



Unexpected Joy

A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

PURPOSE CHURCH

Facilitator Guide Part 1

By Gregg Svalstad

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SPECIAL FEATURES OF THIS STUDY:

■ WORKBOOKS

Every aspect of the 110 page workbook was designed and produced by Purpose Church for maximum effectiveness for our Life Groups. It is a guide for all three dimensions of the series: Personal study, Life Groups and Sermons.

■ VIDEOS

We produced two videos featuring Pastor Glenn, Pastor Brian and several of our other pastors and leaders to try to communicate directly and effectively with each person who participates in a Life Group. The videos are designed to be watched in your group time for the Intro Week and Week 1. These videos will prepare your group for your discussion on each of these weeks. Videos will be available using vimeo at purposechurch.com/UnexpectedJoy or if you need it you can request a DVD.

■ UNDERSTANDING PHILIPPIANS

Dr. Carl Toney has written brief Understanding Philippians sections to enrich personal study and Life Group sharing. These sections are designed to make this study more meaningful for everyone across the spectrum of Bible knowledge and experience from beginner to most advanced.

■ SOAP BIBLE STUDY METHOD

The Bible is God's Word. In Hebrews 4:12 we read.... For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword... God has given us the Bible so that our lives would be transformed by the Holy Spirit. However, when we are new to studying the Bible we can be intimidated, confused and unsure what to do. And when we have been reading and studying the Bible for a long time there are times when it can seem stale or repetitive, and no longer seems to have an impact on our daily lives. The SOAP Method is a simple but profound tool that can help each of us to read and apply God's living word to our lives.

■ INTENTIONAL LIFE GROUP BUILDING

Whether you are a new group forming for this series or a group that has been together for many years we have included elements to be intentional about growing stronger as a group through this series. The Intro Week video and discussion is designed to have your group be intentional about and committed to building your group. A Question of the Day is provided to help everyone in the group share more about themselves in a non-threatening fashion. This guide is to supplement the workbook with practical suggestions to use with your group throughout the series.

■ COMMUNITY SERVE OPPORTUNITY

One of our core values is Everyone is designed to serve. We are all called to use our unique gifts and talents and invest our time and efforts to serve to advance God's Kingdom. We are also called to reflect God's heart by being His hands to serve the poor, lonely, and marginalized from our community. Every group is challenged and encouraged to select an opportunity to serve together during this series.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THIS LIFE GROUP SERIES?

■ FULFILLING OUR MISSION

Our goals for Life Groups through this series come from our mission statement: Help people find their purpose by
connecting with God
connecting with others
and connecting others with God

People are busy. Our goal is not to form groups and get people in groups to make their lives busier. Instead our goals are directly related to these three aspects of our mission statement. This Life Group series is designed to help each person take that next step in connecting with God, connecting with others and connecting others with God.

■ LASTING LIFE IMPACT

We have tried to be very intentional about designing this series for maximum life impact. The percentages may vary slightly but most experts agree that on average we remember about:

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we write in response to what we read, hear, or see
- 70% of what we share and discuss with others
- 80% of what we experience
- 90% or what we teach others

Think about how we most often study the Bible. Most of the time we read or we hear teaching or preaching from the Bible. But with these approaches, the teacher or preacher may remember a high percentage, but we forget a very high percentage of what we have heard or read and so it has little lasting impact on our lives.

James 1:22-24 says, Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets...

We want to do more than just listen to the word preached or read the Bible and forget. Our prayer for you through this series is that the life impact will be great as you:

- Hear sermons AND write notes
- Read the Bible with notes to help you deepen your understanding AND respond in writing using the SOAP method to apply it to your life.
- Watch videos AND respond through writing and discussion
- Share and discuss what you have heard, read, and written
- Experience serving together to live out your faith
- Teach each other as you share and discuss
- And encourage, support, and challenge each other as you live out what you are reading, hearing and discussing.

■ GROWTH FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS AND LIFE GROUPS

One of our values is Growing People Change. We believe that spiritual maturity is not something we arrive at but rather throughout the whole life of every Christ follower there is always a next step in Following Jesus. This study is not designed to be basic for beginners or advanced for the spiritually mature. Rather it is designed to work for groups with people across the spectrum and to be encouraging yet challenging for all to take the next step of growth in their relationship with Jesus.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE PERSONAL STUDY

■ UNDERSTANDING PHILIPPIANS

We are excited about the addition of the Understanding Philippians sections to deepen both the personal study and the Life Group discussions. Dr. Carl Toney, an Associate Professor of New Testament at Hope International University has written these brief sections to give background information and clarification of meaning for each of the passages. The purpose of the Understanding Philippians sections are not to just give more knowledge to everyone but rather to give a deeper understanding of the passages so that the SOAP study and discussion can be more meaningful for each person and group. Remember you are the facilitator of the group not the teacher. These sections are not meant for you to teach but rather for you to facilitate discussion on them so that everyone can share the insights and understanding they gained from them.

