

WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GROUP QUESTIONS

UNSHAKABLE - STANDING FIRM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

UNSHAKABLE

STANDING FIRM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

1. INTRODUCTIONS:

- a. Please share your name with the group.
- b. Do you personally spell the word “unshakable” or “unshakeable”? (Both are correct.)
- c. Please share one thing that intrigues you about the title of this study.

2. SCHEDULE:

- a. Please look over the schedule in the front of your notebook. Are there any questions about the schedule?
- b. If at all possible, please come a few minutes early so that you can enjoy the time in your group to the fullest extent.
- c. We'd like to honor your time, so we'll try to stick as closely to the schedule as possible. In order to help with that, Jonna (or someone) will text your leader with a 3-5 minute warning before you need to close in prayer.

3. DAILY INDIVIDUAL STUDY TIME:

- a. Please start each study time with prayer in order to invite the Lord to be part of your study time. He wants to meet with you and teach you from His word.
- b. We will have 5 days of individual study time. We recommend that you spend time in study each day rather than trying to get it in all at once so that you can get the most out of your study time. (Even if you don't get it all finished, you're still totally welcome here. Please come anyway.)
- c. Study questions with asterisks (*) will be the discussion questions for the coming week.

4. PREPARE YOUR HEART:

- a. What do you think it means to be unshakable?
- b. How do you think we become unshakable?
- c. What is one uncertainty about this world that you hope this study will help you know how to handle better?
- d. Please take a look at the titles for each week. What is one title that intrigues you, and why?
- e. As you look forward to this study over the next six weeks, what is one aspect regarding your relationship with Jesus that you hope to be unshakable (or less shakable) by the end of the study?

5. PLEASE CLOSE THIS TIME IN PRAYER.

- a. Please ask the Lord to prepare your heart for the message you're about to hear.
- b. Please ask the Lord to help you open your heart and mind to what He wants to teach you over the next several weeks.

WEEK 1
LISTENING GUIDE

UNSHAKABLE
STANDING FIRM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

UNSHAKABLE MERCY
1 TIMOTHY 1:12-17 & ACTS 9

1. God’s unshakable _____ leads to our _____. (12-15)

2. God’s unshakable _____ displays His perfection and leads to _____. (16-17)

Horizontal lines for writing.

WEEK 1
DAILY INDIVIDUAL STUDY TIME

UNSHAKABLE

STANDING FIRM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

UNSHAKABLE MERCY
1 TIMOTHY 1:12-17 & ACTS 9

DAY ONE

PRAY: Ask the Lord to guide your study this week as you learn more about His merciful character.

MEMORIZE: Write 1 Timothy 1:16 on the lines below or on a notecard to use for reference and meditation throughout this week.

STUDY: Today we'll start our study of the unshakable mercy of God by looking at the salvation of Paul, an insolent opponent of the gospel, who met the Lord Jesus in a blinding moment of forgiveness and transformation. The merciful redemption of the persecutor of the church continues to impact us today as we study the ministry of Paul and the words he was inspired to write in Scripture.

Mercy: Compassion or forgiveness, especially when it is within one's power to harm or punish

Please read Acts 9:1-20.

1. *What stands out to you or what questions do you have about this passage?

2. Based upon what you've read, how would you describe Saul? (See also Galatians 1:13-14, Philippians 3:4-7, and Acts 8:1-3)

3. In what ways is it surprising that God chose Saul to carry His name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel (v. 15)? How did God prepare Saul for this role even before His conversion?

4. *What lessons do you learn from Paul's responses to the Lord in this passage?

5. The Lord's mercy to Saul may seem unexpected, but His plans are always designed for our good and to bring glory to His name. How have you seen God's mercy revealed in unexpected ways?

As you close your study time in prayer today, share with the Lord what you have learned and how you would like to apply this to your life.

DAY TWO

PRAY: Ask the Lord to show you more about what it looks like to be merciful.

MEMORIZE: 1 Timothy 1:16. Unscramble the phrases below to write out the verse.

Jesus Christ might display that in me, his perfect patience who were to believe But I received mercy in him for eternal life. as the foremost, as an example to those for this reason,

STUDY: Paul's conversion led him to begin preaching that Jesus is the Son of God. The result is that some learned from Paul's testimony and believed in Jesus (v 25), while other disciples of Christ were afraid of him (v. 26). In Acts 9 we see the display of God's mercy, but also examples of believers who showed mercy to Paul.

Please read Acts 9:20-31.

1. First, consider Ananias back in verses 10-19.

a. What do you learn about Ananias from these verses?

b. What are some possible ways he could have responded to the Lord's request?

c. *How do you see Ananias show mercy to Paul in these verses?

2. Now, let's look at the example of Barnabas from verses 26-27. For more about Barnabas also read Acts 4:36 and Acts 11:22-26.

a. What qualities do you notice about the character of Barnabas?

b. How does Barnabas show mercy to Paul?

c. *What are some outcomes of Barnabas' attitude toward Paul?

3. What motivations should a follower of Jesus Christ have for being merciful?

4. Think of a situation where you could show mercy (be compassionate and forgiving especially when it's in your power to hurt or harm) to another person. This could be someone in your family, at work, or in the world at large. How could your merciful attitude change the situation? What are possible outcomes if you withhold mercy?

Close your study time in prayer by sharing with the Lord how you have been challenged to show mercy.

DAY THREE

PRAY: Begin your study by asking the Lord to help you learn more about Him from your study today.

MEMORIZE: Read or say 1 Timothy 1:16 out loud several times. Fill in the blanks to complete the verse:

But _____ for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, _____ might display his _____ as an _____ to those who were to believe in him for _____.

STUDY: Today we'll look more into 1 Timothy 1:12-17 where Paul records an "auto-biography" about how deeply privileged he is to have received the mercy of God and then be entrusted as a minister of the gospel. In these verses, Paul shares who he was before Christ, what Jesus did for him, and who he became as a result of this. He ends with a worshipful statement giving glory to God.

Please read 1 Timothy 1:12-17.

