



## Philippians 1:12-18

September 27, 2020

“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:14

**Begin with prayer.** “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Psalm 119:18).

In Philippians 1:1-11 Paul thanks God for the Philippians, expresses his love for them, and then prays for them. In verses 12-26 Paul gives the church a report on his present situation and his outlook on the future. The present report is the focus of this study in verses 12-18.

### Imprisonment for Christ

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**Read Philippians 1:12-18.**

[Q] Look back at Philippians 1:3-11, Paul’s prayer for the Philippians. What does his prayer have to do with his positive report on his imprisonment in verses 12-18?

[Q] Describe Paul’s attitude about his imprisonment. What is the most important thing that Paul is focused on?

Some people might have thought he was crazy, but Paul sees that God has used this disaster (prison) to bring more people to hear about Jesus. And Paul knows about pain.

[Q] **Read Acts 16:16-40.** List the difficult things that went wrong. How did God turn each of those circumstances around for His glory?

“When we’re in the middle of our suffering, we never know what will happen, but we must trust that God is sovereign and that He can and often does advance the gospel through great personal hardships, such as imprisonment or cancer. Our job is to stay faithful, joyful, and Christ-centered through the suffering, confidently trusting in His wise, sovereign will.” — D. A. Carson, *The Temptation of Joseph*

**Apply:** What can you do to be more like Paul: using every circumstance in life to advance the gospel, instead of only looking for a change of circumstances? Can you think of a way you can use a current difficult circumstance or relationship in your life to advance the gospel?

## Confident in the Lord

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### Read Philippians 1:14.

[Q] Why would Paul's imprisonment result in others being even more bold and less fearful about speaking about Christ? Why doesn't it do the opposite, causing others to stop talking for fear they would also be imprisoned?

[Q] What do you think it means to be "confident in the Lord"?

[Q] Are you confident in the Lord so that in the midst of suffering everyone around you knows where your confidence comes from? How would your friends and family describe your attitude toward suffering?

### Read verses 15-18.

[Q] What do those who preach Christ from rivalry want to see happen to Paul and what is his response?

[Q] Jump ahead and read Philippians 2:1-5. Paul says to do nothing from rivalry or conceit. How can he rejoice that Christ is preached even when some are doing it insincerely out of envy and rivalry?

Paul rejoiced in spite of suffering. Does the preaching of Christ cause you to rejoice? If you are a Christian, you were chosen to "proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

### Apply:

This week ask God for His viewpoint on suffering and for Him to enable you to rejoice in the midst of trouble or pain.

With Paul, our confidence and joy in the gospel must never be marginalized by trials. Hostility to Christians, when rightly viewed through the gospel, can embolden us to speak good news without fear, as it did for Paul and his colleagues.

Just as Paul finds that he can rejoice in persecution and even in those who preach out of rivalry, we too are freed from fearing the suffering that comes because of our allegiance to Christ. After all, such suffering ushers us into profound communion with Christ, our suffering Savior (cf. 3:10).

— Gospel Transformation Bible note on Philippians 1:12-18