■ THE SOAP STUDY METHOD

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." It's not enough to just read the words... you've got to learn to let the

words read you. Let them overtake you, speak to you, correct you, challenge you, comfort you, convict you, change you... And when you do you'll begin to grow and be the person God created you to be. This is the purpose of the SOAP Bible study method.

■ SOAP METHOD INTRO VIDEO

We have produced a video to introduce the SOAP study method to you and your group. You will watch the video with your group during your second meeting "Week 1" (see page 22 in workbook) but we encourage you to watch the video in advance to make sure you are familiar with the study method. Even if you or your group members have used the SOAP method previously we still encourage you to use the video for week 1 to make sure everyone gets the most out of using the method for the study.

■ USE OF THE SOAP METHOD IN YOUR GROUP TIMES

You will see instructions for each of the weeks in the Life Group section but here is how you would use it.

- Intro Week: SOAP is not introduced yet
- Week 1: Use the SOAP video to apply it to Philippians 1:1-11 together in your group time and then share how each aspect was for each of you and what God showed you through the time.
- Week 2-8: Group members use the SOAP method during their personal study and write out their responses prior to the group time. The main portion of your group discussion will be sharing these discoveries. Note: the series was designed for members to complete the SOAP study in advance and come ready to share. Some groups may find alternative plans for the SOAP study and discussion more effective for their group. See the suggestions given for Week 2 in the Life Group section.

ADAPTING THE STUDY TO FIT YOUR GROUP

This study is designed to be flexible so that no matter what type or style of group you have you can adapt it to work well for your group. Here are some ideas for adapting the series to fit your group if your group.

- 1) A brand new group formed for this series.
- 2) A rooted group staying together to form a Life Group.
- 3) An existing group continuing with no new members.
- 4) An existing group adding new members or two groups combining into one.
- 5) Any other variation of groups.

■ SCHEDULING FOR THE SERIES

As you look at the Table of Contents in the workbook you will see that the series is designed for 10 Life Group meetings and the sermon series will be 8 weeks. Scheduling is flexible and it is not necessary to be exactly in sync with the sermon schedule. But here is the schedule if you want to be in sync with the sermons.

- Intro Week (pages 9-17)--**prior** to February 4: Watch the first video together in group time. Designed to begin connecting or re-connecting group members to one another, set group expectations and commitments for the series, prepare everyone for the series and get an overview of Philippians. Assignment: Read through all four chapters of Philippians.
- Week 1 (pages 18-29)--week of February 4. Watch the second video together in group time. Designed to continue to connect or reconnect group members to one another, orient everyone to the SOAP method, and use it to study and share from the first passage. Philippians 1:1-11.
- Week 2-8--February 11-March 25.
- Community Serve Opportunity (pages 50-51) We encourage you to try to schedule your group's Serve Opportunity for the end of February or beginning of March. Begin discussing it in the early weeks so you can get a date that works for everyone in the group.
- Closing Week (pages 102-106)--after Easter. Designed to reflect and share from what God has been doing through the whole study.

■ BEFORE YOUR FIRST MEETING:

For a **rooted or existing group continuing with no new members**

Be sure to contact everyone well in advance and confirm when and where you are having your Intro Week meeting. Confirm they will be able to attend and remind everyone to bring their workbooks. You can arrange to take workbooks for your group on consignment and then collect the money.

For a **rooted or existing group adding new members or two groups combining into one**

Be sure to contact everyone all new people well in advance and confirm with all returning members when and where you are having your Intro Week meeting. Confirm they will be able to attend and remind everyone to bring their workbooks. You can arrange to take workbooks for your group on consignment and then collect the money. If you are combining with another group, make sure you meet with the facilitator or a key person from the other group in advance to talk over how to best bring the two groups together and what roles each of you will have in leading the group.

For a **new group**

The best way to fill your group is to personally recruit/invite people to the group. Be sure to contact everyone who signed up for or was assigned to your group. Contact them as far in advance as possible and confirm where you are having your Intro Week meeting. Confirm they will be able to attend and remind everyone to bring their workbooks. Also, ask if there is anyone else they would like to invite to join the group. You can arrange to take workbooks for your group on consignment and then collect the money. If you are combining with another group, make sure you meet with the facilitator or a key person from the other group in advance to talk over how to best bring the two groups together and what roles each of you will have in leading the group.

