

The Joy of Living
Philippians 1:12-18
Adversity Advances Joy

- **Paul’s vision for living was oriented around the advancement of the Gospel. (v. 12-13)**
 - **In giving an update to the Philippians, Paul provides little in the way of personal details. Instead, he uses the opportunity to remind them of the need to prioritize the advancement of the Gospel above all else.**
 - **“To question how it is with *him* the apostle *must* react with information as to how it is with the Gospel.” – Karl Barth**
 - **To advance means to make headway despite blows/adversity.**
 - **To “become known” in the text means that people see it for what it really is.**
 - **“Paul may be in chains, but the gospel has gone forward unfettered.” – Frank Thielman**

- **Paul’s vision for living made it possible for him to see God at work in his life circumstances. (v. 14)**
 - **Because he prioritized the Gospel above all other things, it makes it possible for him to see everything as it really is.**
 - **It allows him to ask the question, “How is God at work in the middle of this?” instead of the question, “How can God get me out of this?”**
 - **The way Paul sees God working in his situation is that it has worked to embolden those around him to share the Gospel, which**

ultimately brings him joy.

- **Paul's vision for living had a place for suffering. (v. 14-17)**
 - **Paul is suffering because he is in prison and because there are people envious of Paul who are using his situation to promote themselves.**
 - **He knew though that "God works not merely in spite of but *through* adverse circumstances."**
 - **God is the One who works through the foolish and weak in the world to bring about His plans.**
 - **Paul can acknowledge his affliction (his suffering is real) while at the same time he can experience God's joy (there is purpose in this, and that purpose is that Christ is preached).**
- **Paul's vision for living allowed him to set aside personal quarrels for the preaching of the Gospel. (v. 15-18)**
 - **These opponents of Paul aren't preaching a false gospel, and they aren't seeking to discredit his authority or ministry.**
 - **They are trying to take advantage of his situation to gain a greater following and promote their personal ministry over Paul's.**
 - **Paul is modeling what humility looks like by setting aside his personal glory so that the Gospel can go forward.**
 - **So, because the Gospel continues to advance, Paul can have joy in the present situation and can look forward to the future with joy despite the uncertainty of his current circumstances.**