

Introduction: A picture, a problem, and a process

- The picture – Metamorphosis
- The problem – Why do we long to change, grow, improve, and be transformed, yet find it so difficult?
- The process – Spiritual metamorphosis

What does spiritual metamorphosis look like in real life?

1. Spiritual birth: **JUSTIFICATION** John 3:1-16
Jesus gives me new life. Romans 5:1
2. Spiritual growth: **SANCTIFICATION** 2 Corinthians 5:17
Jesus changes me to be progressively more like Him.
3. Spiritual maturity: **GLORIFICATION** 1 John 3:2
Jesus changes me forever when I see Him face to face.

Is morphing for everyone?

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2

How God transforms His children:

The call – Let Jesus live His life through you.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Ephesians 4:1

The process – Practice sacrificial, other-centered relationships.

²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:2-3

The reason – Christ’s Church must reflect His character.

⁴There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:4-6

Three reasons we fail to be transformed:

1. Spiritual **IGNORANCE** Galatians 2:20

Our failure to understand our true identity in Christ destines us to the “try hard – do good – failure” syndrome.

- The problem: Lack of **KNOWLEDGE**.
- The solution: **DISCOVER** your new identity.

2. Spiritual **ISOLATION** Hebrews 3:13

Our failure to actively participate in deep, Christ-centered, honest relationships makes transformation impossible.

- The problem: **PRIDE**
- The solution: Do life in **COMMUNITY**.

3. Spiritual **MYOPIA** Romans 11:33-36

Our failure to grasp what’s really at stake when Christians don’t live like Christians minimizes our motivation and destroys our testimony.

- The problem: Our culture of **CONSUMERISM**
- The solution: Get a high, holy view of **GOD**.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what areas of your life have you seen God transform you since becoming a Christian? Internal? External?
2. With which of the “**Three reasons we fail to be transformed**” did you most closely identify? Explain your answer.
3. What specific step of faith could you take right now to allow God to transform your life to become like Him? When and how will you do that? Who or what might help you be successful?

Resources for “Spiritual Metamorphosis”

1. How to discover your new identity:
 - *Conformed to His Image* – Kenneth Boa
 - *Unstuck: Audio* – Chip Ingram / LivingontheEdge.org
2. How to do life in community:
 - *True Spirituality: Book, Video, Audio* – Chip Ingram / LivingontheEdge.org
3. How to get a high view of God:
 - *Knowledge of the Holy* – A. W. Tozer
 - *Knowing God* – J. I. Packer
 - *The Real God: Book, Video, Audio* – Chip Ingram / LivingontheEdge.org

Introduction: What's wrong with me?

"For I desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing." - The Apostle Paul

Romans 7:18-19

Review:

Ephesians 4:1-6

- **The call to transformation: "Walk worthy of your new life."**
- **The process: "Practice sacrificial, other-centered relationships."**
 - Be Humble Not Proud / Selfish
 - Be Gentle Not Demanding / Harsh
 - Be Patient Not Impatient / Angry
 - Bear with Not Critical / Judgmental
 - Making every effort Not Slothful / Disengaged

- **The problem: Our common struggle**

"Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it...What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord".

Romans 7:20, 24

The Questions:

- How did Jesus conquer sin?
- How does that work in my life?

How do we deal with the problem of sin?

Our text:

