

**Introduction: Understanding expectations**

**Review: C + P = E**

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

**Key #4: \_\_\_\_\_**

**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 (NIV)

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 <sup>28</sup> **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 (NIV)

- Stand firm = Don't give \_\_\_\_\_
- Contending = Don't give \_\_\_\_\_
- Not frightened = Don't shrink \_\_\_\_\_

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, <sup>30</sup> since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.*

Philippians 1:29-30 (NIV)

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

## Understanding God's gift of suffering

### 6 possible reasons we suffer

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. My _____              | Galatians 6:7-8       |
| 2. Others' sins          | Psalm 49:1            |
| 3. Spiritual attack      | Job<br>Ephesians 6    |
| 4. Fallen world          | Luke 13               |
| 5. Spiritual _____       | 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

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Share a time in your life when your experience varied greatly from your expectations. What was the result?
2. Discuss what God expects from us. How does Paul “model” this “consistent conduct” throughout Chapter 1 of Philippians?
3. Under adverse circumstances, which of these are you most tempted to do?  
a) “give up b) “give in” c) “shrink back”
4. Discuss and contrast the 2 gifts God gives us (vs. 29-30). How does this shape our expectations?
5. What new insight did you gain concerning suffering? How could this help your perspective in your current situation?