

Turn in your Bible to Philippians 1:20-30 Follow along as I read...

20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always **Christ will be honored 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 live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. 29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, 30 engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.”

In the last two weeks we have learned three important truths so far from Philippians 1...

1. A defining quality of being a Christ follower is JOY. (1-11)
2. A determining factor to experience joy is whether or not you interpret life from Jesus' perspective/1 passion. (12-19)
3. To experience Jesus' joy you must have one passion--to magnify Jesus Christ=treasuring & proclaiming Him. (20-26)
1:20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always **Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death**

I believe John Piper's book, Don't Waste Your Life is the best Biblical explanation & application of Phil. 1. The introduction to the study guide for that book says...

“A NEWLY RETIRED COUPLE moves to New Mexico to spend their twilight years on the golf course. A middle-aged man labors all day at the office to make enough money to provide his family with a nice house in a safe neighborhood and fun vacations in the summer. A young student enters college in hopes of gaining the education and skills needed to have a good career. Is this all there is to life? Or did God make us for something greater than the American Dream? It is our conviction that God did indeed create us for more than the American Dream. Nevertheless, millions of people waste their lives in pursuit of the vain trappings of this world because they never discover the simple, obvious, glorious, biblical reality that “[God’s] steadfast love is better than life” (Psalm 63:3). They are never gripped by the truth that “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). The awesome biblical promise that “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14) has never landed on them by the power of the Holy Spirit and awakened them to a Don't Waste Your Life passion for God's supremacy in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.

Our prayer is that God would use this study guide to awaken in you a consuming desire to not throw your life away on “fatal success.” Our desire is that Jesus Christ would explode into your life, unite your fractured dreams and fragmented heart, and produce a single, holy, all-embracing passion for his name. And then our hope is that in this passion you would be set free from small dreams and weak visions, that you would lay down your life for the cause of Christ in the world. As Jesus said, “Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it” (Mk 8:35). (DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE, John Piper, pp. 6-7)

**That is my purpose this morning .. The Spirit will lead every Christ follower to a very conscious decision:
*Instead of wasting my life, I want more than anything else—Jesus Christ to be honored, magnified,& seen to be the all-glorious Lord and Savior that He actually is by everyone in my life BY my example!***

The possibility of wasting your life is GREAT ... many are doing it...

1. Eternal ruin/misery/destruction (Matt. 7:21-23) 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

2. Heart-wrenching shame before Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:12-15) *12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

To Keep From Wasting Your Life...

1. Live to Magnify Jesus Christ (vs. 20-26)

If Jesus is not made much of in your life, your life is wasted.

-Magnify Christ by making your life serve as a telescope not microscope in relation to seeing God. (20)

A telescope makes a very large object, like a star, look like it really is—HUGE!

Jesus is ALL-supreme...determine to help people see Him as He really is-GIVER, DOER, SUFFICIENT.

A microscope makes a very small object, like a cell look bigger than it really is—Larger than it is!

My life is all-supreme...I view myself as helping God out, carrying the load—of course with God's help.

***Pray to Jesus**=Acknowledge that you are needy and that Jesus is ABLE and WILLING...ask Him!

***Praise Jesus**=Speak often of Jesus' greatness, works...He gets all the credit! We praise what we prize!

-Magnify Christ by treasuring & valuing Him before/above everyone & everything else in life. (21-24)

1:21 Treasure Jesus more than life itself (Choose death-be with Jesus over a long, healthy, fun life)

1:22-23 Treasure Jesus more than ministry (Choose death-be with Jesus over having a fruitful ministry)

1:24 Treasure Jesus more than your preference (Choose to stay/serve because it is what Jesus wants)

-Magnify Christ by joyfully & sacrificially loving people—helping them to treasure Christ also. (25-26)

Paul was willing & wanting to come to them again FOR their progress & joy in their faith.

I live so that you will see, savor & be so satisfied with Jesus that your life will point others to Jesus.

***How you handle loss AND how you handle gain reveals who/what your treasure is. Phil 4:11-13**

Loss (Job 1:20-21; 2:10); Hardship (2 Cor. 1:8-9); Weakness (2 Cor. 12:8-10)

Gain (1 Tim. 6:17); Victory (1 Cor. 15:57)

2. Live Worthily of the Gospel of Christ (27a)

If Jesus is not made desirable to others by the way you live, your life is wasted.

The word “only” means “of most importance; above all else.”

“Most importantly, above all else, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel.”

*In other words, if we say we treasure Christ & love people, then we'd better live like it is true.