Ephesians 4:7-10

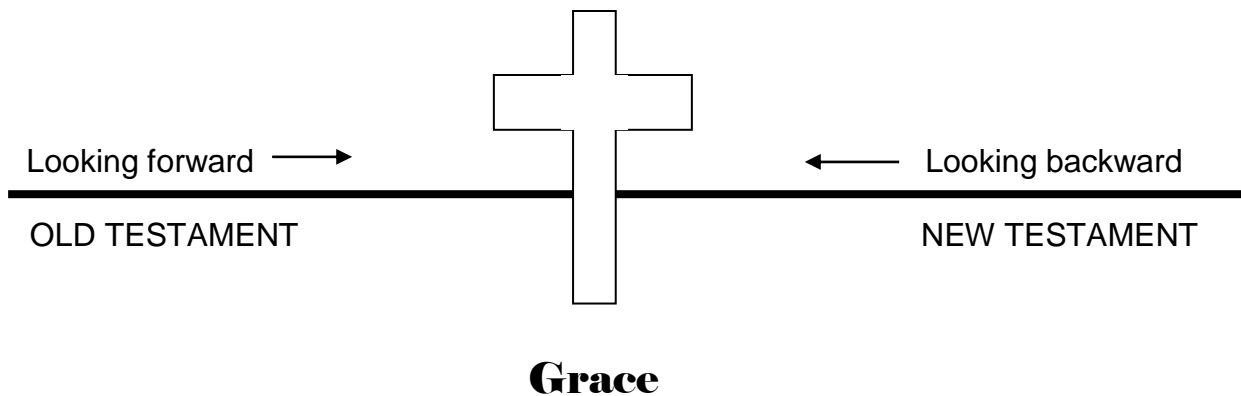
*But to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.
Therefore it says,*

*"When He ascended on high,
He led captive a host of captives,
And He gave gifts to men."*

*(Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into **the lower parts of the earth?** ¹⁰He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, **that He might fill all things.**)*

Key words:

- "He led captive a host of captives" Psalm 68:18
- "the lower parts of the earth" - Jewish view of the after-life Luke 16
 - Hades – the wicked 1 Peter 3:18-19
 - Paradise – the righteous 1 Peter 4:6
- "that He might fill all things" Revelation 5:9-13



The implications for “Transforming”

Fact #1 - Christ is a conquering victor over sin, death, and Satan. The power to live a new life was made possible by His **DEATH** and **RESURRECTION**.

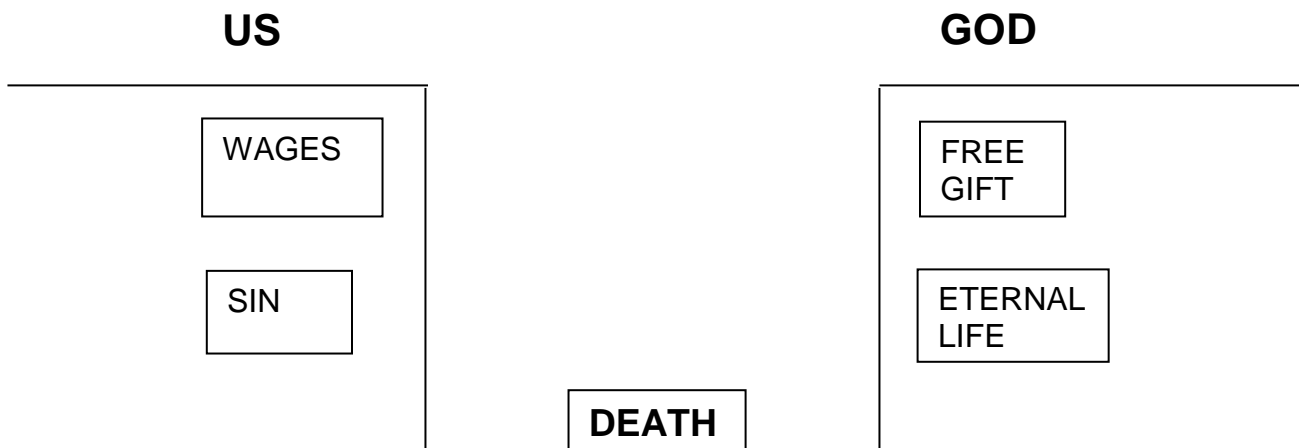
Colossians 2:13-15 & Ephesians 2:1-8

➤ **Principle #1** - Life change always begins with the **TRUTH**.