1. What do you learn about Paul from this passage?

2. What do you learn about God from this passage?

3. *What connections do you see between recognizing your personal sin and appreciating the mercy of God?

4. *How can understanding the mercy of God in saving you allow you to trust Him for other parts of your life as well?

5. *Spend a few moments thinking about how you have experienced the mercy of God. Following the pattern Paul used in these verses, write your story on the lines below.

a. Who I was before I met Jesus.

b. What has Jesus done for me?

c. Who am I now? How have I been changed by Jesus?

Close your time in prayer today by telling the Lord how His mercy has changed your life.

DAY FOUR

PRAY: Ask the Lord to show you more about Himself in your study today.

MEMORIZE: Review 1 Timothy 1:16. Personalize this verse to your life by completing this sentence on the lines below.

But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His...

STUDY: Paul's life was transformed by the mercy of God. In this passage we see that two of the outcomes for Paul were that he became an example for future believers in Jesus Christ and lived to exalt and glorify God.

Please read 1 Timothy 1:12-17

1. In these verses, what reasons does Paul give for the mercy of God displayed toward him?

2. Why is it significant that God's mercy covers the sin committed when we are acting ignorantly or in unbelief?

3. In verse 12, Paul says that it's the Lord who has strengthened him for service.

a. To what or to whom do you look for the strength you need to accomplish the service the Lord has called you to?

b. What can you do to increase your trust in Jesus for the strength you need?

4. What qualities of God are connected to His mercy in this passage? You could also look at Psalm 86:15 and Ephesians 2:4-5.

5. *In what ways is it significant that Paul closes this section with a prayer of praise to God?

As you close your time in prayer, spend a few minutes praising Him for the ways He has been merciful to you.

DAY FIVE

PRAY: Ask God to help you grow in appreciation for His mercy and to learn more about becoming more like Him in this way.

MEMORIZE: Review 1 Timothy 1:16 using the letters below to help you remember. Each letter is the first letter of the words of the verse.

B I R M F T R, T I M A T F, J C M D H P P A A E T T W W T B I H F E L.

STUDY: Today we'll reflect on the Damascus Road experience of Paul in Acts 9 and his testimony recorded in 1 Timothy 1:12-16. Following Paul's example, let's consider how God's mercy should continue to impact our lives today.

1. Jesus asked Paul, "Why are you persecuting me?" As you consider your own life, what question do you hear the Lord asking you at times when you are moving away from Him?

2. In 1 Timothy 1:9-10, Paul lists a variety of sins, but calls himself the "foremost of sinners." (v. 15) What does it mean to you that Paul's sin, your sin, and all those listed are covered by the merciful forgiveness of Christ?

3. *Briefly review the passages studied this week in Acts 9 and 1 Timothy. What attitudes do you see in Paul's life that you would like to increase in your own life?

4. Because of God's mercy in his life, Paul became an example to future believers in many ways. What opportunities do you have to be an example to other Christians?

5. *In Matthew 5:7 Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy." John Piper has said that "Mercy comes from mercy. Our mercy to each other comes from God's mercy to us."

a. How would you summarize these thoughts?

b. What can you do to become more aware of God's mercy to you?

Close in prayer by thanking the Lord for what He has taught you this week. Be specific as you pray about the ways you have been challenged.

WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GROUP QUESTIONS

UNSHAKABLE MERCY
1 TIMOTHY 1:12-17 & ACTS 9



UNSHAKABLE

STANDING FIRM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

1. *What impacted you from last week's message?
2. *What stands out to you or what questions do you have about this passage?
3. *What lessons do you learn from Paul's responses to the Lord in this passage?
4. *How do you see Ananias show mercy to Paul in these verses?
5. *What are some outcomes of Barnabas' attitude toward Paul?
6. *What connections do you see between recognizing your personal sin and appreciating the mercy of God?
7. *How can understanding the mercy of God in saving you allow you to trust Him for other parts of your life as well?
8. *Spend a few moments thinking about how you have experienced the mercy of God. Following the pattern Paul used in these verses, write your story on the lines below.
 - a. Who I was before I met Jesus.
 - b. What has Jesus done for me?
 - c. Who am I now? How have I been changed by Jesus?
9. *In what ways is it significant that Paul closes this section with a prayer of praise to God?
10. *Briefly review the passages studied this week in Acts 9 and 1 Timothy. What attitudes do you see in Paul's life that you would like to increase in your own life?
11. *In Matthew 5:7 Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy." John Piper has said that "Mercy comes from mercy. Our mercy to each other comes from God's mercy to us."
 - a. How would you summarize these thoughts?
 - b. What can you do to become more aware of God's mercy to you?

2. Understand God's _____ and you will be able to _____ in the thorns. (8-10)

Lined writing area consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

DEFINITION:

- a. God's blessings through Christ to people who deserve His curse ~ Jerry Bridges
- b. God's riches (poured out on us) at Christ's expense

UNDERSTAND HIS GRACE:

- Ephesians 2:8 ~ We are saved through the gift of God's grace
- Romans 5:2 ~ Because we are saved in Christ, we stand in grace
- Psalm 5:12 ~ He surrounds us with favor (grace) as with a shield
- Ephesians 2:7-8 ~ He lavishes us with grace
- Romans 6:14 ~ Grace gives us strength to overcome sin
- Hebrews 13:9 ~ Our hearts are strengthened by grace
- Hebrews 4:14-16 ~ He understands our weaknesses...He sympathizes...His grace helps us in our time of need...so we can draw near to His throne of GRACE
- Jeremiah 31:2-3 ~ Grace helps us survive the wilderness, and it's tied to His everlasting love and faithfulness
- Acts 20:32 ~ Grace builds us up and gives us our heavenly inheritance
- Romans 11:6 ~ To experience God's grace, I have to give up the notion that I have to earn it.

GRACE IS BIGGER THAN THE THORN

DAY ONE

PRAY: Please open this time in prayer, and ask the Lord to show you a new perspective about Him and your life.

MEMORIZE: Please read 2 Corinthians 12:9 out loud at least three times, emphasizing different words each time.

