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“Momentum Moments”

Philippians 1 Small Group Plan

It has been said that a sense of purpose works in two ways — we work on **it** and then it works on **us**. Do you have a sense of purpose? Viktor Frankl, holocaust survivor and author of *Man’s Search for Meaning*, poses this question. After spending three years in a Nazi prison camp he concluded that everything can be taken away from you except your sense of purpose and meaning. You have to give that away.

This is conclusion of Paul as he sits in a Roman prison and writes his letter to the Philippian church, except for one thing. Paul takes it a step further. He doesn’t simply survive, he rejoices.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- Are you a “glass half-empty” or “glass half-full” person? Explain.
- What are the differences between these two views of life?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— CONFIDENT - IN SPITE OF THE CHAINS —

Philippians 1:12-14

¹²Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

- What had become “clear” (v. 13) to the “whole palace guard” that helped to advance the gospel (v. 12)?
- Was it Paul’s verbal message or his lifestyle message that was so impressive to those around him? Explain.
- How did Paul’s difficulty – “chains” (v. 14) — give confidence to other Christians?

— JOYFUL - IN SPITE OF THE CRITICS —
Philippians 1:15-19

¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

- How can “envy” “rivalry” (v. 15) and “selfish ambition” (v. 17) twist and distort ministry? What does this twisted ministry begin to look like?
- Why would someone practice ministry out of envy and rivalry?
- Read verse 18 and describe Paul's attitude when attacked by critics.
- Define and describe what “rejoice” (v. 18) had come to mean for Paul.

— HOPEFUL - IN SPITE OF THE CRISIS —
Philippians 1:20-27

²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me. ²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

- Paul prayed for “courage” (v. 20). Why?
- Describe what it means, “to live is Christ” (v. 21)?
- What does it look like for Christ to “be exalted” in my “life” (v. 20)?
- What does it look like for Christ to “be exalted” in my “death” (v. 20)?
- When Paul says, “Whatever happens” (v. 27) what does he think will happen?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- How do you usually feel about personal criticism? How do you typically respond to it?
- Has your faith ever created a social or work-related difficulty for you? Explain.
- What does it mean to live “*worthy of the gospel of Christ*” (v. 27)?
- When someone is suffering for being a Christian, what do they need?
- Close by reaffirming in prayer your faith in God — in both good and difficult times.