



## Discussion Guide Off Limits – Part 1 LEADER GUIDE

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*Hey leaders! This week we began a NEW sermon series called “Off Limits”. In our faith journey, we often encounter areas of our lives that remain untouched by the transformative power of God because we deem them “off limits.” Together, we’ll dive into the necessity of opening up every aspect of our lives to God’s grace and how we can invite God into every corner of our existence.*

*We added a few new features to our small group guides this week, so we hope you find them helpful and encouraging! We have tried to incorporate a few sermon quotes into the questions. You’ll also see a spiritual practice at the bottom of your guide for your group to try throughout the month. Lastly, a “recap” card is available on the group guide page that you can send to your group a day or two after you gather.*

*Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!*

**NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?**  
*Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or [discipleship@rockbridge.cc](mailto:discipleship@rockbridge.cc)*

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**“Grace is the voice that calls us to change and then gives us the power to pull it off.”**

[Max Lucado]

**LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note** *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **Passage Summary**
  - Paul’s greeting and prayers are characterized by joy and gratitude for this church. He desires for God’s grace to operate freely and fully in their lives as he looks forward to the “Day of Christ”. Paul’s heart for the Philippians—as evidenced by his prayer and God’s promise—is for them to fully mature and keep progressing in their faith. His letter shows us that grace is comprehensive in nature, moves us toward completeness, and nothing is beyond the reach of God’s grace to His people.
- **Philippians Ch. 1 Commentary & The Most Powerful Force of Transformation**
  - Use the commentary and article for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share with your group before you gather.
- **Grace Poem & Images**
  - This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

**ICEBREAKER || Leader Note** *The goal for the icebreaker is to build joy and gratitude together. If you’d prefer, you can ask this question: What are you grateful for or how have you experienced joy this week?*

If God's grace were a flavor of ice cream, what flavor would it be and why?

**BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note** *Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!*

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*“The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all his acts.  
The Lord is near all who call out to him, all who call out to him with integrity.”*

[Psalm 145:17-18]

**BIG IDEA || Leader Note** Read this aloud so your group knows what the theme of today’s discussion is.

There should be nothing in our lives that is “off limits” from the power of God’s transforming grace.

**PASSAGE || Leader Note** Have someone read the passage aloud slowly. Consider having another person read it aloud again (possibly in a different translation) or use [Dwell](#) to listen to the passage read aloud.

- Philippians 1:1-11

**DISCUSSION || Leader Note** Your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share, looking for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two REMINDERS: 1) Every question does NOT have to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit leads! 2) The answers do NOT have to be read aloud ... they are simply there for guidance!

1. What stood out to you most about the passage? What most caught your attention?
2. In the sermon we heard, *“By God’s design, grace affects everything.”* What area of your life has been difficult for you to allow God’s grace to affect? Why is that? *This is a great opportunity to go first!*
3. What does Paul mean by addressing the Philippians as “saints”? *Paul refers to the Philippians as saints to highlight their identity as set apart and consecrated to God through their faith in Christ. It emphasizes their status as believers in Jesus Christ.*
4. What does Paul express in his thanksgiving for the Philippians in v. 3-5? *Paul expresses gratitude for the Philippians’ partnership in the Gospel from the first day until the present. He remembers their participation in the Gospel mission, including their financial support and prayers.* How does expressing gratitude illustrate the nature of God’s grace?
5. How can we emulate the partnership in the Gospel that the Philippians demonstrated? *We can actively support and participate in the work of spreading the Good News, both through financial contributions and prayerful support for missionaries and ministries.*
6. What is significant about Paul’s confidence in the Philippians’ growth in v. 6? *Paul’s confidence demonstrates his trust in God’s work within them. He believes that God, who began a good work in them, will bring it to completion, emphasizing God’s faithfulness in the process of sanctification.* How have you recently demonstrated something similar about someone in your life? If you haven’t, who could you do that for this week?
7. How does the assurance of God’s ongoing work (grace) in us impact our understanding of growth in the Christian faith? *Understanding God’s ongoing work in us provides assurance and encouragement in our journey of faith, reminding us that our growth is not dependent solely on our efforts but on God’s grace and faithfulness.*
8. In the sermon we heard, *“Grace is opposed to earning, but it fuels effort.”* In what ways can we participate in the work that God is doing in us? *This is a great opportunity to go first! Answers will vary, but may include: by remaining faithful to Him, engaging in spiritual disciplines such as prayer,*

*Bible study, and fellowship, and cooperating with the Spirit's transforming work in our lives.*

9. What does it mean to have affection for others with the affection of Christ Jesus? *Having affection for others with the affection of Christ Jesus means loving others with the selfless, sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated. It involves genuine care, empathy, and compassion for others, reflecting Christ's love for humanity.* How has someone's "affection of Christ Jesus" towards you impacted your life?
10. How can we cultivate the kind of love and affection that Paul describes in v. 8? *We can cultivate this kind of love and affection by deepening our relationship with Christ through prayer, studying His Word, and abiding in His love. As we allow His love to fill and transform us, we become vessels of His love to others.*
11. How does growing in love and knowledge contribute to living a life that honors God, as Paul describes in v. 9-11? *Growing in love and knowledge enables believers to make wise and discerning choices, leading to a life that reflects the character of Christ. This ultimately brings glory to God and prepares believers for the return of Christ.*
12. What role does prayer play in the development of love and discernment? *Prayer is essential for the development of love and discernment as it allows believers to commune with God, seek His guidance, and receive the Holy Spirit's wisdom and insight. Through prayer, believers are empowered to grow in love and discernment.*
13. How can we apply Paul's prayer for the Philippians to our own lives and prayers? *We can apply Paul's prayer by praying for our own growth in love and discernment, as well as praying the same for others in our Christian community. Additionally, we can seek to live in a manner that reflects the qualities Paul prayed for, trusting in God's grace to enable us to do so.*

**STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note** *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Anything in your life that is left UNTOUCHED by God's grace will be unsafe and unsound. However, if we respond to His invitation of grace, our lives can be transformed! Based on the Holy Spirit's prompting today, *what is a step of obedience that you can take?* Here are a few areas to consider making God's amazing grace the foundation of in your life ...

- Identity
- Relationships
- Work and school
- Adversity and suffering
- Marriage, singleness, and parenting

*Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.*

**PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note** *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5-10 minutes for prayer at the end of your small group each week to pray for the focused area below.*

## Resurrection Momentum

- How will the empty tomb impact your life and actions this week? Let's pray that the *power of the resurrection* would continue to fuel us to live sent as we move beyond Easter weekend.
- It's human nature for our hearts to grow cold towards God's grace and goodness to us. Let's pray that the Holy Spirit will help us truly *treasure the goodness of God* with all of our hearts.

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE \*Optional\*** *We include a monthly spiritual practice that can be shared with your group after you gather. Our hope is for this to enhance what we're learning and discussing together, so share about your experience with the practice at the beginning of your gatherings or throughout the week!*

Centering prayer is a practice that leads one into the inner room of the soul and can usher you deeper into prayer, opening yourself up to the transforming power of God's grace more readily!

- [Centering Prayer](#) or [rockbridge.cc/centering-prayer-2](http://rockbridge.cc/centering-prayer-2)