

Todd Kelly:

Day one, session one

Well, I'd like to welcome everybody here. It's great to see you, and I'm looking forward to the day together. This is my good friend Tom, and I've known Tom for quite a while, so if at any point I tease Tom, you'll know it's because I have great affection for Tom. I want to invite you to come as close to the front as you possibly can, so you can hear well. The type of training that we do in our organization is very personal. It is done in small groups of 12 to 15 key people. I'll explain more of this in just a bit, but I far prefer being close to you than being up on a stage. I want to get to know you and I want to remove any distance. Transformation occurs through one life intersecting with another life, so if you come forward to take this time to do that. Let me explain a couple of announcements. Throughout the day you'll hear me refer to this booklet. There is a copy here in Mandarin, a copy in English, and this booklet describes some key tools we use to read the Bible well. The fancy name is *Hermeneutical Principles*, and in these principles are a good read. I have a very few of these to give away, so we will give them out as kind of a reward for someone that gives a great answer, but for the rest of you, I have a card. You can pass these out now because on this card is the instruction where you go to get this booklet.

Each of you can access that or look online. If you could just take a card and pass it on, and we have this in several languages, not just English or Mandarin. This card also lists French and then it says etc. There are many, many, more languages that you can find this book in, and hopefully your language will be there. If it's not just write us and let us know, and we'll see what we can do. Again, if some of you are coming in late, you are invited to come as far forward as you possibly can. I'd love to be able to see you interact with us in this process. Okay, as we begin our day together, let's have a word of prayer and commit it to the Lord. May I ask one question just before we pray? How many of you your first language is Mandarin? Okay, so you're going to do prayers and reading from Mandarin today, and the rest of you like me, you're on your own. I do this quite regularly working with other languages, and so I usually have the translator read from his language.

The translator is reading the book of Philippians, I developed a discipline to stay focused on reading it in English which is my language. If we're reading Scripture, it will be read in Mandarin, but

please read your language. Okay, one more time. Comes as close as you possibly can.

Malcolm asked a terrific question in the opening session. He said, "How do we give the next generation what really counts?" That forces you to think, doesn't it? It's a powerful question because it's asking first what really counts. Are you thinking about that? What really counts? Then secondly, how do we give that? Our organization has spent a lot of time thinking about that question and I'm not saying that we have mastered that question. I want to share with you today a little bit about the answer we've arrived at. Our focus is to train for transformation and to see a movement of God's word. I'll unpack this more later, but let me just define it a little bit right now. The Gospel is all about transformation. We were dead in our trespasses and sins, but we now have been made alive in Christ. The Word of God is all about transformation. It's powerful, quick, active, sharper than any two-edged sword, discerns the thoughts, is able to divide between the bone and the marrow.

The Word of God, the Gospel of Christ, is all about transformation from the very beginning to the very end. I didn't introduce myself. My name is Todd. I serve with this ministry called *Leadership Resources International*. We train pastors around the world, and part of the thing I've recognized over time is for many, change is difficult. I pastored in local churches for about 15 years, and wrestled with this idea of change within the church, and the more I reflected on it, change is the basis of a Christian life, and somehow we need to get over the fear of change. We need the light and change. When we see the Gospel grow through change, it's exciting. I'll explain a little bit more of this in a moment. Coupled with that change is a desire we have to see the Lord's plan, and we refer to this as movements of the Word of God. It's an interesting phrase that occurs in the book of Acts that says, "And the Word of the Lord grew, and the Word of the Lord was highly exalted," and other phrases like that. It's as if it's describing human attributes to God's Word, like a child growing, and it spreads, it detours, it covers new territories.

Just as the disciples were rejoicing in the book of Acts, we rejoice in what we see and the Word of God's spreading, moving. Fifteen years ago, when I began serving with *Leadership Resources*, I went to one country in Asia, where the Word of the Lord has been for some time, but it's not very credible. We were studying the first four chapters of the book of Mark. That's a powerful part of God's Word, and I was simply doing it with a question/answer style. It was an immersion to

get the Word of God. One of the pastors there at the end of the week said to me, "Can we talk?" I said, "Sure, let's do that." We took a little walk away from the rest of the group ... and I'll never forget the look in his eye. If you can imagine a person that has not had a meal in a very, very, long time, except they just now had a meal; it was very nutritious and delicious, but the reality for them is they don't know when they're going to have another meal; and he was reflecting on the meal, the feast in the Word of God. In his eye there was a look of pleasure and pain, and there was a quiver in his voice, and he said, "We need this so much."

Later, my boss asked me, is there a doubt in your mind about the significance of this work?

I've never forgotten that hunger for the Word of God that was in his voice because the Word of God nourishes the soul. Fast forward several years, I'm in another Asian country. The Gospel was not far ranging there either. It has been there a while, and we were studying the book of Jonah all week together, and then we came to Chapter 4 and we were looking at Jonah's anger with God. It's a rather shocking chapter in God's Word. Two times Jonah says to God, "I am angry enough to die." I've often wondered why God didn't give him his death wish. Instead, you see God with His compassion, and His concern for Jonah, drive Jonah to Himself. He says, "There are 120,000 people in Nineveh; they do not know their left hand from their right." Of course, He's referring to their spiritual awareness of God and their immorality. It unveils the heart of God – rather than bringing His wrath on the wicked people, He'd rather give them His mercy. But Jonah is angry enough to die.

You can't read that chapter without beginning to see the distance, the great gulf there is between the heart of God and your own. I happened to be studying that book several years ago when 9/11 occurred. I remember the climate in America. It was a very sobering climate. People were afraid, concerned. They wanted justice. There were a lot of prayers that were being offered. What we pray for is revealing, isn't it? I remember night prayers being offered out for the safety of our troops, and of course we want to pray for those troops, but I don't remember anybody praying for the salvation of Al-Qaeda. That's the message to Jonah. God has a heart of mercy. We struggle in a very, very, deep way for mercy. We were in this Asian country doing this training. At the end of the training, we asked the question, "What ought we to do? How has God been working in your life this week as we study the Word of God?"

One of the pastors with a tear in his eyes, he said, "I have a confession to make." He said, "My heart is worse than Jonah and I need you to pray for me." He said, "Many times I'm called in before the police, and I sit there across the table hoping that my interrogator goes down to hell." Now, if you heard the stories of the brutality that he and others in his company endured, you could appreciate his feeling. But, this is the effect of God's Word on the human heart, and this pastor said, "I now know I can no longer have this agony. Will you pray for me?". Of course, we gathered around him and we prayed. God worked in his heart.

Part of our model is that you have to multiply the training. This pastor, he went the next month and he was training with a group in another region of his country. It was an area that we would never have access to, but he and his colleagues studied the book of Jonah with his group. At the end of the week, he asked them the same question: How has God been working in your heart? They said, "You know, we have been stingy with the grace of God. We have failed to reach out to the neighboring tribal groups." They organized evangelistic campaigns, and within the first few days of going out, 85 people from these tribes have received Christ as their Savior. That's the power of God's Word. It's in its nature to create change. We've tracked the development of those 85 people, and they have developed into five churches. The larger one, the last time we checked, has grown to over 125 people.

Now, imagine you showed up in one of those churches, and you'd like to learn the history of the church. How did this church begin? Who were some of the key influencers in this church? There were some people from this neighboring tribe; they came over and they shared the Gospel with us. You said, "Okay, I plan to investigate that." You went over to this neighboring tribe and then you began to ask questions to them. You said, "Tell me about this. How did the church over here begin?" They said, "Well, there's these two pastors, they came from another part of the country, and they shared the book of Jonah with us. We saw God's heart for the nations, and we realized our shortcoming, and we had selfishly held onto the Gospel for ourselves." He said, "I don't need these two pastors that brought the Gospel." He traveled to another part of the country, and he began to ask some questions, and then this one pastor shared this story with him: It was when we studied the book of Jonah that God put his finger on my heart. He revealed to me how distant my heart was from His. This is the power of God's Word. It brings change, and it spreads like a wildfire. It's the story of the book of Acts, and it's being lived out through the world today. One of our underlying convictions in our

ministry is that the Word of God brings life. Think about the opening pages of the Bible. What do we learn from them? What do we learn about the creation of the world? We learned there is a God. We learned that the earth is formless and it's empty. We learned that the Spirit of God is hovering over the waters. Try to get that image in your mind, darkness. The Spirit of God poised to act, and then what happens? God set that. When I was a little bit younger and my children were much younger we would work on my catechism with them, and the question in the catechism at this point was, "How did God create the world?" My children would respond with the answer, "By speaking His powerful words." Those are pretty powerful words. Those words are in another sphere than my words. How many of you are parents?

Well, quite a few. You speak words to your children, I'm sure. At some point along the way of your parenting you realize that your words, they don't have that much power. I wish my words had this kind of power. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. It's just a matter of fact. That is the way that the story of Creation unfolds. There's a repetition of that pattern. It drives day one to day two to day three. What does this teach us? It teaches us that God's Spirit is working through His Word in life. Why did this pastor in one country say, "We need this so much"? Why did this pastor say, "Please, pray for me? I need God's heart." Because just as sure as God's Word throws out the light to the universe, it was bringing light to the human heart. God's words are powerful. They bring this transformation. His Word accomplishes what he wants it to accomplish. In another part of the Bible, Isaiah 55, He speaks of it in a very particular way. It is just like when He sends the snow or the rain to water the earth. It provides seed for the sower. It provides food for the eater. It accomplishes the purpose for which He sent it. Then there is no question mark. There is no doubt in God's mind. No uncertainty.

His Word accomplishes the very purpose for which He sent it. It is a life transforming purpose. Fast forward through the pages of the Bible, to the book of Acts. The Spirit of God comes, and He's hovering. The Word of God is proclaimed on the day of Pentecost. Everyone hearing it in their own language, and life is formed. God's Word accomplishing the purpose for which He sent it. This is a basic conviction behind the work that we do, and the Word of God it's like the Bible being in a car. One of my friends uses this illustration; I thought it was great. It says, "Where is the Bible in our ministry?" For some ministries, unfortunately, it's in the trunk. The trunk of the car, you know, some ministries they get it out every once in a while. They refer to it but it

really doesn't have great impact on their direction. For others, it's in the back seat of the car. It's there. It's accessed a little bit more, but really isn't in the front seat.

