

Living is Christ

July 1, 2012

PHILIPPIANS 1:20-30

Vol. 2 Num. 26

Core Competency:

Patience- I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

A patient person shows great understanding, but a quick-tempered one promotes foolishness. (Proverbs 14:29)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

❸ LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP.

Introduction

In 1858, John G. Paton, a young man from Glasgow, Scotland, felt called to go as a missionary to the New Hebrides Islands in the South Pacific. In that era, people often opposed missionary ventures because of the great and very real perils of traveling, the hazards of inadequate medical care, and the dangers of preaching the gospel to people regarded as “uncivilized.” Consequently, an elderly gentleman, upon learning of John Paton’s plans warned, “You will be eaten by cannibals.” “Mr. Dickson,” John replied, “You are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms. I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms. In the Great Day, my resurrection body will arise, as fair as yours, in the likeness of our risen Redeemer.” John Paton, could say, along with Paul, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

To those who don’t believe in God, life on earth is all there is. Therefore, it is natural to strive for money, comfort, happiness, personal fulfillment, power, and prestige. Paul had a transcendent purpose for living. Paul’s whole purpose in life was to speak out boldly for Christ and to become more like him. He had a purpose so clear, so definite, and so profound that it permeated everything he said and did. It gave him hope in the darkest moments of life.

As believers, we derive true meaning and purpose for our lives only when we make God the reference point for our lives. I recently reviewed a book written on the topic of achieving success. One of the salient points made in this book is that all successful people have a clear purpose in life. The author contends that successful people have a compelling reason to get out of bed in the morning—and that driving purpose keeps them on track and makes them successful.

This Week

This week, intentionally pursue your relationship with God. It is here, as you pray, as you read God’s word, as you listen, as you sing, as you meditate, as you worship, as you wait that you will discover your true identity and purpose. It will revive you, allowing God’s light to flood into the darkest parts of your life. Here, in Christ, the Spirit will work in you both to desire and to be obedient to His calling.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage:

Philippians 1:20-30

20 My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all boldness, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

21 For me, living is Christ and dying is gain.

22 Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose.

23 I am pressured by both. I have the desire to depart and be with Christ—which is far better—

24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you.

25 Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith,

26 so that, because of me, your confidence may grow in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

27 Just one thing: Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, working side by side for the faith that comes from the gospel,

28 not being frightened in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of destruction for them, but of your deliverance—and this is from God.

29 For it has been given to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him,

30 having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I have.

② DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the following questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

1. a) What do you think Paul means when he says, "To live is Christ"?

b) What would your family or friends say is the overriding purpose of your life?
2. What factors, negative circumstances, or beliefs keep the gospel of Christ concealed or obscured in your life?
3. What, if anything, would prevent you from honestly being able to say, "To die is gain"?
4. Verse 27 begins with the words "Just one thing." What is the one thing to which Paul is referring and what does this introductory phrase seem to suggest about its importance?

5. a) The Greek word “worthy,” literally means “to even the beam” and refers to balancing the scales so that both sides are even. In light of this information, how are believers to live “worthy” of the gospel?
- b) Was this command to individuals, or to the Christian community or both? Explain your answer.
6. What is the greatest or most significant matter that God has entrusted to you?
7. a) The Greek word “granted” in verse 29 comes from the same word as grace. What two gifts are listed in verse 29?
- b) How can suffering be a gift and how is it linked to grace?

Sermon Notes:

③LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God’s word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFE GROUP.

How can your community group or your life group better reveal the gospel of Christ?

Read John 13:34-35. How can you help cultivate real community in your life group and your church?

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away God's Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away God's money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