Devotional and Prayer Journal
Dear Trip Participant,

The mission trip you are about to begin is an experience that may change your life forever. God is truly faithful to reveal Himself in new ways during short-term mission trips: whether that is through learning about a different culture, serving with your team, seeing a new side of God’s beautiful creation, or being away from the distractions of your day-to-day life. Each time we venture out, we return home with a slightly different perspective on life and our relationship with God.

In the following pages are a Devotional and Prayer Journal with Scripture for the day, encouraging words and discussion questions to go deeper. There is also space available for you to write your thoughts and prayers, what God is doing in your life during the week, and what He is revealing to you through Scripture.

We encourage you to take time each day to spend with God in Scripture, pray, and write in the journal. After you return home, you will have the journal as a reminder and keepsake from this life-changing experience of all God did in and through your life. Let the mission adventure begin!

With joy and blessings,
The PPM Staff
Grace and Peace

“And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” —Philippians 1:6

Read Philippians 1:1-11

Greetings and welcome to the first day of an experience that you will never forget! Grace and peace to you as you are traveling, arriving, or waking up for your first full day of ministry here. You will not quickly forget your experiences here, but as you begin this week it is important to remember who really is at work here. God is constantly growing you and stretching you through different experiences and giving you opportunities to share His love with others—even at home! For this time, however, He is working in and through you in a new place many miles from home.

When Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians, he was in prison clinging to the joy and hope he found in the person of Jesus Christ. Even though he was in a position of persecution and pain, he wrote letters of joy and encouragement to people he loved so dearly. Paul knew that the joy and hope he had in the Lord could not be shaken by anything in the world. He also knew that God was still working in the lives of the Philippians and encouraged them to continue pressing on toward a deeper faith.

What’s the Point?

This week your challenge is to press on toward a deeper faith. Each day will bring new experiences, new people, and new opportunities to share the love of God! You may stumble through some of these experiences and wonder, “Why am I here?” Don’t worry! “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion the day of Jesus Christ.” You may be surprised at some of the areas of your life He will use this week. Always expect the unexpected and have faith as you serve this week!

For Discussion:

1. List the things Paul prayed for the Philippians in verses 9-11.
2. What is one area that you think you will grow in this week (from Paul’s list)?
3. What are your thoughts going into this week of service?
4. How do you think God will use you this week?

Digging Deeper: Romans 11:33-12:1, Psalm 121:8
A Life Worthy

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.” —Philippians 1:27

Read Philippians 1:12-30

“For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” One of the most famous statements of the Apostle Paul, this verse shows that Paul was willing to do whatever God called him to whether that was to live or to die, to be imprisoned or free. He longed to be with God and give Him glory with such intensity that everything else in the world didn’t matter. He encourages the Philippians to live their lives in the same way, with the gospel in the front of their minds while they are serving the Lord in unity!

What's the Point?

Being on the mission field away from home with a group of people you may or may not know very well can be an intimidating experience. We are here to serve the Lord in this culture as one body. We are chosen representatives of the gospel and of Jesus Christ, so as we are serving let’s remember that we are serving the Lord and that He calls us to “strive side by side.” It is amazing to see what God can do when we are so focused on Him and His gospel; the world disappears and we are free to do His work well. You may be distracted this week, or even today, by conflict, homesickness, or disappointment, but if you continue on—forgiving others and focusing on God—God will continue to work in mighty ways through you!

For Discussion:

1. When you think about Christ dying on the cross for your sins to be forgiven, what is your reaction?
2. How does the knowledge of what Christ did for you impact your day-to-day life?
3. What is one way that you can “live a life worthy” this week? How about when you go home?

Digging Deeper: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Hebrews 12:12-14; Psalm 84
The Humble Servant King

“Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Chris is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” —Philippians 2:9-11

Read Philippians 2:1-11

“Therefore” is such a great word. It makes you wonder what came before it and makes you look back and really look at the verses prior to the “therefore.” So, let’s look. The end of chapter 1 leaves us with the assurance of salvation but also tells us that we will suffer for Christ’s sake. Chapter 2 picks up with promises of encouragement and a call for believers to be unified! We, as Christians, are to give up our selfishness and live our lives for God. In living for God, we are to be serving others. Paul gives us the greatest example of living for God: Jesus Christ. Jesus had more to give up than any of us, and He did. “He made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of a man” (v.7). Even after making himself a servant, He gave up even more in dying for us. This is the example we have to follow. This brings us to “therefore.”

What’s the Point?

God has called us to follow Christ’s example and be His ambassadors here on earth. We are here to point people to God and give Him glory. What an honor! What a privilege! What a task we have in front of us. Philippians 2:4 is your challenge today: “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” All for the glory of God the Father.

For Discussion:

1. Do you find it difficult to put others before yourself?
2. Why do you find it easy or difficult?
3. What would be the hardest thing in your life to give up or leave behind if it was asked of you?
4. Would you be able to leave everything and everyone behind to serve Christ?

Blemish Free

“Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”—Philippians 2:14-15

Read Philippians 2:12-30

Sometimes serving others and serving the Lord is not easy and is not always what we would call a pleasant experience. Paul knew this as he served the Lord even in hardships! In 2 Corinthians 11:24-28, he shares a little bit of his experiences: “Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger through false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.” Paul went through so much for the cause of Christ and yet he writes to encourage the Philippians to do all things without grumbling or questioning.

What’s the Point?

This week, you have a chance to serve the Lord in a mighty way! He more than likely will stretch you, and some of the things that you are going to be involved in may not be your favorite things to do. You may not like laying tile, scrubbing toilets, praying with the elderly, or playing with kids. But we have been called to “do all things without grumbling” so we will “shine as lights in the world.” As the week continues on, keep on serving the Lord with joy and gladness. People will notice and you will shine as lights!