“But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

STUDY: Paul was a great leader in the church. He wrote most of the letters to the churches in the New Testament and accomplished amazing things for the Lord in his life on earth. In this week’s passages, Paul is modeling for the believers a life that finds all of his delight in the Lord. Please read all of 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 to understand the context of his message. Today, we will focus most of our attention on verses 1-7.

1. Please consider the point Paul was making in verses 1-6, especially his conclusion at the end of vs. 6. How would you describe him based on what he said?

2. From vs. 7, why do you think Paul’s revelations might cause him to struggle with conceit? What other things can cause us to be conceited?

3. *From vs. 7, what are Satan’s motives for Paul’s thorn? What are God’s motives?

4. *Please read Proverbs 29:23 and James 4:6, and explain how Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” was actually God’s protection.

5. *When we have thorns in our own flesh, we easily attribute our own reasons to them rather than believing God is protecting us from something else. What reasons do we sometimes attribute to God's motives?
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As you close this time in prayer, please look over your answers, and talk to the Lord about any questions you have regarding His motives for your struggles. Please tell Him how your perspective has been impacted by this passage.

DAY TWO

PRAY: Jeremiah 29:13 says, "You will search for Me and find Me when you search for Me with all of your heart." As you open this time in prayer, please ask the Lord to help you search Him for answers, even to the hard questions, so that you won't give up.

MEMORIZE: Please unscramble the following phrases of 2 Corinthians 12:9 by placing the correct order number in the space provided.

1. "My grace is sufficient for you, _____
2. may rest upon me. _____
3. of my weaknesses, _____
4. But He said to me, _____
5. all the more gladly _____
6. for My power _____
7. in weakness." _____
8. is made perfect _____
9. so that the power of Christ _____
10. Therefore, I will boast _____

STUDY: So often, when we're going through difficult times, we think God is against us or has failed us. But in actuality, God has a different answer for our struggles. Please read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. Today, our focus will be on verses 8-10 as we seek the Lord for better understanding.

1. What was Paul's request to the Lord? How did God answer?
-
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2. *The Greek word for grace means “kindness and favor.” The Greek word for sufficient means “to be enough, to be content.” Using those definitions, please explain how God’s grace can bring contentment even when the circumstances haven’t changed.

3. *If God’s kindness isn’t dependent on our circumstances, what should we look for instead of our circumstances to understand His kindness?

4. The Greek word for content in vs. 10 means “well pleased, delighted.” What would Paul have to believe about God to respond the way he did in vs. 10?

5. Please list the opposite meanings of the words in vs. 10, and explain how those opposites will not bring lasting contentment:

a. Weaknesses >>> _____

b. Insults >>> _____

c. Hardships >>> _____

d. Persecutions >>> _____

e. Calamities >>> _____

f. These opposites don’t bring lasting contentment because

Please close this time in prayer. If it’s hard to understand God’s kindness and grace in the midst of difficult circumstances, please tell the Lord about your struggle. If anything else you studied today leaves you needing more understanding, please ask the Lord to lead you to His truth.

DAY THREE

PRAY: Sometimes God has plans for us that are way beyond our finite understanding. As you open this time in prayer, please ask the Lord to give you a bigger understanding of His infinite purpose.

MEMORIZE: Please fill in the blanks to complete 2 Corinthians 12:9.

“But He _____ to me, ‘My _____ is sufficient for you, for My _____ is made perfect in _____.’ Therefore, I will _____ all the more gladly of my _____, so that the power of Christ may _____ upon me.”

STUDY: For the next two days, we’ll look at Acts 16:11-34 to understand Paul’s experience in Philippi. How did he model 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 for us? Before we can answer that, let’s get an understanding of what happened. Please read Acts 16:11-34, and answer the following questions:

1. What great victory did Paul experience in verses 11-15?

2. What did Paul and Silas do in verses 16-24, and how was that received?

3. From verses 22-25, please summarize what happened to Paul and Silas and how they handled it.

4. *How did God use Paul and Silas’s attitudes to impact what took place next?

5. *What do you see about God’s involvement in the whole experience?

Please close this time in prayer, and talk to the Lord about how you would have responded if you had been in Paul’s shoes.

DAY FOUR

PRAY: Please ask the Lord to help you see His hand in the story you're going to study today.

MEMORIZE: Please fill in the blanks to complete 2 Corinthians 12:9.

“But He _____ to me, ‘My _____ is _____ for you, for My _____ is made _____ in _____.’ Therefore, I will _____ all the more _____ of my _____, so that the _____ of _____ may _____ upon me.”

STUDY: Today we'll look a little more closely at Acts 16:16-34 to see how we can apply Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 to his circumstances. Please review Acts 16:16-34 and 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, and answer the following questions:

1. What connections can you make between these two passages (2 Corinthians 12:1-10 and Acts 16:16-34)?

2. What evidence do you see of God's sustaining grace working in Paul's life?

3. *Paul was finding his strength in the Lord rather than himself so much so that he said he delighted in his weaknesses. How do you see that displayed in this story?

4. What insight does this give you into how God is calling you to handle difficulties?

5. *What help does Paul's example give you for your own thorns?

Please close this time in prayer, and talk with the Lord about how you respond to difficult situations.

DAY FIVE

PRAY: Everything we learn from scripture loses its value if it doesn't bring us to a deeper relationship with the Lord. Talking to God is one of the hardest things we can do, especially when we can't physically see or hear Him and we don't understand His plan. The first step in being able to overcome this is to tell the Lord about your struggle. Please open this time talking to the Lord about the obstacles that sometimes prevent you from talking to Him, and ask Him to help you overcome them.

MEMORIZE: Please write 2 Corinthians 12:9 from memory.

STUDY: When Paul wrote of the thorn in his flesh, he prayed and trusted the Lord for His answers, even though he didn't get what he asked for. Paul actually got a better answer than what he hoped for. Today, we'll turn to prayer as well. Please read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, and refresh your mind with your answers from this week's daily individual study time:

1. Please list one struggle that you're having in your life right now, big or small... a possible thorn in your flesh.

2. How have you handled that situation so far?

3. How might God be using that situation to protect you from conceit?

4. *What evidence can you see of God's grace in the midst of your circumstances?

