



## **Are We There Yet: Meekness**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Invite a member of the group to lead prayer.

#### **Read Philippians 2:1-11.**

"If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

## WC ENCOUNTER GROUPS CURRICULUM

### WEEK THREE: MEEKNESS

Paul is writing from a Roman jail under a capital charge, yet he writes words of encouragement for the church at Philippi with complete joy. The Philippians would have been almost entirely Gentiles and Roman citizens - many are Italian by birth. As Roman citizens, they enjoyed special privileges and as a colony of Rome, they did not have to pay some of the same taxes as other places in the Roman empire. They were special in the eyes of the Roman Empire. Although they enjoyed special privileges, Paul wanted to remind them that there were not to think of themselves as better than others. They needed to show meekness and humility. The words that Paul writes have authority, not just through his position or calling in the church, but because he lives the words that he writes. Paul has demonstrated meekness by giving his life totally to God, and humility by not seeing himself as any greater than his brothers and sisters.

Meekness is not weakness. Meekness doesn't suggest that a person is a pushover. In Numbers 12:3 it reminds us, "The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were on the face of the earth." God used Moses to deliver the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt.

According to *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a 15th century Christian book by anonymous writer, "meekness is nothing else but a true knowing and feeling of man's self as he is." My friends, meekness is seeing ourselves in relation to the greatness of God and realizing that we are not God. We shouldn't put ourselves down or hate ourselves, but realize we are simply not God, nor are we better than others. It is through this lens that we give ourselves totally for God's purpose.

The Scripture tells us we need to have the same mind. Having the same mind doesn't mean agreeing on every theological point or every biblical interpretation. Having the same mind means having the attitude of Christ and seeing others as Jesus sees them, as children of God.

The Bible says that Jesus emptied himself, becoming like us. What do we need to empty ourselves of? The need to be right, pride, privilege, prejudice, positions, problems, or pain? How do we do it? Is it as simple as mustering enough will power? No, we cannot help ourselves. Emptying is a spiritual activity. The good news is that we have a spiritual resource - the Holy Spirit. When we co-labor with the Spirit of God to empty ourselves, we make room for God and for people. Life becomes less about serving our

own interest and more about serving God and all children of God. The Spirit of God gives us the power we need. Co-laboring with the Spirit happens when we have an active prayer life, when we spend time listening to God and looking for ways to serve the least, the lost, and the last. The Spirit of God gives us power to do the work of God. My friends, we are filled up! We are filled with the Love of God. We are filled with the Grace of God. It gives us the power to go the distance. We stop asking am I there yet? We ask, are WE there yet! Because it's not about me anymore - it's about we!

## GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Share where you've seen God at work in your life this week.

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When you hear the word meek, what comes to mind?

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Define humility in your own words.

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What are some challenges to emptying ourselves?

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Share a time when you witnessed authentic humility.

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What are some things that you need to let go of/empty yourself of in order to make more room for God, and to serve others?



# PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Please go around the group and have each person share a praise for this week and a prayer request/concern.

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## CLOSING PRAYER

Have a volunteer lead closing prayer: asking for prayer concerns and lifting up the needs of the group.

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# WC ENCOUNTER GROUPS CURRICULUM

## WEEK THREE: MEEKNESS

### FAMILY ENCOUNTER

## WEEK THREE

Supplies:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Scissors
- Paper
- Pens, pencils, or markers

## WELCOMING GOD:

Gather together, and welcome God into this time and space through the lighting of a candle. Take this moment to pause briefly and sit quietly in this light for a few moments, allowing time for everyone to relax their body, mind, and spirit for this time. In these moments, the invitation is to become aware of God's presence with and amongst you as a family.

## SHARING WITH GOD AND ONE ANOTHER:

Say: "If anything is on our minds that makes it difficult for us to focus, let's share it now and then let it go."

- Whoever leads this portion might share what is on his or her mind to model this. Give time for each person to respond. When everyone has responded that would like to, invite everyone to place their hands out and lift them up as we give these distractions to God.

OR you can invite the family to pray together as one person leads, saying the following:

"Dear Loving God, The One who knows our hearts, celebrates our victories, grieves with us during our losses, and gives us the strength to overcome our challenges. Please help us to let go of the distractions we name now, so that we can openly share with our family and may encounter you in a special way today. Our distractions are... (let there be silence here, so everyone has an opportunity to name aloud what is distracting them). In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen."

## ENCOUNTERING GOD:

Say: "This week in church, we talked about meekness. Try to remember what we heard last Sunday as we read today's Bible verses..."

- Take turns reading the Scripture or have a different family member read the Scripture each week.
- Read Philippians 2:1-11 aloud.
  - Scripture is available on front page, or feel free to read your own Bible's version.

## ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:

Say: “Paul writes about attitude in Philippians. When he says to have the same mind that was in Jesus, he invites us to a specific attitude - to share Jesus’ attitude! Paul writes that Jesus emptied himself, humbled himself, obeyed, and loved people. Then, Paul tells the Philippians that they should act like Jesus and regard others as better than themselves. In other words: the Bible invites us to think of others before ourselves. This can be so hard sometimes!”

### Discussion Questions

- What do you think it means to think of others as better than ourselves?
- What do you think it means to be humble?
- Can you think of anyone you know who really loves and serves other people?  
Can you describe that person?

Say: “Thinking of others as better than ourselves sometimes means doing kind things for others, things we might not do otherwise. As we begin the next activity, think about things you can do to show kindness to those around you.

Activity: Give each person a piece of paper and have them fold it in half. Then, have each person draw a half heart on their paper beginning at the folded edge of the paper. Each person should then cut out a heart.

Say: “Now that we all have our hearts cut out, let’s all think of one person we can do something for. Write that person’s name and what you can do for them on your heart - and then go do it! Also, keep the heart with you throughout the week as a reminder to pray for that person.”

## ENCOUNTERING GOD TOGETHER:

Say: “May we pray together as a family...”

Let us share our prayers for the world: for our country and leaders, for other countries and their leaders...

Let us share our prayers for the church, ministers, and spiritual leaders...

Let us share our prayers for our teachers, first responders, friends, and others in the community...

Let us share our prayers for our family and our own specific needs...”

If you would like to record the people for whom you pray, use the next few lines to do so:

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\*You can also record these requests in a family prayer journal if you are using one.

# ENCOUNTERING TRANSFORMATION TOGETHER:

Pray aloud together:

God, we welcomed you here and read Your Word,  
we prayed and we spent time with you,  
we rested in your love for us,  
and we did this all together.

Now, we promise to love one another and others as you love us.  
In the name of Christ. Amen.

# BLESSING ONE ANOTHER FOR OUR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WORLD:

Invite family members to bless one another using any of the examples below or their own blessings.

Examples:

- "I love you. God loves you. I pray God blesses you."
- "God loves you exactly like you are—and so do I."
- "I love the gifts God has given you and how you bless the world with them."

# DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Please answer these during your personal devotional time at the end of the day or do it as a couple or family.

Where have you seen God today? For the children, we say, "what made you happy today?"

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What broke your heart or made you sad today?

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What good thing did you do for someone else today?

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What are you thankful for today?

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