESSION 1



LECTIO™

UNVEILING SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

TIM GRAY

Nihil Obstat: Currently Under Review

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

Copyright © 2017 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Ashley Crane, Kris Gray, Cathy Loh

Media: Steve Flanigan, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, Ted Mast, Jon Ervin, Matthew Krekeler

Print Production/Graphic Design: Jeff Cole, Brenda Kraft, Jane Myers, Christina Gray, Ann Diaz, Julia DeLapp

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

www.augustineinstitute.org/programs

(866) 767-3155

augustineinstitute.org/lectio

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9982041-4-7

SESSION 1

PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIANS

SESSION OVERVIEW

Read this overview in advance to familiarize yourself with the session.

Written toward the end of St. Paul's life, Philippians is a short, tightly written letter overflowing with treasures. This study will unpack those treasures, highlighting the rich teaching and pastoral care that Paul offers his beloved Philippians.

This first session begins by looking at the original audience. Philippi was a Roman colony in Macedonia (northern Greece), situated on the Via Egnatia, one of the Roman roads that stretched across the empire allowing the transport of people, armies, communication, and trade goods. Starting with the city's first convert, Lydia (see Acts 16:14), the Faith quickly won many converts. These men and women shared a close relationship with St. Paul, supporting him during his Roman imprisonment, and Paul expresses his gratitude, speaking of holding them in his heart (see Philippians 1:7) and yearning for them with the affection of Christ (see Philippians 1:8).

As a Roman colony, Philippi's inhabitants were steeped in Greco-Roman culture. Paul's letter will redirect numerous Greek ideals (friendship, citizenship, honor, partnership, etc.) in light of Christ in order to root their identity first and foremost in the Person and Gospel of Jesus Christ. At the center of the letter is a poem or hymn written for Christ, the model that Paul wants the Philippians to always have in mind (see Philippians 2:6–11). And imbuing the entire letter is the theme of joy, a joy only to be found in Christ.

In its opening greeting and prayer we already see Paul directing the Philippians closer to Christ, by, for example, transforming the traditional greeting wish for health and well-being to a prayer for grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul refers to himself as a slave, the lowest among the classes of people, and to the Philippians as holy ones. As he greets the Philippians, he specifically mentions the bishops and deacons in their community—a reminder for us that these offices are not later inventions but already appear in the early Church. The opening verses of the letter, although few in number, tell us a great deal about Paul and the Philippians and give a preview of the topics Paul will explore in his letter.



CONNECT

*Begin this session by leading the **Opening Prayer**, and then read or summarize the **Introduction** for your group. Both can be found in the Study Guide on page 3.*

Welcome participants to the study and lead the group in brief introductions before engaging in the following conversation. Use the italicized comments following each question to guide or enhance the discussion as necessary.

How often do you think about your citizenship? How important is it to you?

Many of us probably take our citizenship for granted and don't think about it very often. Certain events, such as an election, might remind us of the rights and duties that are part of our citizenship and remind us to be thankful for the privileges we have and to strive to perfect the virtues of being a good citizen. But someone who has immigrated to a new country and had to go through the process of becoming a citizen of that country is much less likely to take citizenship for granted. It's something they worked for, not something they received as a birthright. Many of the residents of Philippi (a Roman colony) were proud Roman citizens. But as important and privileged as this citizenship was, Paul reminds them that their citizenship in Heaven is infinitely more important.

Which sounds like a stronger statement: "I feel like this is important" or "I think that this is important"? Why?

It is very common to use our strong feelings about something as an argument or a reason, while saying that we think someone's logic sounds more like opinion—not as strong or important as feelings. Other participants may have the opposite experience, recognizing the strength of an intellectual argument over an appeal to emotion. It may be helpful to provide a specific example, such as "I feel like Philippians is a very important letter to study" versus "I think that Philippians is a very important letter to study." In this session we will look at the way that the heart and mind are connected for Paul, although they are often distinct from one another in modern thought.



Play the video segment, which will last for about 26 minutes. Encourage participants to follow along with the outline in their Study Guides and take notes as key points are made during the video teachings. Then lead the discussion using the questions below.



DISCUSS

Following each question are possible responses and comments to guide you in the group conversation.

1. What was one thing you heard for the first time or that was an "aha" moment for you?

Some new things might include the importance of Philippi's status as a Roman colony, the importance of its location along the Via Egnatia, Paul's identifying himself as a "slave" (in contrast to the common translation of "servant") of Christ, Timothy's role in writing the letter, or the lack of distinction between head and heart for Paul.

2. What does Paul's greeting to the Philippians tell us about his relationship with them? How does this greeting prepare us to better understand the rest of the letter?

It demonstrates the close, affectionate relationship between Paul and the Philippians, as well as Paul's high opinion of the Philippians. He rejoices in them and thanks God for them, and he is confident that God will complete his good work in them. Unlike many of his other letters, Paul doesn't have any major concerns or rebukes for the Philippians. Understanding Paul's relationship with the Philippians and the overall good state of the church there prepares us for a letter that praises the Philippians for what they do well and encourages them to persevere. We can take the model of the Philippians as our own guide for living as saints in Christ Jesus (1:1) and partners of the Gospel (1:5).

3. What is different about Paul's use of common words and ideas like *citizenship*, *peace*, *grace*, and *friendship*? What does his particular use of these words accomplish in his letter?

When Paul uses these words, he isn't just referring to the common, secular meaning that the Philippians were familiar with because of their Greco-Roman culture. He is taking those images and ideas and going a step above to communicate something about life in Christ. Each of these ideas is good and noble on a natural level, but they are raised to a higher level in the context of the Christian life. When Paul uses these words in new ways, he is helping the Philippians understand the Christian life in terms of what is familiar, but he is also warning them that sometimes there may be a conflict between the natural meaning and the Christian meaning—particularly with citizenship.

*Direct participants to this session's **Memory Verse** in their Study Guides, and read it together. Then lead the **Closing Prayer**. Encourage participants to do the **COMMIT** reflections on their own before you meet again as a group.*



COMMIT

*Following are suggested answers to the questions participants will be asked in their daily **COMMIT** reflections.*



DAY 1 – PHILIPPI

Participants will learn about the ancient city of Philippi.

Read Philippians 3:20. In light of Philippi's status as a Roman colony and the large population of Roman citizens living there, what is the significance of Paul reminding the Christians that their "commonwealth" (or citizenship) is in Heaven?

Philippi's status as a Roman colony is a major point of prestige, and there is a high concentration of Roman citizens among the residents of Philippi. Many of them are veterans of the Roman army. The combination of being a Roman citizen living in a Roman colony would have resulted in many privileges and advantages, as well as the duty to live up to such a status—to be a good citizen. But if the Philippians' true citizenship is in Heaven, then that is more important than their Roman citizenship and their residence in a Roman colony. The earthly privileges of citizenship are nothing compared to the privileges and responsibilities of being a citizen of Heaven. One's first responsibility and first loyalty must be to Christ, not to the temporal emperor.

We too often need to hear Paul's reminder in our own lives. How does the world distract us from the truth that our commonwealth and citizenship is first and foremost in Heaven?

It is easy to let temporal realities consume us. Daily routines such as work/school, promotions/grades, putting food on the table, keeping a clean house, laundry, etc., keep us busy and can keep our focus on passing things. In the midst of these temporal activities, keeping a presence of God, doing these things with love and for God's glory, and offering up daily activities and sacrifices for others, are all ways to turn our focus toward the things of Heaven and our heavenly citizenship.



DAY 2 – PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIANS

Participants will follow Paul on his second missionary journey as he visits Philippi for the first time and establishes the church there.

Unfortunately, not everyone in Philippi responds well to Paul's work there. Read Acts 16:16–34. How do Paul and Silas end up in trouble in Philippi? How are they rescued?

Paul casts out a spirit of divination (a demon) from a slave girl, and her owners are upset because they can no longer make money from her fortune-telling. They bring Paul and Silas before the city magistrates and accuse them of being troublemakers and acting contrary to Roman law and morals. The crowd beats Paul and Silas, and the magistrates throw them in prison. While Paul and Silas are singing praises to God in prison, there is an earthquake, the prison doors are thrown open, and the prisoners' chains unfastened. The jailer assumes that his prisoners have escaped. Jail keepers were responsible for their prisoners with their own lives (often executed if prisoners under their watch escaped), so the jailer picks up his sword to take his own life. Instead of escaping, Paul and Silas stay and share the Gospel with the jailer, who converts and is baptized along with his whole family and brings Paul and Silas to his home.

Now compare the arrest of Paul and Silas in Acts 16:20–24 with their release in 16:35–39. Why do you think Paul says nothing about their citizenship when they are accused, but brings it up when they are released?

Paul and Silas are given no chance to defend themselves against their accusers. Paul plays his "citizen card," so to speak, after the magistrates try to get Paul and Silas to leave Philippi quietly. There is a big fuss about their citizenship afterward, but nothing is said about it before. It is possible that initially Paul and Silas did not have a chance to speak of their citizenship. Or they chose not to speak of their citizenship, instead willing to witness to the Gospel in their suffering and reach others in the town in this way. Later, however, we see Paul using his citizenship to make sure his name isn't tarnished by the scandal of public beating and imprisonment, which would affect his friends in Philippi.



DAY 3 – LECTIO: PHILIPPIANS 1:1–2

Participants will pray through Philippians 1:1–2 and reflect on our universal call to holiness.

LECTIO

Who is writing? How are they described?

*Paul and Timothy are writing. They are described as *duloi*, "slaves" or "servants" of Christ Jesus.*

To whom is the letter addressed? How are they described?

*It's addressed to all the members of the church in Philippi. They are described as *hagioi*, "saints" or literally "holy ones," and they are also described as being "in" Christ Jesus. The leaders of the church, the bishops and deacons, are specifically addressed as well.*

What does the author wish for the recipients of the letter?

Paul wishes them grace and peace. These both come from God.

MEDITATIO

What does it mean for Paul and Timothy to identify themselves as servants or slaves (*duloi*) of Christ Jesus? Can we use that term to describe ourselves?

They are totally devoted to doing the will of God. They are not their own—they belong totally to Jesus. It shows humility, especially when writing to a community where so many of the audience would have a much higher social status than slaves/servants. We too, like Paul and Timothy, are to be totally devoted to the will of God.

How does Paul's use of "all" when addressing the saints (*hagioi*) point to the universal call to holiness?

