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"To love another person is to see the peace of God."

[Victor Hugo]

ENGAGE & CONNECT

When you're considering a new friendship, what quality or characteristic is near the top of your list for someone to be your friend? What's important about that to you?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

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

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

[Proverbs 17:22]

BIG IDEA

The potential in our relationships is not set by problems, the past, or preferences ... it's set by Christ!

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION

Philippians 4:1-5

1. In v. 1, how does Paul describe the church in Philippi? What does this language reveal about his view of Christian community?
2. How does he frame the solution to the issue between Euodia and Syntyche? What is the significance of Paul urging others in the church to "help these women"?
3. In the sermon we heard, *"Our relationship to Christ resets the potential of our relationships."* How does this challenge you? What does that mean for Christian communities today?
4. How does joy in the Lord help Christ followers avoid idolatry in relationships?
5. What does "let your gentleness be evident to all" mean? Why is this a vital witness to the world?
6. Why is it important that Paul grounds all of these relational commands in the truth that "the Lord is near"?
7. Think about a current or past relational strain. How might "agreeing in the Lord" change how you engage(d) that situation?
8. What relational responses (anger, withdrawal, manipulation, etc.) do you tend to fall into? What might it look like to respond instead "in the Lord"?
9. In what relationship do you need to "put Christ back at the center"? What would taking one step toward that look like?

10. How might our small group respond when conflict arises—either within or around us—so that we reflect the spirit of this passage? What practices could we begin to cultivate “gentleness known to all” in our relationships?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE

Paul shows that [resurrection hope shapes relational reality](#). He reframes conflict through the lens of the gospel: Christ’s presence, love, and lordship reset the potential of every relationship. When joy in the Lord is our foundation, it leads to gentleness, reconciliation, and witness to a watching world. [As you consider your next step, here are two questions to reflect on:](#) 1) How am I allowing personality or the past to define the potential in relationships instead of Christ? 2) How could seeking joy in the Lord (instead of from people) better shape my relational habits?

Possible Next Steps of Faith

1. Reach out to someone you’re in conflict with or distant from and ask how you can move forward “in the Lord.” Start with prayer, and then take a small step of reconciliation.
2. Spend one week journaling or praying each morning, “Lord, help me to respond in gentleness and joy today.” Reflect at the end of the week on how your relationships were affected.

PRAYER FOCUS

**Over the next few months, we will include a short blurb about the Red Letter Challenge, along with a reflection question, so that our church family is encouraged to keep what we experienced last fall in mind.*

Red Letter REMEMBRANCE

SERVING → We are Bridge Builders who use our gifts and abilities to help others.

- How have you been using your gifts and abilities to serve our church family over the past few months?
- In what specific way do you sense God inviting you to serve those around you more consistently?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Philippians Ch. 4 Commentary](#) & [Joy In Every Circumstance](#)
 - Use these for background and encouragement before your group gathers.
- [How COVID Affected Our Relationships—and What To Do About It](#)
 - This would be a good resource to use after your group gathers.