

STUDY 6. NOTES FOR LEADERS

1. Are there areas in your life where you are a perfectionist? How does that affect you and others around you?
2. **Read Philippians 3:12-21.**
 - a. What do you think is Paul's conception of "perfection"?
 - b. When does Paul think he will reach it? (See also v. 11)
3. **See verses 13-14.**
 - a. What is it that Paul needs to forget?
 - b. Are there aspects of our past that prevent us from being the Christians we are meant to be?
 - c. Can you redefine the concept of "forgetting"?

Paul may be referring to his Jewish involvement, his mistakes as a Christian or his achievements as a Christian. The group may also raise pastoral issues such as hurts, anger, negative church experience.

4. How much of our Christianity should be spontaneous and how much should be deliberated effort? (See also 2:12).

Philippians especially stresses the discipline aspect of Christianity.

5. **See verses 11, 14, 20, 21.**
 - a. Could Paul's focus on life after death lead to the "pie in the sky" or the "layby" mentality, when we only focus on the future after-life?
 - b. What is your focus?

Remember Paul's stage of life. Refer the group back to Chapter 1:21. Life and death both have their focus.

6. **See verse 15.**

Paul seems to be having a "shot" at some people in the church. Who do you think these people are?

They are probably Jewish Christians trying to re-establish a legal faith.

7. **See verse 17.**
 - a. Paul sets himself up as a role model. Is that being arrogant?
 - b. Who has been your role model in your faith development?
 - c. Would you be game to set yourself up as a role model? In what way?

Paul was their mentor and leader. There was no written New Testament to refer to as an authority. Apostolic authority was very powerful. Most of the group will "duck" being a role model. Take the opportunity to affirm some in the group by highlighting their strengths.

8. **See verse 18.**

- a. How is it possible to be an enemy of the Cross of Christ?
- b. Are there any contemporary enemies?

The Cross and what it symbolises is the centre of our Faith. If there are substitutes (eg. dietary laws, etc.) it moves the focus from Christ to man made rules. Many contemporary Christian Sects do that.

9. Some commentaries believe that Philippians 3:2 through to Chapter 4:1 is part of a separate letter. (Change of tone, break of argument.) What do you think?

To test this, read Chapter 3:1 and go straight to Chapter 4:2. Is there a flow of argument? Others suggest that Paul may have written the letter over a period of time. Hence the change of form.

10. **See Chapter 4:1.**

- a. Why does Paul remind the early church to “stand firm”?
- b. What is it in our church or our society that causes us to become wobbly in our faith?

Paul was resisting those who seek to change the Faith. Is materialism or affluence causing us to become “flabby” in the Faith?

11. **Review all of Phil. 3:2 - 4:1.**

- a. What words does Paul use to describe the church?
- b. What words are used to describe the enemies of the church?

Use this exercise to highlight what is positive about the church.

12. What is the importance of this study for you?
OR, What do you find encouraging about this passage?