*Gandhi said, “Show me redeemed lives and I might be inclined to believe your redeemer.” That's fair.

The phrase “let your manner of life be worthy” literally means ‘behave as a citizen’.

Philippi was a Roman colony—were Roman citizens—they could buy & sell property—had legal rights.

The word “worthy” means weigh. Imagine an old fashioned scale:

One side: truth of what you say the gospel is all about; Other side: your life... They should balance out!

Jesus desires your life to be as radical as His message IF His message is to have any credibility.

Philippians knew of a great example...Acts 16:23-26 *‘23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. 24 Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.’*

The jailer and the prisoners saw/heard first hand that what Paul said about Jesus was lived out in his life.

A friend of mine had a telemarketer call him telling him about some great investment opportunity.

The telemarketer told my friend that if he invested money in this program he would earn a lot of money.

He shared how several people had become millionaires with this program...impressive...a sure thing.

Then my friend asked a question: “If this is true, why are you still a telemarketer and not a millionaire?”

Immediately the telemarketer hung up...not taking the time to even answer my friend's question.

My friend's question implied: If what a person says isn't backed up by how he lives, something is wrong.

Think about what we're about as a church: *We say we exist to... treasure Christ AND love people...so God is pleased, we are happy & people around us are regularly coming to treasure Jesus & love others also.*

Now the question: 'Is there evidence to back up what we say is true?' In other words...

Is God actually pleased with how we live our lives?

Are we actually happy because of our treasuring of Jesus Christ and loving others?

Are people around us actually coming to treasure Jesus Christ in their lives because of our example?

The only way people are going to want to treasure Christ is if we actually treasure Him ourselves.

Let me ask you, 'Are you willing to go to friends at your school, the marketplace or neighborhood, & say,

"Wouldn't you like to be like me...have my attitude & my joy? You can...it if found in Jesus Christ"

A week ago as I was talking with a couple who were visiting Berean & I asked them why they visited.

It was neat to hear the woman say that one of her classmates in school comes to Berean and told her how much the Lord had done in her life through the people & ministry at Berean that she should come with her.

It matters how we live...at school...in the neighborhood...in the marketplace because people are watching.

3. **STRIVE for the faith of the Gospel by the Spirit, with 1 mind & not frightened by opposition.** (27b-30)
If you are not striving with other Christians as a unified team to lead others to Christ, your life is wasted.

What? The phrase 'striving side by side' is a Greek word from which we get our English word "athlete."

It's a compound word: not just athlete but athlete together—in other words: team...together as a team

What are we competing together for? The faith of the gospel: defend the Gospel & share the gospel

We are a team. How you conduct yourself as a Christ follower affects how people think of us together.

Lou Holtz, the former football coach at Notre Dame, once said, *"The freedom to do your own thing ends when you have obligations and responsibilities. If you want to fail yourself, you can. But you cannot do your own thing if you have responsibilities to team members."*

How? By the Spirit—capital S—Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can enable believers live as a team.

Every Christ follower is indwelt by the person of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gets along with Himself--He's not schizophrenic—He doesn't have that problem.

Since He lives in every believer, if there is any disunity or conflict, there is only one explanation.

It is because someone is walking according to the flesh and not walking by the Spirit.

Don't give me "personality conflicts"—that's just a bunch of baloney.

We have the Spirit within us, therefore we should be united with others who have that same Spirit.

Any conflict between us as brothers and sisters in Christ is totally unacceptable.

It is not conduct worthy of the gospel. It is living inconsistent with what we say we believe is true.

How? With "one mind." That's the Greek word for psychic—where we get our word psychology.

It means that everybody is on the same page or everybody's reading out of the same play book.

To have one mind really means that everybody is headed toward the same goal for the same reason.

The 'one mind' is the mind of Christ. Whatever is in the mind of Christ is what should be in our mind.

Whatever is His agenda should be our agenda. So stop and think about this for a minute.

What do you suppose, right now this very minute, is in the mind of Christ?

Your convenience? comfort? ease? personal preferences? opinions? Probably not.

Within the mind of Christ today is advancing the gospel. That's what He gave His life for.

Therefore, that's what should be foremost in our minds. That's what matters.

We need to quit getting sidetracked by all kinds of little personal stuff and get our eyes fixed on the goal.

How? Not frightened in anything by your opponents.

The word "frightened" describes a horse stampeding away. horses=flight animal-first instinct is to run.

When we conduct ourselves worthy of the gospel, it is going to bring the opponent to the surface.