It is not just the clergy—the bishops and deacons—who are addressed as saints. This indicates that both clergy and laity are called to holiness. Everyone in the Church is called a "holy one," and Paul says a few verses later that he is confident God will complete this work (1:6). The Church reiterates the truth of this universal call to holiness in her writings from the Second Vatican Council, from which our meditation was taken: "The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and everyone of His disciples of every condition" (LG 40).

What does Paul's use of "our" in "God our Father" tell us about how we can answer the call to holiness?

Holiness isn't something we can do on our own. As Vatican II reminds us, "Since truly we all offend in many things we all need God's mercies continually and we all must daily pray: 'Forgive us our debts.'" We can be holy because of our Baptism, which cleanses us from sin and makes us children of the all-holy God. The Father, "our" Father by Baptism, gives us the Spirit through the Son—it is the Spirit who makes us holy and enables us to live holy lives.



DAY 4 – MIND AND HEART

Participants will explore the connection between the mind and the heart in Scripture.

In what ways have you witnessed the separation of mind and heart play out in your own life? In society? What potential consequences does this tyranny of feelings have?

A personal experience of the separation of mind and heart might be something very big, like having negative or mixed feelings about a Church teaching while still choosing to have faith and be obedient. Or it might be something seemingly trivial, like knowing rationally that divorce is wrong but wanting the heroine of the romantic comedy to leave her annoying husband and run off with the dashing hero who really appreciates her. We see this separation in many ways in society. One of the clearest is the lack of logical debate about many modern issues. Instead of trying to understand another person's point of view and reasonably explaining one's own point of view, our modern discourse often consists of nothing more than explaining how we feel and how no one has the right to try to change how we feel—or even to hurt our feelings. This tyranny of emotion makes it nearly impossible to actually discuss issues with any hope of understanding or persuasion. It can even make it difficult to express an alternate viewpoint, because that might offend people or hurt their feelings.

Look up the following verses. What do they say about the heart?

Deuteronomy 6:4–7—*We are to love the Lord with all our heart and all our soul; the words of the Lord are to be upon our heart, and we are to teach these words/commands of the Lord to our children. In order for the words of the Lord to be on our hearts, this must be referring to more than just the place of a person's emotions.*

Jeremiah 31:33—*God will make a new covenant and write his law on our hearts. The heart thus is to be used to both understand the law, and to love and obey the law.*

Ezekiel 36:26–27—God will give us a new heart; he will put his Spirit in us and cause us to walk in his statutes (in order to do this there must also be understanding).

Matthew 6:19–21—“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. One has to also decide where to lay up their treasure.”

Luke 8:15—The seed falling on good soil refers to those who hear the word and hold it in their heart, where it bears fruit. Again, the heart is used for understanding as well as emotion and decision.

Romans 5:5—“God pours his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.”

Based on these verses, how would you describe the biblical understanding of the heart? Considering St. Paul’s background as a scholar of the Law and Scriptures, what do you think he means when he says he holds the Philippians in his heart?

The Scriptures paint a picture of the heart as the center of the human person. It is the source of all thought, the source of all our choices, the source of all our actions. It is the place where God meets us, the place of covenant and prayer and obedience. God dwells in our hearts. When Paul says that he holds the Philippians in his heart, he is saying that they are united in Christ Jesus, that he loves them with the love of God but also that he knows them and understands their needs. And Paul’s holding of them in his heart also includes his prayers for them and their needs.



DAY 5 – TRUTH AND BEAUTY

Participants will reflect on St. Paul Writing by Pier Francesco Sacchi, c. 1520, National Gallery, London

Look up the following verses. What does Paul have to say about the Cross of Christ?

1 Corinthians 1:17–23—“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God . . . but we preach Christ crucified.”

1 Corinthians 2:2—“For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

Galatians 2:20—“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 6:14—“But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

Ephesians 2:13–18—Christ reconciles us “to God in one body through the cross.”

PHILIPPIANS

LIFE IN CHRIST

LEADER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

SESSION 2



LECTIO™

UNVEILING SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

TIM GRAY

Nihil Obstat: Currently Under Review

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

Copyright © 2017 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Ashley Crane, Kris Gray, Cathy Loh

Media: Steve Flanigan, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, Ted Mast, Jon Ervin, Matthew Krekeler

Print Production/Graphic Design: Jeff Cole, Brenda Kraft, Jane Myers, Christina Gray, Ann Diaz, Julia DeLapp

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

www.augustineinstitute.org/programs

(866) 767-3155

augustineinstitute.org/lectio

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9982041-4-7

SESSION 2

PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

SESSION OVERVIEW

Read this overview in advance to familiarize yourself with the session.

In the last session we looked at the background for St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians and its opening verses. Written toward the end of his life while he is imprisoned in Rome, St. Paul's short letter expresses the close friendship he shares with the Christian community located in this Macedonian Roman colony.

In this session we will explore Paul's circumstances as he writes the letter under house arrest in Rome. Paul's experience of prison provides an important background for understanding the letter, and it tells us a great deal about Paul himself. We find that far from being disturbed by his lengthy imprisonment and uncertain future, Paul is able to totally abandon himself to the will of God and rejoice even in these dire circumstances.

We will also look more closely at the relationship between Paul and the Philippians, what Paul describes as their *koinonia*, or "partnership." The Philippians are not only Paul's sons and daughters in the Faith, but they are also his invested business partners working together with him for the salvation of souls. This partnership in the Gospel, with its risks and its rewards, is something into which we are invited to enter as well.

Dr. Gray also will address St. Paul's understanding of the unity of the mind and heart. Modern culture often creates a polarization between the mind and heart, pitting these two human attributes at odds with each other. Instead, the human person is created in God's image with a mind and a will whose understanding and actions are intended to work in harmony, which happens when our love is informed with knowledge and discernment, working together for our good and the good of those around us.



CONNECT

*Begin this session by leading the **Opening Prayer**, and then read or summarize the **Introduction** for your group. Both can be found in the Study Guide on page 19.*

*Then briefly review the last session with your group. Can anyone recite the **Memory Verse** (Philippians 1:6) without assistance? Otherwise, look it up (page 6) and recite it as a group. Discuss highlights and any questions group members may have from the last session's **COMMIT** reflections before moving on to the following questions.*

When have you had to rely on a partnership with someone to accomplish a goal? How did the partnership help accomplish the goal? How did you feel about not being solely responsible for the outcome?

Whether it's a group project for school or work, coordinating with family members to prepare a holiday celebration, or the day-to-day running of the household, we all have times when we need someone else's help to accomplish what needs to be done. Many hands make light work. Sometimes it can be a relief to not be the only one responsible for the success of a project. Other times it might be stressful to have to rely on someone else's motivation, talent, or commitment instead of being totally in control.

Share with participants that today's session is about partnership: When it comes to the work of the Gospel, we are never on our own—God did not intend for us do the work of evangelization alone.

Describe a time when something that initially seemed like a limitation or setback actually opened the door to new opportunities.

Maybe an unexpected or undesired move opened up new opportunities for education or a career. Maybe not getting a first choice for something made way for an even better alternative. Maybe a significant relationship ended, which, despite the initial heartbreak, left the person free to enter into a better relationship. The saying "When God shuts a door, somewhere he opens a window" applies even to St. Paul—his long imprisonment in Rome gave him amazing opportunities for evangelization that he wouldn't have had otherwise.



Play the video segment, which will last about 26 minutes. Encourage participants to follow along using the outline in their Study Guides and take notes as key points are made during the video teachings. Then lead the discussion using the questions below.



DISCUSS

Following each question are possible responses and comments to guide you in the group conversation.

1. What was one thing you heard for the first time or that was an “aha” moment for you?

The contrast between Saul the persecutor and Paul the persecuted Christian may be a particularly striking comparison. Paul's experience of prison while under house arrest in Rome may be a new detail. The definition of koinonia as “partnership” with all its business imagery and implications may also be new.

2. Why does St. Paul pair “love” with “all knowledge and discernment”? What are some consequences of separating love from knowledge and discernment?

He pairs them because love without truth isn't fully love. We must be able to recognize and choose what is worthy of love and what is the right way to love, otherwise we will fall short of the command to love as God loves. If we separate love from knowledge and discernment, we can end up with a kind of sentimentality or mere affection that looks like love but doesn't have the ability to will the good of the other. This kind of love is powerless because it isn't founded in truth.

3. What is the connection between the moral life and the liturgical life for Paul? How do you see this connection in your own experience?

For Paul the moral life leads to the liturgical life. A life of virtue gives glory to God. At the same time, the liturgical life must be based in the moral life—we can't give right worship to God if we are not living a good, moral life. One simple point of application is to recognize that growing in virtue is not just about “me” being a

better person—it's actually about God and allowing myself to be better conformed to his likeness. So my virtue, my moral life, is a way to worship and give glory to God. And participating in the liturgy of the Church will bear more fruit in my own life if I am striving to grow in virtue and not just going through the motions.

4. St. Paul relates how his imprisonment made many other brethren “much more bold to speak the word of God without fear” (Philippians 1:14). What causes this courage? How do the lives of the saints encourage you in your daily walk with Christ?

The first cause of such courage is the Holy Spirit. Before receiving the Holy Spirit, the Apostles fled when Jesus was arrested and hid after the Crucifixion. But once they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they filled the world with the proclamation of the Gospel, willing to endure martyrdom. St. Augustine describes courage as love readily bearing all things for the sake of God. In each of the saints, we see a life lived well, where things are loved in right order, and God is loved before all else. This great cloud of witnesses provided by the saints is an encouragement—we find ourselves “in-courage” with them.

Direct participants to this session's **Memory Verse** in their Study Guides, and read it together. Then lead the **Closing Prayer**. Encourage participants to do the **COMMIT** reflections on their own before you meet again as a group.



COMMIT

Following are possible responses to the questions participants will be asked in their daily COMMIT reflections.

DAY 1 – PAUL IN PRISON

Participants will review the events in St. Paul's life leading up to his imprisonment in Rome and the way his sufferings for the Gospel relate to the sufferings he inflicted on Christians before his conversion.

Read Acts 21:10–14. What reaction do Paul's companions have to the prophecy of his arrest in Jerusalem? What is Paul's reaction?

Paul's companions weep and urge him not to go to Jerusalem so that he might avoid arrest and imprisonment. But Paul seems to have great peace about his impending persecution—he says he is ready not only to be imprisoned but to die. He trusts that this is the will of God for him.

