

Philippians
Part 4
To Live or to Die?

TALKING POINTS WALKING POINTS

Leader's Guide

2025-8-24



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Starter Question

- ① From Sunday's sermon, what did you *like best*, or what *caught your attention most*—and *why*?

Observation—*What do I see?*

- ② Take a moment now to memorize Philippians 1:21 **"To live is Christ, and to die is gain."**
- ③ And now let's zoom out a bit to the context, in order to understand Paul. Read v. 12-24, and then...
- ↳ What are Paul's circumstances (v. 12)?
 - ↳ What two things are resulting from Paul's circumstances (v. 14-17)?
 - ↳ What two things will work together to produce Paul's certain deliverance (v. 19)?
 - ↳ Since Paul referenced "living" and "dying" in v. 21, let's circle each reference to them in v. 20-24. (Make sure not to miss the more obscure references such as "depart" and "that" in v. 23 as references to death, "remain on in the flesh" in v. 24 as a reference to life, and "the two" in v. 23 as a reference to both life and death!)

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- ④ In Paul's case, *in what way* is "living" equal to Christ? What does that **really** mean?
- ⑤ If "living is Christ", *in what way* is dying "**gain**" (v. 21) and "**very much better**" (v. 23)? **What** is better than Christ?! How do you explain that?
- ⑥ We all understand the concept of delayed gratification: forego a smaller personal pleasure now for the sake of a larger personal pleasure later. But is that what Paul's doing here? If not, what is he saying?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- ⑦ Who has heard someone say, "**I'm livin' the dream!**"? To what circumstances were they referring?
- ⑧ Under what circumstances **might you**—or, **have you**—said "**I'm livin' the dream!**"? Tell us about it.
- ⑨ Parenting probably is the closest circumstance we've experienced which mirrors Paul's attitude. Another Apostle, John, shared Paul's joy, even amid difficult circumstances. Read 3 John 4. Who among us has experienced the joy of serving **spiritual** children? Would you tell us about it?

1 Standard discussion-starter question. Just get folks talking, but don't linger here.

2 This really should take just a moment. The discussion of it follows.

3 Paul's circumstances (v. 12)? **prison**

The result of Paul's imprisonment (v. 14-17) **was increased boldness in witnessing among most of the believers in Rome, but some did it to spite Paul, others out of love and pure motives.**

The two things which will work together to produce Paul's certain deliverance (v. 19) are **the prayers of believers and the working of the Holy Spirit.**

Since Paul referenced "living" and "dying" in v. 21, let's circle each reference to them in v. 20-24.

1²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death

1²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

1²² But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know what I will choose.

1²³ But I am hard-pressed between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better,

1²⁴ yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

4 Paul was Christ's slave. A slave does his master's bidding. Paul had so yielded his will to Christ that he was able to say "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." (Galatians 2:20)

5 Because being in Christ's presence is very much better than serving him here on earth. Just as Jesus longs for us to be in his presence (John 17: 24), so Paul longed to be in his presence.

6 Well, on the one hand, yes, Paul did experience joy by serving Christ on this earth. But it was a joy **in spite of** his many hardships (2 Corinthians 11:24-28). Heaven will be unending rest and perfect fellowship.

7 Let group members speak up on this one.

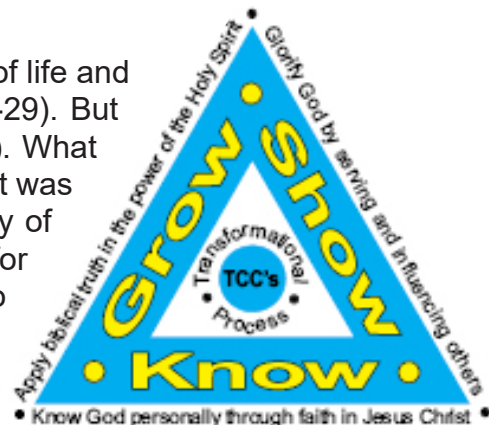
8 Ditto.

9 Be ready with your own answer, but two caveats: (1) make sure your examples are concrete and specific, not vague and abstract, and (2) let group members go first. If group members do volunteer their own answers, ask follow-up questions if they are vague and generalized answers.

Sermon Summary Text: Philippians 1:18-30

When Paul penned his letter to the church at Philippi, he was imprisoned in Rome. All he cared was that the gospel be proclaimed—not who got the credit (v. 18). Paul states two things that he knows to be true: that his trust in God will be vindicated and that Jesus will be exalted in his life—either by his life or by his death (v. 20). For Paul, this was a no-lose proposition. Since Christ is glorified in Paul whether he lives or dies, and since the gospel is advancing whether Paul is free or imprisoned, should he stay or should he go? Which is preferable—living or dying? Paul walks us through his decision-making process (v. 22-24).