Fact #2 - We become “co-partakers” of Christ’s victory over sin, death, and Satan the moment we **RECEIVE CHRIST** as our personal Savior by faith.

Romans 6:3-11, 17-19, 22-24

➤ **Principle #2** - Life change demands we **ACT** on the truth.



For the wages of sin are death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

Fact #3 - Every believer is given a **SPIRITUAL GIFT** (supernatural enabling) at the moment of salvation for two reasons:

- To remind us that “life-change” occurs on the basis of **GRACE** not self-effort.
 - To empower us as other-centered “agents of grace” who supply what **OTHERS NEED** to be transformed into the likeness of Christ.
- **Principle #3** - Life change is both a gift and a **RESPONSIBILITY**.

Discussion Questions:

1. Briefly summarize what Jesus did between the time of His death and resurrection. What is the significance of Christ giving spiritual gifts to His Church?
2. Have you ever asked Christ to forgive you of your sin based on His victory over sin, death, and Satan?
3. In what area of your life do you need to experience God’s power over sin?
4. How are you currently allowing others to use their spiritual gifts to help you grow in Christ? How are you currently using your spiritual gifts to love and encourage others?

Introduction: Can you imagine . . .

- . . . driving home after an exhausting and stressful day only to get an “S.O.S.” voicemail from a not-so-close friend . . . and immediately experiencing a shift of focus off yourself and your stressful day and finding yourself filled with compassion and energy to help this person in need?

- . . . hearing of a promotion or a financial windfall in the life of your ex-husband/wife . . . and having the first thoughts that come to your mind be joy and gratitude to God for His blessing on their life?

- . . . being able to hear the honest conversations of your children and your closest friends as they've gathered at your home after your funeral . . . describing you as the most patient, loyal, and Christ-like person they had ever known?

How God brings out the best in His children:

Ephesians 4:11-16

- ¹¹*And He gave . . .*
 . . . *some as apostles,*
 . . . *and some as prophets,*
 . . . *and some as evangelists,*
 . . . *and some as pastors and teachers,*
- ¹²*for the equipping of the saints . . .*
 . . . *for the work of service,*
 . . . *to the building up of the body of Christ;*
- ¹³*until we all attain . . .*
 . . . *to the unity of the faith,*
 and of the knowledge of the Son of God,
 . . . *to a mature man,*
 . . . *to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*
- ¹⁴*As a result, . . .*
 . . . *we are no longer to be children,*
 . . . *tossed here and there by waves,*
 . . . *and carried about by every wind of doctrine,*
 . . . *by the trickery of men,*
 . . . *by craftiness in deceitful scheming;*
- ¹⁵. . . *but speaking the truth in love, . . .*
 . . . *we are to grow up in all aspects into Him,*
 . . . *who is the head, even Christ,*
- ¹⁶*from whom the whole body . . .*
 . . . *being fitted and held together by that which*
 every joint supplies,
 . . . *according to the proper working of each*
 individual part,
 . . . *causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*

1. **Leaders** are gifted to **EQUIP** God's people for service. Ephesians 4:11-12a

2. **Every member** is a **MINISTER**. Ephesians 4:12b

3. **Ministries are developed** to help **EVERY BELIEVER** to live **every day** in **every** way just as Jesus would live if He were living out His life in their physical body. Ephesians 4:13

4. God **measures spiritual maturity** by a specific, **FOUR-FOLD** criteria: Ephesians 4:14-16
 - Doctrinal stability
 - Authentic relationships
 - Growing love
 - Full participation

Are you positioning yourself for God to bring out the best in you?