Other ministries bring it into the front seat, but it's on the passenger side. The Word of God is being opened and referred to, but where is the proper place for the word of God to be in ministry? It should be in the driver's seat. It should set an agenda. It should direct and control our movements in ministry, and the reason is because God's Word is powerful to transform to change. God has an agenda. God has a purpose, and He's using His words to accomplish His purposes. Now, I want to explain just a few things about our model before we get into the book of Philippians.

Just to share a few things about our training model first, that we always work in partnership, relationship, with groups that are in-country. Our longing is to see a movement of the Word of God that is envisioned as sustainable within that country, and that God through His spirit brings people together to share in like-mind, in like-heart with the Word of God in driving the agenda of ministry. People ask, "How do you decide to go somewhere?" I think often they're looking for some mastermind strategy that we've devised to control our movements, but actually, I think it's God who's controlling our movements, and He does it through friendships and conversations, but this partnership and relationship is very key to anything that we're going to do together. That there's a period of time for getting to know one another or deeply investigate or explore whether serving together makes sense.

We don't want to serve anywhere where God is not clearly leading us. There should be no pressure in ministry. That may be a shocking thing for some of you to hear me say, but if you study Jesus' life in ministry there was never a point where He seems pressured; perhaps just before He goes to the cross, but that's the only time I know. He just simply looks to the Father and does His work. Another key feature is there's a selection process. In our training model, we're working pretty specifically with pastors, key leaders, churches, and we do this because they stand in a special place within the church, not because they're better than anyone else, but because we don't want to replace them as the changed leaders within their cultures. God has given them that role, so we decided to come alongside them, encourage them, build them up, and through them to see the Word of the Lord grow.

Another feature of our model is it's a model of immersion in the Word of God. It is almost like if you took me and you put me in in another

country I've never been in before, you say, "Learn the culture, and learn the language. We're here to help you with it. We'll be a guide for you. We'll explain things as we go." Every time we're meeting with a group or immersing them in a book of the Bible. As you know, there are 66 books in the Bible, and we can't be with them 66 times, but as we're meeting with them, they are learning these key principles for reading the Bible well. Through a process of meeting with them over several years, these principles become ingrained in them, they will use these principles to discover God's Word, and the best part is these principles are transferrable, so they are able to pass them on to others. They are tools, they are skills that they're learning along the way.

The focus is to discover what is God's purpose in this book of the Bible? How is He seeking to change us through the book of Jonah? It's not enough to speak about the Bible and the information that's there. The Bible is not only made up of content. There is a divinely-placed intent in the Scriptures. There is teaching, doctrine, there's reproof in the Scriptures. Then there's purpose in the Scriptures, and God is the divine author of Scripture. He has placed that purpose there, so our task is not simply to talk about the Bible's information. It's not even to bring our own ideas and thoughts about what the Bible says, it's to unveil what God is saying because we respect that God has a purpose in His Word.

Why is the book of Jonah there? I suggest that you don't know the answer to that question until you arrive in Chapter 4 because it's only in Chapter 4 that we discover why Jonah ran away in the first place, and it is one of two books in the Bible that end with a question. God says, "120,000 people in Nineveh who don't know their right hand from their left. Should I not be concerned?" Jonah would've preferred that God draw His own heart to Jonah's heart, but God was drawing Jonah's heart to His own. It wasn't enough that Jonah delivered the message God wanted to Nineveh. God wanted Jonah to share His heart, God's heart. His heart of compassion, mercy for the worst of sinners, for the worst of our enemies.

Now, that is a tough message, and the only thing that can create that within our hearts is the power of God's Word. Many, many years ago, we'd been given a number of books for our young children, and we had so many books, so it was time to let a few of them go. My wife assigned me the task to look through the books. I don't get rid of books easily, so I have to read each one. One of them was on the book of Jonah, and I decided to keep the book not for the reason you

think. This particular book had Jonah running away from God. God caused a great fish to swallow Jonah. It spit Jonah up on dry ground, and Jonah knew he never wanted to run away from God again. There's a happy Jonah traveling on to Nineveh. I wanted to scream because I said, "That is not the message of Jonah." That may be the message of the author of that book, but that's not God's message. If we are honest, often our preaching and our teaching, this is the author's intent. That children's book was a catalyst for me, personally, and for our organization to work with people in such a way that we discover God's divinely implanted purpose.

Remember the pastor I told you about that took the book of Jonah to another group of pastors? Eighty-five people came to Christ through that process. Do you think that would've occurred if you took the line from that children's book? Our burden is to immerse people in the Word of God, not simply to discover principles for reading, but to discover God's divine purpose in our ministry, and having understood that, to be changed by it. In my experience, this doesn't happen in the church unless we are intentional about it, and it takes hard work and diligence to get there. Again, our training model, model partnership, so that the work is truly indigenous and being carried out in a way that's sustainable. The selection process involved, there's immersion in the word of God, and then the actual training time together is a dynamic process.

Dynamic in several ways. You can't come to one of our trainings and sit passive in it. Of course, the group will be much smaller than this, probably 15 and every time you come you can give them assignments. We use an interactive model that we refer to as three legged stool, and in this model, we call the first leg ...

This is a demonstrate session, and so many will get up, usually it's over here either from one of our team or from the partnership in country we're giving an example message. It will not be a perfect example, no talk that there is. What they desire is to illustrate the use of its principles, so as to get at God's divine purpose in that part of His Word. This second leg we call Dig to Discover, and in this session is where we actually learn these tools. There'll be a simple explanation there, and then beyond that there will be a lot of practice using that tool. Divide into groups of two, three, or four and pop in here before it's back about what they found. The last question's to push them further into understanding, and it develops a conversation. Sometimes they push back on our own understanding, and we're constantly growing through this process. This last leg we refer to as the Do

Session, and in this Do Session they're required to come prepared to tell us a few basic things about a passage that you have discovered. They answer questions like, "What is the main idea of your passage? What is the structure that's in that passage? What is the context, and how does that context shape our understanding of that passage?" And a number of other questions along those lines.

Then we have time for discussion around their presentation. The 12 to 15 that are in that group, they're engaged in the discussion. It's like iron sharpening iron. We're trying to grow in our understanding of what the author is saying at that point in that passage. For the week that we're meeting together there are several sessions going on, and then as time goes on, they are required to train as well. When they go out to train, then later they come back and tell us about it, and we are wanting to know all about how did God work when you're training to a group? What challenges did you run into? Were you able to resolve those challenges? After they give their reports, there was plenty of discussion around it, we pray for them, and ask God to bless them all to continue to grow. There's this combination of doing and falling out in training and then conversation around them. Those of you who are sharp, most in this room, are starting to see that it's a discipleship process.

It's a hearing or coming to the Scriptures to learn what God is saying, with knowing and doing and using the Scriptures in ministry, and just like in Creation, just like on the Day of Pentecost, we're seeing transformation occur on a regular basis. Now, perhaps you run a church and your church is struggling, I won't let you be disheartened. There is a mystery in the way God works. You cannot reduce it to a formula, a system, but we see in the Word of God prophets like Jeremiah and there seems to be no fruit whatsoever in the ministry, and yet he was faithful to God, wasn't he? Having said that, however, I do think that the Scriptures are powerful when they're active. Why does one ministry flourish and sometimes there are ministries that do not? Why? That question should always drive us back to the Word of God. The measure of faithfulness is not ultimately the fruit. The measure of faithfulness is being faithful to God's Word, and God is pleased through His Word to bring about great fruit.

We have one last point here about the training method. As we live with mercy over a period of years, this is what we're looking to see unfold. In this first couple of years as we're meeting the mercy of the Word of God, we have come to expect God does a great things in that process; expect transformation. When I say transformation, you're thinking of

varied layers of transformation. There is that personal spiritual transformation that you want to pass on and you said, "I need God's heart." There is a mystery transformation that occurs, one group of pastors we went to they said, "We need to organize evangelism." People come to Christ and they grow in Christ and churches are planted. Other evidences of transformation that we have seen are in a way it causes a fellowship of pastors and churches that didn't ever work together to work together and grow together. We have even seen denominations that as a whole were being taken away from the commitment to God's Word come back to God's Word. A colleague of mine at work says, "You know, I used to go out wondering whether God was going to show up and bring this change as we immerse people in His Word." He said, "I've moved from wondering whether He would show up to expecting Him to show up, but that was partly because of a growing confidence in God's Word, and also the experience of seeing it happen multiple times."

It is a basic model where we're seeing this happen between year one and the start of year three, and then in this phase, we're seeing multiplication occur. The seeds of this multiplication have already been planted here. You can hear it in our training, that other commitment to multiply what we learned. It's always important that we think about, "Who am I going to give this away to?" I hope as we get into the book of Philippians you'll be thinking that today. Who am I going to give this away to? The strategy for multiplying has begun here to work out but the great fruit is standing between years three and the start of year five. A few years ago we had an outside organization evaluate our ministry. That could be a humbling process. We're all excited about what God has given us to do, and it's very easy to overestimate the effectiveness. From time to time, we need to have those outside evaluate what we do. There were a number of things that we learned in the process, ways we can grow, but there were some very encouraging things that they told us as well. After doing a year and half studying on our work, they concluded that every time we start a group of 12 to 15 pastors it ends up reaching 300 over a period of time.

If you want to reach the world, the way to do it is not in a large conference. Gatherings like these are good because we need one another. We are exposed to new things, and we're given a challenge. But you probably know almost instinctively that the best way to see change is through smaller groups. Why did Jesus choose 12 disciples? There may be a number of reasons, but I suspect one of them is because He wanted to go very deeply into a few, so that they could

affect the world. Invested in those few over a period of time, and through that God brought change. It was a combination of transformation and multiplication that He was working with them. They want this neatly divided, and of course, this is a simplification of our classes as well, but we do think this order is important. Think about it, if you didn't have transformation here, what would you be multiplying? Program? The strategy? Or would it really multiply in life change?

