



● one month to live





a study of Philippians based on  
the book *One Month to Live* by Chris & Kerry Shook

This study you are about to begin was inspired by the book of the same title: *One Month to Live: Thirty Days to a No-Regrets Life\** written by Kerry and Chris Shook (available in The Source Book Store).

However, this guide uses the Book of Philippians as the foundational basis for discussion and reflection. Philippians is a short but powerful book; written as a letter of encouragement to the church in Philippi. Reading the entire letter to the Philippians prior to the first group meeting will help you get the most out of this study.

The four-week participant guide contains daily activities and readings for participants; weekly facilitator guides for group leaders; along with additional resource material. Daily activities are brief and intended to be completed prior to group meetings.

If you have not listened to the song, "*Live Like You Were Dying*," sung by Tim McCraw recently, you might want to do that. It will set the stage for the adventure you are about to take.

Barbara Condra



## OFF CAMPUS/SMALLER GROUPS

### **Opening the Door** (10 minutes)

Play the song, "Live Like You Were Dying," as people arrive and/or after your opening prayer to start the conversation. *The URL for the U-Tube video is on the participant's page for this week if you don't have a CD of your own.*

Take a couple of minutes for people to respond to the song and the emotions it evokes in them. Briefly explain the theme of the study One Month to Live and its connection to the current sermon series. (October 2009)

Remind everyone to read all of Paul's letter to the Philippians as a foundation for the study, even though the discussion will focus on selected passages.

### **Engaging in Conversation** (10-12 minutes)

Ask group members to share either what they think the purpose of the study is or what they hope to gain from the study. Use the two questions in Day 1 on the participant's page to engage your group in a dialogue with the other members of the group.

### **Going Deeper** (20 minutes)

Read verses 18-24 out loud and discuss some of the questions they have about Paul's response to his circumstances. *Be ready with one or two of your own, if no one has something they want to share.* If someone is questioning how Paul can be "happy" about being in prison use James 1:2 and see the teaching note at the bottom of the next page. Read aloud Paul's prayer in verses 3-6 and 9-10. Then continue the discussion with questions from Days 3 and 4; paying particular attention to these two questions: Why is Paul able to do this? And, would a non-Christian answer this the same way as a Christian?

**Engaging Reflection** (15 minutes)

*The intent of this section is to have everyone walk away with something on their mind that they can't quit thinking about; something that will carry them into their preparation for next week. Use as much or as little as seems appropriate for your group.*

- This could be the "Think on this" question in Day 5
- Some people respond to poems read aloud with expression. Ask someone who is good at that to read the short poem in this week's study.
- Play "Live Like You Were Dying," again and then ask everyone to share one thing that they need to do differently this week.

## ON CAMPUS/TRADITIONAL GROUPS

**Establishing the Foundation**

Prior to starting this study ask your group to read through the book of Philippians. This study will not go through the book chapter by chapter; but rather pulls sections appropriate to the focus of each week's discussion. There is background information on Paul; the circumstances surrounding his imprisonment; and his relationship to the church in Philippi at the back of this booklet.

The questions and suggestions listed for the off-campus group are appropriate for either table group discussions or large group discussions.

**TEACHING NOTE**

Being joyful in the midst of suffering is not a masochistic form of joy. Masochism takes joy in the experience of pain: it is the pain that gives the pleasure. The joy found in these verses comes experiencing Christ's presence as the pain is endured and the reward of spiritual maturity that results from that experience.

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# Live Passionately week 1

Philippians 1: 3-6, 9-10, 18-24

## day 1

Take a minute and jot down 5 or 6 things you must do this week; you'll come back to it later.

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Philippians 1:27 says, "whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." What does Paul mean by "whatever?" What is he referring to? What do you think the "Whatever's" are that might happen in your life? What if one of those "whatever's" was a phone call from your doctor telling you that you have one month to live?

What would you now?

## day 2

The "whatever" that happened to Paul was imprisonment and threat of death. Read thru verses 18-24 several times. How did Paul feel about his situation? What questions does Paul's response raise in your mind?

## day 3

Read Philippians 1:3-6, 9-10. How would you describe Paul's attitude in this prayer? What is the focus of his prayer? Knowing that Paul is in prison as he wrote this book, what is unusual about his prayer in vv. 3-6 and 9-10? What is it that is enabling Paul to do have this attitude and this focus?



