

# LIFELINES

Six Words of Rescue for Those  
Who Are Struggling

WEEKLY STUDY



## WEEK FIVE

The LIFELINES series is based on the beautiful and challenging letter to the Philippians. Each week we will be offered a “lifeline” that God intends to lift us up by. This week we looked at the lifeline described in Paul’s words to the Philippians, he called them “Citizens of heaven”. If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group go to [www.prov.church/signup](http://www.prov.church/signup) and click on Small Groups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then prayer this prayer together:

*God, You know our hearts and you know our weakness. When we are in a season of stress, we can fall into traps that keep our focus on ourselves instead of you. Forgive us God. We reach for the lifelines you offer to us to be lifted up to a beautiful life in Christ. We reach for Jesus. Amen.*

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## DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: PHILIPPIANS 3.13-16

*<sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

*<sup>15</sup> All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. <sup>16</sup> Only let us live up to what we have already attained.*

- This sentiment in Paul’s writing is something he is well known for. He wants the church to see the beauty of what is yet to come--to have an imagination for what we haven’t yet seen but trust is coming. What does your heart yearn for today? Are there times when your perspective so shifts that you find yourself longing for the ultimate hope of heaven? Are you straining more for the prize of heaven or earthly things?
- *Pray that your striving for heaven would increase and that the power to press on will be given to you by God.*

## TUESDAY: PHILIPPIANS 3.17-20

<sup>17</sup> Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. <sup>18</sup> For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ...

- Paul puts the heavenly perspective in the context of the community and world that the followers of Jesus were experiencing. The model provided by the elders in the faith gives them something to shoot for as they navigate the world of instant gratification and destruction. And they are given a name to encourage them as they do so--citizens of heaven. Who are you modeling your life after? Are there people who are "ahead of you" in the faith? How might you learn more from them? What would it mean to place your allegiance to Jesus ahead of all others?
- *Pray that you would live into and reap the full benefits of your citizenship in heaven.*

## WEDNESDAY: 2 PETER 3.18

<sup>18</sup> But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

- Following Jesus is not just a one time decision. It's a decision that we make daily--even moment by moment. In order to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ we grow in grace and knowledge of him.. Have you ever faced a moment where you knew you could either learn and grow or wither on the vine? What are ways you are growing in grace? What are ways you are growing in knowledge of Jesus?
- *Pray for growth in grace, knowledge, wisdom and maturity in Christ.*

## THURSDAY: EPHESIANS 4.13-15

<sup>13</sup> ...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

- Older teens and adults know that a certain steadiness comes with age and experience. Generally we gain the ability to stay the course and focus on what is important to us. In earlier stages of development we are often more prone to the pull of various teachings and opinions. Are there environments where you feel the pull of every wave and wind more than others? How can you hold steady in those places? Are there situations in which you are being called to speak the truth in love? What's the difference between speaking the truth and speaking the truth in love?
- *Pray for a steady heart and mind as you walk through the waves and wind of our culture--that you could speak and act out of a mature love.*

#### FRIDAY: HEBREWS 13.14-16

<sup>14</sup> For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

<sup>15</sup> Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. <sup>16</sup> And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

- In these verses from Hebrews we see the kingdom of heaven referred to as a city. The city we are experiencing now is not the lasting one. We strive for heaven. But the next two verses tell us what we should do while we are moving towards heaven. We worship and care for others while we pursue the city that is to come. Is it ever tempting to give up on this “city” we live in now? How could this city begin to experience hope precisely because we are yearning for heaven?
- *Pray that God would use you to reveal bits and pieces of the city to come to those living in the city that does not endure.*

#### SATURDAY: JOHN 14.2

<sup>2</sup> *My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?*

- We are striving for heaven because that is where our truest citizenship is located. But Jesus promised his disciples that he would go on before us and get things ready. At the same time, through the Holy Spirit, our hearts are being prepared too. How do you picture the place being prepared for you?
  - *Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for this promise from Jesus--that there is a place for you in the house of God.*
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### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Citizenship in Heaven is the Lifeline we are offered this week. What other citizenships (places you belong) do you hold on to? Are there any you need to let go of or change perspective on?
- Philippians 3.17 identifies the need to have models to base your life of faith on. Who are some of the models in your life? Are others modeling parts of their life after you? How does that make you feel?