



## **The Simple Secret to Growing in Christ** **Philippians 1:12-20**

I'm going to describe two types of people and chances are very high that you know someone that fits each description. Ready? The first is someone wise beyond his/her years. He/she is responsible, dependable, etc. The second is of the age that you'd expect these things, but it doesn't seem he/she has ever "grown up."

**What** makes the difference? Some would say genes... Others would say role models...

**Today** we'll look at what I call "The Simple Secret to Growing in Christ." This is so

important because this will determine whether we live life in Christ the way He has planned.

To live an abundant life in Christ doesn't happen instinctively but intentionally.

**Here's** the simple secret to growth in Christ/abundant living:

**Maturity in Christ is measured in decisions not decades!**

In the text, we'll see three significant life areas where Paul made decisions that furthered his walk in Jesus. He doesn't say, "This is what I decided;" this is behind-the-scenes as spiritual growth forms in the decisions we make.

**The first life area was his pain** (Verses 12-14).

Remember Paul's pain from last week?

The attack on his body? The humiliation of being stripped naked?

Paul was able to recall his pain without it becoming his identity!

He was able to surrender it and see it used by God!

Will you surrender your pain to God or be swallowed in it?

Even “messengers of Satan” can be used by God (2 Cor. 12:7).

**The second life area was “problem people”**  
(Verses 15-18).

In verse 17, he admits the “distress”  
(θλιψις, *thlipsis*) of these.

The verb form of the word “distress” referred to crushing grapes!

We too can feel crushed by the problem people in our life!

**The third life area was his pride** (Verses 19-20).

Verse 19 are the words of a humble man!

He depended on Christ, **and** he depended on others!

We must decide to live dependent upon Christ and the Body!

**Maturity in Christ is measured in decisions not decades!**

**So**, what decision(s) do you need to make today? To surrender your pain to see it used by God rather than being swallowed by it? To not let others define you but to find your identity in Christ and live into this reality and live out of this reality? To submit your pride/independence to Christ and benefit from the prayers of others?

*Where in life do you need to hold to this promise most? Will you decide right here/now to believe this over what you see? Let's be a church that is getting to know Christ and one another; walking with the God Who holds the future! Maturity in Christ/living in Christ and His abundance is determined one decision at a time!*

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