The beautiful thing in the story I told you earlier is that one pastor's heart had been changed and then that affected his other pastors he was training. I assume many of you in this room are involved in ministry, in leading ministries, and that if you walk away with nothing else today, just think about the relationship between transformation and multiplication. The third is what we call movement. This transformation is being multiplied, and eventually it grows into a movement of God's Word. Now, about five years ago, we met this point in our training system. We long to see a movement of God's Word; we learned that from the Scriptures, but with the movement of God's Word He needed leaders that can carry that on. It needs to go beyond us. It needs to outlive us. If it is tied to us, it will always be held back.

Now, that can be scary because you start to lose control. You reach your own limits or capacities, and some people are afraid of that. I think it's pretty exciting because leaders in different countries, they go beyond our imagination and our thoughts. They apply what they've learned in new ways. Several years ago we were working with some leaders in West Africa, and these leaders have developed some initiatives going into North Africa, and I bumped into one of these leaders in Africa, and he said to me with a little bit of uncertainty he says, "I want you to know that you really helped us but we're not doing exactly what you said to us." I said to him, "Well, tell me about it. What do you mean?" He said, "Well, we have 60 groups and they're made up of 10 to 15 people. They're all Muslims. They're not pastors, and were using these principles in immersing people in the Word of God." I wasn't a math major. I didn't even go with the number 15. I just went with the number 10. I went with the number 10, and I multiplied that by 60, and I came up with 600 people they're training in an unknowing way and immersing them with the Word of God. They're using this to evangelize people, and I went over and I gave him a big hug 'cause I thought, "This isn't possible!"

He had the liberty, the courage, to go beyond the system we had given, applied in new and creative ways. I'm looking forward to catching up with this friend again because I want to hear about the transformation God has planned. We are looking to see a movement of God's Word, so it must be an indigenous work at that point. It must be sustainable, as friends, we're looking to help in any way we can. We're looking for the key graduates that have come out of this, they're learning and applying all that they've been taught to carry out movement in God's Word. God has privileged us to work with 110 key leaders at this point and maybe 12 major areas of the world. These key graduates are driving the strategy and movements, and they're telling us, we think we should go over here next. We asked them questions, "But why do you think that?"

They're doing this at their own initiative and from their own time and their own resources. That's transformation. God has grabbed their hearts and they're excited, like God Himself. They want to see God's Word and carry out the other things. I thought that we'd begin this way to increase in context with what you're going to experience in the next few sessions. The next three sessions, we'll get immersed in the book of Philippians. We're going to seek to understand and to change by God's divine intent of purpose. One way we're going to learn some of these principles. I think you'll like them. You'll be able to take them and immediately use them. Those of you who have children, leave them to draw on a piece of paper for your child. For some of you, this must be really exciting, and others maybe just slightly disappointed because here's the first principle ...

What is that? A brother already knows the theory. It's a line, right? When you come back, we're going to start out by talking about this line, the importance of this line, what it represents, and what it teaches us on our past. Okay, I think we'll have a break now for 30 minutes.

Day one, session two

Okay, we're going to get started. While people are still coming in and finding their places, let me just make a comment. I didn't say too much about the selection process that we use. One of the brothers came up to me after or during the break and asked me about it. 2 Timothy 2:1-2 are important for the work we do. In verse one, Paul says to Timothy, "Be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus." That's the transformation we were talking about. Timothy, as a pastor, needed to feed on the grace of Jesus Christ for his strengthening, his health, his life. Then Paul says to Timothy, "And the

things that you've heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Paul is speaking to Timothy, and he says to entrust his teaching to faithful men who will be able to train others also. You can work this out in Chinese. Paul has four generations here. One of the things I think we learned from this is that we're always in process. A friend of mine says, "Always a trainee, always a trainer." We should be thinking about, "Who am I being trained by and who am I training?" Timothy was being trained by Paul, but Paul is also calling him to think about others that he was going to train. It's interesting. Paul didn't just say, "Training faithful men," but he said, "Train faithful men who would be able to teach others also."

He speaks about character and he speaks about competency. He's to look for men who have the character of faithfulness, but they also have the competency, because they're able to teach others also. Now, when you're thinking about leadership development and multiplication, I think these two qualities are very important. Think about it. If you have a faithful person who's not able to teach, it's probably going to stop with them. If you have a person that is able to teach, but they're not faithful, it's going to stop with them. There is a wisdom in the marriage of these two qualities, and so Paul says to Timothy, "Look for faithful men who are able to teach. They're the ones I want you to invest in, and through your investment in them the work will be multiplied. I'm not taking this as a prescriptive as if this is the only way to do it. Paul is speaking to Timothy rightly as the pastor of the church in Emphasis, and I think he's giving him wisdom for how to carry out that work in that context. This is the basis of how we think about our work and selection. While we're in this process of selecting the people that would be in the work that we're doing, we have a conversation with our partner who is from that area.

As we are describing the program or asking the partner who would be a good participant for this program, and so we take them to 2 Timothy 2:1-2 and talk about this. Beyond this we're asking other questions; you may have the time. Will they have the commitment for the number of years to walk through this discipleship process? Does their church approve? On many instances does their wife approve? That's an important question. There are a number of questions we're raising for our partner to make the decision about who will be involved. Now, there should be a place for anybody who wants to be in training to be trained. How would this training look for a leader of a church? He's going to be thinking through his own church and the layers of leaders that are there. He also makes it connected to a fellowship of churches

or pastors that he can also bring to training too, and then each of these leaders are thinking through their church in the layers of leadership. The strategy may look different from one area to another area, but our desire is to see the Word of God flowing powerfully through every church, through every nation. I'd skipped over a lot of that talking about selection.

Okay, in this booklet there are eight basic principles that we teach. Over a four-year process, we're working those principles every time that we get together with these group of trainees. When we first started the training we had about 15 principles. Part of the craft of teaching is to be able to simplify things to their basic essence. All the more important when it comes to a training that's built on multiplication. We entered a period where we were critically evaluating our ministry and we said, "This is way too confusing. We need to get the essence of these principles; what are most important to us." There is nothing sacred about these eight principles or the way they are stated. We believe that they help us to read the Word of God well, that it faithfully preach and teach God's words to others. Some of them we have drawn from other teachers and trainers, some of them we can define ourselves.

We're definitely not afraid to learn from others. We've also learned to adapt them from one culture to the next. The first two principles we call conviction principles because they really speak to the way we think about the task of the preacher or teacher of God's Word. The other six are more tools that help us work out the task of preacher or teacher. Let me start with those two conviction principles. The first one is simply what we call The Line. When I talk about this line is ... I could be drinking coffee with a friend and grab a napkin and just draw this on a napkin. I've traveled to many, many, parts of the world, but I have not yet found the culture that doesn't understand this concept. If at the end of this explanation, if you don't understand this concept let me know because I keep looking for the one place that will not understand it. This is a line, and this line stands for the Word of God, and the task of the preacher or teacher of God's Word is to stay on the line. We are not to go above the line and say more than what God has said; we are not to go below the line and say less than what God has said. To go above the line and say more than what God's Word actually says, we call legalism. To go below the line and say less than what God's Word says, we call liberalism. Do you know there's something that legalism and liberalism share in common? What do they share in common?

Participant:

This is not on the line.

Todd Kelly:

Yes, they're not on the line of God's Word. I don't know what the legal system is like in your part of the world. I come from the United States, and built within the legal system is a very important question. If a witness is going to appear in a court of law, as they come forward, they have to place their hand on the Bible, and they are asked this question. Do you swear to tell the truth? The whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Do you recognize the pattern? Do you swear to tell the truth? The whole truth, nothing but the truth? Isn't that brilliant? I don't know who wrote that question. If you do, let me know. I think whoever wrote the question understood human nature. They understood how easy it is for us to get off the line of truth. While my children were growing up I saw this all the time. There'll be a problem that occurs, something was taken. And you start asking questions ... silence. But then when you press them to talk it takes you quite a while before you arrive at the truth because sometimes they don't tell the whole truth. They leave details out or other times, they may say more than the truth, it kind of confused me.

I think every parent knows what I'm talking about. This problem is as old as the world is. In Genesis 2:15-17, God gives Adam very clear instructions about His rule within the garden. He's able to eat from any tree of the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We can see it very clearly, there's no confusion; we would say it's crystal clear. Then the serpent comes along in Chapter 3, and right from the very beginning he introduces death. Did God really say you should not eat of any tree of the garden? What's he doing? He's attempting to get Adam and Eve off of the line of God's Word, and Eve understands this conversation and at one point you see a touch of legalism in her answer. She says, "Not only are we to not eat of that tree of the knowledge of good and evil. we're not even to touch it." Where was that in Chapter 2? Might have been well intentioned, but that's not exactly what God said.

Of course, she takes of the fruit and she eats it. What was actually needed for the world to remain faithful to its Creator? What was needed? Adam needed to be the faithful creature of God's Word. He was there listening in on this conversation between the serpent and Eve. How do we know? Because the text says that Eve took the fruit and let Adam eat it also. Before either of them ate of the fruit of that tree, Adam should have stood up and declared the line of God's Word. How important is this? It's important enough that we could've

prevented the whole world from falling. How important is it? It was so important that Jesus entered in the world to reclaim this line. He entered into a temptation, too, and what did He do in the midst of that temptation? At every point, He reclaimed this line of God's Word.

He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." I think when I was young I heard the first part of that ... does not live by bread alone. There's something more to life than just physical food, but I didn't feel the weight of the end of Jesus' statement. Man does not live by bread alone but how does man live? Man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Jesus reclaimed the line, He gave his life so that we could live on the line. That's how important this principle is. This principle has implications for how we study the Bible, but it also has implications for how we live our lives. It's because of this that I think that some of God's words are a constant act of repentance. In that passage I quoted earlier from Isaiah 55, where the Word of God comes down like the snow and the rain, accomplishes God's purposes. To confirm that God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts; My ways are not your ways."

