

Scripture and Background Information for June 28-August 1

To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

Background for Philippians 3:2-8

Philippians is the epistle of joy and encouragement in the midst of adverse circumstances. In it, Paul freely expresses his fond affection for the Philippians. He lovingly urges them to center their actions and thoughts on the person, pursuit, and power of Jesus Christ. Paul also seeks to correct a problem with disunity and rivalry, urging his readers to imitate Christ in His humility and servanthood. One of Paul's methods in convincing them is by reminding them of God's grace toward them by sharing his own testimony.

In Philippians 3:2-8, Paul reminds his audience that grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ are for all people. Though Paul had every reason from an earthly standpoint to be considered worthy of the grace of Jesus, it was by grace that he was saved. Chasing after rules and regulations is not what saves us but by faith alone in Jesus Christ and what He has done for us by His death and resurrection. Our testimony, just like Paul's, has a beautiful way of telling Jesus' story.

*In verse 6, faultless or blameless refers to Paul's own legalistic understanding of his own righteousness. According to his understanding of religion, his good would have outweighed his bad. However, Jesus radically changed Paul's definition of what "religion" was supposed to be.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

August 4

James 3:13-18

August 11

2 Corinthians 13:11