

LESSON 2

DEFEATING DISCOURAGEMENT

Philippians 1:12–26



1 Describe a time of deep discouragement in your life. What caused your discouragement, and how did you snap out of it?



Read Philippians 1:12–26 and the following notes:

☐ 1:12–14 ☐ 1:13 ☐ 1:15–18 ☐ 1:19–21 ☐ 1:20, 21

2 How did Paul respond to his misfortunes?

3 Why did Paul seem so unconcerned about the motives of those who were preaching Christ for the wrong reasons?

4 How could Paul be so unconcerned about death?

5 Why was Paul so confident of vindication and release?

6 What might have caused Paul to be ashamed?

Paul had plenty of reasons for becoming discouraged—he faced imprisonment, bitter rivalries, and personal setbacks. Yet he could face the future with confidence because he was not living for himself. Instead of trying to feel good and be successful, Paul lived to serve the Lord and to help others. Because Paul's life centered around his walk with God, circumstances became irrelevant, others' motives and actions couldn't discourage him, and personal uncertainty could not render him powerless. We can have this same peace and confidence by putting Christ at the center of all we do. He will lift us above our circumstances and enable us to face our challenges, knowing that everything is in his hands.



7 In a discouraging situation, what can a person choose to do?



8 How do you usually react to tough times? What might help you to become more positive in your attitudes and responses?

9 How can difficult circumstances increase your dependence on Christ?

10 In what circumstances or with which people do you easily become discouraged?

11 What can you do to guard against these discouraging influences?



12 Select one aspect of your life that is most discouraging to you. What is making you feel discouraged? How could you react differently? What attitude change might you make?

A What does the freedom of Paul's house arrest suggest about the Roman view of Christianity at that time? How did God use Paul's imprisonment to spread the gospel?

MORE
for studying
other themes
in this section

B In Paul's day, why might some Christians have been happy at the thought of Paul in prison and perhaps even wish to cause him further difficulty? Why do believers sometimes act this way?

C Whom do you know whose life is focused on Christ? How do they maintain this focus? In what ways would you like to be more like them?

D What makes it difficult for us to keep our faith in Christ? Why do we find it difficult to witness boldly for Christ? What can you do to be a stronger witness for Christ?

E In which situations do you need to speak the Word of God more courageously? What barriers make this difficult, and what can you do to overcome them?

F In what areas of your Christian life are you doing the right actions for the wrong reasons? What should you do to correct this?

G How should we handle a situation where someone is involved in Christian work or ministry for the wrong reasons?