We need to expect that as we work in staying on the line it's going to confirm our thoughts and our ways. It's a constant act of repentance and faith, and that leads me to our next principle. We call this principle Text and Framework. Now, assuming that you want to stay on the line of God's Word. This is no small challenge, because our minds are limited, and the nature of our hearts, we still deal with sin. As we come to study God's Word, a text of God's Word, [let me] draw this a little bit. We're coming to sit down and study the book of Philippians. We need to recognize that as we do that we have a framework of thinking that operates in our minds. Some people refer to this framework as our presuppositions of worldview. Our framework of thinking occurs over a process of time. Over time we learn many things, our minds attempt to organize those thoughts, so they can be everything from the way we think about family, about education, about Jesus.

We developed a framework of thinking over time. I want to say that a framework can be a good thing, but we need to be aware that we operate with that framework thinking. When I come to the text of God's Word, what often happens is my framework shapes the way I read that text. When I was a child, I remember going to a store, and they have these cheap pairs of sunglasses, and the glasses might have yellow lenses or red lenses. When you put those glasses on, it

discolored everything. I mean, I could still see trees, but they look pink. I can see the sky, but it looked orange. And I always find myself wanting to take those glasses off quickly. We need to be aware that this way of approaching the text can discolor the text. Rather than reading the text through the lens of our framework, we need to learn to let this text reshape our framework. There are different ways to represent this visually. I think our booklet actually flips these two, so that text is up here, the frameworks down here. The important points we need to understand, we have a framework of thinking, and this framework affects the way I look at God's Word. This framework is shaped by my culture.

It's shaped by the time in which I live. It's shaped by the particular issues in society I struggled with, so I need to be aware that that's happening as I read God's Word. If you think about Jonah, he was likely struggling with his framework of thinking. The Ninevites lived in the north. They were a rising threat to his real security. They were known to be a vicious people. Jonah didn't want to see them succeed. So the way he had been raised and the way he fought culturally was affecting how he responded at least to God. There many places in the Bible where we see people's framework operating in a powerful way. You think of Mark Chapter 2? What happens? A paralytic was lowered through the roof. Jesus says to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Think about that as a word of God. Jesus speaks His Word. If you are the paralytic you keep thinking, "Thank you very much but, you know, I won't be able to walk." We don't know that for sure because that's not the direction that Christ goes. But we do know what the religious leaders were thinking. They thought blasphemy. Why? It's their framework of thinking. What they said is God alone can forgive sins. God alone can forgive sins. They thought some other things too. They thought for anybody else to forgive sins, that's blasphemy. Now, let me ask you a question. Was that a pretty good framework? Do you agree that ultimately God alone can forgive sins? That's pretty good. Would you agree that for anyone else to claim they can forgive sins? Yeah? That's pretty good. So what's the problem?

Translator:

Yes, but Jesus is God.

Todd Kelly:

Yeah. We thought Jesus was just a man. Viewed from their framework this makes perfect sense. But the Word of God was challenging their framework. They had a decision to make. Were they going to allow the Word of God to reshape their framework? Was it, which will be king,

the text or their framework? See that's the fundamental problem. When you start thinking about this principle of text and framework you see it everywhere in the Word of God. Do you remember when Peter was there in Joppa and that sheet was lowered in front of him? What did God say to him? Peter says, "Why I would never take any of that." And God says to Peter, "Do not call unclean what I call clean." The second time, then the third, and each time Jesus says the same thing. Peter has a decision to make. Everything about his framework said *do not partake*. And of course Jesus is using this as an illustration to get him to go see Cornelius in his home because God is going to do a work among the Gentiles. Is Peter going to go?

Finally, he decides to go. You know the story, but what you might not remember is when he comes back, the church warns that he had a fellowship in Cornelius's home, and the church was in an uproar, and so Peter tells the story, and his logic is, "Who was I to stand in the way of the Holy Spirit? God's Spirit has spoken that Word." And Peter said his framework must submit to the Word of God. So they call these conviction principles. A line of God's Word text and framework. The line teaches us the importance of God's Word. Text and framework teaches us that we must be aware and prepare to submit our framework. This is the task of a preacher or teacher of God's Word. It's the task of the student of God's Word, and it is going to take a lot of work and diligence to do it well. But this is the path of discipleship for following Jesus. Now we'll just stop there for a minute. May I ask if you have any questions or reflections?

Translator:

So now so far I just have a thought of our framework must submit to God's framework, so how?

Todd Kelly:

Yes.

Translator:

And our next question, how do we submit to God?

Todd Kelly:

Great. This is a process that we have to rely on God to work in our hearts. An example would be the pastor I mentioned that said, "I need the heart of God, please pray for me." It really has to do with the heart disposition and a submission to God, to be humble before God. Wisdom, and ability to think through what is my framework and when is that coming into conflict with the Word of God? I think it just comes down in praying that God will help us be aware and help us to submit

as we learn His Word. I think it's a simple answer; again, it's a profound answer. We carry it with us through life. So what should happen over time is God reveals to us areas of our framework that are out of the line with His. We can give an example from my own culture.

I can't speak to your culture and I don't want to try. One of the things about American culture is a desire for security and self-reliance. I enjoy reading about business and entrepreneurship, investments. But when we read the literature that is out there in our culture, it's all about security in this life. You cannot live in that culture without being affected by that in some way. And many people they think about the life they live is I need to be balanced. I need time over here, time over there, I need to save over here, invest in different ways that will bring security to my life. And so the way they think about finances comes over into the way they think about Christian ministry. You don't take on risk in life and you don't take on risk in your Christian life. So some of the line you would hear is about living a balanced life. Now my point is not that it's wrong to invest or think about this world and our security or loved ones in this world, but my point is to say when does that kind of thinking come in conflict with the Word of God?

So Jesus says, "If any man will deny Himself, let him take up his cross and follow Me." I don't hear the language of balance. How can I take up my cross and also live a balanced life? It makes no sense. Do you understand? So I think verses like that speak to our culture and it makes us think about our framework. Again, the point isn't to say we don't save or invest money. It's more about, "Am I holding back and playing it safe in the Christian life?" So there's not one quick answer to this. I think it's a process that works in our hearts. Any other quick questions? Alright. Let's go to the Book of Philippians. Let me just get a read, be honest, there's no shame here just how many had the opportunity to read the Book of Philippians? In our process of training, we read the book and we see a value in just reading the whole book. So we will ask you to read it for several times in preparation. And often in our training we'll read it several times while we're together, and as we are reading the Word of God we're trying to see what God's divine intent is. What is He saying as a whole and how is God seeking to change us through it?

Alright. Due to the time I'm just going to move right in without reading it now. And I want to begin by asking you a question. We didn't go to the principle we call *genre*. It's a French word, and it simply means a style of writing. In every one of our cultures we have different styles of communication. In nearly every other culture people like to tell stories,

and stories can be a lot of fun. Sometimes stories are jokes, and we all laugh at the end of the story. Other times, stories can be sad, or they can illustrate a point. So within a style of writing there is also a tone that is working. If you were to look in this book of Philippians, how would you describe the kind of style that it is? Any thoughts? A letter? Yes, it's a letter. Who wrote the letter? Paul. And who is he writing to?

Participants:

Philippians.

Todd Kelly:

Yes, to a specific church, right? You learn about that right when you open the book. So Paul and Timothy, they are writing to all the saints in this church, and then specifically they identify elders and deacons. So we have a style which is a letter. We ought to begin to identify some of the features of the letters. What else could we say about letters? What are some of the features we see in a letter? There's somebody who is being written to. Somebody who receives it. That also means what? There's an author or somebody who sends. So that's the part before I began to identify. What else do we find in a letter? Say it again. The Gospel? Yes, of course the Gospel is in it. Correct. Yes. In terms of the features of a letter, we have an author, how does he begin his letter? And the greeting. And how might he close his letter?

Translator:

Blessings.

Todd Kelly:

With a blessing ...

Translator:

Blessings and ...

Todd Kelly:

... and the body. Now these are features that you and I would probably use in writing a letter to somebody today. So this really isn't that different than our own style of writing. There are many reasons why people might write a letter. There are issues that are involved. But there's also a kind of tone. If you think of a letter like the Book of Revelation, and I don't know how you read that, to me it sounds like a tone of rebuke. Now, how would you describe the tone of this letter?

Translator:

Joy – it means joy.

Todd Kelly:

Okay, there's joy in it. What other words likely used?

Participant:

Thanksgiving.

Todd Kelly:

Thanksgiving?

Participant:

Prayer.

Todd Kelly:

Anything else? Any other ways you'd like to describe it?

Participant:

No ...

Todd Kelly:

Okay, there's a fellowship.

Participant:

Thankful ...

Todd Kelly:

Thankful? Okay. There's a spirit of thanks.

Translator:

Oh, the heart of Jesus.

Todd Kelly:

Okay, you see the heart of Jesus – yeah.

Translator:

Yeah.

Todd Kelly:

Let me ask you from verse 1 and 2. You pick up any words of tone on these verses? Often, we read right through the greeting and we read right past the closing without picking up the way Paul says it. What tone is Paul setting right through the very start? What does Paul want them to know?

Participant:

They rejoice.

Todd Kelly:

Did you get that from verse 1 and 2?

Translator:

... want them to know overseers, the deacons, and the neighbors they are all in Christ.

Todd Kelly:

Okay. Yes, good.

Translator:

Yeah.

Todd Kelly:

They are in Christ.

Translator:

Yeah, to have the heart of Christ.

Todd Kelly:

Okay. He sees them all as one collective group. There is something that unites them. It is the Lord Jesus that they're united in. What does he want them to know in their experience?

Yes. He wants them to know grace and peace. He says grace to you and peace from God our Father the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we read right through his words. I think they're pretty important. In Chapter 4 in the Book of Philippians. Here in this book, Paul closes the book. What purpose does he leave them with?

Translator:

A grace out of Lord Jesus Christ.

Todd Kelly:

Yeah, isn't that interesting? It comes back with this word here. And he wants the grace of Jesus to be in their spirit. He wants their experience to be one as full of Jesus' grace and peace. Now, why would he say that? Both at the beginning of the letter and at the end of the letter.