Compare the accounts of Saul's persecution of Christians in Acts 8:1–3, 9:1–2, and 26:4–11 with Paul's description of his many sufferings for the Gospel in 2 Corinthians 11:23–31. What similarities do you find? How does this fulfill what Jesus says about Paul at the time of his conversion in Acts 9:15–16?

Paul suffers many of the same persecutions he inflicted on Christians earlier in his life. Paul watched as Stephen was stoned to death; Paul was also stoned and would later die a martyr's death. Paul had Christians arrested, and he was imprisoned several times. At his conversion, Jesus said that Saul would suffer much for the sake of his name, and Paul's litany in 2 Corinthians 11 confirms that suffering. It also confirms that Paul sees his suffering as a badge of honor precisely because it is for the sake of the name of Jesus.



DAY 2 – PAUL’S PRISON PREACHING

Participants will learn about Paul’s experience of house arrest in Rome and how this apparent setback actually led to greater opportunities for evangelization.

When has someone recently showed his or her friendship for you? How did this affect your relationship? Who needs your friendship today?

A friend may have brought a dinner during a time of illness, or given a call or sent a note to help cheer you. Such acts, which bring us together especially at difficult times, deepen our friendship—they allow us to “be Christ” to another and help us to experience Christ’s love through one another. Giving thanks for such acts of kindness is important, and this thanksgiving is part of Paul’s reason for writing his letter.

What seems to be limiting or binding you in your spiritual life? Take some time in prayer today to ask God to use that very thing for his glory.

All sorts of things can feel like limitations in the spiritual life. A busy parent may not have as much time for silent prayer as he would like. A student may not have the resources of time or money to devote to the mission work to which she feels called. Or someone may desire to grow in virtue but constantly find himself struggling with the same sins over and over. Recognizing limits and frustrations, whether or not we have any control over them, allows us to intentionally turn these issues over to God and consciously surrender to his will. Chances are we will find ourselves growing in unexpected ways when we do so.

Think of a time God took something in your life that seemed like a failure or setback and used it for good. How did you feel when you were in the middle of that situation? How do you feel about it in hindsight?

God can and does bring a greater good out of every evil, although it’s often difficult to recognize in the moment. Some examples include God using an embarrassing failure to help us learn humility, teaching us patience when it takes longer than we want or expect to achieve a goal, using an illness or injury to give us time to slow down and draw closer to him, teaching us compassion through our own sorrows, etc. Often there is frustration, disappointment, or discouragement in the midst of these situations, but in hindsight the hand of God at work is much more evident.



DAY 3 – LECTIO – PAUL’S ABANDONMENT TO CHRIST

Participants will pray through Philippians 1:12–18 and reflect on how total abandonment to God’s will leads to peace in all circumstances.

LECTIO

How does Paul refer to those he addresses in this passage?

He calls them “brethren.”

According to Paul, what has his imprisonment accomplished? What evidence does he offer to support this conclusion?

He says that his imprisonment has served to advance the Gospel. The proof is that the whole Praetorian Guard and “all the rest” have heard the gospel message as a result of his imprisonment. Also, other Christians have been made bolder in their own evangelization because of Paul’s situation.

What are the two different motives Paul sees for others preaching Christ while he is in prison? How does he react to these two different groups of people?

Some have been preaching the Gospel out of “envy and rivalry”—perhaps Paul’s imprisonment as a chance to shine in their own missionary work. Others are motivated by good will toward both Paul and the mission of the Gospel to work harder in their preaching. Paul rejoices because either way Christ and the Gospel is being proclaimed.

MEDITATIO

How do you think Paul's attitude about the will of God forms his attitude about his imprisonment?

Jean-Pierre de Caussade says that if we can recognize God's will in any moment, then we will find all our hearts desire. St. Paul is able to recognize that his imprisonment is part of God's will, and, because of this, he has all that his heart desires. He is able to be content, patient, and peaceful in these circumstances that outwardly seem so dire and uncertain. Ultimately, he has peace because he trusts in God. Additionally, Paul's focus is on God, not on himself—he is truly humble. He sees everything—his own circumstances, the actions of others, etc.—through the lens of God's will. Thus every moment for Paul, even during his arrest, is filled with infinite treasure because Paul's focus is first on God.

Why do you think Paul is able to rejoice even in the betrayal by his rivals?

He sees that God's will is being accomplished, and so he rejoices. Even those rivals, who are preaching out of partisanship, are still preaching Jesus Christ. Paul sees that the work of preaching the Gospel is being advanced, not in spite of his imprisonment but because of it, and so he is able to rejoice even at being imprisoned because he sees how it works for the glory of God and the accomplishment of God's great plans. Paul knows that "in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).



DAY 4 – PARTNERSHIP

Participants will explore the beautiful way that Paul and the Philippians partner together for the work of the Gospel.

With whom do you partner for the spread of the Gospel? In what ways are you invested in this business venture?

You might have an obvious partnership, such as working or volunteering for your parish or some other Christian organization, or sponsoring a missionary and supporting his or her work financially and with your prayers. Other partnerships might include the partnership between a husband and wife in raising their children, godparents supporting parents, mentorship relationships, etc. Ultimately each Christian partners with the Holy Spirit in doing the work of evangelization. The investment might be money, time, skills, prayers, etc. This is a good opportunity to consider how we can invest even more in this venture.

Look up the following passages. Who were some of Paul's partners?

Acts 13:1–4—*Barnabas*

Acts 15:40–16:5—*Silas and Timothy*

Acts 18:18—*Priscilla and Aquila*

Romans 16:22—*Tertius*

2 Corinthians 1:1—*Timothy*

Philippians 1:1—*Timothy*

1 Thessalonians 1:1—*Silvanus and Timothy*

What does Paul's experience in Athens teach us about the importance of partnership in evangelization?

We are not meant to do this work on our own. When we strike out on our own without help, moral/prayer support, and fellowship, we are not able to be as effective as we can be when working as part of a team.

PHILIPPIANS

LIFE IN CHRIST

LEADER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

SESSION 3



LECTIO™

UNVEILING SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

TIM GRAY

Nihil Obstat: Currently Under Review

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

Copyright © 2017 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: Modifications from the Editio Typica copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Ashley Crane, Kris Gray, Cathy Loh

Media: Steve Flanigan, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, Ted Mast, Jon Ervin, Matthew Krekeler

Print Production/Graphic Design: Jeff Cole, Brenda Kraft, Jane Myers, Christina Gray, Ann Diaz, Julia DeLapp

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

www.augustineinstitute.org/programs

(866) 767-3155

augustineinstitute.org/lectio

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9982041-4-7

SESSION 3

FRIENDSHIP IN CHRIST

SESSION OVERVIEW

Read this overview in advance to familiarize yourself with the session.

Last session we read of St. Paul's thanksgiving for the partnership he shares with the Philippians, a partnership in the ministry of the Gospel. Paul shares his affection and prayer for the Philippians and then updates his partners on how even his imprisonment is working to advance their joint venture of saving souls by the proclamation of the gospel message.

In this session we pick up with Paul's clear allusion to the Old Testament figure of Job to demonstrate how we can suffer through no fault of our own yet remain encouraged by hope in Christ. Job, a righteous man, suffers great calamity despite his righteousness. He remains convicted of his ultimate redemption in the face of withering admonitions from his friends who allegedly come to console him. Like Job, Paul suffers imprisonment though he is innocent, yet joyfully proclaims the Gospel, remaining convinced of his ultimate vindication because the Redeemer that Job trusted in, Paul knows by name—Jesus Christ.

Next, we learn how Paul calls this church community to unity in order to successfully face trials. We will discover how Paul appeals to the Philippians' sense of community and reworks the concept of friendship to remind them that their Christian citizenship is rooted in the Gospel of Christ. By exploring the Greek ideal of friendship, we will discern its limitations versus the Christian understanding of friendship. Then we will consider how Paul expands the Philippians' view of friendship by calling them to the key virtue of humility, looking first to the interests of others in imitation of Christ.

St. Paul shows himself as an imitator of Christ's humility. He longs to depart and be with Christ but knows that the Philippians need him for encouragement; because of this Paul chooses to "remain in the flesh [which] is more necessary on [their] account" (Philippians 1:24). Paul sets the example of how to persevere through trials and also how to be a true friend by placing the needs of the Philippian church ahead of his own desire to be with Christ. Paul's goal is to help the Philippians understand that the only way to live out true Christian friendship is to have the same mind as Christ. Likewise, we will discover that we need to have the mind of Christ to live out the Christian ideal of friendship, loving God and neighbor.



CONNECT

*Begin this session by leading the **Opening Prayer**, and then read or summarize the **Introduction** for your group. Both can be found in the Study Guide, page 35.*

*Then briefly review the last session with your group. Can anyone recite the **Memory Verse** (Philippians 1:9–10) without assistance? Otherwise, look it up (page 22) and recite it as a group. Discuss highlights and any questions participants may have from the last session's **COMMIT** reflections before moving on to the following questions.*

Think about your friendships. What do they have in common? Do you have a best friend? What sets this relationship apart from your other friendships?

Responses may include sharing a similar worldview and values, having common interests, enjoying spending time together, being able to trust and depend upon each other. A best friend is often the one we spend the most time with and the first one we turn to in order to share our joys, sorrows, hopes, and fears. A best friend is someone we know we can always count on, someone we trust completely, likely because this person has never let us down.

Do you consider Jesus Christ your friend? If yes, how so? If not, why not? What are some ways you can develop or strengthen your relationship with Jesus Christ?

Jesus tells his disciples that he calls them friends (John 15:15). Jesus calls us to be his disciples and friends. Being a disciple and friend of Jesus Christ means spending time with him in adoration, in Mass, in the Scriptures, and in prayer in order to know him better. We need to “have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16) to live in accord with his teachings, and we develop this mind by spending time with him.



Play the video segment, which will last about 27 minutes. Encourage participants to follow along with the outline in their Study Guides and take notes as key points are made during the video teachings. Then lead the discussion using the questions below.



DISCUSS

Following each question are possible responses and comments to guide you in the group conversation.

1. Have you ever encountered any “Jobs” in your life? How did they manage to carry on despite their hardships? What was the source of their strength?

Like Job, they probably had great faith and trust in God even though their suffering may have been unmerited: “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). They likely looked to Jesus, who was the divine Son of God, yet was willing to suffer according to the Father’s will, and tried to imitate him by accepting their cross, turning to God in their sorrow or struggle, and trusting that he would strengthen them and that he would draw something good from it. They acknowledged that they might not ever understand the reason for their suffering while still in this world yet remained faithful. Trust is the key.