5. Looking down the road, what will you find at the end of the road if...

a. You try to handle things in your own strength?

b. You allow the Lord's grace to be your strength?

Please close this time in prayer, and talk to the Lord about each of your answers.

WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GROUP QUESTIONS

UNSHAKABLE DELIGHT
2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10 & ACTS 16



UNSHAKABLE

STANDING FIRM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

1. *What impacted you from last week's message?
2. *From vs. 7, what are Satan's motives for Paul's thorn? What are God's motives?
3. *Please read Proverbs 29:23 and James 4:6, and explain how Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was actually God's protection.
4. *When we have thorns in our own flesh, we easily attribute our own reasons to them rather than believing God is protecting us from something else. What reasons do we sometimes attribute to God's motives?
5. *The Greek word for grace means "kindness and favor." The Greek word for sufficient means "to be enough, to be content." Using those definitions, please explain how God's grace can bring contentment even when the circumstances haven't changed.
6. *If God's kindness isn't dependent on our circumstances, what should we look for instead of our circumstances to understand His kindness?
7. *How did God use Paul and Silas's attitudes to impact what took place next?
8. *What do you see about God's involvement in the whole experience?
9. *Paul was finding his strength in the Lord rather than himself so much so that he said he delighted in his weaknesses. How do you see that displayed in this story?
10. *What help does Paul's example give you for your own thorns?
11. *What evidence can you see of God's grace in the midst of your circumstances?

WEEK 3
LISTENING GUIDE

UNSHAKABLE FREEDOM
GALATIANS 2:1-21 & ACTS 15



UNSHAKABLE

STANDING FIRM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

1. Unshakable freedom is founded on the _____ of the _____. (Acts 15, Gal. 2:1-10)

2. Unshakable freedom is _____ on the _____ of Christ. (Gal. 2:11-19)

3. Unshakable freedom is _____ in unshakable _____. (Gal. 2:20-21)

DAY ONE

PRAY: Begin by asking the Lord to open your eyes to his freedom and truth as you study today.

MEMORIZE: This week we will be memorizing Galatians 2:20. Write the verse on a notecard or on the lines below and slowly and carefully read through it. From this verse, what do you learn about God that you are thankful for?

STUDY: Today we will set the stage for Galatians 2 and the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus by looking at some events in Acts 15. Most scholars agree that the events in Acts 15 and Galatians 2 describe the same situation. As you study, think about what it was like for the Jews, who had been under the law, to experience freedom in Christ. Do you think this would be an easy thing to move from living under the law to living under grace? In what ways are you tempted to live under law rather than in the grace and freedom we have in Christ?

1. Read Acts 15:1-5.

a. What were the early church leaders debating?

b. *Why was this debate important?

2. Read Acts 15:6-11.

a. What was Peter's response in this debate?

b. How can verses 10-11 help you apply the gospel to your own life?

3. Read Acts 15:12-21.

a. What was the final judgement of the leaders in Jerusalem?

b. Why do you think that some guidelines were put in place for the Gentiles? How can guidelines help us as we live by faith and grace in the Lord Jesus?

4. Read Acts 15:22-31.

a. What was the response of the Gentile believers to the council's decision?

b. *How do these events affect your own relationship with Jesus Christ and the freedom you experience in Him?

Close in prayer. Thank the Lord for the freedom that you have in Christ Jesus, and ask him to show you new ways in which you can walk and experience His freedom this week.

DAY TWO

PRAY: Confess to the Lord your need of his help to apply the truth we will look at today.

MEMORIZE: Read through Galatians 2:20. Focus on the first part of the verse, "I have been crucified with Christ." Repeat this phrase a few times and meditate on it. What in your life demonstrates that you truly have been crucified with Christ? How do you need to grow and change to make this truth a reality?

STUDY: Ray Stedman says this about Galatians, "Galatians comes to grips with the question of what real Christian life is like. The answer can be characterized by one word, "liberty." The Christian is called to liberty in Jesus Christ." The problem these Galatian believers faced was that some Judaizers were coming in and trying to tell them that they needed to add obedience to the law (specifically circumcision) to their faith for salvation. The message the Judaizers preached was the gospel and the law. In what ways might we be tempted to add to the gospel of grace in Christ? Be thinking about this question as you study today.

1. Read Galatians 2:1-5 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Why did the apostle Paul go up to Jerusalem, according to verses 1 & 2?

3. What did the “false brethren” want to do, according to verse 4?

4. What does Paul mean by “slavery” in verse 4?

5. *Though we may not encounter people advocating circumcision for salvation, there are many ways that we fall into the same trap that the Galatians fell into. Listed below are some ways that people in our day and age try to add to the gospel message. What would a law- oriented response look like and what would a gospel response be to these ideas? Fill in the chart, the first idea has been done for you.

| a. The gospel and | Law-oriented response | Gospel-oriented response |
|---|---|--|
| Sacraments, baptism, communion, etc. | These must be performed to be accepted by the Lord. | These are ways to demonstrate my love for the Lord and commitment to Him because he has unconditionally loved and accepted me in Christ. |
| Membership in a church or religious group | | |
| Doing certain spiritual activities (Bible reading, prayer, spiritual disciplines) | | |
| Following inner promptings | | |

b. *Do you find that you tend to think of life through the lens of the gospel of grace or through the lens of the law? Why do you think this way?

Close in prayer by thanking the Lord for his gospel of grace and telling him one thing about his grace that you are thankful for today.

DAY THREE

PRAY: Ask the Lord to continue to soften your heart with his truth and grace as you study today.

MEMORIZE: Continue memorizing our verse this week, Galatians 2:20. Focus on the middle section, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” Repeat this phrase a few times and meditate on it. How can your everyday life demonstrate Christ’s power? What can you do today to more fully experience Christ’s power in your life?