Translator:

Yes, because they experience time of people suffering.

Todd Kelly:

Difficulty, suffering. What else does he bring in Chapter 4?

Translator:

Contentment in the Lord.

Todd Kelly:

Be content in the Lord. What comes earlier in Chapter 4?

Translator:

Oh yeah, he unites the ...

Todd Kelly:

Okay. He wants them to be united. Are they united? What's more of the big problems going on within the church?

Translator:

Yeah, there was the vision.

Todd Kelly:

There is the vision. There are two women in the church. These are not two women that are over on the side or way in the back of the room. These two women were key influencers in his church. They had done so much for the Gospel. Help these women who had labored side-by-side with me in the Gospel together. We sometimes – in the Book of Philippians, I've seen words like joy, and we quickly make the assumption that this was a church that was full of joy. But we learned in this book there's a strife in the church. One example of that is the two women and the conflict that's here.

In Chapter 3 there are those who are attacking the Gospel itself. There's been quite a conflict going on in this church, and so we find that Paul writes some letters, and the tone of these letters, isn't like Revelation which is a letter of rebuke. Letter of correction. Strong word, challenging ... This is a word coming from Paul as he describes himself as servant of the Lord. He wants for them to have a grace and the peace of God in their everyday experience of Christian faith, and Paul is an incredible shepherd, and he's shepherding the people in Philippi from the very beginning to the very last so that they will have this kind of experience. Does that sound pretty good to you? Do you know this experience in your life with that grace? Is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in your spirit in an ongoing way? Do you know his peace in our heart? When the challenge of church in ministry is confronting you, is this a living reality?

If you say it's not always the case. You're with me and we're in Philippi together. What was it that Paul said to those in Philippi that helped to

bring this grace and peace into their experience? And what's he saying to you and me that can help us enter into this experience in an ongoing way? And what in our framework of thinking is getting in the way? What is in the Word of God that we need to hear that helps clear the air and enables us to breathe freely again? This Book of Philippians has a lot to say to us. When we come back after lunch we're going to dig deeper, because we've just begun to scratch the surface of this book, and hopefully as we dig deeper you will come to see this grace of God, this peace of God, that is able to hear us through conflict, suffering, and trial, and challenge to our faith. And we're going to go to another one of our principles. We refer to this as asking good questions.

Asking good questions. I don't know what your experience was but when I was growing up the teacher at school told us that there were no bad questions. Did you ever hear that from somebody? There's no bad questions? But this teacher that said there were no bad questions, she didn't really believe it. Because there was a question that was asked, and then another student asked the same question that was just asked, and she became upset. So as a child I learned pretty quickly that there are some questions that are bad questions. But we're going to talk about what are good questions to be asking Paul in Philippians so that we understand this transformational attempt, purpose as it was. Any questions that are on your mind as we come to an end here at the session?

Okay, we're going to be dismissed and we'll have lunch and we'll be back after lunch I guess. Yes, let's pray. Let's pray together.

Father we thank You for our time here this morning. We want to understand Your words, be changed by You, be calm with our patterns of our thinking and ways of acting. We need You to work in our hearts. We want to know this experience that Paul is desiring for the Philippians. As we dig deeper into this worthwhile book with You, help us. As like Paul prayed for Timothy to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Father, as we go to share together a meal, thank you for providing such a wonderful food for us and a beautiful environment to join in fellowship with other brothers and sisters in Christ. Grace of Jesus.

Participants:

Amen.

Day one, Session three

Todd Kelly:

Okay, hopefully you all had a good lunch and a time of fellowship together. And you're very alert. This is always a hard time of the day for me so I'll try not to fall asleep if you promise not to fall asleep. Okay, as we begin let me just draw together a spread of what we've done here. We've looked at a couple of conviction principles. One of them is divine, and we talked about the task of the preacher/teacher, the Word of God is to stay on the line of God's Word. Along with that we've looked at this idea of a textbook framework. I realize this is small; sorry about that. But hopefully just a simple symbol will help you recall in your mind the discussion around it. And that is created in awareness for us that we do come with a certain way of thinking, certain patterns. As we study God's Word, we need to allow that to work to reshape our framework of thinking, and if we don't it will be very difficult to stay on the line of God's Word. These are conviction principles. And then we can look at genre. I'm not very good at drawing, so what I'm giving you here is some different fruits.

Okay, this is terrible. This is my pineapple. But when it comes to genre you're thinking there's fruit just as there's the Word of God but it comes in different forms. You need to learn how to treat each one differently. So each one is different; with the banana you peel it, to eat it. But of course if you try to bite into a pineapple, that will be a little tricky. But you're trying to get at the richness of the fruit, but just as there are different fruits, there are different styles of genre in writing. That style is going to shape the way we understand the message, and the message is the line of God's Word. And now we're going to go into another principle of asking good questions. What is a good question? How would you answer that?

Translator:

Ah, okay. It will prompt the person to think deep question.

Todd Kelly:

Okay. A good question from thinking, careful thinking.

Translator:

Yeah.

Todd Kelly:

Critical thinking?

Translator:

Yeah, you will just think ...

Todd Kelly:

Someone else? How would you explain it? What's a good question?

Translator:

Okay, to help others life to grow and build them up.

Todd Kelly:

Okay, a good question's going to help you to grow. A good question will draw people's hearts. When I'm asking this question, "What is a good question? I'm asking, What is a good question to ask about the Book of Philippians?" Let me give you an example from the Book of Jonah. If I ask the question, how is it possible for a great fish to swallow a man? From the perspective of the Book of Jonah is that a good question or a bad question?

Participant:

Bad question.

Todd Kelly:

It's a bad question.

Participant:

... not all the point of Book Jonah.

Todd Kelly:

That's not the point of Book of Jonah. What is your name?

Participant:

Migda.

Todd Kelly:

You can start for today. Okay, you go to the board, and start – it's a question and answer. It's not the purpose of the author to tell us why or how a great fish swallowed Jonah. Let me ask you another question. Why did Jonah flee to Tarshish in the first place? Is that a good question or a bad question? It's a great question, isn't it? And it's actually the genre that is prompting you to ask that question. Verses 1 and 2, Chapter 1 he's saying –The Word of the Lord came to Jonah saying. The verse 3 says, and Jonah fled to Tarshish, and you're like, where is that in the Bible before? A prophet of God's fleeing from God? What just happened? Why would he do that? You see the writer the way he unfolds the story shocks you into asking the question. But he also makes you walk through two more chapters, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, before you get to the answer in Chapter 4, and that is like a

dam that bursts wide open. And Jonah says that is why I fled to Tarshish in the first place.

So in the telling of the story, the genre, the writer comes back to it. My simple definition of a good question is this, a good question to ask is "Is the text leading us down the path of the author?" So you're always asking another question. Is this question leading me down the path of the author? Or is it guiding me off the path of the author? Ultimate task is to stay on the line of God's Word, so I want to stay on the line with the Book of Philippians. So I'm going to give you an assignment just now, and I want you to just link up with two or three people near you. Group two is fine. I want you to look at the opening verses of the Book of Philippians, specifically Chapter 1 verses 3 to 11. Read what is there, and then come up with a couple of questions that you think are good questions to ask. Questions that you think are leading us down with path of the author. I'm going to give you about five minutes or so to do this so you need to work quickly. Everyone clear?

I asked you to look at verses 3 to 11, and to come up with a couple of questions that you think are leading us down to the path of the author. What did you come up with? What part do you want to say or express through these verses? In verse 6, Paul says, "God has started the good work," so what is the good work? Yes, so, in verse 8, it says, "God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus." What is the affection of the Christ Jesus all about? Hmm, yes, and also verse 9 and 10, why does Paul want them to abound in love, and knowledge and depth of insight? Those are some great questions. The first two questions were *what* questions, and the last one was a *why* question. What questions are dealing with basic observations? A *why* question is an interpretative question. Sometimes, we learn a very direct reason right from the text. In that sense, it is an observation, "What's their need?" *Why* by its very nature takes us to make a deeper level of understanding.

Yes, and what is that good work that God began? What do you think it is? To spread the Gospel. Yes, what do you need to do? Okay, you get that directly out of the text or is that a definition that you're bringing to the text?

Translator:

In Chinese, you mean?

Todd Kelly:

Yes, what was that verse? Verse 5 in Chinese it says, "Flourish the gospel." Yes, that's the Chinese. Yes. I think this is the translation. In Chinese, it means, you're working together with me, and being flourished in the Gospel. In English and also the SP Bible which translates literally from Greek, there's no, like a flourishing bloom, or success, this word, keyword. Well, it's the idea to keep it in the Chinese of *working together*. The actual word behind that translation is quite at the end. That word is often translated in English which is *fellowship* or *partnership*. In English, fellowship can be a word that isn't often clear. If we go to a Starbucks with a non-Christian, we're having coffee. We go to Starbucks with a Christian, you would say, we're having a fellowship, but that's not what the word means. The idea of these words is not just being with Christians. It's more of along the lines of the business term, where you have Christians coming together around a common purpose. They're investing their resources, they're taking on risk, for the cause of the Gospel.

In business, it could be like a joint venture. I don't know if you thought about fellowship in that way before, but that's what it actually means, and we can see that idea unfolded in the book of Philippians. We'll get into this a little bit more. What other questions did you come up with?

Participant:

How does Paul pray?

Todd Kelly:

Look at verse 3. We would say, "This is over the top." He says, "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you always. In every prayer." That line in verse 7, it says it's justifying his feelings for me. "It's right for me to feel this way about you because I hold you in my heart." Why? You're partakers with me of grace. He defines that in two ways. They share with him in his imprisonment and in defense and confirmation of the Gospel, and then in verse 8, it's just so incredible what he feels. It's almost like an oath in a court of law. He calls on God as his witness. God knows how I yearn for you all, and he doesn't simply say, "With my affections."

His affections are so deep that the way he describes it as with the affections of Jesus Christ. Do relationships like this really exist in the church of Christ? Is it exaggeration? Why does Paul feel this way?

Participant:

He said, "The foundation is Christ."