LIFE GROUP SESSION GUIDE

INTRO WEEK

■ PREPARING FOR INTRO WEEK MEETING

- Read through this guide and the first 29 pages of the workbook to familiarize yourself and give you an overview of the Intro Week and Week 1.
- Watch the Intro Week video in advance. You can access it online at purposechurch.com/UnexpectedJoy. Determine if you can use the online version for your group time or if you need a DVD and make sure you or your host are prepared for showing the video. See workbook page 13 for how the video fits in the Intro Week session.
- Here is an overview of Intro Week video:
Glenn Gunderson (Lead Pastor) and Brian Holland (Claremont Campus) open the video talking about the importance of Life groups. Then Lisa-Toney (Executive Pastor) Eric Holmstrom (Students/HSM), Adrian Pichay (JHM/Creative Director) Tina Tong (Ministry Assistant/Worship Service Programmer) discuss what makes a good Life Group and what makes for bad LifeGroup
- Be sure to have extra books for anyone who might not have gotten one
- Plan your group time using workbook pages 12-17. See the suggestions to fit your group section for customizing this session for your group.

■ CUSTOMIZING INTRO WEEK FOR YOUR GROUP (WORKBOOK PAGES 12-17)

For a rooted or existing group continuing with no new members

1. Get to know your group.

Even though you know each other, spend time on the “Get to know your group” questions to get everyone thinking and sharing about this series. Go around the circle and have everyone share to get everyone talking.

2. Read the Preface Together

Read the Preface together to prepare for everyone sharing answers to the question. Don't rush past this. Be sure to share first and model being vulnerable and brief in your sharing. This is designed to set the tone for the sharing throughout the series.

3. Watch the video.

You can introduce it with something like "even though we have been together this video will give us some good reminders about what we can celebrate about our group and what we can do to make it even stronger during this series

4. Respond to the video.

Take time to discuss what stood out from the video about what makes a good Life Group.

Identify the things that have helped you be a strong Life Group in the past.

Discuss what stood out from the video about what hinders a Life Group and then what things have hindered your group in the past.

5. Read the Covenant Agreement.

This is very important for existing groups to renew and revise your covenant for the next 10 weeks. Write out what you are committing to do and avoid.

6. Read Understanding Philippians overview

Read this together on pages 10-11 and discuss the questions to get everyone "on the same page" looking forward to studying this together.

7. Assignment. Read through all four chapters of Philippians in one sitting.

Emphasize that reading through "the whole book" sounds intimidating but it is only four brief chapters and will only take 20-30 minutes to read. Remind everyone that this was a letter written by Paul not a book with chapters and verses. Encourage them to read it with that in mind and to mark it up in the ways suggested. You will begin next week by talking about this.

8. Update contact info and roles in the group

Hosting, snacks, service projects, communication, prayer requests

Assignment:

Talk about others you might want to invite or encourage to join in next week for Week 1. Close out your group by letting everyone know they can read ahead but there is no need to because you will do the study together when you meet for week 1. You can look together at page 21 that can be used for Sermon Notes.

For an existing group adding new members or two groups combining into one:

1. Get to know your group
This time will be very important to make sure you don't have "insiders" and "outsiders" in your group. Go around the circle and have everyone share to get everyone talking. You might want to spend extra time in your first weeks having people share when and how they came to Purpose Church or the group.
2. Read the Preface Together
Read the Preface together to prepare for everyone sharing answers to the question. Don't rush past this. Be sure to share first and model being vulnerable and brief in your sharing. This is designed to set the tone for the sharing throughout the series.
3. Watch the video.
You can introduce it with something like "even though some of us have been together in a group this will be important for us all to learn together about how to be a strong group over these next 10 weeks.
4. Respond to the video.
Take time to discuss what stood out from the video about what makes a good Life Group.
Identify the things that have helped you be a strong Life Group in the past. Discuss what stood out from the video about what hinders a Life Group and then what things have hindered your group in the past.
5. Read the Covenant Agreement.
This is very important for existing groups to renew and revise your covenant for the next 10 weeks. Write out what you are committing to do and avoid.
6. Read Understanding Philipppians overview
Read this together on pages 10-11 and discuss the questions to get everyone "on the same page" looking forward to studying this together.
7. Assignment. Read through all four chapters of Philipppians in one sitting.
Emphasize that reading through "the whole book" sounds intimidating but it is only four brief chapters and will only take 20-30 minutes to read. Remind everyone that this was a letter written by Paul not a book with chapters and verses. Encourage them to read it with that in mind and to mark it up in the ways suggested. You will begin next week by talking about this.
8. Update contact info and roles in the group:
Hosting, snacks, service projects, communication, prayer requests.
Talk about others you might want to invite or encourage to join in next week for Week 1.