STUDY: Yesterday we saw that the gospel is all we need for salvation. Therefore, we must resist the temptation to add anything to it. Today we will see that the gospel is for all people! Because the gospel is for everyone, the Lord, by his powerful grace, has plans for you to minister the truth of the gospel through the testimony he is giving you as you follow after him. As you study today be thinking about where the Lord has called you and given you his grace to minister.

1. Begin by reading Galatians 2:6-10. Summarize the main thought of this passage.

2. According to verse 6, what was the response of the leaders in Jerusalem to the message that Paul had been preaching to the Gentiles? Why was this significant?

3. How were the ministries of Peter and Paul the same and how were they different according to verses 7-9?

4. *What can you learn about the message of the gospel and the varying mission fields to which different apostles were sent that could be applied to your own life?

5. Think about verse 9 and the obvious grace that Paul had been given to minister to the Gentiles.

a. *How was this powerful grace evident in Paul’s life?

- b. *How do you see the grace and power of the Lord at work in your life giving you opportunities for ministry?

Close in prayer, thanking God for the grace he has given you to walk with him and minister through his power.

DAY FOUR

PRAY: Begin by asking the Lord to show you how you can practically apply his word to your life today as you study.

MEMORIZE: Continue memorizing Galatians 2:20. Focus on the last section of the verse, “And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Repeat this phrase a few times and meditate on it. What does faith-filled living look like? What step could you take today to live a more faith-filled life?

STUDY: In his notes on Galatians, Don Anderson says, “When we get our eyes off the Lord Jesus and our one desire to please Him, and we get those eyes on people around us and our desire is to please them, we then begin to fail in making the normal progress toward spiritual growth that should be ours.” As you study today, look at your own heart in regard to people pleasing. How might your temptation to please people more than the Lord deter the message of the gospel?

1. Begin by reading Galatians 2:11-16 and summarize the main idea of these verses.

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-
2. Look at verse 12.

- a. Why did Paul confront Peter when he came to Antioch?

-
-
- b. *Why is it tempting to keep the peace (not make a scene or be disruptive) rather than take a stand for truth when the gospel is being challenged?
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-

3. Look at verse 13.

a. What did the others do when they saw Peter's behavior?

b. Who in your life might be influenced by your actions if you were to shrink back from the gospel?

4. Look at verse 14.

a. What did Paul do in response to Peter's actions?

b. *What can you learn from the stand Paul took for the gospel?

5. According to verses 15-16, how is a person justified before God? Why is this significant for all people?

Close in prayer by using the prayer below as your own
(prayer adapted from Don Anderson's *A Practical Study of Galatians*).

Lord, make me a mighty oak like the apostle Paul, one that can stand the storms and pressures of life even if it means that it is necessary to stand alone.

DAY FIVE

PRAY: Ask the Lord to meet you in power as you study his word today.

MEMORIZE: Thank the Lord for the truths that we have seen and meditated on as we have memorized Galatians 2:20 this week. Try to write the verse from memory on the lines below.

STUDY: As we close out our study looking at the freedom we have in Christ, we will see where our life in Christ comes from. We know our freedom and life can never come from the law, so where can these things be found? Be thinking about the answer to this question as you study today.

1. Read Galatians 2:17-21 and summarize the main idea of the passage.

2. Think about verses 17-19. The argument of the Judaizers, the argument that Paul wants to counter in this passage, is that if we live by faith in Christ alone without the law, people will have license to sin.

a. How does Paul counter this argument in these verses?

b. Cross reference Romans 6:1-4. How does this passage help you understand what Paul is saying here in Galatians?

3. Look at verse 20.

a. What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?

b. As a Christian who has died to self, by what power do you now live?

c. What does it mean and look like to live life by faith?

4. *Robert Morgan summarizes Galatians 2:20 as the life in Christ that is surrendered (I have died to my own desires), exchanged (I am now living through Christ's power), and trusting (I am dependent on Christ who loves me and died for me). In which of these areas do you need to grow the most and why?

5. *How does living by the law demonstrate a lack of faith in Christ?

Close in prayer. Tell the Lord how you want to grow in freedom and faith and tell him one step you will take to respond to him today.

WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GROUP QUESTIONS



UNSHAKABLE FREEDOM
GALATIANS 2:1-21 & ACTS 15

1. *What impacted you from last week’s message?
2. *Why was this debate important?
3. *How do these events affect your own relationship with Jesus Christ and the freedom you experience in Him?
4. *Though we may not encounter people advocating circumcision for salvation, there are many ways that we fall into the same trap that the Galatians fell into. Listed below are some ways that people in our day and age try to add to the gospel message. What would a law- oriented response look like and what would a gospel response be to these ideas? Fill in the chart, the first idea has been done for you.

| a. The gospel and | Law-oriented response | Gospel-oriented response |
|---|---|--|
| Sacraments, baptism, communion, etc. | These must be performed to be accepted by the Lord. | These are ways to demonstrate my love for the Lord and commitment to Him because he has unconditionally loved and accepted me in Christ. |
| Membership in a church or religious group | | |
| Doing certain spiritual activities (Bible reading, prayer, spiritual disciplines) | | |
| Following inner promptings | | |

5. *Do you find that you tend to think of life through the lens of the gospel of grace or through the lens of the law? Why do you think this way?
6. *What can you learn about the message of the gospel and the varying mission fields to which different apostles were sent that could be applied to your own life?
7. *How was this powerful grace evident in Paul’s life?
8. *How do you see the grace and power of the Lord at work in your life giving you opportunities for ministry?

9. *Why is it tempting to keep the peace (not make a scene or be disruptive) rather than take a stand for truth when the gospel is being challenged?
10. *What can you learn from the stand Paul took for the gospel?
11. *Robert Morgan summarizes Galatians 2:20 as the life in Christ that is surrendered (I have died to my own desires), exchanged (I am now living through Christ's power), and trusting (I am dependent on Christ who loves me and died for me). In which of these areas do you need to grow the most and why?
12. *How does living by the law demonstrate a lack of faith in Christ?

