

# Living Above Circumstances

## Philippians 1:12-18

### **Philippians 1:12-18 (NASB)**

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

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

<sup>14</sup>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.

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

<sup>16</sup>the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;

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

<sup>18</sup>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.”

While under house arrest, Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians. The apostle could receive visitors but couldn't travel. Despite living in a home, Paul was more than likely chained to a Roman soldier 24 Hours a day. Moreover, because he knew that a trial was years away, these were his living conditions for the foreseeable future—perhaps for the rest of his life.

Under such circumstances, Paul might have thought to ask the Lord to release him. After all, God had called him to preach, to disciple believers, and to reach the Gentiles. But he was stuck in Rome, unable to plant new churches or visit those whom he was nurturing by letter. Besides being unjust, the imprisonment was keeping him from important work. Surely, if anyone had a right to gripe, it was Paul, who had endured persecution, shipwreck, and beatings for the gospel. Yet he never once complained. His letter to the church at Philippi is filled with rejoicing, as focusing on God let him live above his circumstances ([Philippians 4:8](#)).

### **Philippians 4:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup>“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”

The more we talk and complain about a situation, the worse it looks, until the problem looms larger in our mind than our faith does. Conversely, carrying challenges straight to God keeps matters in perspective. The Lord is bigger than any hardship. On His strength, we rise above the difficulty.

Problems can look so big and unwieldy that they distort our perspective. God invites us to live above our circumstances by fastening our eyes on Him. The trials of this life shrink when compared to our loving, powerful Lord, who exercises His might in defense of His people.