

# JOY IN THE JOURNEY

## LIVING RIGHT IN A WRONG WORLD

**“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace.  
In the world you have tribulation, but take courage;  
I have overcome the world.”**

— John 16:33 —

### LESSON TWO

## **TO LIVE IS CHRIST** **Finding Joy in Life or Death**

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

**“How do you react when adversity strikes?”**

### INTRODUCTION

“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)

“And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.’” (Luke 9:23-26)

### LESSON

#### **To Live is Christ: Finding Joy in Life or Death**

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21)

1. Our circumstances are opportunities to leverage our faith. The goal is glory for Him.
2. Suffering is intended to make us more like Christ. Expect others to notice the change.
3. Some people mock, slander, and accuse us when we suffer. Don't let that slow you down.
4. Living is all about Christ. Dying is all about Christ. Be joyful in either circumstance.
5. We are expected to suffer as we are expected to believe. Don't be surprised.

**So why do we question adversity in our lives?**

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### Philippians 1:12-30

12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;

16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;

17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 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 exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

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

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

23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

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

25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

26 so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

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### Hebrews 11:32-40

32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

35 Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

(pause)

36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

### Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

b: AD 69 • d: AD 155

“In the *Martyrdom*, Polycarp is recorded as saying on the day of his death, “Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong”, which could indicate that he was then eighty-six years old or that he may have lived eighty-six years after his conversion. Polycarp goes on to say “How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior? You threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched; but you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked.” Polycarp was burned at the stake and was pierced with a spear for refusing to burn incense to the Roman Emperor. On his farewell, he said “I bless you Father for judging me worthy of this hour, so that in the company of the martyrs I may share the cup of Christ.”