## day 4

Before doing today's activity read through the verses listed for this week. Then look back at the things you had on your "must do" list for this week. Are there changes you would make if you only had one month to live? How have your priorities changed? Thinking about those priorities, what does it mean to you to "Live Passionately?" Would a non-Christian answer this the same way as a Christian?

## day 5

Think on this: Are we really living the passionate life of a Christian if we have to rethink our priorities when we find out we only have one month to live? Read through this poem several times before the first group meeting and listen to Tim McGraw's song, "Live Like You Were Dying." Be prepared to share your response to these two experiences.

Dance like no one is watching!  
Love like you'll never get hurt!  
Sing like no one is listening!  
Live like its heaven on earth!

— Mark Twain

A few years ago, Tim McGraw released the song, "Live Like You Were Dying." This song was based on the true story of Tug McGraw, Tim's father. You can listen to that song by going to this URL:  
[http://www.tangle.com/view\\_video?viewkey=500441d98ff7590e97f0](http://www.tangle.com/view_video?viewkey=500441d98ff7590e97f0)



## Love Completely week 2

### OFF CAMPUS/SMALLER GROUPS

#### **Opening the Door** (10-15 minutes)

Have "Live Like You Were Dying" playing in the background as your group gathers. Using the questions you ended with last week as your entry point this week, have group members respond to this question: "What has inspired you the most this past week or what has troubled you the most? (A good follow up response for the facilitator, as each person shares, is to ask them why they think that idea made an impression on them. This type of response from you assures the group that these aren't right or wrong responses. The emphasis is on the importance for each person to process their reactions or feelings in order to learn from them.)

#### **Engaging in Conversation** (15 minutes)

Use the scriptures listed in Days 2 and 3, along with selected questions to focus the group's discussion on this week's topic of "learning humbly." Be sure to bring out the portion of the definition that says, "humbleness when translated as gentleness expresses a spirit of willingness and obedience and a lack of resistance to God's dealings with us."

#### **Going Deeper** (10 minutes)

Replay the theme song again while everyone sits quietly listening, before you discuss question 4 with the group. Encourage your group members to share how they relate to the lines that are highlighted in the guide. The focus for this part of the discussion is to help each person see the connection between humility and self-centeredness and resistance to obedience; and how that plays out in our lives as expressed in the words of this song. Allow time for several people to share the lyrics they wrote as if the song was about them.





### **Guided Reflection**

Use the verses and questions in Day 5 of the participants guide as your closing discussion. Be sure to allow time to read the passage in Romans and to reread verses 3-4 again. Use the final bulleted question "How hard could it be to make those changes now?" as you lead into a challenge for next week. Have each person share one change they will commit to make during the coming week. Let them know in advance that next week's meeting will begin with everyone sharing how they did.

## **ON CAMPUS/TRADITIONAL GROUPS**

### **Opening the Door**

In larger groups to this kind of discussion is more difficult but it can be done. People are often less inclined to share in a large group and if everyone shares it can take up too much time. One strategy that works well in large groups is to have small, sticky notes spread around the tables or place one or two on each chair. As people enter the room ask them to write a response to the question that you have written on the marker board and then to put their sticky note on the board. As you begin to share these anonymous comments, some of the group members will begin to speak up.

### **TEACHING NOTE**

It is always wise to be prepared to share your own responses to those questions that require personal reflection and sharing. There are two things to consider: 1) When you ask your group to share something that wasn't part of a prior assignment, it is often a good idea for you to share first. That gives them a chance to think of what they want to say. 2) Be comfortable with some silence when you ask your group to share something they've had a chance to consider. If the silence lingers longer than seems good, then share your thoughts. But, don't jump in every time and share first. It will shut down the sharing of others.

one month to live

## Love Completely week 2

### day 1

Who is the person in your life who set the example of love for you? What are some ways he/she showed that love? Who looks to you as an example of love? What do they see in you that shows them your love? Read thru the first stanza of the lyrics to "This Day" on the opposite page. What insight do those words provide about love?

### day 2

Read Phil 1:3-4 & 9-10 Paul is not known as a "warm and fuzzy" guy, but he certainly does a great job of describing how he feels about the members of the church in Philippi. How does Paul show his love? Who is your cheerleader? Whose cheerleader are you? Read through stanza 2 a couple of times before you finish today.