2. According to Dr. Gray, Paul bursts “old wineskins” by reworking the secular notion of citizenship to reflect the Gospel. How does this expansion or reworking affect your understanding of how Christians are called to live as citizens of a heavenly kingdom while still living in this world?

As Christians, we are dual citizens of both the earthly kingdom and the heavenly kingdom. It is not enough to merely follow the secular law of the land. Further, sometimes that law conflicts with God’s laws, and we cannot rightly cooperate with those laws. God calls us to be holy as he is holy (see Leviticus 11:45; Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16). To accomplish this requires having the mind of Christ so we can think in a way that is consistent with our heavenly citizenship and also with our fellow citizens of Heaven. Each of us is called to form our conscience in light of the Word of God (see CCC 1785) and to make right judgment in accordance with reason and the divine law (see CCC 1786).

3. Paul shows how the mind of Christ and humility elevate the Greek ideal of friendship. How does this teaching better enable you to live out the command to love God and love your neighbor?

Paul understood that the Greeks could never achieve their ideal of friendship because they did not esteem the key virtue of humility nor did they share the same mind of Christ. Humility, in imitation of Christ, where we esteem others above self, provides a foundation for achieving true friendship. As Christians, we are called to love others as God loves us (see John 13:34). Since we know that God is love (see 1 John 4:8) and we are all made in the image and likeness of God (see Genesis 1:26), we must strive to live this command. Fortunately, God has given us his spirit, as well as many beautiful examples of humility and sharing the mind of Christ in the saints and most especially in our Blessed Mother. We can follow her example and also call upon her to help us to grow in the virtue of humility and to put on the mind of Christ.

*Direct participants to this session's **Memory Verse** in their Study Guides, and read it together. Then lead the **Closing Prayer**. Encourage participants to do the **COMMIT** reflections on their own before you meet again as a group.*



COMMIT

Following are possible responses to the questions participants will be asked in their daily COMMIT reflections.



DAY 1 – JOB

Participants will consider Paul's example of suffering and trust through the lens of Job.

Throughout the Scriptures, we encounter many righteous men and women who display great faith in the face of adversity and suffering. Look up the following three passages. What can we learn from Job and these examples to help us when we face difficulty in our own lives?

1 Samuel 1:1–11, 20—Hannah is barren and suffers shame and ridicule. She goes to the Temple of the Lord and bears her soul to God asking for a son, trusting that God will hear and answer her prayer.

1 Samuel 24:1–12—David must flee from Saul and his army, and is forced to hide out in the desert area of En-gedi as Saul unjustly seeks to kill him. Still, when David has the chance to take Saul's life and end Saul's pursuit of him, he refuses to do so because Saul remains God's anointed king. Instead, David trusts in God's ultimate vindication for him.

John 19:25–30—Mary, John, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, wife of Clopas, all gather at the foot of the Cross, sharing in Jesus's suffering. They do not abandon him as the rest of the Apostles did in fear for their own lives.

Many other examples exist in the Scriptures, such as Noah (remaining faithful in the midst of a faithless generation), Abraham (responding to God's command to sacrifice his son), Moses (having to bring God's command to Pharaoh), Joshua (taking Jericho by marching around the city), Esther (having to approach the king at the risk of her life), Daniel (remaining faithful to God's law, even when faced with the lions' den), etc. All these examples remind us that we need to draw near to God in the midst of our suffering and he will draw near to us (see James 4:8). They also teach us the importance of making our requests known to him in prayer (see Philippians 4:6) and then waiting upon the Lord, trusting his will and timing for the answer to our requests.

Scripture teaches us that God is trustworthy. What do these verses tell us about God's promises to us?

Jeremiah 29:11—God has a plan for each of us to give us a good future full of hope.

Romans 5:1–5—Having received redemption and God’s grace through Jesus’s sacrifice on the Cross, we can rejoice and have hope in the midst of suffering.

Romans 8:28—All things work together for our good.

Hebrews 13:5—God will never abandon us.

James 4:8—If we draw near to God, he will draw near to us.

1 Peter 5:10—In the midst of our suffering we find encouragement in God’s promise to “restore, support, strengthen, and establish” us.



DAY 2 – GREEK IDEAL OF FRIENDSHIP

Participants will consider the Greek ideal of friendship, particularly what is lacking that is necessary to love God and neighbor as Christ commands.

Although friendship is key to the Greek concept of human flourishing, their understanding of friendship remains incomplete. Look up the following verses. How does Christianity elevate and go beyond the Greek understanding of friendship?

John 15:13–15—Jesus, the divine Son of God, desires friendship with mere men and women. For the Greeks, friendship between different social classes was not possible, and friendship between humanity and divinity was inconceivable. But with the Incarnation, divinity takes on humanity, becoming Emmanuel, God with us.

Galatians 3:27–28—In Baptism we put on Christ and the old divisions that separated us are done away with.

Philemon 1:10–16—Paul exhorts Philemon to receive his slave Onesimus back now as a brother because of Onesimus’s baptism into the Faith.

While Aristotle’s concept of friendship is based on virtue, Dr. Gray explains in the video that a key Christian virtue is missing from the Greek understanding. What is that virtue? Why do you think that virtue is necessary to achieve true friendship?

The virtue of humility is key to living Christian friendship and is the missing virtue for the Greeks, who did not esteem humility. We can only truly love others by unselfishly placing their needs ahead of our own. Otherwise, we may be inclined to seek relationships that are motivated chiefly by self-interest and what the other can provide for us.

Paul takes the notion of friendship based on *philia* and elevates it to *agape* by appealing to “their manner of life” and challenging them to live lives “worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Philippians 1:27). How are they to accomplish this? What implication does this have for your own Christian community? What can you do to avoid or heal any divisions in your community?

To live lives worthy of the Gospel requires us to imitate Christ, who laid down his life for us and was willing to turn the other cheek. That is only possible when we have “one mind” with Christ. Humility is required for us to place the needs of others ahead of our own and to follow the example that Jesus gave us. In our own communities, we must work together for the good of the other by placing the other ahead of ourselves. Divisions can be healed through prayer and forgiveness. Oftentimes the intercession of other Christian friends or leaders who can give counsel and help bridge the division can lead to healing and restore unity.



DAY 3 – LECTIO: UNITY THROUGH THE MIND OF CHRIST

Participants will reflect on Philippians 2:1–4 and Paul's admonition to find encouragement in Christ and to be of the same mind.

LECTIO

Verses 1 and 2 form an if/then conditional statement. Such statements include known factors or hypothetical situations and their consequences. In verse 1, what are the four parts of the “if” conditional clause?

The four “if” conditions are: 1) Any encouragement in Christ, 2) any incentive of love, 3) any participation in the Spirit, and 4) any affection and sympathy.

The “then” consequence is that the Philippians are to make Paul’s joy complete. What are the four requirements for achieving this consequence?

The four requirements are: 1) Being of the same mind, 2) having the same love, 3) being in full accord, and 4) being of one mind.

In the last two verses, how is humility described?

Humility precludes selfishness and conceitedness and regards others as better than ourselves. Humility enables us to place the interests of others ahead of our own.

MEDITATIO

Paul rhetorically reminds the Philippians (and us) that his four “ifs” are not hypothetical situations but facts that they have encountered in their conversion to Christ and their incorporation into Christ’s Body, the Church, in Baptism. How have you encountered any of these four “ifs” in your own relationship to Jesus Christ?

Participants may be “encouraged in Christ” by our Lord’s willingness to suffer for them on the Cross, or by his openness to all who draw near to him. They may have encountered “incentive of love” by a passage in the Scriptures that touched their heart and allowed them to feel closer to Christ, or by an act of charity done for them by another. They may have felt a powerful “participation in the Spirit” during a reception of a particular sacrament or in a time when they felt led by the Spirit to do a particular good work. They may have felt “affection and sympathy” when they felt Christ’s presence and/or the help of another person during a difficult time.

Having reminded the Philippians of their encounter with Jesus Christ, Paul exhorts them (and us) to manifest this in our lives. In which of the four “thens” do you need to grow? What small, concrete resolution can you make to make progress in this area?

Self-reflection in a personal examination of conscience will help participants identify the area(s) in which they need to grow. Participants might reflect on whether they are of the “same mind” . . . do they stop to pray about situations and ask God’s guidance? They might reflect on whether they have “the same love” . . . are they willing to forgive others like God has forgiven them? They might reflect on whether they are of “full accord and one mind” . . . do they speak ill of others unnecessarily? Prayer to the Holy Spirit can bolster an intention for growth and provide the actual grace to grow as needed.

Paul issues a warning against selfishness and conceit. These attitudes are detrimental to the unity to which Christians are called. Take some time to do an examination of conscience using Paul’s words:

Have I recently done something from “selfishness or conceit”? Have I tried to outmaneuver a co-worker, or taken credit for someone else’s work or good deed?

Have I counted myself better than others? Have I spoken ill of others unnecessarily? Have I gossiped?

Have I bragged about myself?

How have I not looked first to the interests of others? Have I made time for my spouse, children, friends, neighbors, co-workers? Have I helped a friend I know is in need?

If yes, whom do I need to seek forgiveness from? Schedule a time to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Ask forgiveness of those you have wronged.

And what can I do to restore unity and friendship? Praise and speak well of others, and aim to be truthful in all your words. Be willing to make time for others.



DAY 4 – HUMILITY

Participants will consider the virtue of humility and how it is necessary to live out the Christian ideal of friendship in order to love God and neighbor.

Paul exhorts the Philippians to pattern their lives on the supreme example of Jesus Christ, the model of humility. Look up the following verses. How does Jesus describe himself? Or how does the verse show Jesus as the model humility?

Isaiah 50:6; 53:3–5—Isaiah’s prophecy foretells Jesus, who will take on our sins, willing to take shame and mistreatment for our sake.

Matthew 11:29—Jesus describes himself as gentle and humble of heart.

Mark 10:45—Jesus describes himself as one who came to serve (not be served) and to give his life for others.

Luke 22:27—Jesus says that he is among his disciples as the one who serves.

John 6:38—Jesus comes to do the will of God the Father, not his own.

John 15:3–17—Jesus, who is the Teacher and Master, serves his Apostles by washing their feet and then tells them that as he has done, they must also do.

Philippians 2:8—Jesus humbled himself even unto death.

2 Corinthians 8:9—Jesus humbled himself, becoming poor for our sake.

Think of examples of people you know who display humility by placing the needs of others ahead of their own. What does that look like?

