

Leading Philippi

Paul's Patrons Series: Book 1 — Book Club Discussion Questions

1. In *Leading Philippi*, Arianna's pagan prophecy marks Epaphroditus's early life with fear. Compare this with the promise Paul writes to the Philippians: "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion..." (Phil. 1:6). How does this contrast show the difference between pagan fear and Christian assurance?
2. Epaphroditus grows up offering sacrifices to Aphrodite, yet Paul reminds the Philippians to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4) instead of worrying about pleasing false gods. How does the novel illustrate the emptiness of idols and the freedom of worshipping Christ alone? (See also Acts 16:16–18, where Paul casts out a spirit of divination.)
3. Philippians 2:5–8 calls believers to have the "mind of Christ," who "humbled himself." Where do you see Epaphroditus wrestling with humility, service, and sacrifice for family and community? How does his example compare to the Christlike humility Paul calls for?
4. Luke's friendship with Epaphroditus reflects deep loyalty. In Philippians, Paul calls his community "partners in the gospel" (Phil. 1:5). How does true Christian friendship differ from ordinary companionship? Read Acts 16:11–15 about Lydia's hospitality. How do both Lydia and Luke model gospel partnership?
5. Paul wrote Philippians from prison yet repeats the word "joy" throughout. In the novel, famine, illness, and loss test Epaphroditus's resolve. How can we, like Paul, find joy in Christ even when life is hard? See Philippians 4:11–13.
6. The story's opening verse, "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22), mirrors Paul's warning against placing confidence in fleshly works (Phil. 3:3–9). How does Epaphroditus learn that true devotion is about heart obedience rather than empty ritual?
7. Acts 16 shows Lydia, a seller of purple cloth, becoming the first convert in Philippi. How does Lydia's portrayal in *Leading Philippi* connect with her biblical role? What does this teach us about how God uses women's influence in households and the early church?
8. In Philippians 3:20, Paul reminds believers their "citizenship is in heaven." How does Epaphroditus's journey show the tension between his cultural identity (as "favored of Aphrodite") and a new identity in Christ? What does it look like for you to live out your heavenly citizenship today?

9. Paul honors Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25–30 for risking his life for the work of Christ. How does this real Epaphroditus compare with the character in the story? How does this challenge us to serve sacrificially for the gospel, even when it costs us deeply?
10. Acts 16 tells of Paul and Silas’s imprisonment in Philippi, yet God uses their suffering to bring a jailer to Christ (Acts 16:25–34). How does the novel echo this truth that God brings light into darkness? Where is God calling you to trust that “what has happened... has really served to advance the gospel” (Phil. 1:12)?

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