### day 3

Phil 4:1a "Therefore my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown..." Who came to mind as you read these words? Since one quality of loving completely means letting others know how you feel about them, what have you done to let that person you love them? If you only had one month to live, who is it that needs to hear how much you love them? Write their names down and then read stanza 3 while you think about them and pray for them.

## day 4

There are many examples of love in the Bible and around us; but none of them are as complete and powerful as God's love for us as described in John 3:16. Read through that verse and make it your prayer for this day.

## day 5

God shared His son with us because He loved us. If you only had one month to live; who would you share God's love with because you love them? Read stanza 4 and focus on those last two lines. What if all you had was one day, whom would you have to talk to? In reality, isn't today all we really know we have?

### **This Day**

recorded by *Point of Grace*

1) This day is fragile - soon it will end  
And once it has vanished, it will not come again  
So let us love with a love pure and strong  
Before this day is gone

2) This day is fleeting  
When it slips away  
Not all our money can buy back this day  
So let us pray that we might be a friend  
Before this day is spent

3) This day we're given is golden  
Let us show love  
This day is ours for one moment  
Let us sow love

4) This day is frail - it will pass by  
So before it's too late to recapture the time  
Let us share love, let us share God  
Before this day is gone  
Before this day is gone

Words & music by Lowell Alexander  
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## Learn Humbly week 3

### OFF CAMPUS/SMALLER GROUPS

#### **Opening the Door & Engaging in Conversation** (15 min.)

(Continue to play the theme song each week as your group gathers. It just helps to get everyone refocused from whatever life has thrown at them that week.) Begin the sharing in this session by asking your members to find a partner to share with. (This should not be a spouse or significant other.) Depending on space, have the pairs stand together with some "space around them" so they can hear each other. Give each person 3-4 minutes to share their experience with the change they tried to make. You will need to let them know when it is time for the partner to share. After everyone has returned to the group, ask them to share what was common to their experience this past week and what insight they gained from listening to their partner.

#### **Going Deeper** (20 minutes)

Using stanzas 1,2 and 3 from the song, "This Day" by Point of Grace, lead your group in a discussion of what it means to "Love Completely." There are more questions available in Days 1-3 than you will have time to discuss, so be selective. There is no expectation that you discuss every question. You may have some of your own that you want to use, too. You will want to be sure to discuss the last question in Day 3. "If you only had one month to live, who is it that needs to hear how much you love them?" This question sets up the last part of this week's discussion.

#### **Engaging in Reflection** (15 -20 minutes)

Ask someone to read John 3:16. (Even if that person could say the verse from memory have it read. You may have people in your group who are new to the Bible and you don't want to make them feel as if they "should" know this verse already.



Spend some time discussing how this verse illustrates what it means to “love completely.” The questions in Day 5 are intended to guide your group into an understanding of the importance of making the most of the time we have to share Christ with others. The lyrics of the song illustrate the urgency of this and can also be used to prompt discussion. End your meeting this week with a challenge to pray about one person they know they must talk to about God’s love before their month is over.

If you have a CD of the song, “This Day” You could use it as a closing meditation.

## ON CAMPUS/TRADITIONAL GROUPS

### Opening the Door

This activity works very well with larger, more traditional groups, too. Because these groups often have more space you can vary the activity by shortening the time each person has to share and have them share with more people. To do this, write the directions on the marker board. Give every one 2 minutes to share their experiences. At the end of four minutes they find a new partner and repeat the process. You will need to let them know when it is time for the next person to begin speaking and when to switch partners. Remember, they should not be partnered with their spouse.

If you have a recording of the song, “This Day” you might want to use it this week by playing it after the opening activity.

### TEACHING NOTE

Be careful not to let your group get bogged down on whether or not we will ever love as completely as God did when he sacrificed His son. The answer is, of course, NO. The point is that God set the example for us. Our task as Christians is to continuously strive to come closer to the example.

*“I am careful not to confuse excellence with perfection.  
Excellence I can reach for, perfection is God’s business.”  
— A friend*

one month to live

## Learn Humbly week 3

Philippians chapter 2; 3:7-8; Romans 12:3

*Definition: Humility in the spiritual sense is an inner grace of the soul that allows one to think of himself no more highly than he ought to think. The term can also be interpreted as gentleness, which expresses a spirit of willingness and obedience and a lack of resistance to God's dealings with us.*

### day 1

What do you think it means to "learn humbly?" What kinds of things would you learn during the one month you have to live? How would what you learn benefit you? How could it benefit others?