Mother Teresa is a famous example of someone who took care of the most needy and forgotten in India and all over the world. Mothers and fathers place the needs of their children above their personal needs. Other examples include those who care for aging parents, teachers, priests, and more. Participants might also mention simple acts such as letting another go first in line, retrieving an item for someone else, or letting another speak first.



DAY 5 – TRUTH AND BEAUTY

Participants will reflect on the Madonna of Humility by Lippo di Dalmasio, c. 1390.

No questions this day.

PHILIPPIANS

LIFE IN CHRIST

LEADER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

SESSION 4



LECTIO™

UNVEILING SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

TIM GRAY

Nihil Obstat: Currently Under Review

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

Copyright © 2017 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Ashley Crane, Kris Gray, Cathy Loh

Media: Steve Flanigan, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, Ted Mast, Jon Ervin, Matthew Krekeler

Print Production/Graphic Design: Jeff Cole, Brenda Kraft, Jane Myers, Christina Gray, Ann Diaz, Julia DeLapp

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

www.augustineinstitute.org/programs

(866) 767-3155

augustineinstitute.org/lectio

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9982041-4-7

SESSION 4

THE MIND OF CHRIST

SESSION OVERVIEW

Read this overview in advance to familiarize yourself with the session.

The last session explored St. Paul's call to live out friendship in Christ. This is a tall order—it's simple enough to talk about, but it can be very difficult to put into practice. Paul doesn't leave us to figure it out on our own; he directs us to the perfect guide and model for exactly how to live the Christian life in his beautiful poem/hymn in Philippians 2:6–11, which is the topic of this next session.

We begin by looking at Paul's opening words in Philippians 2:5, in which he exhorts the Philippians to have the mind of Christ. How can two people be of the "same mind"? By both having the mindset of the Messiah, of Jesus Christ. Dr. Gray points out that the Christian word for conversion is *metanoia*, which refers to the transformation/change of the mind. Truth and love are both central to the Christian message. Knowing Jesus Christ, his truth and Gospel, and having his mindset will transform us to be able to love with Christian charity.

Then we look at the beautiful picture that Paul paints for us of what the mind of Christ looks like lived out—Jesus's life is one of humble obedience, emptying oneself for others. Dr. Gray opens up the two parts of Paul's poem/hymn. In the first part, Christ, because of his humility, makes two descents: first from God to man, and second from man to death. The second part of the poem is one of ascent, as God the Father exalts Jesus, who is professed to be Lord and God.

Paul's poem/hymn holds up Jesus as the model and blueprint for living the Christian life. It is the mindset of Jesus—giving, serving, and pouring ourselves out for others—that will bring us happiness. In the Roman colony of Philippi, whose citizens were all too familiar with men who desired to be worshipped as gods, St. Paul preaches a radically different story of a God who humbled himself and became man.



CONNECT

*Begin this session by leading the **Opening Prayer**, and then read or summarize the **Introduction** for your group. Both can be found in the Study Guide on page 53.*

*Then briefly review the last session with your group. Can anyone recite the **Memory Verse** (Philippians 1:21) without assistance? Otherwise, look it up (page 38) and recite it as a group. Discuss highlights and any questions participants may have from the last session's COMMIT reflections before moving on to the following questions.*

Have you ever felt like you were “of the same mind” with someone else? If so, what enabled this unity? If not, what do you think gets in the way of this unity?

Many of us have had an experience of thinking about something the same way with someone else—they just “get us,” or we are often “on the same page.” We might have a common background, a shared important experience, or a long history that allows us to understand each other. We might communicate in the same way or process information and problem-solve in the same way. The strongest sense of being “of the same mind” is not just when we have the same ideas or arrive at the same conclusion, but it’s when we share the same worldview. On the other hand, many of us have also had an experience of completely talking past the other person, trying to communicate and missing the point, etc. This is very likely to happen when we view the world in a completely different way compared to the other person—we have a whole different mindset. When Paul urges the Philippians to be of one mind, he’s not just talking about good communication or agreeing about ideas; he is talking about having the same worldview: the mindset of Christ.

Describe someone who you think provides a good model for the Christian life. What about this person’s life do you want to imitate?

The model might be a family member, a teacher, a priest, or religious brother or sister, etc. The saints provide us with very good models for the Christian life. There are many admirable aspects of their lives to imitate: prayer, love, generosity, etc. Paul’s blueprint for the Christian life tells us to imitate Christ, specifically in his humility and obedience. These are the keys to having the mind of Christ and living the Christian life well.



Play the video segment, which will last for about 26 minutes. Encourage participants to follow along with the outline in their Study Guides and take notes as key points are made during the video teachings. Then lead the discussion using the questions below.



DISCUSS

Following each question are possible responses and comments to guide you in the group conversation.

1. What was one thing you heard for the first time or that was an “aha” moment for you?

Dr. Gray defines several Greek words in this session that may be new for participants: metanoia (transformation of mind/conversion), harpagmos (act of exploiting something for personal gain), tapeinoō (humility), kenōsis (to empty oneself), isa theou (to be like God/equality with God), and morphe (form). Something new might have been the contrast between “information/knowledge” and mindset and how mindset has the ability to bring transformation. Or the reminder of just how radically different the Gospel is in proclaiming a God who humbled himself and became man, especially in the Roman world where so many leaders desired to be worshipped as gods.

2. What is Paul’s “recipe” or plan for making a community of friendship? What are some practical ways to live this out in your own communities (family, parish, school, workplace, etc.)?

The key to creating a community of friendship is to be of one mind. For Paul this means not just agreeing or having the same ideas or beliefs, but having the same mindset or worldview. The way for multiple people to be of one mind is for all of them to have the mind of Christ. This means being totally conformed to Christ (metanoia—transformation of the mind leading to total transformation of the self). Striving to imitate Christ

in his humility and obedience will lead to a community of friendship; specifically we must put others first. Spouses can make an extra effort to see to the needs of the other before their own or defer to the wishes of the other instead of insisting on their own way. Siblings can let another have the first turn or the prized toy/cup/seat in the car, etc. Students can submit to teachers obediently and joyfully. Co-workers can look for ways to help and encourage one another rather than focusing solely on their own advancement.

3. What does the model of Jesus's life tell us about how to find happiness and fulfillment? What does this look like when we put it into practice?

The structure of Paul's great hymn in Philippians 2:6–11 is one of the downward movement of kenosis followed by the upward movement of exaltation. This shows us that happiness and fulfillment come through humility, obedience, and emptying ourselves. This means not exploiting our own position/privilege/talents for our own gain, but looking for ways to put these at the service of others. It means obeying the will of God, no matter what ("obedient unto death" as Paul says of Jesus in Philippians 2:8). It means being humble and putting others first, not seeking our own glory.

4. Just how radical do you think Paul's preaching of Jesus's *kenosis* was to the pagan Roman citizens of Philippi? How radical is it for us in our own lives? In what areas do we still need to be "transformed by the renewal of [our] minds" to more fully have the mindset of Christ?

For a pagan culture accustomed to having its rulers declare themselves gods (and sons of gods), who saw temples erected throughout the empire dedicated to various Caesars, the Gospel of Jesus Christ—God become man, willing to be born in a stable, willing to suffer and die for our salvation—was totally new and probably difficult to believe at first. Paul's willingness to suffer when wrongly accused may have opened some in Philippi to the truth of his preaching. In our own lives, even as believers, we sometimes need to hear anew the radical proclamation of the Gospel, and to reevaluate just how much (or how little) we have conformed our lives to the mindset of Christ. Are we as honest, patient, generous, long-suffering, etc., as our Lord Jesus Christ? If not, these are areas in which we need to let the grace of Christ transform us.

*Direct participants to this session's **Memory Verse** in their Study Guides, and read it together. Then lead the **Closing Prayer**. Encourage participants to do the **COMMIT** reflections on their own before you meet again as a group.*



COMMIT

Following are possible responses to the questions participants will be asked in their daily COMMIT reflections.



DAY 1 – METANOIA

Participants will explore Paul's understanding of conversion as metanoia, a transformation of the mind leading to a total transformation of the whole person

How do your choices and actions reflect your own *metanoia* in Christ?

Metanoia is not a mental activity—it changes the way we think and also the way we act. It affects both the intellect and the will. So our lives need to reflect a transformation, a conforming-of-the-self-to-Christ. This might look like trying to break bad habits that are not in conformity with the mind of Christ, seeking to grow in virtue in imitation of Christ (especially humility and love), prioritizing family over career, having a consistent and active prayer life, tithing, making Mass a priority on Sundays and other Holy Days of Obligation, serving the poor and needy, helping a neighbor or family member, etc.

What are some ways that the world is beckoning you to be conformed to it instead of to Christ? How are you combatting the call of the world?

We are constantly exposed to the mindset of the world, especially through secular media. Our ideas of relationships are formed by music, movies, books, and TV shows; our ideas of what we need to own are easily influenced by advertisements and those we meet; our idea of self-worth is influenced by an emphasis on career, physical appearance, and possessions; our idea of truth is influenced by the relativistic culture in which we live. In our own lives we might feel one or another of these influences particularly strongly. One important way of combatting such influences is by setting aside time for daily prayer so that we keep Christ and his mindset ever before us. Another way is making an examination of conscience each night, reviewing our day and our choices in the light of Christ.

Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and grace, and pick one concrete action you can take this week to continue in the process of the renewal of your mind.

Some ideas include picking one of the Gospels and reading a chapter or even a few verses each morning, reading a paragraph of the Catechism before bed each evening (especially the third part on the moral life), going to daily Mass or going to Confession, picking a question you have about Church teaching and researching the answer, or reading about the life of a saint and asking for his or her intercession. One possible action might be starting to read a classic spiritual work written by one of the saints, such as the Introduction to the Devout Life by St. Francis de Sales.



DAY 2 – THE MIND OF CHRIST

Participants will study Paul's great hymn to Christ in Philippians 4:6–11, looking specifically at how it is a blueprint for having the mind of Christ.

Read Philippians 2:3–4. How does Paul urge us to live out the uniquely Christian virtue of humility? (Remember, in verse 4 there is no “only” in the original Greek!) What are two or three things you can do this week to practice this humility?

