

# Philippians 1:12-26 - Study Questions

## Lesson 3

### Background of Paul's imprisonment

Paul had been arrested in Jerusalem and wrongfully accused of teaching contrary to the Jewish law and defiling the temple by taking Gentiles into the inner courts. He was jailed in Jerusalem but later sent to Caesarea because of a plot to kill him.

Although innocent of all charges, the governor left Paul in prison in Caesarea for 2 years to appease Jewish religious leaders. A new governor was appointed and a group of Jews wanting to kill him, asked if he could be moved back to Jerusalem. When the governor went to Caesarea and heard Paul's defense, he asked if Paul was willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial. Paul replied he had done nothing wrong and, as a Roman citizen, asked that he be tried in Rome.

(Acts 21:26 – 25:12)

Paul had desired to preach in Rome (Acts 19:21; Romans 1:15) Warren Wiersbe said in his commentary, "Paul wanted to go to Rome as a preacher, but instead he went as a prisoner."

1. This week's memory verse is Philippians 1:21

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

2. What good resulted from Paul's imprisonment in verses 12-18?
  - o List a few biblical examples in which God brought good out of persecution and difficulties.
3. How do the following Scriptures help a believer to maintain a godly perspective when persecuted or treated unfairly?
  - o John 15:18-20
  - o John 16:33
  - o Romans 8:35-39

- 2 Timothy 3:12
- 1 Peter 4:12-19

4. Paul described his imprisonment as “the things which happened to me” and “my chains.” What hardships of being in prison did Paul *not* mention?

- What did Paul choose to focus on instead?
- List a few Scriptures that teach believers to focus on the Lord rather than circumstances.

**Background of the palace guard**

Philippians 1:13 mentions the “palace guard.” Nelson’s Bible Dictionary states the palace guard were an elite group of Roman soldiers in New Testament times that guarded the emperor and Rome. Their salaries were better, and they had more privileges than the average Roman soldier.

The custom was for a prisoner to be chained at the wrist to a soldier 24 hours a day. The soldiers were chained to the prisoner in shifts; each shift was about 4-6 hours long. Paul was allowed to live in a home while in Rome but remained chained to Roman guards (Acts 28:30).

5. In what ways did Paul’s imprisonment create new areas of ministry for him?

6. How are those who preached Christ with the wrong motives described in verses 15 & 16?

7. Some of those preaching Christ wanted to cause Paul even further suffering. What is the scriptural way to respond to hurtful behavior from other believers? Note the biblical reference(s).

8. It was important to Paul to have others pray for him. What were some of his prayer requests?

- Romans 15:30-32
- Ephesians 6:18-20
- 2 Thessalonians 3:1, 2
- Philemon 22

What do you learn about his heart attitude from these requests?

9. According to Bill MacDonald, “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” means the boundless resources the Spirit supplies to enable believers to stand fast. Provide several Scriptures that demonstrate *how* the Holy Spirit helps the believer.

10. Write out Philippians 1:21. Explain the following phrases:

- To live is Christ
- To die is gain

How do verses 22-26 add to your understanding of verse 21?

# Philippians 1:12-26 - Discussion Questions

## Lesson 3

1. How does Philippians 1:12 compare with Romans 8:28?
  - What importance does Paul place on the “furtherance of the gospel”, and what was he willing to do for it?
  - How important is sharing the gospel to you? What are *you* willing to do for it?
  - Share at least one example of a bad situation that resulted in something good (whether observed or personally experienced).
  
2. Read Philippians 1:12-24 and 2 Corinthians 3:2-3. Paul was a “living epistle” as are all believers. What impact do you think he had in the lives of those who knew him and “read” his life?
  - As people “read your life”, what conclusions do you think they might come to about Christianity? About Christ?
  - What qualities do you believe to be important in a living epistle that may not be evident in your life presently? What change(s) will need to take place to make them a reality?
  
3. Read verses 15-18. What negative motives did some have for preaching Christ?

- What are some practical ways we can follow Paul's example of resisting the negative and rejoicing in the positive?
4. Read verse 19. Paul was confident they were praying for him and that the Holy Spirit would supply the answer. Describe what it means to you to know others will pray for you.
- What do you think "the supply of the Holy Spirit of Christ Jesus" is?
5. Read verse 20 in the New Living Translation. How would you describe Paul's conviction and confidence in this statement?
- How do your convictions and confidence concerning this statement compare to Paul's?
6. Read Philippians 1:21. This verse has been said to sum up Paul's life. Finish this sentence with a word or phrase that currently sums up your life.

For to me, to live is \_\_\_\_\_.

- Name three areas/things that need to change in your life so that you live and breathe Jesus:
7. What was Paul's attitude about death?
- In what ways should a Christian's view of death differ from that of the world?
  - While you still have life in your body, how would you like to be a benefit to others?