



SUNDAY SOCIAL

Community • Holiday Eats • Baptisms

NOVEMBER 26th
After the 11am service
on the patio

Sign-up to bring your favorite holiday dish!



YOU ARE invited

TAKE IT TO JESUS



WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS EVENT

TREASURED

"YOU ARE ALTOGETHER BEAUTIFUL, MY LOVE... THERE IS NO FLAW IN YOU." SONG OF SOLOMON 4:7

DECEMBER 8, 2023



5:30 PM • \$30



WELCOME TO THE NEW WORLD

“DON'T DOUBT IT”

PHILEMON 8-16



WEEK 2

**God is the God of everywhere.
There's not a place on the face of the planet
Where His sovereignty is not being exercised.**

Whoever said life isn't messy was not telling the truth. Life is complex and sometimes crazy. Not to mention that we are dealing with a deluge of brutal global realities always on tap through a steady stream of information, bringing the worst of what's happening in the world into our daily lives. We are ever exposed to real and perceived injustices, unfairness, and disappointments. As we watch this play out in real-time, it produces increased stress levels. A recent article on The Hill, titled *America Is in a United States of Stress and Disillusionment*, reads, "Let's face it: We are a stressed-out country. The COVID-19 pandemic, economic upheavals, racial injustice, gun violence, climate change, and political divisiveness have served as major stressors."

Every generation is experiencing increased stress levels, which predictably leads to chronic disappointment and breeds a disposition of doubt. This is pervasive and spreading like wildfire all around us. But is this the assumed state of the follower of Christ? What do Christians possess that increases their faith and diminishes their doubt? For Paul, we see His simple belief in God's sovereignty, faith in God's providence, and willingness to be an instrument of God's power lifting him above the calamity and confusion. Enabling him to fulfill God's mission.

(10 min) PRAY

Ask God to permeate your time with His presence. Pray that God will give you relief from doubt and disillusionment. Pray that God will reinvigorate and renew your faith in Him.

(25 min) TIME TO CONSIDER

As you've had the opportunity to reflect on what God has spoken to you through this week's lesson, consider these questions as a group and discuss them.

1. While the world would view Onesimus's meeting with Paul as an extraordinary coincidence, Paul viewed it as God's sovereignty at work. Define God's sovereignty and explain how simple belief in God's sovereignty produces peace. Apply this to a situation in your life.
2. While sovereignty tells us that God is always doing something, providence tells us that everything God does is working to fulfill His will. In other words, God has a purpose in all His acts. Sometimes, when circumstances are complex, we can be so consumed with the present pain and discomfort that we miss what God is doing. Paul encouraged Philemon in verse 15 to see the big picture of God's activities. Read that verse and discuss how you think that helped Philemon. How can seeing the big picture of what God is working in a situation help you?
3. Locking our perspective into God's sovereignty and providence enables us to become instruments of His power. For instance, instead of becoming disillusioned by his circumstances (house arrest and chains), Paul chose to view His circumstances as directed by God and part of His plan. Because of that, He didn't miss the divine appointment with Onesimus. This poses a question we must answer: how do we want to live our lives? Do we want to miss the opportunities that God is providing for us? Discuss as a group.

Paul could have languished in disappointment. Instead, He was looking for the divine appointment.

WEEKLY MEMORIZATION VERSES: *Ephesians 1:11* **In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.**

EXPERIENCING THE SPIRIT TOGETHER: Pray for the next 15-20 minutes as a Life Group. Ask God to guide you in this time of prayer. You have choices to make this week. Choices will reframe how you see your life and the circumstances God has allowed. Choose to look to God's sovereignty and providence. Avail yourself to Him to be an instrument of His power. Be sensitive to those in the group sincerely struggling under the weight of disappointment. Pray for them and encourage them. Remember He encourages us to bear one another's burdens.

(5 min) LIVE IT

Be intentional about centering each day this week around the presence of Christ in your life. Begin each day in prayer, declaring your choice to see your life from the framework of God's sovereignty and providence. Look for the divine appointments that God brings. Expect them and trust that God will give you power as you step out in faith.