Put others first. We are to count others as more important than ourselves, looking to their needs/interests first (not “in addition” to our own interests, but considering others instead of looking out for our own interests). Some small ways to put this into practice include serving other family members at meal time before filling your own plate, offering to run an errand for a friend or co-worker instead of going home right away, listening to someone else's opinion or experience before sharing your own (and listening more than we talk), etc. Some bigger ways to practice this might include deferring to someone else's choice instead of insisting on your own preference, being the first one to apologize after an argument even if you think you were both at fault, etc.

The key to humility is obedience. Jesus emptied himself and was “obedient unto death” (Philippians 2:8). Take some time in prayer to reflect on whether you have been obedient to God and to those he has put over you, and how you can perfect your obedience.

One way to perfect our obedience is to look at how we are carrying out our actions. We may follow a direction we are given, but do we do it promptly (or do we put it off to the last minute)? Do we do the action gladly and with joy (or do we begrudge having to do the particular action)?



DAY 3 – LECTIO: SLAVES OF ALL

Participants will pray through Mark 10:35–45 and reflect on Jesus’s teaching that one who would be great must be the slave of all.

LECTIO

Who is asking the question of Jesus? What is their request?

Two of the Apostles, James and John (the sons of Zebedee), are asking the question. First they ask Jesus to say yes to whatever they are about to ask; then they ask if they can sit on either side of him in Heaven (“in your glory”). They’re asking for him to give them the two positions of greatest honor and authority.

How do the other Apostles react to this question?

The other Apostles are “indignant” when they hear about this. They’re not happy with James and John for making this request.

How many times does Jesus use a form of “serve” or “slave” in his response?

Four.

MEDITATIO

What motivates James and John to make their request of Jesus? How does Jesus redirect their focus?

James and John want to be great—they want a position of honor compared to the other Apostles. Jesus redirects their focus by defining honor/greatness/authority in terms of humility and service. If they want to be glorified, they must first humble themselves as Jesus is going to do. And it won’t be easy or pleasant (“chalice” and “baptism” refer to his sacrifice on the Cross).

What is the worldly model of leadership? What model does Jesus offer in contrast?

The worldly or secular model is one where leaders “lord it over” other people. It is visible honor, glory, and authority. The leaders expect to be served by the “less important” people. But the model that Jesus offers is quite the opposite—a leader must be a servant, the one who is great and has authority must use his position to benefit others. He uses radical language of being a “slave” to show that this is a real and total service to others, not just a token or symbol.

What does it mean to be “slave of all”?

It relates to what Paul says in Philippians 2:3 about counting others as more important. Put others first. See to their needs, be considerate of them. Recognize Christ in everyone we encounter, not just the people we think have a right to our service or a particular claim on us. As a particular example, for a mother this might mean serving the needs of her children and husband, being patient with other shoppers at the grocery store, being kind and compassionate toward other parents, looking for ways to help friends and other family members, etc. However, it does not mean being a doormat—we are “slave of all” because we are imitating Christ. Our dignity as sons and daughters of God calls us to serve others; and serving shouldn’t deny or contradict our own dignity.



DAY 4 – EQUALITY WITH GOD

Participants will go deeper into how Paul affirms the divinity of Jesus in Philippians 2:6–11.

Isaiah 45 is one of the strongest treatises against idolatry in the entire Old Testament. Read Isaiah 45:18–25 and Philippians 2:9–11. What echoes of Isaiah do you find in Philippians? What is Paul saying about Jesus when he makes these references to Isaiah 45?

The most important echo is Isaiah 45:23 / Philippians 2:10–11: “every knee shall bow” and “every tongue shall swear/confess.” Isaiah prophesies that everyone will eventually acknowledge the one true God (YHWH), and Paul uses the exact same language to say that everyone will eventually acknowledge that Jesus is God. Paul is saying that Jesus is equal to the God of the Old Testament; Jesus is Lord.

Read Philippians 2:9–11 again. What can you do this week to make a point of acknowledging that Jesus is Lord?

One idea would be to practice the ancient tradition of bowing one’s head every time the name “Jesus” is said. Another would be to pray a specific prayer each day, such as the closing prayer from this session by Thomas à Kempis or the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus. Another way to practice a special acknowledgment would be to offer something up to the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus—work to give up a bad habit, pursue a virtue or good work you have been avoiding, etc.



DAY 5 – TRUTH AND BEAUTY

Participants will reflect on The Crucifixion, Bartolomé Estebán Murillo, ca. 1675, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

No questions this day.

NOTES

PHILIPPIANS

LIFE IN CHRIST

LEADER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

SESSION 5



LECTIO™

UNVEILING SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

TIM GRAY

Nihil Obstat: Currently Under Review

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

Copyright © 2017 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Ashley Crane, Kris Gray, Cathy Loh

Media: Steve Flanigan, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, Ted Mast, Jon Ervin, Matthew Krekeler

Print Production/Graphic Design: Jeff Cole, Brenda Kraft, Jane Myers, Christina Gray, Ann Diaz, Julia DeLapp

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

www.augustineinstitute.org/programs

(866) 767-3155

augustineinstitute.org/lectio

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9982041-4-7

SESSION 5

IMITATIO CHRISTI

SESSION OVERVIEW

Read this overview in advance to familiarize yourself with the session.

In the last session we explored St. Paul's beautiful hymn to Christ in Philippians 2:6–11. This hymn is a poem in two movements: the first is the downward movement of Christ's humility as he pours himself out for our sakes and becomes "obedient unto death" (Philippians 2:8), and the second is the upward movement of the Father exalting the Son. Paul's message to the Philippians and to us is that if we desire to share in Christ's glory, we must learn to imitate his humble obedience.

This session will take a closer look at Paul's instructions on how to apply Christ's example to our own lives. Each one of us is called to imitate Jesus, and we do this through obedience (2:12), cooperating with the work God is doing in our lives (2:12–13), and pouring out our own lives as sacrificial offerings so that we will "shine as lights in the world" (2:14–16). In doing this we are conformed to Christ in his fulfillment of the prophecy of the suffering servant of the Lord in Isaiah 49.

To help us imitate the example set for us by our Lord, Paul directs our attention to other models of lives lived in conformity to Christ. In Philippians 2:19–30, Paul identifies both Timothy and Epaphroditus as men who demonstrate true Christlike friendship through their concern for the welfare of others (both Paul and the Philippians). The Philippians are encouraged to follow the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus, and, in doing so, they can better imitate Christ.

St. Paul also offers his own life as an example of imitating Christ and sharing in his sufferings. In Philippians 3:1–16, Paul shares how he has given up everything and received Christ in return. Paul uses the business language of partnership, gains, and losses to illustrate his point that nothing can compare to being united with Christ, and the only way to be truly united to Christ is to share (*koinonia*) in his suffering. A life conformed to Christ is necessarily a life conformed to the Cross.



CONNECT

*Begin this session by leading the **Opening Prayer**, and then read or summarize the **Introduction** for your group. Both can be found in the Study Guide, on page 69.*

*Then briefly review the last session with your group. Can anyone recite the **Memory Verse** (Philippians 2:5–7) without assistance? Otherwise, look it up (page 56) and recite it as a group. Discuss highlights and any questions participants may have from the last session's COMMIT reflections before moving on to the following questions.*

What is one task or project you have that is never quite finished and always requires more work?

Responses might include a responsibility at home or work that takes consistent or repeated effort like laundry or marketing, a hobby or skill that requires practice, or continuing education. Calling to mind some area in which there is always room for improvement or growth prepares participants for this session's discussion of God's work of grace in our lives. Our salvation is a free gift from God, but it requires our cooperation—and is also a work in progress for our entire lives.

Share about a time you gave up something that was good in order to get something that was even better.

Most things in life involve some kind of trade-off. Some examples include not taking an interesting elective so you could take a class that was crucial to your main course of study, giving up a job you enjoyed to stay home with your kids, giving up a food you love in order to become healthier, giving up an extra half hour of sleep to have time for prayer, etc. We make these kinds of sacrifices of good things for better things throughout our lives. Paul tells us in Philippians that we are ultimately called to sacrifice everything in order to gain Christ—this is the greatest possible good, and it is well worth the loss of everything else.



Play the video segment, which will last for about 26 minutes. Encourage participants to follow along with the outline in their Study Guides and take notes as key points are made during the video teachings. Then lead the discussion using the questions below.



DISCUSS

Following each question are possible responses and comments to guide you in the group conversation.

1. What was one thing you heard for the first time or that was an “aha” moment for you?

Some examples might be the link between Paul's words to the Philippians and the sacrificial language of the Old Testament (especially the drink offering/libation poured out on sacrifices), the connection between Paul's mission and the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, or the idea of having a partnership in the sufferings of Christ.

2. What does Paul urge the Philippians to do in order to “shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:14–16)? What are some practical things that we can do to live out this same calling in our own lives?

He tells them to continue to be obedient, work out their salvation with fear and trembling (i.e., let God's grace transform their lives in a visible way), don't grumble or question, be blameless/innocent/without blemish (perfect sacrifices), hold fast to the word of life. Some actions we can take to put these things into practice are to obey God's Word and his Church, not grumble against the Church and her leaders, take advantage of the grace of the sacraments in order to overcome sin in our lives, and try to embrace suffering with patience and even joy (offer it up) as part of our identity as a sacrifice offered to God in union with the sacrifice of Christ.

3. How does Paul show Timothy and Epaphroditus to be models of Jesus? Is there someone in your life who models Jesus in this way? Is there someone to whom you model Jesus in this way?

Paul emphasizes that both Timothy and Epaphroditus have concern for others—for both Paul and the Philippians—rather than looking to their own interests. They model the humility of Christ by putting others first. Also, their concern is for the things that really matter—both the spiritual and the physical welfare of others. People who model Christ in this way might include parents putting their children first, a priest or deacon who shows real concern for both the physical and spiritual welfare of the parish, a friend who

is always putting others first, etc. We can examine our own relationships and find people who need us to be truly and consistently concerned about their welfare—a friend going through a hard time, a struggling family member, a new co-worker, the poor around us, etc.



COMMIT

*Following are suggested answers to the questions participants will be asked in their daily **COMMIT** reflections.*



DAY 1 – BLAMELESS AND WITHOUT BLEMISH

Participants will examine the connection between St. Paul's application of the hymn to Christ and the language of the Old Testament sacrificial system.

The story of Cain and Abel's two offerings reveals something crucial about this sacrificial system built into human nature. Read Genesis 4:3–7. What are the differences between the brothers' offerings? Why does God accept one and not the other?