UNSHAKABLE PURPOSE
2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21 & ACTS 17:16-40

DAY ONE

PRAY: Please open this time in prayer. Ask the Lord to help you lay down any distractions so that you can meet wholeheartedly with Him today.

MEMORIZE: Please read our memorization verse for the week, 2 Corinthians 5:17, out loud several times, and emphasize different words each time. Please consider how the truth of this verse could impact your perspective on your life.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

STUDY: The apostle Paul’s life reflected a purpose that could not be shaken. This week, we’ll study a passage that will give us insight into why no opposition would change Paul’s mind. We’ll see if we can learn anything from his purpose that applies to our lives. Please read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 to get context of the passage. Today, we’ll focus on verses 14-17:

1. *In vs. 14, the original Greek work for “controls” means “to hold together.” Please explain how someone would respond to difficult circumstances if God’s love was holding him together. Then, explain how that person would respond if something else was holding him together.

a. Response with God’s love:

b. Response without God’s love:

2. Please compare Romans 5:8 with 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, and explain why Paul would choose to allow God’s love to be what holds him together.

3. Vs. 16 says we regard no one according to the flesh, which means “according to the world’s standards.”

a. *According to Ephesians 2:1-5, how does the world’s view of man differ from the Lord’s view?

b. How would Jesus' sacrifice affect how we see people, including Him?

4. In vs. 17, what is the "therefore" there for?

5. Some people accuse God of being distant, uncaring, critical, or angry. How would you use 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 to refute those accusations?

Please close this time in prayer, telling the Lord any obstacles that keep you from allowing His love to be what holds you together. Talk to Him about what you see in Him that makes it worth it to let His love hold you together.

DAY TWO

PRAY: As you open this time in prayer, please ask the Lord to open your heart to the purpose He has for you.

MEMORIZE: Please unscramble the following phrases of 2 Corinthians 5:17 by placing the correct order number in the space provided.

1. if anyone is in Christ, _____
2. the new has come." _____
3. The old has passed away; _____
4. a new creation. _____
5. "Therefore, _____
6. behold, _____
7. he is _____

STUDY: A lot of people struggle to understand their purpose on this earth. Today, we'll look at 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 to get an understanding of God's purpose for us. Please read the passage, and answer the following questions:

1. *When scripture refers to “God,” it is usually referring to God the Father. Please list out all the things it says that the Father does in this passage:

a. Vs. 18:

b. Vs. 18

c. Vs. 19:

d. Vs. 19:

e. Vs. 20:

f. Vs. 21:

g. What insight does this give you about God the Father?

2. What do you see about Christ’s role in this passage?

3. *According to this passage, what purpose has God given each one of us to accomplish? What obstacles get in the way of us taking on that purpose?

4. *An ambassador is “a person of high rank employed by a government to represent it and transact its business at the seat of government of some other power.” An ambassador does not come with his own agenda, but the agenda of the one who sent him. As an ambassador for Christ, what do you see from this definition of our privilege? What do you see of our responsibility?

5. When a word is repeated three or more times in scripture, it is intended to get our attention. How many times is the word “reconciled” or “reconciliation” repeated in this passage? What do you think God’s purpose is in emphasizing it? What do you think that says about the heart of God?

Please close this time in prayer. Tell the Lord anything you see about Him that you may not have seen before, and talk to Him about any concerns you have about fulfilling His purpose for you.

DAY THREE

PRAY: Please open this time in prayer. Ask the Lord to help you see today’s passage through His eyes and why He wanted it included in the Bible.

MEMORIZE: Please fill in the blanks to complete 2 Corinthians 5:17.

“Therefore, if _____ is in Christ, he is a _____ creation. The old has _____ away; behold, the new has _____.”

STUDY: In Acts 17, Paul was on his second missionary journey. He was accompanied by Silas and Timothy. He was being followed by angry Jews who wanted to stop his ministry. At one point, it got so bad that he was sent by sea to Athens without Silas and Timothy. Today, we pick up in Acts 17:16-34 where Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy to come to him in Athens. As you read this passage, look for evidence of Paul as an “ambassador for Christ.” Please read Acts 17:16-34, and answer the following questions.

1. *Paul had just come from several cities where he had been attacked for preaching the Gospel. If he had been motivated by anything other than the love of Christ, how might he have handled his situation in Athens?

2. What did Paul see that “provoked his spirit” so that he started speaking of the Gospel? Why would this have been a concern to him?

3. How did the people respond to Paul?

4. *The Areopagus was the place for the Greek council, in which everyone who “lived there would spend their time in nothing except hearing or telling something new.” Paul was given the opportunity to address the Areopagus. What do you see in his speech that points to God’s:

a. Authority?

b. Power?

c. Love?

d. Any other attribute?

5. After leaving Athens, Paul went to Corinth. Please read his words to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 2:1-5. What insight does this give you into Paul’s mindset after his experience in Athens?

Please close this time in prayer. Talk to the Lord about what you learned from Paul’s experience in Athens and how that might apply to your life.

DAY FOUR

PRAY: Please open this time in prayer, and ask the Lord to open your heart to ways He can use you to fulfill His purpose in your life.

MEMORIZE: Please fill in the blanks to complete 2 Corinthians 5:17.

“Therefore, if _____ is in _____, he is a _____. The old has _____ away; _____, the _____ has _____.”

STUDY: Today we’ll take another look at Acts 17:16-34 and see what connections we can make between this passage and 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. Please refresh yourself with both passages, and answer the following questions:

1. *Paul said that he was controlled (held together) by the love of Christ. What do you think controlled the Athenians?

2. In 2 Corinthians 5:16, Paul said, “from now on we regard no one according to the flesh (world’s standards).” What evidence do you see in Acts 17 of Paul living that out? What standards do you think the Athenians were living by?

3. Please compare 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 with Acts 17:30. What insight does Acts 17:30 give about God’s purpose for “not counting their trespasses against them” in 2 Corinthians 5?

4. *How would a person being mocked for his faith in Jesus respond if his heart was motivated by:

a. Anger?

b. Foolishness?

c. Despair?

d. Fear?

