

Growth Group Discussion Q's

January 4, 2026

Fun Discussion Starter: Describe one high and one low in your holiday season experience.

Example: "My high was the Christmas Eve candlelight service. My low was when the dog ate all the freshly baked Christmas cookies left on the counter while we attended the Christmas Eve candlelight service."

Message Review

What do we value? Our lives are shaped by what we value. The choices we make reflect what is important to us. If you want to learn what is important or highly valued by an individual, simply look at their everyday choices.

In Romans 16, the Apostle Paul commends a number of believers in the Roman church for living out esteemed values of the Christian life. On Sunday, we looked at one individual: Phoebe, and one character trait: Hard work.

On Individual: Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2)

- Read Romans 16:1-2.
- Phoebe exhibits two particular qualities that Paul commends which give the believers in Rome reason to welcome her in a way "worthy of the saints."
- Phoebe is a "deacon of the church at Cenchræ" (v.1). This position in the church means that Phoebe has been entrusted with leadership responsibilities – an indication of proven character and a servant's heart.
- **Why are these characteristics important for church leadership? How is one's character proven? In what way are these characteristics vital for all believers?**
- Phoebe was also a "benefactor or patron" of many in the church including Paul himself. This means that Phoebe was likely a businesswoman who used her resources to empower and further the ministry of others.
- Pastor Mark pointed out that a mark of maturity in an individual is when they use their resources (skills, knowledge, finances, etc.) to bring about good on behalf of others.
- **Do you agree with this assertion? Why would this be a necessary attribute of maturity?**
- **Who is in your sphere of influence that could benefit from your resources (time, skills, influence, etc.)?**

One Character Trait: Hard Work

- Read the following verses from Romans 16 – v.3, 6, 9, 12
- It is not surprising that individuals who are commended in Chp16 are noted for their commitment to the "work" of the Lord and that they would expend a great deal of personal energy and resources to do so. In particular, the women in v.12, were noted for "working

hard” and even “very hard.” This Greek word is defined as “a relatively large quantity— ‘much, great, extensive.’¹

- Why is the reputation of being a “hard worker” important? What does it say about the character and values of the individual?

What do we value?

- What do we value? Our lives are shaped by what we value. The choices we make reflect what is important to us. If you want to learn what is important or highly valued by an individual, simply look at their everyday choices.
- What choices can we make every day to display the values we want to be known for?
- Consider the questions posed by Matthew Hooper’s message from last week:

“Questions we ask radically shape the lives we live. Less questions, less shaping. No questions...stagnation.”

- What am I hoping for in 2026?
- What will bring peace in 2026?
- What will be my source of joy in 2026?
- How will I love generously in 2026?

¹ Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. [*Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*](#) 1996 : 595. Print.