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### day 2

Read verses 5-12 then list all the ways Christ demonstrated humility when He took on the form of man.

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## day 3

How does Christ's example of humility challenge our natural self-centeredness? Read verses 3-4. What impact would those two verses have on you if you only had one month to live?

## day 4

Consider these lines from the song

*Live Like You Were Dying*, Tim McGraw

- ...finally gave forgiveness I'd been denying; I hope you get the chance to live like you were dying.
- I was finally the husband...most of the time I wasn't
- Suddenly 'goin fishin', wasn't such an imposition and I went 3 times the year I lost my dad

What feelings and/or thoughts kept him from doing these things before? What's changed? What actions would it list if this song was about your life?

I'd finally...

Suddenly, I...

I'd say yes when...

## day 5

When you read Romans 12:3-5 along with Philippians 2:3-4 you get a vivid picture of what God expects of Christian relationships. How would you explain this to a new Christian? How much of this can be seen in your attitude and behavior? If you had only one month to live, what changes would you need to make?

**How hard could it be to make those changes now?**

**Why wait?**



**15**



## Leave Boldly week 4

### OFF CAMPUS/SMALLER GROUPS

**NOTE:** *There's a lot to do in this week's meeting. Be sure you watch the time carefully during the first part of the meeting so that you have time for the ending activity. If you find you can't get every thing in, then extend the conversation one more week. There is nothing magical about finishing in 4 sessions. Take a look at the teaching suggestion for holding a celebration at the week 5 meeting!*

#### **Opening the Door & Engaging in Conversation** (15+ minutes)

Lead your group in a discussion of their responses to the three examples of "leaving boldly." (There is background information on all three of these men at the back of the booklet.) In that discussion help them to draw out that Paul's focus was on his impact for Christ. That will lead you into Day 2 where the discussion turns to comparing their passion for Christ to Paul's. The critical part of this isn't how near or how far they are; but rather, what distractions are in their lives and what do they need to walk away from. How does last week's focus on sharing God's love with people that we love fit into "leaving boldly?"

#### **Going Deeper** (10+ minutes)

Spend some time discussing the connection between contentment and "leaving boldly." Have your group share how they responded to the questions in Day 3.

#### **Engaging in Reflection & Making Commitments** (20-30 min.)

Days 4 and 5 are both a wrap-up and a challenge. If you plan to finish this study in week four, you will need to structure your discussion so that there is enough time for your group to share what has happened in their lives and what they plan to do as a result. If there isn't enough time to share in the group consider having each person make a connection with one other member of the group during the week. This would become an accountability partner for a stated amount of time: 3-4 weeks for example. Then schedule a time for sharing from these partners at a meeting a few weeks later.

## ON CAMPUS/TRADITIONAL GROUPS

### Engaging in reflection & Making Commitment

An alternative approach for large groups is to give everyone a piece of paper with the words, **"How I plan to live my life more passionately, humbly, loving and boldly" written across the top.** Allow time near the close of your group time for each person to write out what they plan to do. When they are finished have them fold the paper in thirds and write One Month To Live on the front. Ask them to put it in their Bible; using it as a prayer guide for the next month. Let them know that in 4 or 5 weeks they will have an opportunity to share with others in the class how this has impacted their lives.

### Teaching Note

You might consider throwing a "Celebration" for the 5<sup>th</sup> week. After all, everyone has just been given a reprieve. The test results were wrong. You've got the rest of your life to live Passionately, Lovingly, Humbly and Boldly. So, throw a party and share with everyone what you plan to do in order to "Live Like You Were Dying."

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BOLD CONFIDENT COURAGEOUS

one month to live

# Leave Boldly week 4

Philippians 1:19-21; 3:7-14; 4:11-13

day 1

Three different people are quoted here. Each comes from different walks of life and from a different different place in time. How did each of them approach dying with boldness? In what ways are they similar and how are they different? What impresses you the most about each one?

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”  
—Paul, an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ

"Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet, today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth." —Lou Gehrig  
1939 Yankee Stadium

“This lecture will be the last time many people I care about will see me in the flesh. I have a chance here to really think about what matters most to me, to cement how people will remember me, and to do what ever good I can on the way out.”  
—Prof Randy Pausch The Last Lecture

day 2

How would you compare your passion for Christ's to Paul's as described in chapter 3:7-9? Paul knows Christ intimately and is focused on serving Him. Are there things in your life that keep you from being fully focused on Christ? What is it that you need to walk away from?