A diagnostic evaluation:

1. I am currently being equipped for ministry by:

- Worshiping regularly
- Listening / Reading for personal growth
- Being involved in an apprenticeship and/or mentoring relationship

2. I am currently ministering and building into the lives of others . . .

- Rarely or sporadically
- Functioning in my gifts with joy and fruitfulness
- Involved in ministry, but don't feel deeply useful
- Regularly seeing other's lives changed through me and my gifts

3. I am *becoming more like Christ* in my everyday life as evidenced by:

- Coming **B**efore God daily
- A desire to read God's Word
- A disciplined study and understanding of God's Word
- An ability to "see through" false teaching

4. I am *becoming more like Christ* in my everyday life as evidenced by:

- Doing life **I**n community
- Enjoying one or more deep, authentic relationships in Christ
- My regular attendance in a small group where "speaking the truth in love" is common
- Having three or four gut-level accountability relationships that are helping me through the most sensitive areas of my life

5. I am *becoming more like Christ* in my everyday life as evidenced by:

- Being **O**n mission 24-7
- A desire to become more deeply involved with God's people (worship, classes, friendships, meeting needs)
- A sense of belonging and acceptance with my church family
- A clear sense that I "fit" in my church body (I am loved by others and find myself caring and helping them in increasing measure)

Introduction: “A tale of two butterflies”

A new life always *demand*s life-change

2 Corinthians 5:17

WARNING: Two common errors to avoid

1. Moralism
2. Antinomianism

A believer whose life does not change = An Oxymoron:

Ephesians 4:17-24

*¹⁷So I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord,
that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do,
in the futility of their thinking.*



*^{18a}They are darkened in their understanding
and separated from the life of God*



*^{18b}because of the ignorance that is in them
due to the hardening of their hearts.*



*¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity,
they have given themselves over to sensuality,
so as to indulge in every kind of impurity,
with a continual lust for more.*

²⁰ *You, however, did not come to know Christ that way.*



²¹ *Surely you heard of Him
and were taught in Him,
in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.*



²² *You were taught with regard to your former way of
life,*

- *to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;*
- ²³*to be made new in the attitude of your minds;*
- ²⁴*and to put on the new self, created to be like
God in true righteousness and holiness.*

1. As believers, our lives must be progressively characterized by **MORAL PURITY**.

Ephesians 4:17-19

2. An **IMMORAL LIFESTYLE** is inconceivable for us as believers for two reasons:

a) It contradicts **WHO** we are!

Ephesians 4:20

b) It contradicts **WHO** Jesus is!

Ephesians 4:21

3. We achieve **PERSONAL PURITY** by following God’s three-fold principles of transformation.

Ephesians 4:22-24

- a) “**Put-off**” (point in time) **the old!**
- b) **BE RENEWED** (continuously) in the attitude of your mind!
- c) “**Put-on**” (point in time) **the new!**

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you summarize the main point outlined in Ephesians 4:17-24?

2. Briefly discuss the three views of moral purity as it relates to a believers life.
 - ❑ **Moralism** – My moral purity earns God’s favor.

 - ❑ **Antinomianism** – Moral purity is irrelevant because grace super abounds when I sin.

 - ❑ **Biblical** – Moral purity is the natural outgrowth of who I am as a child of God and it reflects His character and holiness.

3. In what area of your life did God convict you personally? In what ways do your thinking, actions, speech, or attitude not reflect the “new you?”

4. What will it look like this week to follow God’s three-fold principles for transformation? Be as specific as possible.

(a) I will “put off” _____ this week by . . .

(b) I will “renew my mind” this week by _____ . . .

(c) I will “put on” _____ this week by . . .

Introduction: “Dad, I’m trying as hard as I can!”

Review:

1. **Every believer** is called to “be transformed.” Ephesians 4:1-6

2. **Christ’s defeat** of sin, death and Satan makes “transformation” possible. Ephesians 4:7-10

3. **The Church** is God’s primary agent of “transforming” in our lives. Ephesians 4:11-16

4. We achieve personal purity by God’s **three-fold principles of transformation**: Ephesians 4:17-24
 - “Put-off”
 - Be renewed
 - “Put-on”

5. **Transformation** is a matter of spiritual training vs. trying harder. Ephesians 4:25-32

Five habits that cultivate holiness from the heart:

(Habits 1 & 2 in Part 5, continued in series Part 6)

1. **BE HONEST** - Speak the truth in love.

