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 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, 30 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
Ephesians 6


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?