Todd Kelly:

Yes, in fact, he started that way, right? Then, very specifically, it's centered in this partnership with the Gospel they share. This isn't a human arrangement. That's why as our sister said, "Verse 6 is so important." Verse 5 is the reason that Paul's so thankful to God for the Philippians. There's so much joy for him. In verse 6, he expressed his confidence that the partnership that God began in the Philippians is going to continue until the day of Christ. Verses 7 to 8, they justify Paul's feelings for the Philippians, and verse 9 is a prayer for all of them. That their growth and development in this partnership would flourish. They were there to flourish, to the glory and praise of God. We're asking questions that are really helping to unpack this path of the author for me. I want to take you to the end of the book, and we want to still ask these questions. One helpful way to read a letter is to see the beginning at the end. Often in good literature, you'll find that writers introduce the subject and then they come back to it again.

It is a way of introducing and then tying up the message. Turn in Chapter 4, and look at verses 10 through verse 20. What similarities do you see here to the opening of the letter? What ideas might be helpful for us to see the path of the author that carries us through this book? Take a look and talk about it with your neighbors. I'll give you a few more minutes to do this. Okay, are you ready? What do you see here in verses 10-20? Or some of your observations or questions that help lead down the path of the author. Yes?

Translator:

Brother says, "In verse 10, why didn't they have an opportunity?"

Todd Kelly:

Okay, good. Some other questions? What is the pattern that you see?

Participant:

I see that there is a partnership ... a gospel partnership ...

Todd Kelly:

Yes. The idea of partnership in the Gospel is again introduced. He speaks of that in verse 14, and very specifically. It's the idea of their giving of financial resources that they stay in this partnership. Paul's concern isn't just to have his need met; partnership with the Gospel goes much deeper than that. Paul is concerned for their spiritual benefit, for their reward. There's this other-centeredness that Paul has with him. Now, we are starting to touch an idea here that I think is significant for the book of Philippians. It's right in the center of the message. This idea of partnering together in the Gospel. You can test this by looking at the whole book. You just see the language of

partnership being expressed. If we had plenty of time, I would have you do the research yourself. It's always more profitable that way when we are doing work. Think through this letter that many times. Paul is using language that is suggestive of this partnership with the Gospel. Paul is speaking about their prayers for him, and he believes he is going to be released through their prayers. Verse 18 and 19 says, "Yes, I will rejoice." This is in Chapter 1. Why is Paul rejoicing? He says, "I know through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance."

When Paul thinks about dying and being with Christ. Verse 24 of Chapter 1, he says, "But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you." Paul says, "I think I will remain in the flesh and I am going to continue with you for your progress in joy and faith." There is a give and take in this partnership. They are praying and Paul is spending his life for them, and then he wants them to share this kind of attitude with one another. Isn't it striking in what he says in verse 27? "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ," and notice the way he says this, "Then whether I come and see you or in my absence I hear that you're standing firm with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel." He desires the unity of mind and heart, and unity in their efforts as they work out all the Gospel partnership that God has brought them into. This kind of language will continue on throughout the book. I am not going to take the time to look at all of them right now. What we are trying to discover, what is the path the author is leading us down? What are those questions that are going help us to see that path more clearly?

Okay, any other questions that you came up with as you look at the last part of Chapter 4? Good, good. What are some of the specific ways we can contribute for partnering in the Gospel? Okay, so what our brother here is asking, it's a really good question. That is leading us from the author's intent and purpose into application. Good applications were grown out of God's divine purpose in the task. Okay, any other questions that you came up with?

Participant:

In verse 13, what does he really mean?

Todd Kelly:

Yes, this is a great verse. We sometimes refer to this as a calendar verse. You know calendars, when they put them together, Christian calendars, and they pull verses out of the Bible and put it on to some scene. Yes, they lift them out of context and they give a generalized principle. Is Paul saying here that he can lift a thousand pounds every?

As he walks up to the bar, he keeps chanting this to himself, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." What is he saying in this context? Sufferings? Okay, where did you see that?

Translator:

Verse 12.

Todd Kelly:

He knows how to be in need, he knows how to abound. He's learned the secret of how to face life when he has a lot or when he has nothing. In the illustration of Paul picking up the thousand pound weight, how would you answer that question? What if he can't pick it up? It doesn't matter, does it? Because Paul has learned the secret. The secret of what? It's about contentment, isn't it? Yes, so whether he could pick it up or not, it really doesn't matter, because *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens*, means I can be content in any situation. This is why context is so important. It's not *I can do anything because of Christ*. He's saying, "I can be *content* in any situation." That makes a lot of difference, doesn't it? It's not about Paul's advance. It's not for him about the gift he's been given for his own personal benefit. It's about seeing the Philippians thrive in this partnership that God's called them to. I don't know how many Christian leaders we have in the world. This does speak to us, doesn't it?

Is our heart more joyful because we are receiving some personal benefits in our leadership or is it more joyful because we are seeing the partnership in the Gospel flourish? What is the divinely implanted purpose at this very point in the book of Philippians? What other charge do you think God is bringing here to leaders in the church or the whole of the church as we partner together with the gospel? Yes, it's about the Gospel and achievement. Yes, it really is. It's seeing the progress of the Gospel lived out. It takes the attention off of ourselves, and puts them on to the Word of Christ through His partnership, and this generation joined in the heart of Paul. When you think about it this is really exciting stuff. Paul says in verse 10, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that you revived your concern for me." Why? It thrills his heart to see a Gospel partnership lived out. That should thrill our hearts, too, right? It's a Word of God. Paul's convinced that He who began that good work will carry it out until the day of Christ. It's a living reality. If you think back about Paul's opening prayer in Chapter 1, he's praying for them that their love will abound more and more. It's interesting of all the things Paul could've prayed for he doesn't pray for a larger vision, he doesn't pray for a clearer strategy, he

prays that their love may grow more and more. Why that prayer? What would be the answer that leads us down the path of the author?

I think Paul knows that this is the one quality that's essential in the partnership with the Gospel that we have.

Participant:

It's a growing love. It's not merely sentimental. It's a love that has knowledge and discernment with it, and it leads to great fruitfulness. Paul's praying so that they will be filled with fruit of righteousness. Chapter 4 gives that part of that fruit of righteousness. The more we work with the book of Philippians, we are looking to see what is the path of the author that we see in this part? Let me just give you four questions you can take with you for any text in the Bible. We've asked these questions in this process. The first question is, *What does it say?* That's a basic observation question. The other one is ... *Why does it say it this way?* That's looking at what it actually says but reflecting on why does it say it this way and not another way? "What is the specific way?" Paul says. What nuance does he use it? Take the example of verse 5. Chapter one?

Translator:

Chapter 1 verse 5.

Todd Kelly:

What is it that's filling Paul's heart with joy? It's this partnership, this working together for the Gospel, but why does he put it that way and not another way? You see the second question is leading us to deeper reflection, and it leads us to say, "It's important to weigh Paul's words." That's going to help to go down the path of the author. The third question is, *Why is it here?* In other words, if he had left this part out, what would be missing? That's often a helpful way of being able to see the significance of what's there. Think about Chapter 1 verse 6, if this verse weren't there, what would we miss? While we miss the fact that this Gospel partnership has a divine worship included in the Bible itself. We miss the fact that because it has a divine worship it will have a divine patience. Within the context of Philippians, Paul is imprisoned in a way. There are these grave concerns on what's going on in the church of Philippi – and yet, Paul can speak to them with such confidence. That confidence is sharpening their hearts, by Paul's speaking there with confidence. He knows this is a Word of God, that God will bring him salvation.

When you ask a question like, *Why is it here?* again, it takes you deeper in reflection into the importance and significance of each

statement, and how those statements work together as a whole. The last question I'm going to give you is, *What is surprising about it?* Now, we are not looking for things that aren't actually here in the text. We are not looking to be clever or super smart, but we are suggesting that the Bible – God's way of thinking is often full of the unexpected, and we see the language of the unexpected lighten the words of the Scripture. I think we are recognizing that and the expressions that Paul is using about his affection for the Philippians. A brother asked, "Why does Paul feel this way about the Philippians?" It's a little bit surprising, isn't it? As I look out at the world I don't see that kind of affection flowing very often.

What is it that's going on here that generates such deep love and affection from Paul to the point where he says, "Do you understand the affections of Jesus Christ?" Chapter 2 is going to explain some of that to us. Although he was God, he did not consider that something you can grasp. He gave himself, He came and came in the form of the servant, and even to the point of death. Certainly that's showing us something of the affections of Jesus Christ. Paul is saying, "I yearn for you with the affections of Jesus." That is a very special relationship. It's an extraordinary relationship. Why is it there? It's surprising. These questions I have found here, just four simple questions that help us go down the path of the author. There's a vivid art here cultivating these questions and use of these questions to work with texts in the Bible. In developing the skill you can't be satisfied with the first answer you get to the questions. Much Bible study begins and stops with question one, but if you want the richness, you have to work them all. This is asking big questions.

I wonder now if you have any reflections about asking questions.

Participant:

About Christ, what you said was why is Paul doing this, right? I believe to gain this, we study the ... I think we need to look also far the ... That the few go with somebody to Christ that's part because we are lazy. That's how we could learn biblically and historically, share the Gospel with somebody, it's not ... the things that we know. That is why one of the things I do, I call it in my training [inaudible 04:01:23.12] Christ.

Todd Kelly:

Yes.

Participant:

... method of discipleship is a long process ... preach the Gospel and say, "Now, you take care. I'll send you some letters, you continue." No, it is a ...

Todd Kelly:

Yes. If I could just paraphrase. I think what our brother is saying is that, Paul had invested deeply in the lives of the Philippians. He was essential to their coming to faith with Christ. They were like spiritual babies. One of the principles that we also teach is called Traveling Instructions. It is about context. In studying Philippians, we need to go back to the book of Acts. Acts 16 tells us about the founding of the church in Philippi. Of course, the first part in that chapter is the Macedonian vision Paul had where Paul ... Then we see the story of Philippians' conversion, and eventually, the conversion of the Philippian jailer. It's an amazing chapter of transformation of lives. Especially with the Philippian jailer. He goes from feeding them to binding up their wounds. I think when Paul says to them, "He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it." It's a reflection back on Acts 16. Paul did invest deeply in them. Paul also knew the amazing work of God did among them. It's always important to go back and look at the context in Philippians, but also how does Philippians fit within the whole of God's Word. Any other reflections or questions?