That's a fact. And our first instinct is to flee—to run—to pull back and compromise.

Sometimes that means just going back to being like everybody else so they leave us alone.

Sometimes it means pulling back into our little cocoon or our little fortress so that nobody upsets us.

But it's pretty hard to accomplish the mission of the gospel if we're pulled back into our fortress.

The opposition is going to rear its ugly head. Don't turn and run. Stand there.

And when it does—it merely will reveal those who are true Christians and those who are not.

Most people in America consider themselves to be Christians, but not are all true Christians.

But people don't know that. Yet they see those who call themselves Christians & say, "I don't want that."

So when true Christians continue to treasure Christ even with opposition—people see true Christianity.

The last phrase of verse 28, ‘and that from God’...refers to the fact that God give us what we need to stand.
Don’t pull back...Can you name 3 non-believers you are building a relationship with to lead to Christ?

Why? Verse 29 says that God has ‘graced’ you to believe in Christ AND to suffer for Christ.

Are you thankful Jesus died for you & rose again so you might personally know Him and live with Him?

Are you just as thankful Jesus has graced you to suffer on His behalf so others can know Him also?

We have to understand that part of our calling is not only to believe, but to suffer what Christ suffered.

This goes back to our imagery last week: are you on a ‘cruise ship of fun’ or ‘battleship of grace/suffering’?

Paul says in verse 30...you are now engaged in the same spiritual battle/conflict that I have been in.

Don’t think that you are in this alone...you’re not AND don’t think that it has begun with you...it hasn’t.

To Keep From Wasting Your Life.. Hebrews 13:12-16

- 1. Prize Jesus!** 12 So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.
13 Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.
14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.
- 2. Praise Jesus!** 15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,
- 3. Proclaim Jesus!** 15b that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.
- 4. Present Jesus!** 16 Do not neglect to do good & to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God

To Keep From Wasting Your Life..

- 1. Live to Magnify Jesus Christ (vs. 20-26)** *If Jesus is not made much of in your life, your life is wasted.*
-What is the worth of Jesus Christ? Is Jesus All-worthy -What are you magnifying? *Galatians 6:14
- 2. Live Worthily of the Gospel of Christ (27a)** *If Jesus is not made desirable to others, your life is wasted.*
-What is the worth of the Gospel of Christ? Is the Gospel Good News?
-How is your manner of life? Proof: Time? Talents? Treasures? *Luke 12:20-21; 32-34
- 3. STRIVE for the faith of the Gospel by the Spirit, with 1 mind & not frightened by opposition. (27-30)**
-If you are not striving with other Christians as a unified team to lead others to Christ, your life is wasted.
-How are you ‘teaming-up’ with other Christ followers to lead others to Christ?
Community: National Day of Prayer, Care-fest,
Church: VBS, Support teen to NYC, CC teachers, Serve on local outreach/missions team,
*2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Colossians 1:27b-29

Jesus is the blazing center of God’s glory. He is also the center of God’s message of grace that changes lives.

But the only way for that message to be credible is if we have lives that give evidence of that radical change.

There has to be something radically different in us that can only be explained by God.

Jesus has joined us together on His team.

If you don’t conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel, it affects us all & our ability to do God’s mission.

Jesus has united us in Himself through the person of the Holy Spirit, who lives in every true believer.

So, if you are in conflict with someone, that’s unacceptable. Do whatever it takes to remove that conflict.

Jesus wants us to be directed by one mind—HIS! We must be united in our living/sharing the Gospel.

It’s not about me. It’s not about you. It’s not about our opinions and preferences. It’s about the gospel.

Jesus wants us to not be frightened by opposition, but to use it as encouragement to greater sacrifices.

As a body of individuals Jesus wants us to joyfully sacrifice, suffer and serve others in His name.

Observations from John Piper

http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/TasteAndSee/ByDate/2006/1776_Dont_Waste_Your_Cancer

The good that Jesus wants to bring about through difficulties (like cancer) will be wasted or lost if you...

1. Do not believe this difficulty is designed for you by God.
2. Believe this difficulty is a curse and not a gift from God.
3. Seek comfort from your odds or chances of beating this difficulty rather than from trusting in God.
4. Think that beating this difficulty is more important than cherishing Christ more because of it.
5. Spend too much time reading about how to beat this difficulty and not enough time reading God’s Word.
6. Let this difficulty drive you into solitude instead of deepen your relationships with others.
7. Treat sin as casually as before you experienced this difficulty.
8. Fail to use this difficulty as a means of witness to the truth and glory of Christ.