## day 3

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-14

Paul speaks with boldness and passion when he says:

“...I press on to take hold of that for which Christ  
Jesus took hold of me...Forgetting what is behind  
and straining toward what is ahead I press on  
toward the goal...”

What image would you suggest that would illustrate your efforts to take hold of Christ and reach the goal?

## day 4

Paul talks about contentment in Philippians 4:11-13. Lou Gehrig's quote also implied a sense of contentment. How do contentment and “leaving boldly” go together? What can we learn about contentment from these two men?

## day 5

How do you live every day with passion and boldness? What are your thoughts? What do you now know that you didn't know before you started this study?

*“I hope you never lose your sense of wonder  
You get your fill to eat but always keep that hunger  
May you never take one single breath for granted  
God forbid love ever leave you empty handed  
I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean  
Whenever one door closes, I hope one more opens  
Promise me you'll give faith a fighting chance  
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance  
I hope you dance; I hope you dance”*

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH**

Although Paul had planned to continue his mission work in Asia Minor, his plans changed after the Holy Spirit sent him the vision of a man urging him to come to Macedonia. (Acts 16:9) Paul traveled to Macedonia, a province north of Greece. Philippi was the first city they visited.

Anti-Semitism was rampant among the Romans in that area. In fact, the Emperor had just declared Judaism a superstition and had expelled all Jews from Rome. As a result, the small group of Jews and "sympathizers" met for prayer outside the gate of Philippi. (Acts 16:13) Paul's group was invited to stay in the home of one of the members of this group; an independent businesswoman named Lydia.

Paul and his team soon got in trouble with Roman authorities after ridding a slave girl from demonic possession. Her owners were angry because they could no longer earn money from her ability to prophesy and reported to the authorities that Paul and Silas were trying to convert Romans. Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown in prison. They had only been in Philippi for a few months when they were escorted out of town; leaving the fledgling church behind.

Although Paul was only with this church a short time, he felt a strong connection with them. Philippi was one of the churches that sent Paul money to support him when he was imprisoned later. Paul knew the persecution and difficulties they would face from Roman discrimination. With all of this stacked against them, the church at Philippi flourished.

## Additional Reading

*The Precious Present* : Spencer Johnson

Using a parable format, the co-author of the best-selling 'One Minute Manager' addresses our material and spiritual needs.

*The Last Lecture* : Randy Pausch

The personal story of a 46-year-old professor diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

*The Purpose Driven Life* : Rick Warren

Best selling book that helps you answer the question, "What am I here for?"

## Inspirational Listening

*"Live Like You Were Dying"* sung by Tim McGraw

*"This Day"* sung by Point of Grace

*"I Hope you Dance"* sung by Leann Womack

"Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and have never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans.

"Look at these grand men. Which of you wouldn't consider it the highlight of his career just to associate with them for even one day? Sure, I'm lucky. Who wouldn't consider it an honor to have known Jacob Ruppert? Also, the builder of baseball's greatest empire, Ed Barrow? To have spent six years with that wonderful little fellow, Miller Huggins? Then to have spent the next nine years with that outstanding leader, that smart student of psychology, the best manager in baseball today, Joe McCarthy? Sure, I'm lucky.

"When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat, and vice versa, sends you a gift — that's something. When everybody down to the groundskeepers and those boys in white coats remember you with trophies — that's something. When you have a wonderful mother-in-law who takes sides with you in squabbles with her own daughter — that's something. When you have a father and a mother who work all their lives so that you can have an education and build your body — it's a blessing. When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed — that's the finest I know.

"So I close in saying that I might have been given a bad break, but I've got an awful lot to live for. Thank you."

— Lou Gehrig at Yankee Stadium, July 4, 1939



## **The Last Lecture** By Randy Pausch

Randy Pausch was a computer science professor at Carnegie-Melon University. In September 2006, Dr. Pausch was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He was 46 years old at the time of his diagnosis; married and the father of three young children. Randy Pausch died on July 25, 2008.

During the last two years of his life he spent much of his time writing “his last lecture,” which was published in book form in 2008, shortly before his death.

“This lecture will be the last time many people I care about will see me in the flesh. I have a chance here to really think about what matters most to me, to cement how people will remember me, and to do what ever good I can on the way out.”

—Excerpt from *The Last Lecture*.