Participant:

Yes, how do you draw your applications?

Todd Kelly:

These questions aren't designed to ask a specific application or question of each one. These are just helpful tools to unlocking the meaning of the text. The text itself and God's purpose in that text, is going to drive you to the application. Anything else? Okay, we are going to take a break and we will reconvene at 3:30.

Day one, session four

Todd Kelly:

Well, as we begin this session, let me just say it's been a joy to be with you in these few times together. I wasn't quite sure how it would work out with such a large group, but it's a joy to be in the Word of God with you, and to see your eagerness to study the Word. We are not obviously going to cover everything in detail of the book of Philippians. I hope that it's giving you a little bit of a taste for where you are when you approach the Word, that you can leave here with a few more tools to better study the Word of God. And that you see the

relationship between the Word of God and transformation. A kind of transformation that can lead to a movement of the Word of God.

If your heart has been moved through our time together you can imagine how when you have a group of 12-15 people leading over in one period of time. They are seeking not only to understand the Word and be changed by that, but also to bring that to other. That has the potential to fuel a movement of the Word of God. We met in Thailand, in a large conference with 45 of our key graduates from around 23 countries. 45 in 23 countries.

They said, "If you want a vital sustainable movement of the Word of God, it begins with personal transformation." If you want to build in the lives of others, it begins with the transformation of your own heart. The Word of God did that for the apostle Paul, and he multiplied his life in the transformation in the lives of many others. These principles that we began in those ... and there are several more. We learned them individually, but at the end of the day, they worked together in a very integrated way. You might recall, when we were looking at genre and style of writing this letter, we were asking good questions. When we go on, and look at structures, then we're going to be asking good questions. What I hope to do in the time that we have remaining, is to look at the structure of this book. You think a little bit about what is the main idea in transformational intent of this book? Maybe share by thinking through with the application in the end. Okay, I've introduced this idea of structure. Okay, is black better than red? Brothers and sisters, which color is best for you to see in the back, especially brothers and sisters sitting in the back? The red one or black one?

Participants:

Black.

Todd Kelly:

Okay, as we talk about structures, there's a different place to illustrate this. I want to ask you what you see on the board that's true.

Translator:

Oh yes, square and circle.

Todd Kelly:

Okay, any other observations about the squares and the circles? The Gospel, why is it black?

Translator:

Oh yes. It's a bread slice, a bread. Pieces of bread.

Todd Kelly:

Oh, these look like bread?

Translator:

Yes, a bread.

Todd Kelly:

One terrible artist.

Translator:

That is Chinese character ping. He has a face.

Todd Kelly:

Now, what do you see?

Translator:

Oh, a car! Yes, thank you.

Todd Kelly:

My art isn't that bad, though. They could see a car. It's supposed to be a car. What do you see here or here that is similar?

Translator:

Yes, both of them have a circle and a square.

Todd Kelly:

Yes, they both have circles and squares. What else?

Translator:

Oh, the first line is not in order. The other one has a form.

Todd Kelly:

Okay, same number of units here as well as here, but the difference is that this takes on a form, a shape. Put a number of it here. Here is my simple definition of structure. When we say that in a passage or if we look at the Bible, it has structure. What we are saying is that there are units of thought that are arranged in a specific way, to serve a particular purpose. This is one of the beautiful things about the way the Bible is put together. Is that they have clear units of thought, but they are not random or arranged. There are some religions in the world that are at very random units, but we see order in God's Word, and that Word is serving in very particular ways.

What we want to do is look at the book of Philippians together and say, "Is there a structure here in this letter?" This is another one of our principles that helps us to stay on the line of God's Word. As we look at these units of thought and their arrangement, we could do this at a very detailed level or a more jumbled level. Think of it as if you are flying in an airplane or you are in a very tall building. When you fly in an airplane, you get up to the 34,000 foot level. You are seeing the big expanse, and you could see variation, but you are seeing the higher level. If you fly down to the 5,000 foot level, you are seeing much more detail. I am going to stay near the 30-40,000 foot level. This would be the 40,000 foot level. This is for the 10,000 and the 5,000 ... As we look at the book Philippians, let's try to stay more at this higher level.

Look at the book of Philippians. As we begin this letter, we already began the work of structure when we looked at John. We saw a distinct unit in Chapter 1 verses 1 to 2. It's the creed. We also saw another unit at the end of the book. That comes in Chapter 4. Verse 21 to 23. Then we went a step beyond that. What did we see in the opening of this letter? We know a new unit began in verse 3. Let me pause here for a minute. How do you detect where a new unit begins and it ends? Any thoughts? You do this all the time as you read, but now we're reflecting on a question. How do we know we've changed from one unit of thought to another unit of thought?

Translator:

The content is different.

Todd Kelly:

Yes, good. The content is different so, the subject matter is shifted, and we can see that subject matter coming to a close. Are there any other ways that you detect it's a new unit of thought?

Translator:

Oh, yes, there are some keywords.

Todd Kelly:

Excellent.

Translator:

Do you have a star?

Todd Kelly:

Yes, I think you could get a star. What's your name?

Participant:

Sherry.

Todd Kelly:

Sherry, you get a star for the afternoon. That was great. Those are two basic ways that we do this, and if you wanted to teach your children, I think you can help them see this. We have content. Keywords. What are some of those keywords that signal a shift?

Translator:

But, however, these words.

Todd Kelly:

Excellent, others?

Translator:

The beginning word.

Todd Kelly:

Okay, sometimes you might see a repetition, but it's usually changing, it's a variation of the repetition. One of Paul's favorite words, "finally". You find these words or phrases that signal a shift. As we work through this, I want you to look for a change in content and keywords that show a shift. The reason we know that verse 3 is a new unit is largely because the content shifts. Yes? If you look at Chapter 1 verse 3, and we're trying to stay at a 40,000 foot level. How far down in terms of verses do you think this unit lasts? Verse 11.

Translator:

11.

Todd Kelly:

Okay. You think that's probably where this unit goes? Now, why do you think it goes through verse 11? Yes, yes. The content shifts down in verse 12. He begins to talk about his sufferings in verse 12, and he raises something very important there, it's his perspective on his suffering. Verse 12 is the very key to understanding the direction of his book. See, Paul's perspective and his interest is in the advance of the Gospel. He wants the Philippians to understand and to share this perspective with him. He's staying in prison, that's not a big deal. Actually, it's significant because it's serving to advance the Gospel.

Now, talk about surprising. If I was in Paul's place in prison, I would've been thinking, "Oh, this is very difficult." I suppose, if I was in the church of Philippi I would be wondering, "Our leader is in prison, does

this mean the Gospel Word is coming to an end?" Then Paul says, "Far from it. It's actually serving for the advancement of the Gospel." Every time the prison guard changes, you can see Paul's there with a sense of excitement. "A fresh crew of soldiers here. They're going to be chained to me for the next several hours. He is quite excited about this, and he wants the Philippians to know that the Gospel is going forward. In fact, it's reaching Caesar's household. Isn't that amazing? This is God's way of doing things. Now, I would have never have planned it this way. This wouldn't be my idea of how to spread the Gospel. If I would have wanted to take the Gospel to Caesar himself, I would have thought, "I need to enter the palace court." God says, "No, that's not the way we are going to do it. Paul, I want to put you in prison and the Gospel will work its way out." Caesar won't meet you in the palace gate, but the other guard that will be watching you, they can walk in freely. At the end of the book, all the saints are greeting the believers of Philippians, especially Caesar's household. That's absolutely amazing.

We know we're in a new section here in verse 12. Here, we see Paul's prayer for the Philippians, his thankfulness for them, in partnership of the Gospel. How far do we go from verse 12? Where did we end in unit?

Participant:

Yes, 26.

Todd Kelly:

Anyone else think differently? Okay, okay, so maybe down through 30. It depends on what level you're going to if it's 40,000 foot, 30,000, 20,000, but I want to keep this together for now. The reason I prefer to keep it together is because first, the link in verse 27. Paul has talked about himself and his experience through verse 26, and then he is encouraging the Philippians to enter in with him into that experience. He says, "Only let your life be worthy of the manner of the Gospel." In verse 12, he talked about, "What has happened to me?" Verse 13, he identifies that as his imprisonment, and then in verse 30, he ended this unit. He speaks about the Philippians being engaged in the same conflict. You could see how in the opening verses 12 and 13 is speaking about that conflict in prison. And at the end it's coming back to you, "Join with me in this." You could divide this into smaller units first for sure. One way of doing that would be 12 to 18, 19 to 26, and then 27 to 30.

When I'm teaching structure, the reason I use this analogy of the 40,000, 20,000, 5,000 foot level is to recognize there are different

ways which you can come in when you look at the structure. Often, we'll divide into groups of three or four and then we will have them write out their structure on the board. The purpose of that is to see the similarity and differences. Sometimes, it would look like this. It just gives you an opportunity to ask questions. You might ask, "What similarities do you see? You say, "Both of them saw this. It's the same." Say, "What else?" Then, they'll notice, "Well, actually, this is the same as this. They just broke it down into two. You ask, "Why did this group break it down into two units? They'll say, "Well, here, Paul's talking about himself." Here he turns to talk about the Philippians. You say, "That's true. You say, "This group held it together." They might say, "Well, because, Paul is actually putting his arm around the Philippians and having them enter into his conflict.

You're doing with Paul and serving in this Gospel partnership the same way. This isn't a conflict, it's an opportunity a talk it through, and deepen our understanding. Now, assuming that we want this through, verse 30. Why does Chapter 2:1, a new unit? What is the subject now? Jesus' humility, but before the example of Jesus in it. What is Paul calling them to?

Translator:

Yeah, unifying, united with each other.

