

PROVISION: GIVING AND RECEIVING

Philippians 4:15-20

CHUCK DECLEENE

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The questions below are designed to be used by Saylorville Church Cell Groups as they meet during the week following the Sunday morning message at Saylorville. The intent is not for groups to answer every question, but for leaders to use the questions as a guide as they tailor the discussion to the unique needs of their group. The Sunday message and these questions can be found each week at www.saylorvillechurch.com/sermons.

CONNECT WITH YOUR GROUP (10-15 MINUTES)

- Rate your own contentment on the following scale:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

(Completely Discontent)

(Sometimes Discontent)

(Sometimes Content)

(Completely Content)

- John MacArthur said, "Those who live for themselves will never be content. Only those who unselfishly put others' well-being before their own will find contentment." Based on this quote, what could you do to raise your contentment level this week?

APPLY THE BIBLE (45-60 MINUTES)

- **Remember** what you talked about last time. Is there anything you need to **follow up** on this week?
 - **Review** the notes you took on Sunday. What is **one thing** that sticks out to you about what you heard?
 - **Read** Philippians 4:15-20. In his message, Pastor Chuck reminded us of **three keys to contentment**.
1. **God's work of grace in the lives of both the giver and the receiver yields a beautiful sacrifice, a sweet smelling fragrance to God (Philippians 4:15-18)**
 - a. The Church at Philippi gave to Paul immediately and generously (see also 2 Corinthians 8:1-4). What are some reasons the Philippians may have been compelled to give in this way?
 - b. Paul recognizes that their gift was an eternal investment. Generosity understands that God owns everything, so we can invest for eternity what He has given us temporarily. If this is true, how can your Cell Group be more generous this semester?
 2. **God's plan in the area of provision: the givers are partners in the work of the ministry (Philippians 4:17)**
 - a. Read the short article on the next page. The theme of "partnership" runs through the book of Philippians (1:5; 1:7; 4:14; 4:15; etc.).
 - b. In what ways are you truly partnering with others in the work of the ministry?
 3. **God delights to meet the needs of those who provide for others (Philippians 4:19)**
 - a. Read verse 19 again. How has this verse been taken out of context, misapplied, or misunderstood?
 - b. Now that you know more about this passage, how does your perspective on this verse change?
 - c. What will you do differently based on what you've learned this week?

Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to direct your giving so that you might gain eternal rewards?

PRAY TOGETHER (5-15 MINUTES)

- As a group, pray that you might be content by finding joy in the grace of giving generously.

MEMORIZE FOR NEXT TIME

- *Philippians 4:19* - "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."



WHAT IS A “PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL?”

Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi is, among other things, a letter that celebrates partnership. Here are some introductory observations about this theme.

Paul remembers the believers in Philippi. It seems he thinks of these Philippian believers often, evidenced by the phrase, “always in every prayer of mine for you all.” We learn from Paul that a healthy partnership is a heart-to-heart connection which deeply affects what we think about. Partnership is not just a passing experience, devoid of long-lasting impact on our lives. A healthy partnership has “relational staying power.” This encourages us to define partnership not only by what is accomplished (although that is important), but more significantly by relationship—the people we come to know and love and work with toward a common vision.

Paul prays for the believers in Philippi—a lot! In any ministry partnership, one evidence of health is the quality and quantity of prayer. Paul indicates that he prays for the Philippian church all the time; he is thinking about them and cannot help himself. It seems he prays for them night and day. This adds a cosmic dimension to the relational depth between him and the Philippian believers. This is way beyond just human friendship. This is a human relationship, a community, a fellowship which has its origin and life in the divine. Paul prays for them, and, according to verse 19 of chapter 1, they also pray for Paul: “for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance.” Prayer keeps the relationship alive, active, full of the energy of the Holy Spirit, even though they are geographically distant.

Paul’s affection is joy. Paul describes his prayer for them as “my prayer with joy.” It is no surprise that he remembers them: there likely is great joy in his memories. Paul writes from prison in Rome, so the sweet memories of the saints in Philippi is a source of encouragement to him. A healthy partnership has positive feelings: joy, affection, hope. An unhealthy partnership has feelings of neutrality (neither hot nor cold), disappointment, distrust.

Paul’s partnership has divine purpose—“the gospel.” This is a “partnership in the gospel.” The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. The gospel carries with it the divine expectation of God, namely, that the blessing of salvation in Jesus Christ will be extended by his church to all nations, all peoples, everywhere. The gospel is not just a set of beliefs or doctrines, it is so much more than that. The gospel is a dynamic, global, divine mission and blessing—rooted in the Person of Jesus Christ—and extended through his body, the church—to all peoples. Paul identifies himself in Romans 1:1 as “a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.” The gospel of God is thoroughly infused with mission; Paul is sent on mission as an apostle; Paul’s life gives testimony to the fact that the gospel requires enormous sacrifice, adventurous journeys, and suffering.

I can now ask myself: To what extent am I remembering the brothers and sisters in Christ for whom I am advocating, and with whom I am partnering? Do I pray for them like Paul did—“in every prayer of mine for you all”? Can I add to or deepen my prayers for the saints with whom I am partnering? Is there joy in my memory of the ones in distant lands for whom I serve as an advocate; can that joy be enhanced or rekindled through my prayer for them? Do I fully embrace Christ’s divine expectation? Am I wholly committed to this mission of blessing and this blessing of mission—through cross-cultural partnership?