



ST PAUL'S CASTLE HILL

VISION SERIES

OCTOBER 2024

SMALL GROUP STUDIES

small groups

LIFE TOGETHER

“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-9

STUDY ONE

PREPARE - HEARTS AND MINDS

DISCUSSION STARTERS

What are 1 or 2 things you think about when making plans for the future?

What sort of things prevent us from planning into the future?

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:1-14

Understanding Seasons

1. Ecclesiastes 3:1 states, *"For everything there is a season."* What specific seasons of life have you experienced, and how did you discern what God was doing in those times?

2. How can understanding the concept of seasons help you navigate your current circumstances?

3. What season do you think St Paul's Castle Hill might be in at the moment, and why?

Appreciating God's Timing

4. In verses 2-8, the author lists various times for different activities. How does this passage challenge your perspective on timing in your life?

5. In what ways can you cultivate patience and trust in God's timing during this current season?

Recognising God's Purpose

6. Verse 11 emphasises that God has made everything beautiful in its time. Reflect on a time when you struggled to see beauty or purpose in your circumstances. How did that perspective shift, and what role did your faith play in that transformation?

Living with Eternity in Mind

7. Ecclesiastes 3:14 suggests that God's work endures forever. How does this understanding influence the way you approach your daily life and decisions?

8. In what practical ways can you seek to align your personal actions with God's eternal purposes during this season?

9. How can you play your part in the next season that God has for St Paul's in bringing God's Light in Christ to all the world?

PRAYER POINTS

Give thanks for:

- God's sustaining of St Paul's throughout a difficult season
- God's provision of people to care for and disciple
- God's provision of resources and leadership for the future

Pray for:

- The many many many people around St Paul's who do not yet know Jesus, and our part in reaching them
- Wisdom in planning for the future with the resources God has placed in our hands
- God's hand over any and all planning for the next season, that it would only be about bringing glory to His name

STUDY TWO

PRESS ON - FOR THE PRIZE

DISCUSSION STARTERS

What are you aiming to do with your life?

If you were given the chance to look back over your life, what would 'success' look like?

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:7-16

Valuing the Prize

1. In Philippians 3:7-8, Paul speaks about counting everything as loss compared to knowing Christ. What does it mean for you to consider your personal ambitions and achievements as loss to know Christ and to make him known to others?

2. How can this perspective shape your priorities and actions?

Pressing Forward

3. In verses 13-14, Paul emphasises forgetting what lies behind and straining toward what is ahead. What are some distractions or past failures that might hold you back from fully living for Christ in this world, and being a light to others for Christ?

4. How can you practically apply Paul's encouragement to press forward in your life?

Living as a Witness

5. Philippians 3:15-16 calls believers to live in a way that reflects maturity in Christ. How can your daily actions and choices serve as a witness to those who do not yet know Christ?

6. What specific steps can you take to demonstrate your commitment to the mission of reaching others?

The Role of Community

7. Reflecting on the collective mission, how does being part of a Christian community support you in pressing forward to live in the hope and joy of Christ, and to reach the lost?

8. In what ways can we work together with other brothers and sisters in Christ to enhance our collective efforts in sharing the gospel and encouraging one another in this mission?

PRAYER POINTS

Give thanks for:

- Life and hope and joy in Christ!
- The surpassing value of what we have in Christ as compared with any earthly achievements we might want to hold up
- The right status with God that has been secured for us by Christ's gracious sacrifice in our place

Pray for:

- A right perspective on the things of this world and the things to come
- Eyes to see the lost around us, and boldness and kindness enough to speak of life in Christ to them
- A movement of God's Spirit on the people of St Paul's to be a genuine light in the darkness and shelter in the storm in Christ

STUDY THREE

PLAN - UNDER GOD'S WILL

DISCUSSION STARTERS

How do you go about planning for the future, whether it is a small event, or a larger timeframe?

Share a time when your best laid plans were de-railed, and what you might have learned from this experience.

READ JAMES 4:7-17

Submitting to God

1. James 4:7 begins with the call to submit to God. What does it mean to truly submit your plans and desires to God in your life?

2. How does this correspond with 'fleeing from the devil', and what is the promise here when we do?

3. What should submitting to God and fleeing from the devil look like in your life, and in our life together as the people of St Paul's?

The Role of Humility

4. In verses 10-11, James emphasizes the importance of humility before God and others. How can humility influence your prayer life and the way you seek God's guidance?

5. Can you share an experience where humility led to a clearer understanding of God's will for you?

Planning with Prayer

6. Verses 13-15 highlight the tendency to make plans without considering God's will. How can you make prayer the foundation of your planning process?

7. What practical steps can we as a church take to ensure that our goals and aspirations align with God's purposes?

Recognising the Gift of Today

8. James 4:14 reminds us that life is a mist, here for a little while. How does this perspective affect your priorities and your dependence on God?

9. In what ways can you cultivate a greater sense of urgency and intentionality in your spiritual life and in reaching out to others?

PRAYER POINTS

Give thanks for:

- Our God who knows all our tomorrows and has us in his hands
- God's trustworthiness in our lived uncertainty of each next moment
- The promise that the evil one is defeated and will flee from us if we resist him

Pray for:

- A right perspective on the fleeting nature of our life, and wisdom to use it wisely for God's glory
- Humility in making our plans, individually and as a church, that we would submit to God's Word and his timing
- A prayerful dependant heart in all that we do

EVERY MEMBER CONNECTED