ASSIGNMENT:

Talk about others you might want to invite or encourage to join in next week for Week 1.

Close out your group by letting everyone know they can read ahead but there is no need to because you will do the study together when you meet for week 1. You can look together at page 21 that can be used for Sermon Notes

■ FOR A NEW GROUP

1. Get to know your group

This time will be very important to have everyone share at whatever levels they are comfortable to begin to get to know each other. Go around the circle and have everyone share to get everyone talking. You might want to spend extra time in your first weeks having people share when and how they came to purpose church or the group.

2. Read the Preface Together

Read the Preface together to prepare for everyone sharing answers to the question. Don't rush past this. Be sure to share first and model being vulnerable and brief in your sharing. This is designed to set the tone for the sharing throughout the series.

3. Watch the video.

You can introduce it with something like "even though some of us may have been in groups in the past this will be important for us all to learn together about how to build a strong group over these next 10 weeks.

4. Respond to the video.

Take time to discuss what stood out from the video about what makes a good Life Group.

Discuss what stood out from the video about what hinders a Life Group

Respond to the video.
Take time lots of time to discuss what you all learned from the video and what you desire for your group.

5. Read the Covenant Agreement.

This is very important for new groups to set expectations and make commitments to make it a safe place for everyone for the next 10 weeks. Write out what you are committing to do and avoid.

6. Read Understanding Philipians overview

Read this together on pages 10-11 and discuss the questions to get everyone "on the same page" looking forward to studying this together.

7. Assignment. Read through all four chapters of Philipians in one sitting.

Emphasize that reading through "the whole book" sounds intimidating but it is only four brief chapters and will only take 20-30 minutes to read. Remind everyone that this was a letter written by Paul not a book with chapters and verses. Encourage them to read it with that in mind and to mark it up in the ways suggested. You will begin next week by talking about this.

8. Contact Info and Group Roles

Make sure at least one person gets all the correct contact info and have people begin to take on roles for the group: Group communication, hosting, snacks, service projects, prayer requests
Talk about others you might want to invite or encourage to join in next week for Week 1.

ASSIGNMENT:

Talk about others you might want to invite or encourage to join in next week for Week 1.

Close out your group by letting everyone know they can read ahead but there is no need to because you will do the study together when you meet for week 1. You can look together at page 21 that can be used for Sermon Notes.

BETWEEN INTRO WEEK AND WEEK 1

The contact you have between meetings is just as important as your time together in your meeting. Be sure to contact both all those who missed the Intro Week and all those who were present. Encourage those who missed to go on purposechurch.com/UnexpectedJoy and watch the video to get caught up, and check in with all who were there to let them know they are valued in the group.

WEEK ONE

■ PREPARING FOR WEEK ONE MEETING

- Read through this guide and pages 18-29 of the workbook to familiarize yourself and plan for your group time.
- Watch the Week One video in advance. You can access it online at purposechurch.com/UnexpectedJoy
- Determine if you can use the online version for your group time or if you need a DVD and make sure you or your host are prepared for showing the video.
- Be sure to have extra books for anyone who might not have gotten one
- Plan your group time using workbook pages 18-29.

Here is an Overview of the week 2 video:

This video serves as an orientation to the SOAP method for personal Bible reading and application. It is useful for groups who are being introduced to the method for the first time or being reintroduced. Pastors Glenn, Brian, Lisa and Eric walk the group through practicing the SOAP method using the first passage in the Philippians study and then the group shares and discusses what they have written.

■ CUSTOMIZING WEEK ONE FOR YOUR GROUP (WORKBOOK PAGES 18-29)

For an existing group continuing with no new members

1. Question of the Day

Because your group has been together you might be tempted to skip past this. We strongly encourage you to begin your time with this question or one that you substitute to get everyone talking and engaged in the theme of the week.

Review from last week

If you have people joining you that missed the Intro Week. Take time to share together the covenant and expectations you came up with as a group.