5. In every place Paul visited, he never stopped preaching the Gospel, no matter how the people responded to him. Using 2 Corinthians 5:14-21, please explain how he stayed so committed, even in opposition.

As you close this time in prayer, please tell the Lord any fears you have about representing Him to those who may mock you for your faith.

DAY FIVE

PRAY: Please open this time in prayer, and ask the Lord to help you apply all that you've learned this week to your own life.

MEMORIZE: Please write out 2 Corinthians 5:17 from memory.

STUDY: The King James Version of 1 Corinthians 8:1 says, "Knowledge puffeth up." To help us not get puffed up by the scripture we learn, we can take time to see how that scripture applies to our own lives. Please read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21, and answer the following questions:

1. What are some things that try to control you other than the love of Christ? How do those things impact your attitudes and actions?

2. When you think of living ALL of your life for Christ, what fears, questions, and hopes come to mind?

a. Fears?

b. Questions?

c. Hopes?

3. From vs. 17, if you could tell some of the “old” to remember that it has passed away, what truth would you need to remind it of? What thoughts can sometimes get in the way of you hearing the message?

4. God has given you both the message and the ministry of reconciliation as His ambassador. What is one step you will take toward fulfilling that purpose for your life today?

5. *What truths about the Lord from this passage deepen your worship and motivate you to fulfill His purpose for you?

Please close this time in prayer, and talk to the Lord about the fears, questions, and hopes you have about His purpose for your life.

WEEK 5

DISCUSSION GROUP QUESTIONS

UNSHAKABLE PURPOSE

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21 & ACTS 17:16-40

UNSHAKABLE

STANDING FIRM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

1. *What impacted you from last week's message?
2. *In vs. 14, the original Greek work for "controls" means "to hold together." Please explain how someone would respond to difficult circumstances if God's love was holding him together. Then, explain how that person would respond if something else was holding him together.
 - a. Response with God's love:
 - b. Response without God's love:
3. *When scripture refers to "God," it is usually referring to God the Father. Please list out all the things it says that the Father does in this passage:
 - a. Vs. 18:
 - b. Vs. 18
 - c. Vs. 19:
 - d. Vs. 19:
 - e. Vs. 20:
 - f. Vs. 21:
 - g. What insight does this give you about God the Father?
4. *According to this passage, what purpose has God given each one of us to accomplish? What obstacles get in the way of us taking on that purpose?
5. *An ambassador is "a person of high rank employed by a government to represent it and transact its business at the seat of government of some other power." An ambassador does not come with his own agenda, but the agenda of the one who sent him. As an ambassador for Christ, what do you see from this definition of our privilege? What do you see of our responsibility?
6. *Paul had just come from several cities where he had been attacked for preaching the Gospel. If he had been motivated by anything other than the love of Christ, how might he have handled his situation in Athens?

7. *The Areopagus was the place for the Greek council, in which everyone who “lived there would spend their time in nothing except hearing or telling something new.” Paul was given the opportunity to address the Areopagus. What do you see in his speech that points to God’s:
 - a. Authority?
 - b. Power?
 - c. Love?
 - d. Any other attribute?

8. *Paul said that he was controlled (held together) by the love of Christ. What do you think controlled the Athenians?

9. *How would a person being mocked for his faith in Jesus respond if his heart was motivated by:
 - a. Anger?
 - b. Foolishness?
 - c. Despair?
 - d. Fear?

10. *What truths about the Lord from this passage deepen your worship and motivate you to fulfill His purpose for you?

DAY ONE

PRAY: As you begin today, ask God to lead you in understanding and applying these scriptures.

MEMORIZE: Write Philippians 4:6-7 on the lines below or on a notecard to use for reference and meditation throughout this week.

STUDY: Today we will be studying Paul’s perilous journey across the sea as we look for the source of his unshakable peace and confidence in God’s promised outcome. If Paul, and Luke as the writer, had not been passengers on this ship, these events would have been lost. Instead, we have a detailed account not only of ancient seafaring methods, but most importantly of God’s sovereignty over human decisions, inadequate equipment, and even the weather.

Peace: Absence of chaos, conflict. The state of being in the right relationship with God and others. Tranquility, security, harmony.

Please read Acts 27.

1. What do you learn about Paul from this passage?

2. List some of the ways you see God at work in this incident.

3. *What do you notice Paul doing in this chapter that would lead him to have the “peace of God which surpasses all understanding”?

4. *In the midst of storms or difficult times, who do you most identify with in this chapter? And why?

As you close your study time in prayer today, share with the Lord what you have learned and how you would like to apply this to your life.

DAY TWO

PRAY: As you study today, ask the Spirit to bring to mind any parts of your life where He would like to bring growth and change.

MEMORIZE: Philippians 4:6-7. Unscramble the phrases below to write out the verse.

*let your requests but in everything by prayer will guard your hearts and And the peace of God,
your minds in Christ Jesus with thanksgiving Do not be anxious about anything, and supplication
which surpasses all understanding, be made known to God.*

STUDY: As we continue our study on peace we're going to look at a passage from Paul's letter to the believers in Philippi. Chronologically, this is a couple of years after the sea voyage of Acts 27. Paul has arrived in Rome and is writing this letter from prison and recognizes that he may be approaching the end of his life on earth. With that in mind, this letter is filled with very practical instruction about how to live a gospel-focused, Christ-like life in this world. He challenges us to "think like Jesus (2:5)" and that it is possible to be joyful, peaceful, and content in every situation.

Today we will study this passage from the perspective of seeking peace in our relationships with others.

Please read Philippians 4:2-13.

1. Please make note of any repeated words or phrases.

2. What problem does Paul address in verses 2-3?

3. The Greek word translated "agree" (4:2) is the same as "being of the same mind" (2:2). What would it look like for two believers to agree in the Lord or be of the same mind? Especially when they have a difference of opinion?

4. *How would the instructions from 4:4-8 bring peace into a relationship that is in conflict?

