

# Philippians: Week 2 Study Questions

## Philippians 1:12-19

While Paul is imprisoned and writing to his valued church of Philippi, he is able to embrace the reality of both the physical world he is suffering in and the spiritual world that is moving forward as the gospel is advanced. Instead of discounting or despising his suffering, he recognizes it all as God's purposes for spreading the good news of the gospel.

## Application

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1. Although Paul is plagued with physical suffering on earth, he is able to distinguish his own physical comfort from his one mission: the advancement of the gospel. He chooses to rejoice in his suffering because the gospel is spreading. What does your life say about your mission? Are you clear on what God has called you to do and what your mission is? In what way have you ever suffered for the mission of advancing the gospel?
2. Someone who has difficulty getting over or who is particularly sensitive to personal offenses has an identity issue. When is a time you have experienced hurt by someone, possibly through criticism, accusation, or disapproval, that you couldn't get over? What does that expose about where you found your identity in that circumstance? How can you shift perspective to find your identity in a God who can be trusted?
3. Paul makes an intentional choice to rejoice over what God is doing even though it means personal sacrifice. What is one area in your life where you need to choose joy even if it means sacrificing your own comfort, pride, or time?
4. How have you made decisions to avoid discomfort or suffering instead of sacrificing to serve someone else in the past couple of weeks? When you made the decision to run from suffering, what are you holding onto or trying to control? What does this reveal about your ability to trust God?

# Key Points

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- We should be careful not to use our physical circumstances to judge the spiritual reality.
- Paul can overlook the tension of offenses against him because he is to be able to identify more with the mission than the offenses. He has to subjugate his own personal feelings and emotions to the work that God is doing.
- There are three ways we can respond to suffering:
  1. Like Paul, we can choose to connect the dots and see how God is moving amidst the pain.
  2. We might find ourselves over-reaching or over-spiritualizing circumstances, trying to connect dots between suffering and blessing just to justify our hardships.
  3. We may see no connection to what God is doing, stuck in tunnel vision towards our circumstances, and as a result swing towards despair.

Matt read through some passages from the book [\*Through Gates of Splendor\* by Elisabeth Elliot](#) as a helpful resource to these ideas.

- Paul's identity is not wrapped up in his reputation, what people think of him, his comfort, his prosperity, or his success—his identity is wrapped up in the mission that Jesus has called him to and that's why he can move past the suffering he experiences.
- Our identity is not in our need for vengeance; it's in trusting in a God who ultimately makes everything right.
- Until we understand how the mission of spreading the gospel connects to our personal circumstances, we simply have to trust God.
- If people are going to be blessed, it is going to be because other people sacrificed.