For Discussion:

1. Is there something you were not especially looking forward to on this trip?
2. How can you put Philippians 2:14-15 into practice now?
3. Have you seen someone on your team shine as a light already this week? You should tell him or her!
4. In what ways are you being stretched this week?

Digging Deeper: Psalm 51:10-17; Matthew 5:13-16; 1 John 4:7-8
Christ as Our Treasure

“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ.” —Philippians 3:8

Read Philippians 3:1-11

Knowing Jesus Christ is the most valuable thing that anyone can ever have. Paul considered everything this world had to offer as garbage—worthless—when it was compared to knowing Jesus Christ. He had a deep, unquenchable desire to know Christ more and more. As he continued to know Christ on a deeper level, whether that be through suffering, miracles, or studying Scripture, Paul saw the world’s worth shrinking. He closes this section with walking in faith and a desire to “know Him (Christ) and the power of His resurrection, and may share in His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death.”

What’s the Point?

Look around you. Knowing that Jesus Christ is the most valuable thing anyone can ever have can give you a new purpose. It doesn’t matter if people have a lot of material wealth or very little; if they know Christ and have a relationship with Him, they are the richest people on earth. So are you! When you learn to value Jesus Christ above all other things on earth, you have the most valuable thing. God calls us to share this treasure we have found in Jesus with the nations. Today, share that treasure you have found with those around you by sharing His love!

For Discussion:

1. In what areas have you given up things in order to have more of Christ?
2. In giving up these things, how has it changed your perspective on the things of this world (or how has your worldview changed as you have gained more of Christ)?

Digging Deeper: Matthew 13:44-46
Running with a Purpose

“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” —Philippians 3:14

Read Philippians 3:12-4:1

Paul isn’t going to let us forget that we are not here just to be here, but we are here with a purpose—an upward call—to be lights in the darkness! He knew that he wasn’t perfect in this calling, but even in his weaknesses and imperfections he wasn’t going to give up. He was going to press on no matter what: growing in his knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, encouraging believers to continue sharing the gospel and focusing their minds on heaven. He ends this section with a simple statement: “Stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.”

What’s the Point?

This week you have been stretched, and you may be tired or running low on energy. Remember that you are running this week with a purpose! You have touched people with the love of God and still may have some time left to show more people the love of God in a real and tangible way. Your encouragement today is to keep on going and stand firm as you continue serving the Lord.

For Discussion:

1. How are you feeling now that you have experienced serving the Lord in another culture?
2. Are you ready to continue giving 100%?
3. What is one area you need strength in to continue?
4. Have you considered that your purpose doesn’t end at the end of this mission trip, but it continues when you get home?
5. How do you think having a renewed sense of that purpose will change how you live at home?

Digging Deeper: Hebrews 12:1-2; Galatians 6:9-10
Joy, Joy, Joy

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” —Philippians 4:4

Read Philippians 4:2-9

The theme of joy is mentioned more than 15 times in Paul’s letter to the Philippians. Paul talks about finding joy in the Lord, even in the midst of incredible suffering time and time again. Most every time he mentions finding joy or peace, he links that directly with focusing our minds on Jesus Christ and our heavenly calling. In verses 6-7 he says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplications with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” When distractions of the world start overtaking the peace and joy that you can find in the Lord, Paul says to present your requests to God. What a relief that we have a God who listens to prayers and grants us peace.

What’s the Point?

There may be things you are anxious about at this point of the trip—maybe something going on at home, maybe wondering if you will ever come back. Regardless, present your requests to God with thanksgiving. We are called not only to rejoice, but also to be thankful for the things God has done as well as for the joy and peace we can rest in. This week we can find joy in all the things we have seen God do in us and through us, in the people we have met, and in everything we experienced. Now, going home, we can continue rejoicing in the Lord and serving Him.

For Discussion:

1. What did you find joy in this week?
2. How did you see God work?
3. What are you looking forward to doing when you get home?
4. How do you think letting “your requests be made known to God” with “thanksgiving” changes your outlook from anxiety to joy and peace?

Digging Deeper: Matthew 6:25-34; Psalm 66:1-4
What Matters

“To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.” —Philippians 4:20

Read Philippians 4:10-23

When Paul wrote this letter, he had recently received gifts from the Philippians. If you received gifts in this time period, it was the custom to reciprocate with a gift of your own. As Paul was in prison, he had nothing to give them, but he ends his letter with the greatest encouragement and gift they could ever receive. This is what he knew and he could give them: the faith and confidence in knowing that God would supply every need and that with God all things are possible. Paul was completely reliant on God and His provision. He knew that he had nothing and could give nothing without God’s power. Even when he had nothing, he was content in knowing that God was with him. He also knew that whether he was in want or had plenty, it was all for the glory of God.

What’s the Point?

It doesn’t matter where we come from or what we have by worldly standards; when we have God, we can be content and trust that He will supply all of our needs. This includes the needs of the people you met this week. You may be leaving this week wanting to give more time, energy, or things. Know that God will continue to supply all their needs as well as yours. He has endless riches in glory. His riches may not look like our riches, but every need will be met for His glory!

For Discussion:

1. What have you learned this week about what true riches really are?
2. Do you think it is easier to remember that God supplies every need when you have much or when you have little? Why?
3. How can you bring this knowledge home with you?
4. How can you continue to minister to and with the community you have been serving in this week?

Digging Deeper: Isaiah 58:9-11; Job 42:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24