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**"He that takes truth for his guide, and duty for his end,
may safely trust to God's providence to lead him aright."
[Blaise Pascal]**

ENGAGE & CONNECT

Share about a time when something unplanned turned into a memorable moment (i.e. ran into a friend you hadn't seen for a long time; made a wrong turn while driving and found a cool spot).

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

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

*"Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk at my side. Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure."
[Psalm 23:4, The Message]*

BIG IDEA

How do we navigate the unexpected, unplanned, and unprayed for? We actively fight unbelief and embrace the beautiful providence of God!

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION

Philippians 1:12-30

1. In the sermon we heard, *"We must confront or be alert for a spirit of unbelief."* Where in your life are you currently experiencing a spirit of unbelief? This is a good opportunity to go first!
2. In v. 12-14, Paul speaks about his imprisonment. How does he view his circumstances? What does this reveal about his perspective on suffering?
3. Providence is the way God arranges and allows things in order to achieve His purposes. What is a recent example of God's providence that you are thankful for?
4. Paul's imprisonment was not part of his plan, yet he trusted God's purpose. How can we live out this mindset when facing unexpected challenges?
5. Suffering can lead to greater boldness in faith). How have you seen or experienced suffering resulting in your spiritual growth?
6. Paul maintained joy and contentment in suffering. How can joy be cultivated even when circumstances are difficult?
7. Paul had an unwavering commitment to the gospel despite opposition. How can we stand firm in our faith, especially in a culture that may be hostile to it?

8. Paul's perspective transformed his imprisonment into an opportunity. What difficult situation in your life might God be using for His purposes? This is a good opportunity to go first!
9. Paul experienced an internal conflict between wanting to be with Christ and continuing his ministry on earth. How do you balance the desire for heaven with the responsibilities of this life?
10. We should constantly be on guard for our tendency to respond to suffering with unbelief or self-pity. How have you battled this in the past and seen God's goodness? What practical step(s) can you take to develop a mindset like Paul's during times of hardship?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE

Paul demonstrates how to embrace God's providence in unexpected and challenging circumstances. His unwavering commitment to the gospel and to see suffering as purposeful serves as a powerful example for us today. *As we add providence to our perspective and recognize that God is always working in our circumstances and in people*, here are a few questions to consider ...

- Will you choose to **look up** more than you look out?
- By faith, will you **connect** God's providences to His promises?
- How can you **relocate** your joy and **seek** a fresh sense of God daily?
- How might God be **putting you** in position for people to see the inexplicable?

PRAYER FOCUS

Trusting God's Providence in the Unexpected

- Life often brings moments that are unexpected, unplanned, and even unprayed for. In those times, it's easy to let unbelief and fear take root. As followers of Christ, we are called to actively fight unbelief and embrace the beautiful providence of God. His sovereign hand is always at work, weaving even the surprises and hardships into His perfect plan.
- Let's ask God to strengthen our trust in His providence and surrender our anxieties, knowing He is faithful and good. May we see His presence in every twist and turn, believing that nothing is beyond His loving care.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Philippians Ch. 1 Commentary](#) & [What Is Divine Providence?](#)
 - Use these for background and encouragement before your group gathers.
- [Blessed Inconvenience](#)
 - This would be a good resource to use after your group gathers.