

Discussion Guide

Philippians 2:12-30

1. Read verses 6-11 again. Paul says "therefore" in verse 12, work out your salvation, in light of what Christ just did. What is the "therefore" pointing back to specifically?
2. Christ's descent in verses 6-8 moves from equality with God, to emptying himself, to servanthood, to death on a cross. Where do you see that same pattern, downward before upward, showing up in verses 12-18?
3. Verse 13 says God works in you "to will and to act." That's not just God acting on you, and it's not you acting alone either. What's the difference between those two, and what does verse 13 seem to be describing instead?
4. Think of a time you tried to change something in yourself through pure willpower, gritting your teeth and pushing through. What happened? Now think of a time you just waited passively for God to fix something in you without you doing anything. What happened there?
5. Read verses 17-18. Paul describes his own life being "poured out." What does that mean? How is it challenging for you?
6. Look at Epaphroditus in verses 25-30. He "risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me." Whose descent is he imitating, and how?
7. If Christ's pattern is downward movement toward people before any upward movement happens, is there someone in your life right now you've been waiting for to change, or to come to you, before you're willing to move toward them?
8. What would it look like this week to move toward that person or situation first, the way Christ moved first, rather than waiting for them to meet you halfway?
9. Where in your life have you been living in the active voice, trying to grind out change on your own, or in the passive voice, waiting for something to happen to you? What would it look like this week to actually receive what God is already doing and join it, rather than either of those?
10. Name one specific, small step of "working out" this week, something you can only do because of what Christ has already done, not to earn anything further from him.
11. Who is one person in your life who might notice you "shining like a star" if you followed through on that?