

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Philippians:  
A Choice to Rejoice*

## Lesson 3: A Win-Win Situation

### Bible Text

Philippians 1:20-26

### Memory Verse

“Who can separate us from Christ’s love? Can trouble or hard times or harm or hunger? Can nakedness or danger or war? ... No! In all these things we are more than winners! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us.” (Romans 8:35, 37 NIRV)

### Word List

**determined:** having a strong feeling that you are going to do something and that you will not allow anyone or anything to stop you

**outcome:** something that happens as a result of an activity or process

**situation:** all of the facts, conditions, and events that affect someone or something at a certain time and in a certain place

Have you ever noticed how much we talk about sports? We even use the language of sports when we are not talking about sports. A person who is for us is “on our team” or “in our corner.” Someone might “hit a home run” by doing something well. Or we might “score” a new job or a first date.

We also talk a lot about winning and losing. We talk about winning when a person is successful. Or we describe failures as losses. Sometimes two different results might come out of a **situation**. We call it a “win-win situation” if both **outcomes** are good. This means that whatever happens will be a “win” in some way.

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from prison. We have already seen that Paul saw good things happening, even from jail. He knew that God can use bad things to bring good in our lives. And Paul was willing to go through bad things to help spread the Good News about Jesus.

Now as Paul sat in prison, he looked to the future. He did not know what was going to happen. But Paul saw his future as a “win-win” situation. How could he look so happily toward the future? He kept his eyes on his goal – Jesus. And in his eyes, the future looked good.

### Two Strong Beliefs (Philippians 1:20)

**20 I hope very much that I will have no reason to be ashamed. I hope to honor Christ with my body if it be by my life or by my death. I want to honor Him without fear, now and always.**

Paul had lived through many troubles by the time he wrote this letter to the church

in Philippi. Now he wrote from prison. Many people would be ashamed to be in prison. But Paul was not ashamed of where he was. Most people are concerned with what others think of them. But Paul was not. In another letter, Paul wrote, “Do you think I am trying to get the favor of men, or of God? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant owned by Christ” (Galatians 1:10). Paul had one concern, and that was pleasing God. So Paul was not ashamed to be in prison for Christ.

And Paul hoped that he would never have a reason to be ashamed. He wanted to live fully for Christ. He chose to live without fear of what men might do to him. He saw no shame in suffering for Christ. But shame would come for Paul if he stopped serving Jesus and telling others about Him. So Paul was **determined** not to let anything stop him from his work of sharing the Good News.

How did Paul keep going so strongly? How did he stay so hopeful? How did he keep his focus? He had two strong beliefs that pushed him to keep going. First, he believed God’s promises of heaven. Paul’s life was changed completely when he met Jesus. Paul gave up many things like his reputation and his comfort. But what he gained was much more valuable. He gained life! Jesus held the hope of heaven. And Paul looked forward to this future with Jesus.

The other belief that strengthened Paul’s determination was his belief in his work. Jesus had given him the job of telling others the Good News. Paul knew how much the Good News had changed him. Now he wanted to share it with others so they could find the same hope, joy, and life in Christ. And Paul knew that his efforts were not wasted. He saw how God could use anything to bring good to people’s lives, even a letter written from a man in prison.

### **Two Ways to Win (Philippians 1:21)**

**21 To me, living means having Christ. To die means that I would have more of Him.**

Paul knew that he would not always be in prison. He might be set free. Paul would be happy to go free so he could continue his work. Paul could go and see his brothers and sisters in places like Philippi. Freedom for Paul would be a win for Paul and for all those who loved him.

But Paul might not be set free from jail. He might be killed instead. Surely Paul’s friends worried about this. They did not want Paul to die! But Paul was not afraid to die. In fact, as he thought about it, dying did not sound too bad. He knew what would happen when he died. He would go to heaven to be with Jesus. Paul longed to be with Jesus. For Paul, death would be the bigger win.

Paul had given up his hold on life many years earlier. Paul did not just give part of his life to Christ; he gave it all. He once wrote, “I have been put up on the cross to die with Christ. I no longer live. Christ lives in me. The life I now live in this body, I live by putting my trust in the Son of God. He was the One Who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Paul did not need to hold on to his life because he trusted Jesus to take care of it for him.

Paul could not have known all the places that his life with Christ might take him. He had gone through many towns and met many people. He had been through many troubles too. Now he was in another prison, and he did not know when or if he would get out. But Paul knew how his story would end. He would see Jesus!

Paul once asked in another letter if troubles in our lives mean that Jesus no longer

loves us. Then he answered his own question: “No! In all these things we are more than winners! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us” (Romans 8:37 NIRV). Paul had joined the winning team when he gave his life to Christ.

### **Two Desires (Philippians 1:22-26)**

**22 If I keep on living here in this body, it means that I can lead more people to Christ. I do not know which is better.**

**23 There is a strong pull from both sides. I have a desire to leave this world to be with Christ, which is much better.**

**24 But it is more important for you that I stay.**

**25 I am sure I will live to help you grow and be happy in your faith.**

**26 This will give you reason to give more thanks to Christ Jesus when I come to visit you again.**

### **Things to Think About**

1. What do you know about heaven? How does the thought of heaven affect how you feel about dying?
2. Paul was changed by knowing Christ. How has Jesus changed your life? Is your life harder now? How is it better?
3. Have you ever felt a wish to die? Did it come from a sad, difficult time in your life? Where did you turn for help? How would you help someone who felt that way now?
4. How can life in Christ be compared to a race or a contest? What does it take to win?

Paul thought about the future, and he could not decide what he wanted to happen. He wanted both to go on living and to die. Paul’s wish to die was not a dark, ugly wish. This was not the same kind of feeling that pushes some people to take their own lives. No, it was a hopeful feeling. Paul looked forward to moving from this earthly life to a more joyful life with Jesus in heaven. For Paul, death meant more than being free from

the cares and troubles of this world. It meant leaving this world to be with Jesus forever!

But Paul also wanted to be set free from prison to go on living. Paul was willing to endure the troubles of this world for a while longer because of his love for others. He still had work he wanted to do. He longed to see his friends again. He desired to tell more people about Jesus. How could Paul choose between two such good outcomes? Paul gladly left the choice up to God. He would simply go where he was led and do what God had called him to do.

### **Things to Remember**

Life is hard and full of troubles. Jesus said it would be this way (See John 16:33.) Jesus' life was hard. But He chose to come and live and die for us so that we could experience the joy and freedom of life with Him here on earth and eternity too.

We often use the language of sports to help us make sense of this life. Paul did it. And so do we. Paul knew that whether he lived or died, he would finally win. The same is true for us. If we have given our lives to Christ, we will win. Our future is safe with Him. We do not need to fear death because we have rest and rewards waiting for us in heaven. But until we get there, we have work to do. Let us be determined, as Paul was, to run and finish our race well.

### **Philippians 1:20-26**

**20 I hope very much that I will have no reason to be ashamed. I hope to honor Christ with my body if it be by my life or by my death. I want to honor Him without fear, now and always.**

**21 To me, living means having Christ. To die means that I would have more of Him.**

**22 If I keep on living here in this body, it means that I can lead more people to Christ. I do not know which is better.**

**23 There is a strong pull from both sides. I have a desire to leave this world to be with Christ, which is much better.**

**24 But it is more important for you that I stay.**

**25 I am sure I will live to help you grow and be happy in your faith.**

**26 This will give you reason to give more thanks to Christ Jesus when I come to visit you again.**