15. . . but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.

Ephesians 4:15, 25

Spiritual training station #1

- Training objective:**
Honesty (Personal integrity)

- Training command:**
“Speak the **TRUTH** in love” (see Ephesians 4:15, 25)

- Training actions:**
Put off – falsehood
Be renewed – recognize the **SHARED** membership in God’s family
Put on – truthful speech and authenticity

- Training apparatus:**
Practice **CONFESSION**

2. **BE ANGRY** - Deal with anger appropriately.

²⁶BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,
²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.

Ephesians 4:26-27

Spiritual training station #2

Training objective:
Emotional control

Training command:
“Be angry, and yet do not sin”

(see Ephesians 4:26)

Training actions:
Put off – anger that leads to sin and offense
Be renewed – recognize the dangers of **UNRESOLVED** anger
Put on – appropriate expressions of anger

Training Apparatus:
Communicate “**I FEEL**” messages
Make **DIRECT** requests

Discussion Questions:

1. How have you experienced the difference between “trying hard” and “training”?
2. In what ways did you relate with Ryan’s frustrations over trying hard and failing repeatedly? What’s your #1 besetting sin?
3. What was a significant example of truthful speech that someone practiced with you? How did it impact your life?
4. To what degree has anger against self, others, and God been an issue in your life? What do you think would happen in your relationships if you began to regularly use “I feel” messages?
5. In what specific area of your life do you need to go into spiritual training?
6. Who can help you develop new habits to replace old patterns that keep you in bondage?

Introduction: Transformation is a “joint effort.”

*You are the God who **performs miracles**; You display
Your power among the peoples.*

Psalm 77:14

*The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead,
lives in you... Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have
no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do.*

Romans 8:11, 12

*I can do all things **through Christ** who strengthens me.*

Philippians 4:13

*...**work out** your salvation with fear and trembling; for it
is **God who is at work in you, both** to will and to work for
His good pleasure.*

Philippians 2:12-13

Five habits that cultivate holiness from the heart:

(continued from series Part 5)

3. **BE DILIGENT** - Work hard and refuse to take “short-cuts.”

He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

Ephesians 4:28

Spiritual training station #3

Training objective:

Financial stewardship (work ethic)

Training command:

“Steal **NO LONGER**”

see Ephesians 4:28

Training actions:

Put off – stealing

Be renewed – recognize the **VALUE** and **PURPOSE** of work

Put on – work as **UNTO** the **LORD**

see Colossians 3:23-24

Training apparatus:

Write out your **TO BE** list

4. **BE POSITIVE** - Don't wound with your words.

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:29-30

Spiritual training station #4

Training objective:
Positive speech

Training command:
"Saying only what helps"

see Ephesians 4:29

Training actions:
Put off – negative speech
Be renewed – recognize the **POWER** and **CONSEQUENCES**
of what you say.

Put on – positive, encouraging speech

Luke 6:45
Proverbs 18:21
Matthew 12:36-37

Training apparatus:
Practice **SILENCE** and **SOLITUDE**.

5. **BE FORGIVING** - Be the first to say, “I’m sorry.”

³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:31-32

Spiritual training station #5

Training objective:
Relational harmony

Training command:
“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other” see Ephesians 4:32

Training actions:
Put off – hate
Be renewed – remember that “**RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS**” take precedence over
your “rights”
Put on – love

Training apparatus:
The Matthew 5:24 Principle

Summary:

God has provided everything we need to live transformed, holy, and winsome lives. Our part is to appropriate His grace and power by going into training in the areas of:

- ❑ **Personal integrity**
- ❑ **Emotional control**
- ❑ **Financial stewardship**
- ❑ **Positive speech**
- ❑ **Private attitudes**

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the five areas do you consider an area of positive spiritual growth and strength?
2. Which of the five areas do you clearly sense you need to go into spiritual training to cultivate a heart and lifestyle of Christ-likeness?
3. What specifically will you do to allow God's Spirit to transform you in this area over time?
4. Who, specifically, will you ask to help you on your journey?

