**The Filter You Can’t Live Without**

Philippians 1:27-2:18

Small Group Discussion Guide

**OPENING QUESTION** (get everyone involved in discussion):

* Does you workplace have a mission statement or other motto by which every decision or action is evaluated? If so, what is it? If you are not in a workplace, you can answer about one where you have worked in the past or would like to work.

**TRANSITION:** We’re in the middle of a sermon **series** called, “Stripped Away.” If we could reduce our lives down to the core of what makes us tick, and what we can rely on when all the superfluous disappears, what would be left? This week we’re thinking about *the one, defining principle that will guide your life to the best output possible*.

Think of some of the decisions you have made in the last year, big or small. What was the guiding filter that you used to help make those decisions?

**READ PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30**

* The Greek verb translated “Conduct yourselves” literally means, “**Live as citizens**…” Paul is reminding them that they have citizenship in two places.
	+ Do you experience tension within yourself living as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven and living as citizens of a particular earthly place? How so?
	+ Before reading further, what do you think it means to live “in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”?
	+ In the rest of vv. 27-30, what are the results of living with the gospel central to your life (see if you can summarize each result in a one or two word statement)?
	+ What is your initial reaction upon seeing all these results or rewards of living with the gospel central to your life?

**READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4**

* In v. 1, Paul names several of the benefits that we can receive through the gospel of Jesus. Which of these benefits has been especially meaningful in your life? Are any of them especially meaningful right now?
* Having received these benefits, what ought they to produce in our lives, according to vv. 2-4?
	+ Have seen this play out in your life, such that what you have received in Christ has produced a similar output? If so, describe. If not or not completely, please describe as well.
* Read the following verses, which reinforce this theme of how output springs from input. How do they shed further light on this principle? 1 John 4:19 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.
* Think about these examples that Paul gives of living out the gospel. What do (would) each of them look like in your own life?
	+ Unity over rivalry
	+ Humility over conceit
	+ Servanthood over selfishness
* If what you have received from Christ were only judged by your actions towards others, how much would you say you’ve received from Christ thus far? Are you more living a life of unity, humility, and service or competitiveness, pride, and selfishness? Specifically…
	+ In your marriage? Your family? Your finances?
	+ How about here at TVC? Do we tend to think more about our own interests or those of others?
	+ How do you think these principles apply to current issues in our church, if you are aware of any?

**READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11**

* In these verses Paul provides the role model for living a life worthy of the gospel.
	+ What do you learn about Christ in this passage? Anything new?
	+ What reaction do these verses produce in you?
	+ What reaction do you have in knowing the final outcome of humankind – that everyone, whether friend or foe, will acknowledge Jesus’ glory and authority?
	+ In reading this, does this affect your motivation to live a worthy life? How so?
	+ What further did you learn from Jesus’ example that will help you re-enact the gospel in your relationships with others?

**READ PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18**

* Verse 12 begins with “therefore.” Thus, this passage is based on the passages before it. What is your summary statement from what you learned in Phil 1:27-2:11?
* Paul says in **verse 12**: “continue to **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling.”
	+ The command is in the plural form = “Y’all” work out your salvation. What implications does the plural form have for obeying this command? How does it affect your perspective knowing that our community of faith is a **gift** from God through which we get to receive and give all that Jesus has done for us in the gospel?
	+ Paul says to “work out” your salvation not “work for” or earn it. What implications does this have for obeying this injunction?
	+ Lastly, Paul says, “for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” How does this statement affect the way we obey?
* In verse 14, Paul says “Do everything *without grumbling or arguing,*” which presupposes community and relationships. How do you think you do with this aspect of living worthy of the gospel? How about our small group?
* Finally, in verses 15-16, Paul says “Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.” *When your non-Christian friends and family think of Christians, do they think of us as bright lights who they can’t live without? If not, what do they think?*
* From this passage, how might we as a small group specifically be able to be more of a “bright light”?

What are some of the decisions you are facing today, this week, or this year? How can you practically apply the filter of the Gospel to help make those decisions?

**APPLICATION –** Pastor Josh said that unless the gospel is what gives us encouragement, comfort, tenderness, etc., we will never be able to have the kind of relationships described in this passage. How much does any of the following compete with Christ in being the source of your comfort and identity? – Success, Financial Security, Significant Relationship, Power & Competitiveness (always having to win), or Approval/People Pleasing?

**PRAYER: Share with one another some of your current needs, and pray for one another.**

* Among our prayers, let us confess ways that we are not living a life worthy of the gospel, and pray that as a community of faith we might move in that direction.
* If someone in your group particularly needs to experience God’s compassion, pray for them in that way.