

Discussion Guide

Philippians 2:1-11

1. In vs 1-2 Paul lists several things believers already share – what are they? Which of these feels most real to you right now, and which feels distant?
2. Paul says all of this should lead to being "likeminded" and "one in spirit and of one mind." Describe this like-mindedness. What do you think it would look like for our group to share this mindset? What might it produce?
3. Look at verses 3 and 4. What's the difference between "not looking to your own interests" and having no interests at all?
4. Where have you seen unity attempted through a shared enemy or shared success rather than through the kind of grace Paul describes in verses 1 to 2? What did that unity actually produce?
5. Read verses 6 and 7. Paul uses the same word, *morphe*, for both "being in very nature God" and "the very nature of a servant." Why might it matter that Jesus fully inhabited both states, rather than just visiting the second one?
6. In the ancient world, pursuing your own honor was considered a virtue, even a duty. Knowing that, why would Christ's choice in verse 7 have looked not just strange but wrong to the people reading this letter?
7. Verses 9 to 11 begin with "therefore." What is that word connecting? Does it read to you like God rewarded Jesus for a detour into humility, or like the cross itself was the moment his true nature was revealed? What difference does it make?
8. If the cross is the clearest picture we have of who God actually is, what does that change about how you picture God when you're in a season of suffering or weakness?
9. Think of a specific relationship right now, a child, a friend, a coworker, someone at church, where you have some kind of influence or standing. What would it look like to descend into their world the way verse 7 describes, not to fix them, but to be with them?
10. Paul says this kind of mindset "completes" his joy. Where have you experienced joy as a byproduct of lowering yourself for someone else, rather than as something you pursued directly?
11. What's one concrete step you could take this week to move toward someone rather than protect your own interests?