Introduction: A tale of two fires

The Divine Equation: C + P = E

Circumstance + **P**erspective = **E**xperience

Living above my circumstances occurs when my **PERSPECTIVE** interprets my circumstances rather than my **CIRCUMSTANCES** determining my perspective.

The fundamental question: How can we develop the kind of **perspective** that transcends our circumstances?

The answer:

Four keys and four questions from Philippians chapter 1

Key #1: FOCUS

Question #1: Where is your focus?

A lesson from the life of Paul

- Paul's circumstance Philippians 1:1-11

- Paul's **UPWARD** focus

³ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ⁵ in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:3-6

- Paul's **OUTWARD** focus

⁷ For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:7-8

⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:9-11

1. How to develop an upward focus

Philippians 1:3-6

- A Choice = **GRATITUDE**
- An Action = **PRAYER**
- An Attitude = **CONFIDENCE**

Summary = our **FEELINGS** always follow our focus!

2. Three observations about an outward focus

Philippians 1:7-8

1. Difficult circumstances reveal our true **AFFECTIONS**.
2. Living above our circumstances occurs when our hearts are so full of people, there is no room for **SELF PITY**.
3. Sometimes God allows adverse circumstances to realign our **AFFECTIONS**!

Summary = our focus always follows our **AFFECTIONS**!

3. How to develop an outward focus

Philippians 1:9-11

- **THINK** about those who have loved you the most.
- Pray for those you **THINK** about the most.

Conclusion: Where's your focus?

- Upward or Inward?
- Outward or Inward?

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the most "pressing" or difficult circumstance you are facing in your life right now?
2. How does your circumstance compare to being held in prison, and awaiting possible execution?
3. What specific steps could you take today to develop an upward and outward focus even amidst your difficult situation?

Introduction:

“Sometimes the shortest distance between two points is a ‘zig-zag’ line.”

– Dr. Don Sunnuikian

Restatement:

God’s ultimate purposes for our lives are often achieved by circumstances that seem to make no “apparent” sense to us.

Review:

- **C + P = E**
(Circumstance + Perspective = Experience)
- Key #1 = **FOCUS**
- Question #1 = **WHERE’S MY FOCUS?**

Key #2: PURPOSE

Question #2: What's my purpose?

A second lesson from the life of Paul

- Paul's report = his thesis

¹² Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

Philippians 1:12

How God used Paul's difficult circumstances

Philippians 1:13-18

- Exhibit A = The **GOSPEL** goes forth

¹³ so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

Philippians 1:13

- Exhibit B = The **CHURCH** grows strong

¹⁴ and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Philippians 1:14

- Exhibit C = The **MAN** grows deep

¹⁵ Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; ¹⁶ the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷ the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. ¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.

Philippians 1:15-18

3 purpose statements for every believer

1. I am an ambassador/messenger of the Gospel.
 - Purpose: **REACH THE “LOST”**
 - Question #1 = How could God use my difficult circumstances to advance the Gospel?

2. I am called to encourage God’s people; to help them grow to full maturity in Christ.
 - Purpose: **BUILD THE “FOUND”**
 - Question #2 = How could God use my difficult circumstances to encourage other believers?

3. I am a servant of the living God.
 - Purpose: **BECOME LIKE OUR MASTER**
 - Question #3 = What might God want to do “in” me through my present circumstances.

The Big Question = Whose purpose or agenda have I been most eager to see fulfilled... **God’s** or mine?

Discussion Questions:

1. Review the divine formula [C + P = E] and share how your “P” was altered by your “focus” last week.
2. What was Paul’s thesis in verse 12? How did his view of his purpose transform his perspective?
3. What “good” come out of Paul’s adverse circumstances? Why could he be so joyful when his life seemed so difficult and unfair?
4. Talk through the four questions with a close friend or your small group. What would it look like to act on questions 1, 2, and 3?

