

Introduction

Welcome to the third week of RENEWED: a series outlining our vision to **come together to know Jesus, be more like Him and help others do the same.**

On Sunday, Jeff began to unpack what it means to move from knowing some things about Jesus to truly knowing Him in a personal way. *As you're getting better acquainted in your group, consider how this group experience is having an impact on the rest of your life. You might begin to notice some measurable ways you see your relationship with Jesus deepening.*

Getting to Know Each Other *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

Begin your group time by learning more about each other. Open up and have some fun!

- 1) Share one thing you love to do that you get to do nearly every day.

- 2) What's your favorite local restaurant and the meal you most enjoy eating there?

- 3) What are moments or experiences that helped you feel close to God in the past week? When have you felt distant from Him?

Getting Started

Begin to transition into group discussion.

- 1) Hosts can pray to open the group or ask someone else to lead out (*pro tip: ask them ahead of time*). Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For openness to what you're learning together
 - c. For friendships to deepen and grow

- 2) Invite someone else (or a couple of people) to read Philippians 3:1-21 to the group.

Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

Please complete these questions before your group meets.

- 1) In verses 1-6, Paul doesn't mince words as he warns and encourages these believers in Philippi. This strong language shows his passion for knowing Jesus as a person, not just following a religion or a cause.
 - a. Circle the status that best describes how closely you relate to Jesus today:

Distant Observing Uncertain Friendly Close Friend
 - b. Are you satisfied in your relationship with Jesus or is something missing? Explain.

- 2) In Philippians 3:7-8, Paul reflects on how he moved from knowing things about Jesus to truly having a relationship with the *risen* Lord. Jeff described this as a "stripping of self" in order to become more like Jesus.
 - a. Think of an overwhelming challenge you've faced that left you at the end of your own resources. Whether you asked for help or not, what did you receive from God during that time?

 - b. What kinds of things did God seem to be holding back from you?

 - c. How did that impact your relationship with Jesus?

- 3) Read 1 Peter 1: 3-9, paying special attention to the way our faith is tested.
- a. In your own words, write the correlation you see between the suffering we endure and the closeness it produces in our relationship with Jesus.

 - b. If you're willing, share some of the ways suffering has been a benefit in your life.
- 4) In Philippians 3:12-15, Paul highlights action — both God's action through Jesus and his own action of pressing on — then calls us to follow his example. This action of living in persistent hope is certainly challenged in our culture, but we're not in this alone!
- a. What are one or two steps you can take this week to help you choose hope when you're tempted to despair? (*bonus points: keep it simple and practical*)

 - b. This week, make time to check in and encourage each other. Next time, plan to report back on how your steps spurred your relationship with Jesus and each other. *Press on, friends!*

Prayer (*Suggested time: 10 min*)

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus?

A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.