

Greetings in Christ to all our Small Group Leaders; please have your entire small group come together to serve at day in the park on October 7. Pick a time slot to be there and let me know how many and when I can expect you if you haven't already signed up.

May God bless you as you begin to lead your group through the 5:1 Transformation time. Be sure to check out Tim's blog about S.O.A.P. on the web at www.evcsj.com and encourage your people to weekly be engaged in the daily reading and journaling study plan. When you meet during the first week of October, you will discuss the first weeks study guide found on pages 13 & 14. I encourage you to ask the members of your home group to share how God has spoken through His word and how S.O.A.P. journaling has helped them this week.

This weeks study will be focused on the memory verse John 15:5 and Philippians 2:1-11.

¹If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

⁷but made himself nothing,

taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

⁸And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

and became obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

Discussion Questions:

1. What primary character trait is found in Christ that we need to imitate?

In Philippians 2 we learned that we are to be **humble**. That we should take on the attitude of a **servant**. We should see others as valued by God and more important than ourselves. The needs of others should take priority in our lives. Jesus demonstrated this as he gave up His own life for us. Read again, John 15:13 and reflect on the love of Christ.

2. How would being more humble allow God to speak into your life?

If I can accept that I don't know all things and my ways are not the best ways, then I can begin to look for guidance. His word is to be my guide and for His ways will lead me. I understand from Tim's message, that the word of God is living and it is active, sharper than any double-edged sword. God's word is what I need but if I do not humble myself and become obedient to His word than I cannot be transformed by His Spirit.

3. How would being more humble allow God to use you for His purpose?

I think that as I humble myself before God it provides room for His love to move from my head into my heart and out through my life. I must put love into action to allow God to reveal Himself and His desires to me and to the world. In order to do this, I must become humble and accept that God and His will is more valuable than me and my will. I realize that if I humble myself His love becomes complete in me.

Today, I was speaking to Gerald Rodriguez and he mentioned how Moses was raised in a powerful position and humility was likely not part of his personal character as the young powerful prince of Egypt. So God removed him from royalty and moved him into the dessert as a shepherd where he could be humbled. Finally when Moses had become humbled by God, the Lord called him into service for His kingdom purpose and his response to God was, "**who am I**". That was exact answer God was looking for, because now Moses could be used for His purpose. The Lord answered him, "**I will be with you**" and He tells each of us that today. (Checkout Exodus chapters 2 & 3, Matthew 28:19 & 20)

4. What is the correlation of the promise from our memory verse, John 15:5, to Philippians 2:1-11?

I must remain in Christ and His word for my strength and guidance and know that Christ is with me always. If I trust in Him and His power I can do as He commands but apart from Him I can do nothing.

5. How will you remain in Christ in the coming weeks?

Remaining or abiding in Christ requires time with God and His Word. During October, allow people in your small group to hold one another accountable and encourage one another to continue practicing the presence of God.