The obvious difference is that Cain offers "the fruit of the ground" and Abel offers "firstlings of his flock" (Genesis 4:3–4). Cain brings a harvest from the fields; Abel offers animal sacrifice. But the deeper difference is that Cain brings his offering "in the course of time" and Abel brings "firstlings." There's a sense that Cain waits until his whole harvest is in and brings what is left over once he has enough, but Abel offers a sacrifice as soon as there is anything that can be offered. Abel gives his best; Cain gives his leftovers. God accepts Abel's sacrifice because he offers it with the right intention/inner disposition, but God does not accept Cain's sacrifice because his attitude about sacrifice was wrong—he did not "do well" (see Genesis 4:7).

Read Psalm 51:10, 17. What does David's prayer reveal about the relationship between inner disposition and an acceptable act of worship?

An act of worship is only acceptable to God if it flows from the right attitude. Our heart has to be in the right place in order to offer a good sacrifice to God. The outward act of worship is important, but the inner disposition is even more important. This is why David asks God to give him "a clean heart" and a "new and right spirit" (Psalm 51:10).



DAY 2 – KOINONIA IN CHRIST'S SUFFERING

Participants will explore the connection between Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and our own call to offer sacrifice.

Look up the following verses. What are we called to as disciples of Christ?

Colossians 1:24—*To rejoice in our suffering for the sake of Christ's Body, the Church.*

2 Timothy 2:3—*As a soldier of Christ, to share in his suffering.*

1 Peter 2:21—*To follow Christ's example and be willing to suffer.*

What have you been called to give up in order to gain Christ? What do you feel you have gained in return?

Everyone has been called to give up sin, pride, bad habits, etc., in order to follow Christ. In addition, many people have given up relationships, jobs, comfort, etc., to do so. Ultimately we all give up the "right" to have the final say in our life and to pursue our own interests/desires above all else. Sometimes it might feel

like we've only gained struggle and hardship—following Christ isn't always easy. Sometimes we receive consolations and we get an emotional sense of the spiritual gifts we have gained—peace, joy, comfort, etc. When things are difficult, it requires an act of faith to recognize that the apparent riches of this world are nothing in comparison with the promise of eternal life in Christ—we have truly gained everything, but we need the eyes of faith to see it.



DAY 3 – LECTIO: THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Participants will pray through Isaiah 49:1–7 and reflect on how our participation in Christ's suffering allows us to also participate in his fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering servant of the Lord.

LECTIO

What things does God do for the servant?

God calls the servant from his mother's womb, names him, makes his mouth like a sword/makes him like an arrow (gives him words/a message), hides him in his hand/quiver (protects him), and appoints him to be his servant. God makes him not just a servant to deliver a message to Israel, but he makes him a light to the nations.

What is the servant's lament?

He says that he has labored in vain—he has not accomplished what God called him to do.

What does the servant say immediately following this lament?

He affirms that his right and recompense are with God. Although he feels like a failure, he keeps his trust in the Lord.

MEDITATIO

How do the actions of the Lord show his personal involvement in the life of the servant? How does God show his personal involvement in your life?

God shows his interest and his active involvement in every aspect of the servant's life from the moment of his conception—he calls, names, strengthens, etc. He has a mission picked out for the servant, and from the very beginning he equips him to do it. And then he continues to encourage and console the servant when that mission is difficult. Participants might respond that in their lives God speaks to them in Scripture, offers his grace and consolation in the sacraments, and strengthens them for their vocations. Sometimes it takes extra effort on our part to recognize these things—it is easy to forget that we have a mission from God (in our work, family, etc.), or that we have been particularly equipped to fulfill this mission and we're not just doing it on our own power.

Pope St. John Paul II said that Jesus's fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of the servant reveals "the royal dignity of service, the dignity which is joined in the closest possible way to the vocation of every person."

How is God calling you to live out this vocation of royal service?

It's easy to be selfish and just want to look after ourselves, but God has given us people to take care of. He has entrusted our families (friends/co-workers/students/etc.) to us, and we are to be a light to them and serve them. In our families it means sacrificing our own desires and interests to care for and encourage others. At work it might mean sacrificing our comfort or pride. We have to live out this vocation in humility—putting others first.

Even when he is discouraged, the servant expresses great trust in the Lord. Do you ever feel that you “have labored in vain”? What can you do to let God be your strength?

It’s easy to become discouraged—whether in things of this world or in spiritual matters. Our kids might not make the decisions we want them to. Our efforts at evangelization might seem to fall on deaf ears. Our humility in putting others first might go totally unnoticed by those around us. Our attempts to grow in virtue and holiness might result in much slower spiritual growth than expected. Above all, we need to remember that we don’t do any of these things on our own strength—all is by the grace of God. A prayer as simple as “Jesus, I trust in you” or “All for the greater glory of God” can help us in mind that God is the one who calls, strengthens, and receives the glory, not us. We can ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen and console us, and then look for the answer to that prayer in unexpected ways, not just the way we want him to answer our prayers. We can memorize an encouraging passage from Scripture or a quote from a saint to hold onto when we are feeling discouraged.



DAY 4 – GOD AT WORK IN YOU

Participants will study what Paul means by “work out your salvation” and will take a closer look at the Catholic understanding of good works and salvation.

Consider the weight of the responsibility God has allowed us to bear: because of the reality of free will, our choices truly have eternal significance. What kinds of things do you do to “work out” your own salvation? Why do you think Paul tells us to do this with “fear and trembling”?

Our free will is an amazing gift that gives us an incredible responsibility. We really get to choose whether or not we’re going to accept God’s gift of grace. Working out our salvation means accepting and cooperating with the grace that God offers. This includes making frequent use of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Confession, drawing closer to God in prayer, working to grow in virtue, etc. It means rejecting anything that is not of God—to work out our salvation our lives should show visible evidence of God’s grace at work in us. We do this with fear and trembling because it is the most important work we will ever do—our cooperation determines whether we spend eternity in Heaven or Hell. According to St. Augustine, Paul adds “with fear and trembling” to help us remember that our good works are not our own—they come from God’s grace (St. Augustine, On Grace and Free Will, 21). Additionally, while there is a right fear of God, the omnipotent Creator of all, and this fear is the beginning of wisdom (see Proverbs 9:10), it is good to remember that as a result of our Baptism into the covenant family of God that fear is not the fear of a servant toward a tyrannical master, but rather the reverential fear of a son or daughter who loves their Father and desires to please him.

Read Hebrews 10:23–25. Who stirs you up to love and good works? Who in your life needs your encouragement in this way?

This is one of the marks of true friendship, like the friendship that Timothy and Epaphroditus exemplify. Parents, friends, teachers, and priests should all spur us on to good works and encourage us to grow in love. Spouses have a particular responsibility to do this for each, as well as parents for children. We should try to do this for everyone we encounter but in particular for those who are closest to us.



DAY 5 – TRUTH AND BEAUTY

Participants will reflect on Christ Carrying the Cross by Titian, c. 1565, Prado Museum, Madrid

Look up the following verses. How do they describe the encounter with Simon of Cyrene?

Matthew 27:32—“They came upon a man of Cyre’ne, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross.”

Mark 15:20–22—“They compelled a passer-by, Simon of Cyre’ne, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.”

Luke 23:26—“They seized one Simon of Cyre’ne, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.”

NOTES

PHILIPPIANS

LIFE IN CHRIST

LEADER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

SESSION 6



LECTIO™

UNVEILING SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

TIM GRAY

Nihil Obstat: Currently Under Review

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

Copyright © 2017 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Ashley Crane, Kris Gray, Cathy Loh

Media: Steve Flanigan, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, Ted Mast, Jon Ervin, Matthew Krekeler

Print Production/Graphic Design: Jeff Cole, Brenda Kraft, Jane Myers, Christina Gray, Ann Diaz, Julia DeLapp

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

www.augustineinstitute.org/programs

(866) 767-3155

augustineinstitute.org/lectio

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9982041-4-7

SESSION 6

ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

SESSION OVERVIEW

Read this overview in advance to familiarize yourself with the session.

In the previous session, we discussed how St. Paul, following his great hymn to Christ, pointed to Timothy and Epaphroditus as leaders who, like himself, set the example on how to model the life of Christ. This modeling requires us to live in *kenosis*, to forego our own will and to desire and accept God's will in all things, making a sacrificial offering of our lives to God, so that we are able to say with Paul, "For to me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21).

This session begins as Dr. Gray explains the concept of *typos*, to mark out or model. Having given the models of Timothy, Epaphroditus, and himself, Paul now calls on and encourages the Philippians to live in imitation of these models—to choose between being models or enemies of the Cross of Christ. Paul makes clear that as citizens of Heaven, there is but one choice and that the reward is wonderful: Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, "will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body."

We are reminded that living the Christian life—successfully imitating Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and all the saints that the Church sets before us—requires practicing the virtues, including humility, patience, forbearance, gratitude, and thanksgiving. Another key to successfully living in this world and being a true witness to Christ is fixing our minds on the good things of God's creation, no matter our circumstances. St. Paul reminds the Philippians that whatever they offer to Christ and his Church—their time, money, talents, sacrifices, etc.—is a pleasing sacrifice offered to God, and Paul prays that God will bless them with his grace and gifts in return.

The session ends with a recapitulation of the major themes of Paul's letter, including citizenship, the call to build the Kingdom of God here on earth by living well in the pagan culture, and the foundation of joy as a litmus test of the Christian life.



CONNECT

*Begin this session by leading the **Opening Prayer**, and then read or summarize the Introduction for your group. Both can be found in the Study Guide on page 85.*

*Then briefly review the last session with your group. Can anyone recite the **Memory Verse** (Philippians 3:7–8) without assistance? Otherwise, look it up (page 72) and recite it as a group. Discuss highlights and any questions participants may have from the last session's **COMMIT** reflections before moving on to the following questions.*

Do you have a personal hero or someone you look up to? Why do you admire that person? How do you show your admiration?

Participants may share stories about people they admire and who have influenced them. We most often admire a hero because of the virtues they live (courage, generosity, service, etc.) and/or because of the difference they have made in our lives.

What are you most grateful for in your life? How do you thank God for these gifts?

Participants may share about material, emotional, or spiritual gifts in their lives. It is important to remember that all good things come from God and to maintain an attitude of thanksgiving about the good things that God has given each of us. We may thank God in prayer, by having a Mass said, by returning generosity to or helping others, etc.

Think of a time when you or someone close to you may have experienced great peace and joy in the midst of suffering. How were you or they able to maintain that peace and joy?