Introduction: What I learned from Kevin McIntire

1. Facing our **MORTALITY** is both scary and clarifying.
2. Very few things in life **MATTER** very much.
3. **C + P = E**
4. Only an **ETERNAL** “P” can produce peace and joy when facing death.

Question: How do we choose joy when life is crashing in upon us?

Key #3: HOPE

Question #3: Where's my hope?

A third lesson from the life of Paul

Paul's perspective facing death = joy

¹⁸Yes, and I will continue to rejoice..."

Philippians 1:18b

- Reason #1: His deliverance is **CERTAIN**

*for I know that this will turn out for my **deliverance***

- *through your prayers and*
- *the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,*

Philippians 1:19

*according to my **earnest expectation** and **hope**,*

that I will not be put to shame in anything,

but that with all boldness,

Christ will (even now, as always), **be exalted in my body**, whether

- *by life*
- *or by death.*

Philippians 1:20

- Reason #2: His source of joy is **UNSHAKABLE**

*For to me, to live is **Christ** and
to die is **gain**.*

Philippians 1:21

*But if I am to live on in the flesh,
This will mean fruitful labor for me;
- and I do not know which to choose.*

Philippians 1:22

*But I am hard-pressed from both directions,
- having the desire to depart and be with Christ,
for that is very much better;*

Philippians 1:23

*- yet to remain on in the flesh
is more necessary for your sake.*

Philippians 1:24

*Convinced of this,
I know that I will remain and continue with you all
For **your progress and joy in the faith**,*

Philippians 1:25

*so that your proud confidence in me may abound
in Christ Jesus
through my coming to you again.*

Philippians 1:26

Paul's secret: "vantage point"

- "Vantage"** = a) A position or situation more advantageous than an opponent's.
b) A position that allows a clear, broad view; understanding
– i.e. vantage point (Cross reference – 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Discussion Questions:

1. When was the last time you seriously contemplated your mortality?
2. What is the difference between “hope” as we use it in English and the biblical concept of “hope”?
3. What two reasons (Philippians 1:19-20) gave Paul such hope and confidence? What’s the difference between being “delivered out of” our circumstances and being “delivered through them”?
4. Where do you need “hope” in your life right now? In what or whom are you hoping in today?
5. What “next step” do you need to take to place your hope fully in Christ? Who could help you take that step?

Introduction: Understanding expectations

1. Focus = upward/outward, not inward!
2. Purpose = God, “use” my adversity!
3. Hope = Look through and eternal perspective!

Key #4: EXPECTATION

Question #4: What are my expectations?

A final lesson from the life of Paul

What does God expect? = consistent conduct

*²⁷ Whatever happens, **conduct yourselves** in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.*

Philippians 1:27a

What does “consistent conduct” look like?

*Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you **stand firm** in one spirit, **[contending]** as one man for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ **without being frightened** in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.*

Philippians 1:27b-28

- Stand firm = Don't give **UP**
- Contending = Don't give **IN**
- Not frightened = Don't shrink **BACK**

What can we expect from God? = 2 Gifts

*²⁹ For it has been **granted to you** on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.*

Philippians 1:29-30

- Granted = A privilege or “gracious gift”
- Struggle = Conflict, suffering, persecution

Understanding God's gift of suffering

6 possible reasons we suffer

1. My **SIN** Galatians 6:7-8
2. Others' sins Psalm 49:1
3. Spiritual attack Job
Ephesians 6
4. Fallen world Luke 13
5. Spiritual **DISCIPLINE** Hebrews 12
6. Spiritual development 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Summary

Suffering is God's gift to accomplish His ultimate good in a fallen world.

God permits what He hates to accomplish that which He loves.

-Joni Eareckson Tada