2. Understanding Philippians

Look back at assignment #7 on page 16. Spend time sharing together what it was like to read through the whole letter and what stood out to each of you. Then turn together to page 20 and read this week's Understanding Philippians for 1:1-11 to prepare for your SOAP study. Don't take time to discuss the Understanding Philippians section now so you leave plenty of time for the SOAP study and sharing.

3. Watch the SOAP Intro Video

TAKE YOUR TIME WORKING THROUGH SOAP. When you stop to do each section encourage everyone to read through the description on the page: S-page 24, O-page 25, A-page 26, P-page 27 and ask any questions if they don't understand any parts of it. Also emphasize writing down each aspect in their workbooks to be ready to share after the video. Do not rush the sharing time after the video so that everyone gets a time to share from each aspect. As you gently encourage everyone to share, be sure that you create safe space for people to be real and say "I didn't understand" or "I had trouble with that part". Also be careful not to call on anyone to read or pray out loud until you know they are comfortable with that.

4. Prayer Requests

Turn together to page 108 and begin recording your group's requests and answers each week.

5. Assignment

Open up to page 29 and let everyone know the assignment is to take sermon notes, set aside 30 minutes during the week to read the Understanding Philippians section on page 32 and to do the SOAP study on their own and write their responses on pages 35-38 and bring that to share next week.

For New groups and existing groups adding new members or two groups combining into one

1. Question of the Day

This time will be very important throughout your first weeks together. We strongly encourage you to begin your time with this question or one that you substitute to get everyone talking and engaged in the theme of the week. Make sure you create an environment where everyone feels comfortable talking at this safe level. If you have new people this week you will want to spend extra time having people share when and how they came to purpose church or the group.

Review from last week

If you have people joining you that missed the Intro Week. Take time to share together the covenant and expectations you came up with as a group.

2. Understanding Philippians

Look back at assignment #7 on page 16. Spend time sharing together what it was like to read through the whole letter and what stood out to each of you. Then turn together to page 20 and read this week's Understanding Philippians for 1:1-11 to prepare for your SOAP study. Don't take time to discuss the Understanding Philippians section now so you leave plenty of time for the SOAP study and sharing.

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WEEKS 2-CLOSING WEEK

FACILITATOR GUIDE PART 2

See Facilitator Guide Part 2 for specific suggestions for each week.

■ COMMUNITY SERVE OPPORTUNITY

The Community Serve Opportunity is an essential component of this study for all groups. See pages 50-51. The purpose of the Serve Experience is BEING, more than doing. Choose an opportunity that will be highly relational as you serve the poor, disadvantaged or marginalized from our community. The best project for your group will be one that will be a new experience for most of your group members that will allow them to talk to, interact with, and listen to those you are serving.

Suggestions:

- Choose a project that as close to 100% of your group can participate
- Find something everyone is looking forward to.
- Serve experience options will be provided at purposechurch.com/UnexpectedJoy
- Share these options and your recommendation with your group and take a preliminary poll to see what seems the best fit for the group.
- Assign someone else to be the serve project coordinator
- Don't let the guidelines become a burden. Do something that will be fun for your group!

START PLANNING YOUR OPPORTUNITY EARLY!

TEN DOs & DON'Ts FOR FACILITATING YOUR GROUP EFFECTIVELY

1. **DON'T be afraid of silence.** Silence allows people the time to process their thoughts and feelings and to share more deeply.
2. **DON'T fall into the trap of “teaching.”** Once you fall into this trap group members become “students” and the group loses the opportunity to grow through hearing one another’s insights and stories.
3. **DON'T be satisfied with the first responses given.** Keep probing for deeper responses.
4. **DON'T allow someone to hijack or dominate the sharing or discussion.** When you do this other group members will shut down, stop participating or even stop coming to the group.
5. **DON'T allow the sharing or discussion to get side tracked.** Focus the group and the sharing back on track so that you can go deeper together.
6. **DO remember that your primary role is to listen** to group members as they respond to God’s Word and shepherd them as they take their next step of growth.
7. **DO share with authentic vulnerability** what God is revealing to you, especially when you are struggling.
8. **DO help group members move to personal application** instead of only making conceptual observations.
9. **DO wrestle with the unresolved issues of life together.** By doing this instead of just feeding “right” answers your group will experience more life impact.
10. **DO generate dialogue between the group members.** Don’t become the focal point of the group.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or needs for your group please contact us:

Chanel DeLos Reyes 909-629-5277x3031
Gregg Svalstad 909-629-5277x3050, cell 909-967-1008
(this is for facilitators use only)

Email: groups@purposechurch.com

*All videos and resource materials can be found at
PurposeChurch.com/UnexpectedJoy*