Responses may include sickness, death or disability of a family member, loss of a job or home, or some other significant loss or struggle. Peace and joy can be found by clinging to God through personal prayer and intercessory prayer, the sacraments, the Mass, and the grace to accept and trust God's will in our lives. We are reminded that peace and joy don't negate all other emotions, rather they transcend them. As Peter Kreeft has noted, "No one who ever said to God, Thy will be done, and meant it with his heart, ever failed to find joy—not just in heaven, or even down the road in the future in this world, but in this world at that very moment."



Play the video segment, which will last for about 27 minutes. Encourage participants to follow along with the outline in their Study Guides and take notes as key points are made during the video teachings. Then lead the discussion using the questions below.



DISCUSS

Following each question are possible responses and comments to guide you in the group conversation.

1. What was one thing you heard for the first time or that was an “aha” moment or a challenge for you?

Some may find St. Paul's call to the Philippians to model the life of Christ in their daily lives a new, or renewed, call in their own life. Some may have found Dr. Gray's explanation of how our veneration of the saints is modelled after this pedagogical approach of modeling a new concept. Others may find new the concept of kenosis and humility modeled by Jesus as being the means by which God will raise us up. Or some may not have heard of Paul's Eucharistic spirituality before and that the Christian mindset of thankfulness is key to finding peace. Still others may find the concept of abandonment to the Divine Will as the source of joy in their lives a new and challenging concept.

2. Dr. Gray described “not seeking self” as the litmus test of whether the life of Christ is being modeled in one's life. What might this look like in the life of different people (business man/woman, parent, friend, student, etc.)? How have you passed or failed this litmus test lately in your life?

In business or as a student it may mean doing your best at your work, not speaking ill of others to get ahead, not cheating or stealing others work, honesty in all your dealings. In parenting and friendship it may mean patience with others faults, kind words, words of forgiveness, and joyfulness in our words and tone of voice. Many times we fall short in this litmus test, but if we are humble and seek forgiveness and God's renewed grace we will grow in virtue to better model our Lord.

3. Share something you have encountered recently that was “true, or honorable, or just, or pure, or lovely, or gracious, or excellent, or worthy of praise” (see Philippians 4:8). How did this encourage your life in Christ? *Examples may be a work of art, a music concert (professional, or given by a child), a kind word spoken to us, a shared meal with friends, hard work on a job, a beautiful sunset, etc. Each of these remind us of the good, the true, and the beautiful, of which God is the ultimate Good, Truth, and Beauty, which he shows forth in all his creation, and to which he calls us to in imitating his Son.*

4. How does abandonment to God’s will help us experience true joy in our lives?

As Christians, we are called to be light to the world, and that light shines brighter the greater our joy. The closer we are to Christ, the more joyful we are. In order to be close to Christ, we must follow and imitate him. Christ set the example by doing the Father’s will (John 6:38), and so must we in conformity to him. The more we are abandoned to the will of the Father, the closer we are to Christ and the more joyful we will be.

*Direct participants to this session’s **Memory Verse** in their Study Guides, and read it together. Then lead the **Closing Prayer**. Encourage participants to do the **COMMIT** reflections on their own before you meet again as a group.*



COMMIT

Following are possible responses to the questions participants will be asked in their daily COMMIT reflections.

DAY 1 – IMITATION

Participants will consider the Greek ideal of mimesis or imitation as the pedagogical key to education and its application to Christian life today.

In his various letters, Paul often encourages the faithful to imitate him and his companions. Look up the following Scriptures. What does Paul call us to imitate?

1 Corinthians 4:9–17—*Paul shows the perseverance and forbearance that he and the other Apostles have in spite of their trials and hardships.*

Philippians 3:17—*Having described Christ’s self-offering, and shown himself, Timothy, and Epaphroditus as examples of disciples who model the life of Christ, Paul now calls on the Philippians (and us) to model the life of Christ in their own lives, reinforcing that discipleship demands that we live cruciform lives.*

1 Thessalonians 2:9–14—*Here Paul not only recalls his labors and those of his traveling companions, but he affirms that the Thessalonians have themselves become imitators, willing to suffer for others.*

Do you have a favorite saint? If so, why did you choose this particular saint? If not, consult a resource such as Butler’s *Lives of the Saints* or look up saints online to help you identify a saint who can be an additional model for you of how to more faithfully live out the life of Christ. End today’s reflection by praying to this saint for their intercession.

Some people may select their patron saint for whom they are named, or the saint they took at their Confirmation. Others may choose a saint who is venerated for a particular cause like St. Francis for his love of creation or St. Vincent de Paul or St. Teresa of Calcutta for their concern for the poor and/or dying. Other saints may be chosen for a particular virtue or charism such as St. Faustina for mercy

or Pope St. John Paul II also for mercy or for his patient endurance in suffering. It is very helpful to have a saint whose example we can follow and on whose intercession we can rely for assistance in spiritual growth.



DAY 2 – FRIENDS OF THE CROSS

Participants will discover the way to suffer well by considering St. Louis de Montfort's "Letter to the Friends of the Cross."

Take some time today to thank God for the crosses he has allowed you to carry. Write down some ways that you can be a better "Friend of the Cross."

All of us have our crosses to carry, and *The Fourteen Rules* offer guidelines for helping us in suffering well. By focusing on one or two of the rules at a time, we can be encouraged on our spiritual path to growth in holiness.



DAY 3 – LECTIO: THINK ON THESE THINGS

Participants will learn how to have the mind of Christ by filling their minds with all that is good or virtuous.

LECTIO

What six adjectives follow Paul's words "whatever is...?"

True, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious.

What two nouns follow "if there is...?"

Any excellence and anything worthy of praise.

What does Paul ask of the Philippians?

He asks them to "think" about these things.

MEDITATIO

Read the creation account in Genesis 1. What adjective does God apply to what he has created each day?

Why is it important to remember this about God's creation?

God's creation is good, beautiful. Contemplation of what is good, true, and beautiful directs us to God, who is the true Good, Truth, and Beauty, and it encourages us to develop virtue which in turn disposes us to do the good.

Why does Paul want the Philippians, and us, to think about the good? For what purpose?

Paul knows that there is a close connection between contemplation and conduct—contemplation increases in us the desire for what is contemplated. Paul wants our contemplation to lead to conduct which is worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as disciples of Christ and citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

Consider how Paul's six adjectives describe Jesus Christ. Then consider how you can further develop this virtue in your own life (some examples or admonitions are provided to help get you started).

Adjective	Scripture Verse	What is the Connection to Jesus?	Living It in My Life
True	Matthew 22:16 John 1:9 John 6:32 John 8:14 John 15:1, 5	<i>Jesus is true, teaches truthfully True light that enlightens True Bread from Heaven My testimony is true True Vine</i>	John 3:21; 4:23; 7:18
Honorable	James 2:7	<i>That honorable name (Christian)</i>	1 Peter 2:12
Just	John 5:30 Acts 22:14	<i>My judgment is just Jesus is the Just one</i>	Matthew 7:12
Pure	1 John 3:3	<i>He is pure</i>	Matthew 5:8
Lovely	John 15:13	<i>No greater love than this, to lay down his life</i>	1 Corinthians 13:4-7
Gracious	Luke 4:22	<i>Gracious words proceeded from his mouth</i>	Isaiah 30:18 Psalm 116:5



DAY 4 – ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

Participants will review some of the major themes of Paul's Letter to the Philippians by closely reading Chapter 4.

Looking at verse 1 and recalling Paul's appeal in verse 1:27, what does Paul want the Philippians to do? How are they to accomplish this? Why do you think that Paul begins his final exhortation with this reminder?

To stand firm by emulating Christ. Paul loves the Philippians and exhorts them to endure their tribulations and remain a strong Christian community united in Christ, because there is a heavenly citizenship that awaits them where they will receive a glorious body (see Philippians 3:20–21) if they are faithful.

Next, in verses 2–3, Paul addresses two specific women, calling them to resolve their differences. How does Paul appeal to the theme of partnership first mentioned in 1:5?

Paul calls on those who consider themselves a “true co-worker” to help these women resolve their dispute. These two women have “labored with” Paul and are thus co-workers and partners with him, and Paul does not want division in the house of the Lord.

Paul repeats the key word “rejoice” in verse 4. Why is this concept so important for the Philippians to understand (see also 1:19)?

Paul wants the Philippians to understand that joy in the Lord comes from the Holy Spirit, and it can sustain them even through their trials and tribulations. Joy is the litmus test of their Christian life.

How can they allay any anxiety about their circumstances? What does Paul remind them is the fruit of prayer?

Paul reminds these Christians to turn to God in prayer and, with gratitude and thanksgiving, place all their requests before him. In turn, God's incredible peace will sustain and protect them. When we pray and turn to God, asking for his direction, we can be assured that he will lead us. This ongoing, continual dialogue with God brings peace as we are directed in his will.

In the following verse 9, Paul reminds them of a further means of experiencing God's peace in their lives. What does Paul remind them to do?

To follow and emulate Paul's teaching given by action and by word. Here Paul repeats the theme of imitating models of the life of Christ. If we are praying (so that we know God's will) and doing (acting upon God's will), God's peace is always with us.

To what or whom does Paul attribute this ability to remain detached from physical comfort and consolation? See verse 13.

Paul's secret for success in all circumstances is to rely on the strength he receives from the Lord by abandoning his own will to God's will for his life. Joy, as with peace above, are fruits of living in God's will.

Paul is grateful to the Philippians for their care and support. What underlying truth does Dr. Gray explain in the video as the basis for their support? See verses 14–15.

Here Paul reprises the theme of partnership or koinonia to underscore the mutual commitment of Paul and the churches he has planted. They are a partnership in Christ, connected and mutually dependent on one another in Christ.

In what terms does Paul describe the gift the Philippians sent to him via Epaphroditus? And how does he "hope" God will respond to their generosity.

Paul speaks of the gift in terms of worship, as a "fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God" (verse 18). And God will be even more generous to them fulfilling all of their needs through Christ Jesus.



DAY 5 – TRUTH AND BEAUTY

Participants will reflect on The Christian Martyrs Last Prayer, by Jean-Léon Gérôme, c. 1863–1883, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore.

What model did Jesus give to follow when he was in similar situations?

Matthew 26:36–39—When Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane and knows the fate that awaits him, he prays to God for deliverance, but he also entrusts himself to the Father's will.

Luke 23:33–37—When Jesus is on the Cross, he is jeered at, reviled, mocked by all those around him, yet he offers himself up, even asking the Father to forgive those who have crucified him.