Todd Kelly:

He's calling and then he united, and it really goes back to verse 27 in fact, there in Chapter one. He wants them to stand firm in one spirit, with one mind, strive side by side together for the Gospel. They need to be united, and there's only one thing that's going to unite them.

Translator:

The heart of Christ.

Todd Kelly:

Yes, so unity ... it's the mind and heart of Christ, and how far down does this unit run?

Participant:

11, verse 11.

Todd Kelly:

Okay. Verse 11, why would you need to say verse 11? He begins to speak to them about working out their salvation down in verse 12. Verse 12 begins with a keyword. So they've seen the call to unity. Which is going to happen as we adopt the mind and heart of Christ.

What is it actually like in real life, in their relationship with each other? So chapter 2:12 is again, it is burning, and it burns down of what?

Participant:

...Verse 18.

Todd Kelly:

Verse 18, take it to the good choice. If you decide somewhere else I'm not going to argue with you. This an observation here, what we're trying to do is see the units. I'm writing notes over here, and Tom will translate them. These notes are helping us to discern the relationship between each unit. In other words, we don't want to just identify the units, we also want to see how they work with them. They're helping us discern the path of the author where it's taking us. Here I was calling them to work it out. Work out the unity that the mind of Christ in a relationship with each other. What's he doing in chapter 2:19 through verse 30? What is the subject? What is the focus?

Translator:

Two examples.

Todd Kelly:

He introduces us to two people, Timothy and Epaphroditus. I think you mentioned their examples. What are they examples of?

Translator:

They're working together in the same mind.

Todd Kelly:

Okay, they're working together with the same mind, alike?

Translator:

Yeah, the mind of Christ.

Todd Kelly:

Very good. You guys are sharp. The mind of Christ. Which is what we've talked about earlier in Chapter 2. As we work through this we can see just how intentional Paul is. He isn't randomly introducing Timothy and Epaphroditus. He's using them as examples. How do we know? Because we're observing the line which he uses when he describes them. He uses phrases like this, verse 21, referring to other people, they all seek their own interest. Epaphroditus nearly died, verse 30, for the Word of Christ. Who is already mentioned that did die? Jesus, right? What was the language he used when he was talking about Jesus earlier? Verse 8, read verse 8. He humbled himself even

to the point of death. Paul says in verse 29 in this tablet. Receive him with joy, and honor such men. It's their attention to the way that Timothy and Epaphroditus have adopted this unity in mind and heart of Christ. He's calling Philippians to follow their example. Even Epaphroditus and Timothy are following the example of Christ. Why? Because this is what it means to live out Gospel partnership for the advancement of Gospel? If this is our concern to see the Gospel advance, we need to adopt the mind of Christ and work it out. In the same way that Timothy and Epaphroditus were doing.

Now, why might this be helpful to what he's later going to say to the two women in Chapter 4? What's significant does this have for what comes later? We have a phrase in English, we say *pure genius*. This is translated to Chinese? Not quite?

Translator:

Yeah. This one not quite, it's just better to translate.

Todd Kelly:

It's a way of recognizing just how wonderful, how excellent something is. We would say this is brilliant. Why? Because it laid the foundation for addressing the problems that rise in the second part of the book. It's inevitable that there are going to be conflicts both from within the church and outside of the church. Now, do any of you experience conflict in your churches? A couple of ... okay, the rest of your churches are perfect. Conflict is inevitable, isn't it? We need to expect difficulties. But you know what the important question is? How are we going to navigate those conflicts? What is going to give us the strength to press through those conflicts, and keep advancing the work of the Gospel?

Now, I'm raising questions that I think arise out of what Paul is saying. Could it be the guy is teaching us the importance of partnership in the Gospel for the advancement of Gospel? Could it be teaching us how to navigate the difficulties that will arise because it's worth the effort? When you have a deep disagreement with somebody, how are you going to get past that, bring the Gospel in advance to them?

You are working with the group in Brazil, and our partner there, and our team, and a basic difference of approach to a theological issue in practice. We love this brother and sister in Brazil, they're wonderful. We have tremendous respect for them. And they didn't know, and we didn't know that we had this basic disagreement. One of the disagreements surfaced; they're very concerned. My colleague who was there very wisely said, "This doesn't need to throw us though, it

can actually be an opportunity for the Gospel to shine.” What is Paul actually saying in Chapter 4?

This is instruction to them. Look at Chapter 4 verse ... What does he actually say to them? What does he say? Agree to the Lord. He doesn't just say agree; there are some conflicts where agreement cannot be arrived at humanly speaking. Going all way back to Chapter 1, remember how Paul addresses them? The saints in Christ Jesus. Their identity was found in their unity with Jesus Christ. When Paul says to them, be in the Lord. I think he has reminding them first of their fundamental identity. Their union with Christ. And they were also being reminded of the heart and mind of Christ. If we understand this, it becomes easy to agree with the Lord. It's God's work bringing us into this Gospel partnership. It was dominated by our personal decisions. In the beginning of the work, we'll be faithful to Him for the advance of the Gospel. We're to call them to live out unity, binding together. We see the mindset of Christ, in the way that it works out with others. Paul says, *get over it*. Whatever your disagreement is, agree with the Lord.

Move forward. Move forward whenever He calls upon ... There aren't any words that are wasted in Paul's mind. He's leading us down searching path. That path is addressing the possible problems that are known within the church. Now, we don't have time to finish this out, but very briefly, I think 31, honesty and unity. I can explain more why, but it begins *rejoice in the Lord*. It ends with, *so this is the way you would stand firm in the Lord*. Verse 2 through 9, seems to be a unit, you'll see within this unit, the way that verse 7 speaks of the peace of God, which passes all understanding with hearts and minds. And that verse 9 ends that *the God of peace will be with you*. God's peace will guard your minds, and God's peace will be with you. The problem is articulated in two to three. The solution is in 4 to 7, and 8 to 9. Power, this specifically is going to get us through this problem. I think it's by rejoicing in the Lord, that the Lord comes to their specific problem. By thinking good thoughts, thinking the best of one another. I think it's just a wonderful part of this life.

Because we struggle deeply with relationships. We become hurt, we lose focus. But Paul is providing a way forward for them. And then there's a unit of four to ten, and then this last one. Roughly, that's the way the letter works out at the 40,000. I leave this for you to work it through. It'll be a nice challenge for you.

Okay? Let's think literally about this letter, and its overarching theme. I think we've already discussed it indirectly. As we look at the

beginning of this letter where Paul starts, where it ends, in chapter 4:10-20. We started at the end, with this idea of partnership in the Gospel, but he wants to see that partnership flourish. And we begin in verse 12 to see the way Paul shapes their understanding of their circumstances. He does it like explaining his own circumstances. His concern is for the advancement of the Gospel.

In a verse 27 through 30, it calls them to share that same concern with him. The rest of the focus is really working that through. The training will spend 20-minutes time trying to work this out, and write a sentence that captures the essence of the book. We want to put it in the sentence. You don't use the sentence, it can remain very general. The idea of the sentence would be general enough to capture all the book.

What's specific enough to distinguish from the book of Philippians from every other book in the Bible? It seems as I look at the book of Philippians that this is one way of capturing its essence. There are partnerships in the Gospel before its advance. It brings joy to one another, and it's bringing more unity in the gospel. That's not a perfect sentence. In our processes to write that sentence out, and say, how can we improve on that? We may spend an hour on it just asking what's missing, or how can it be improved. But let me just shift a little bit to explain how this worked out in one group that we were training. Then, I'm going to ask you some questions, how God is working with your lives through the day?

After spending a few days on the book of Philippians. Again, this is from another Asian country. But this particular country ... the different denominations in the country are very fragmented and very competitive with one another, and they look down on each other. They will make each other's ... and out of a group of 12 to 15 key pastors, there might have been five or six different denomination's representatives. I said to the group at the end of the time, how has God been working in your life? Can you guess what they said?

Yes, that's exactly right. One of the brothers got up, and he said, "You know, I need to repent." He looked over at a couple of the other brothers who were from a specific denomination. And said, "I felt really guilty because I looked down on you. People from my denomination are very suspicious of you. But throughout this week, we've been studying the Word of God together. We may not agree on everything, but now today ... I see your heart for God, heart for the Gospel. I want to confess that." And then something really surprising.

This brother says, "Hey, why don't we work together as we seek to multiply this training?" Now, that's transformation. I think it's transformation that's flowing from the themes that's running through this book of Philippians. Agree in the Lord. It's the power of seeing how God has called us into this partnership of the Gospel. This partnership has been designed by God, so this advances the Gospel.

As we work to strive in unity together for the mindset of Christ, the Word of God is advanced. Now, we could have just come and talked to them about unity in the church. We couldn't refute them because there's competitiveness. But it was actually this process of the immersion in the Word of God that led to the transformation God attempted. That transformation is now leading to a movement of the Word of God in that country. They are experiencing the joy of this partnership. I wish you could be there in the training. The joy is so obvious as they work together to understand the Word of God and live it out. That joy brings great glory to God. We're nearing the end here, I just wonder if I could ask you that question. How has God been working in your life from today? Has He brought in a new insight to do, and a tool you can take away? Should I speak into your heart in some way?

Translator:

Unity unites in Christ and rejoices together within Christ.

Todd Kelly:

Yeah, it's a precious gift, isn't it? What we need is that joy that comes from Gospel partnership, advancing for it. It's a very helpful insight to see the connection between. Anyone else? Good, good. Yes. To give thanks in all service ... and it only comes as we really relay all the concerns of Christ. In the Apostle Paul's heart, he expected that it will be worked out in the Philippians; I think there's hope for it to be worked out in us as well.

Participants:

Amen.

Todd Kelly:

Well, my prayer is like Paul's that the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you and with your spirits.

Participants:

Amen.

Todd Kelly:

Let us end our course with a prayer.

Father, we thank You for the glory of the Gospel. We thank You for Your work in our lives that came to this partnership. We thank You that ultimately our lives blessed in Your hands. And in spite of our weakness and sinfulness, You don't give up on us. You can continue do Your work. Help us to continue to grow. Help us to appreciate all those who are in Christ. We give glory to You, O Lord. In Jesus' name we pray.

Participants:

Amen.