For Paul, the prospect of release from the pain, suffering, and hardships of life and be with Christ is clearly better (Revelation 7:16-17; 2 Corinthians 11:23-29). But for Paul there were other considerations to be taken into account (v. 24). What was best for the Philippians was that he remain to serve them (v. 25-26). It was most important to Paul that they conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel, standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Likewise, Jesus calls TCC to work together to transform ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Christ. We do that by helping people come to know Christ, to grow in Christ and to show Christ to others.



Conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel manifests itself both positively (standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel) and negatively (shaping our response to opponents). Opposition can cause us to second-guess our decisions: "Should we have said/done this or that? Had we acted differently, would we have experienced less pushback?" So, how do we deal with the doubts and the second-guessing? We do it by going back to what we know to be true (v. 29-30). We remind ourselves that God will triumph in the end!

It has been granted to us, not only to believe in Jesus, but also to suffer for His sake. In the Christian life, faith and suffering travel together. Suffering is a special gift, graciously granted to us by God. It is a privilege to suffer for Christ. When it comes to difficulties, we all need a change of perspective. We shouldn't just reluctantly accept the fact that we may suffer for Christ; we should embrace it as a reality, and view it as a privilege (1 Peter 3:15).



Do you know **what** you believe...

1. About the Existence of "Big 'T' Truth"
2. About God as Trinity
3. About God's Eternal Plans
4. About God's Creation
5. About God's Benevolent Care
6. About Fallen Humans
7. About God's Eternal Commitment to Save
8. About Christ as Peace-Maker
9. About Human Responsibility
10. About Coming to Christ
11. About Being Accepted by God
12. About the Privileges of Adoption
13. About Growing in Holiness
14. About What Saving Faith Is
15. About Repentance and Salvation
16. About the Fruit of Salvation
17. About the Security of Salvation
18. About the Assurance of Salvation
19. About Our Relationship to God's Law
20. About How the Gospel Reaches People
21. About True Freedom and our Conscience
22. About Corporate Worship
23. About Being a God-Honoring Truth-Teller
24. About Civil Government
25. About Marriage
26. About the Church
27. About Christian Unity
28. About Baptism and the Lord's Supper
29. About What Happens When We Die
30. About the Judgment Day

...and **why** you believe it?

**Join other TCC adults as together we explore
thirty truths of "the faith we profess"!**

When? Beginning the first week of September
Wednesday nights (6³⁰-8⁰⁰pm) **or**
Thursday mornings (9³⁰-11⁰⁰am)
or anytime **On-Demand!**

Where? Second Modular

How? Simply **scan here** for complete info ➡



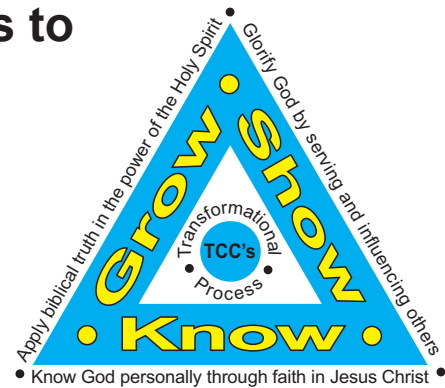
Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

This week, explore the process TCC uses to help ordinary people be able to say along with the Apostle Paul, "To live is Christ, to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

Which of these actions truly describe you?

Triangle Community Church exists to
*transform ordinary people
into extraordinary followers
of Jesus Christ.*

Here's how we do it...



Know*

Know God personally through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1. Receive Christ.** **2. Be baptized.** **3. Commit to your church family.**

John 1:12

Acts 2:41

1 John 2:19



Grow & Show

Apply biblical truth in the
power of the Holy Spirit.

- 1. Worship together Sundays.**

Hebrews 10:25

- 2. Engage in biblical community.**

Acts 2:42-47

- 3. Take personal responsibility
for your own spiritual growth.**

2 Peter 1:5-11

Serve one another and
build redemptive relationships.

- 1. Tell your faith story and help
fulfill the Great Commission.**

1 Peter 3:15-16

- 2. Serve your church family.**

Galatians 5:13

- 3. Give consistently, proportionately
and sacrificially to God's work.**

James 2:18

* In the New Testament, the word "church" is used in two senses: (1) the universal church consists of all who place saving faith in Christ, irrespective of time or location, while (2) local churches consist of those in a single locale and period of time who meet together under God-ordained leadership (pastors/elders/overseers for worship, edification, mutual ministry and evangelism. God, being omniscient, flawlessly knows all his sheep (John 10:14-16), but local churches only are able to recognize and care for sheep as they unite with a congregation through the visible acts of entering (via baptism) and remaining involved.