

Philippians: To Live Is Jesus | Philippians 1:18b-26

1. **THINK:** When you first trusted in Christ, what did you think your life would be about after that? What would be included in your life that wasn't? What would no longer exist, in your mind, that had existed in your life without Christ? Think in categories of purpose, motives, fruit in your life, desires, goals and character. **DO:** Take the above categories and make a list of what you think would newly exist in Christ and what would no longer exist? Did your goals, motives, character, longings, purpose and other things change when you came to Christ? **DO:** Discuss how Paul's whole life changed. Read some of his testimonies in the epistles and pinpoint things that dramatically changed when he came to know Christ. **DO:** In short, what was Paul's life about before Christ and what is it about after Christ? In the same vein, discuss and determine what your life was about before Christ and what it is now after you know Him? Are things that different?
2. **THINK:** What is Paul's contentment hinge on in regards to whether he lives or dies, whether he stays imprisoned or not and whether he suffers or not. Instead of a particular circumstance being his priority, what phrases in the passage today highlight what Paul is really after? **DO:**
3. **DO:** Pick out or find any phrases in today's passage or in Philippians as a whole where Paul highlights his desire for the Philippians financial prosperity. In addition, find the verses where Paul longs for their comfortable circumstances, owning the newest modern conveniences, obtaining status or popularity or achieving a huge ministry following. Take as much time as you need to find any verses that highlight these blessings. **THINK:** If you cannot find any verses that fall in these categories, take some time as a small group and discuss why they are so hard to find or perhaps not even in there. Why would the majority of modern Christendom today concern itself with these things if they are not to be found in the Scriptures?
4. **THINK:** Can you honestly say that dying is gain for you as well as living is Christ? What does 'to live is Christ' look like in your own life? When you consider Paul's urgency for the Gospel, his willingness to suffer whatever was at stake for the Gospel and his definitive intimacy with Christ, does your life match those? Are you in a trajectory of moving towards that? **DO:** Take the phrase 'to live is.....' and write it down. Then, put every word you can think of that applies in your own life. Be honest. Be real. Share it with someone else who can honestly along with you look and survey where you are. Here are some examples:
 - a. To live is.....a better job
 - b. To live is.....better health
 - c. To live is.....isolating myself from others and just doing what I want

5. **THINK:** Are you confident in what Christ will do? Do you long for a Pauline-like life where the Gospel and the glory of Jesus is of utmost desire? Do you grieve that you are not there yet? Are you content with whatever God will do and however He will use you, so as long as your days are spent for Him, however numbered they are and however turbulent they might be? Most of all, do you trust with confidence that God can change you, mold you and transform you? **DO:** Seek to schedule an extended time of prayer, maybe in the morning. Use that time to pour over the epistles and ask the Lord to help you remove what keeps you from intimacy with Him and add in what will gain intimacy with Him.

6. **THINK:** What motivates you in this passage? What might God use to take you from where you are to someone who is even more willing to live or die, as long as it is gain for Christ? Whose progress and joy in the faith have you set your eyes on that God may allow you to spend your days that they might have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus? **DO:** If you are not engaged with reaching others for Christ, either locally, personally or globally, find an entrance point. Prayerfully seek the Lord as to where you could begin to pour your prayers, resources and efforts to grow the international church of Christ.