5. Think of a relationship in your life where you have experienced conflict. Which of these instructions from verses 4-8 do you most struggle with? What is one practical way you could bring peace into the relationship?

Close your study time in prayer by sharing with the Lord what you have learned about how to live in peace with others.

DAY THREE

PRAY: Begin your study by asking the Lord to help you learn more about how He guards your heart and mind.

MEMORIZE: Read or say Philippians 4:6-7 out loud several times. Fill in the blanks to complete the verse:

Do not be _____ about anything, but in _____ by _____ and
supplication with _____ let your requests be made _____ to _____.
And the _____ of God, which surpasses all _____, will guard your
_____ and your _____ in _____.

STUDY: Even though Paul's life was very uncertain at the time he wrote this letter, he was not given to anxiety. Clearly, he had many things to worry about, both in his personal life and in the churches that he watched over, however he had some very practical ways to pursue peace. Today we'll look at how we can follow Paul's example to have peace of mind.

Please read Philippians 4:4-13.

1. *In verses 4-6, Paul gives several instructions. Briefly summarize each instruction on the lines below.

2. *What connections do you notice between those instructions and peace?

3. Verse 8 - write the opposite of each of these virtues

a. true - _____

b. honorable - _____

c. just - _____

d. pure - _____

e. lovely - _____

f. commendable - _____

g. excellent - _____

h. worthy of praise - _____

4. What happens to you when your mind is filled with the “opposite” thoughts?

5. Think of a situation that currently causes you anxiety. Do you believe that the peace of God can guard your mind from this worry? Have you been obedient in following the instructions Paul has provided in these verses? What do you need to do today to have peace of mind? On the lines below record any responses you have to the questions above.

Using your responses above, close your time in prayer today by confessing any sinful worry to the Lord and then “let your requests be made known to Him” regarding the matters that cause you anxiety today.

DAY FOUR

PRAY: Commit your study time to the Lord today. Ask Him to help you understand how these scriptures apply to your life.

MEMORIZE: Review Philippians 4:6-7 using the letters below to help you remember. Each letter is the first letter of the words of the verse.

DNBAAA, BIEBPASWTLYRBMKTG.ATPOGWSA UWGYHAYMICJ

STUDY: The church in Philippi sent a generous financial gift to provide for Paul’s physical needs. Although their gift brought him great joy, he wanted the Philippians to understand that he was content and would continue to be content no matter what circumstances he faced. Paul had discovered the secret to having peace in every situation that the Lord allowed in his life.

Please read Philippians 4:10-20.

1. How does Paul feel about the gift that he received from the Philippians?

2. Describe the various situations in which Paul has learned contentment.

3. What does he say is the secret to facing all of these things?

4. *What are some common applications for the phrase “I can do all things through him who strengthens me”?
How does this study challenge you to rethink this application?

5. In what area are you most challenged to be content? How could you apply Paul’s “secret” to this struggle?

6. *Personalize the words of Philippians 4:12-13 using the prompts below.

a. I have learned the secret to facing _____
_____.

b. I can _____
_____ through Him who strengthens me.

As you close your time in prayer, share with the Lord how you have been challenged to trust the strength of Christ to bring contentment and peace in every situation you face.

DAY FIVE

PRAY: Ask the Lord to help you better understand what he means in Matthew 6 when He says, “Do not be anxious. . . but seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

MEMORIZE: Review Philippians 4:6-7. Write these verses on the lines below - personalizing these truths with your own words.

I will not _____, but I will _____

_____. And I will trust that God will _____

_____.

STUDY: This week we have been challenged to realize that peace is not what happens when everything is perfect in our world, but rather, an outcome of the Spirit at work in us. Paul went through some of the most uncertain, anxiety-inducing experiences a person could have, and yet was able to experience the unshakable peace of God through it all.

Please read Matthew 6:25-34.

1. We have learned this week that worry and anxiety do not promote the peace of God. According to these words of Jesus in Matthew 6, why should we not worry?

2. Rather than being anxious, what should you do? Based upon this, what does it say about you when you worry?

3. How do the promises of Jesus that you wrote above help you when you're tempted to worry?

4. *In Philippians 4:6 Paul writes "do not be anxious about anything." What does it mean to you that these words are written as a command? How does your thinking change if you consider worry as a sin?

5. *In Philippians 4:9 Paul tells the believers that to have the peace of God they should do the things they have heard and seen in him. Based upon your study this week, what do you observe in Paul that you could do to increase the peace of God in your life?

6. In what area of your life do you most desire peace right now? Peace in relationships? Peace of mind? Peace in every situation? Briefly write what you will do to pursue peace in this area.

Close in prayer by thanking the Lord for what He has taught you this week. Be specific as you commit yourself to pursuing the peace of Christ in your life.

WEEK 6

DISCUSSION GROUP QUESTIONS

UNSHAKABLE PEACE
PHILIPPIANS 4:4-13 & ACTS 27



UNSHAKABLE

STANDING FIRM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

1. *What impacted you from last week's message?
2. *What do you notice Paul doing in this chapter that would lead him to have the "peace of God which surpasses all understanding"?
3. *In the midst of storms or difficult times, who do you most identify with in this chapter? And why?
4. *How would the instructions from 4:4-8 bring peace into a relationship that is in conflict?
5. *In verses 4-6, Paul gives several instructions. Briefly summarize each instruction on the lines below.
6. *What connections do you notice between those instructions and peace?
7. *What are some common applications for the phrase "I can do all things through him who strengthens me"? How does this study challenge you to rethink this application?
8. *Personalize the words of Philippians 4:12-13 using the prompts below.
 - a. I have learned the secret to facing _____
_____.
 - b. I can _____
_____ through Him who strengthens me.
9. *In Philippians 4:6 Paul writes "do not be anxious about anything." What does it mean to you that these words are written as a command? How does your thinking change if you consider worry as a sin?
10. *In Philippians 4:9 Paul tells the believers that to have the peace of God they should do the things they have heard and seen in him. Based upon your study this week, what do you observe in Paul that you could do to increase the peace of God in your life?

