

# Win-Win

## Philippians 1:21-26

### Dr. Paul Cannings

#### A. Win-Win for Me (v. 21):

1. For me to live - Zao – Paul’s desire is that Christ is exalted “whether by life or death” (vs. 20). Paul goes on to explain that as a result of his focus, he is continuously daily committed to living a godly life (3:7-16).

a) In fact, Paul may have been expressing his confidence that since his imprisonment had furthered the gospel, God would also use his death to further His kingdom.<sup>[1]</sup>

b) Are we consumers or productive citizens of God's kingdom (Ephesians 2:19)?

2. To live is Christ - Paul is so totally surrendered to Christ that everything about him is focused on becoming like Christ. The very nature of who Christ is dominates his day-to-day commitment to apply God’s Word (Philippians 3:7-11; Romans 7:14-25). This is the main point of emphasis we must all guide our lives by.

a) Because of Paul’s chains, Christ was *known* (Phil. 1:13), and because of Paul’s critics, Christ was *preached* (Phil. 1:18). But because of Paul’s crisis, Christ was *magnified!* (Phil. 1:20) It was possible that Paul would be found a traitor to Rome and then executed. His preliminary trial had apparently gone in his favor. The final verdict, however, was yet to come. But Paul’s body was not his own, and his only desire (because he had a single mind) was to magnify Christ in his body.<sup>[2]</sup>

3. To have died -- Paul’s desire is not to allow sin , the struggles of day-to-day life (Philippians 4:4-7; 10-14) to control his decision-making , emotions, or mindset (Philippians 3:9-11).

a) Paul did not imply that his “deliverance” (1:19) would be from prison. He was ready to die (1:20). He meant continued deliverance from distress (1:17) and any hindrance to the proclamation of Christ (1:18).<sup>[3]</sup>

4. Gain – Paul writes about why this is beneficial, not restrictive, or creates a loss of great earthly experiences. This is why in chapter 3:7-9 again he says it is gain (same as 2 Timothy 4:6-8).

5. But if I am to live on in the flesh – If Paul was to live continuously in his mortality, which includes all the influences that come from the flesh, his life will have many challenges he would encounter that could cause him to have to ‘press to mark’ (Philippians 3:12-16).

a) Means Paul chooses not to give up because of the overwhelming circumstances (2 Corinthians 4:7-12).

b) His personal desire was to depart and be with Christ (v. 23). This he knew would be better by far for him since it would mean his release from the persecutions and other hardships that he suffered. But he also knew that the Philippians needed him. For them, it was more necessary that he remain in the body or stay alive (v. 24). Paul’s selfless attitude is revealed here by placing his friends’ needs above his desires. <sup>[4]</sup>

6. Mean fruitful labor - Because of the work of the ministry, Paul says serving the Philippians produces inward spiritual development that will eventually shape their character, and their spiritual maturity will be manifested outwardly.

a) Further, this passage reveals Paul’s concern for others, not himself (1:24, 26). He must have been thinking of the future and the harvests that would come from his life should God allow him to continue on this earth.

7. Mean fruitful labor for me - Our earthly life must be so focused on the spiritual development of others around us (using our spiritual gift) that it shapes our future work and heavenly rewards. The Laodiceans were so focused on their earthly existence they had no heavenly rewards (Revelation 3:14-22). The believers in Corinth served, but it was for selfish reasons, so there were no heavenly rewards, and their efforts soon became corrupted (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15).

8. Mean fruitful labor for me - By no means serving the Lord is an easy process. By labor, Paul is talking about a believer’s life work (an accumulation of all their work), which is so energized by their faith that serving the Lord ends up consuming how they live each day.

a) Paul understood and was committed to God's call on his life. As believers, we must be committed to the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1-3). This includes our families (Ephesians 5:32), using our talent on our jobs (Matthew 25:14-31), or our spiritual gifts in church (1 Peter 4:10).

9. I do not know which to choose – Paul did not have spiritual guidance from God since both scenarios were profitable to be able to select which direction to apply himself to.

## **B. Win-Win for You (vs. 23-24):**

1. Hard-pressed from both directions - Because of this, Paul feels continuously or habitually pressed in spirit like a tight hole in a person. This includes experiencing great psychological pressure and anxiety so that he is distressed and troubled because he is pulled into directions and in the middle of two thoughts. (Philippians 2:17)

a) He is in the middle of two thoughts.

b) He is tired of life's struggles and wants to leave and be with Christ.

a) His personal desire is to depart (*analyō* pictures a vessel weighing anchor or a soldier breaking camp; it is a euphemism for "to die") and be with Christ. <sup>[5]</sup>

2. Having the desire to depart – Paul's passionate desire to serve the Lord in Phillipi, while craving (Paul has had a very difficult ministry experience as God told him he would; Acts 9:15-16) to accept his fate, based on what he is hearing and seeing, made him feel like he was being crucified. Paul did see the third heavens and was given a thorn to keep him humble (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

a) "To depart" is from a Greek word used for losing a ship from its moorings or striking one's tent. Probably, the latter figure was in the apostle's mind. He was a tent maker by trade, spoke of the human body as a tent, and was a prisoner at the barracks of the Praetorian Guard <sup>[6]</sup>

3. To remain in the flesh – Because the need of the believers in Phillipi is greater, Paul decides to remain in his present state. This changed in 2 Timothy 4:6-8. Paul decided it was time because he 'had finished the course.'

4. To remain in the flesh – Our time on earth should be focused more on God’s agenda than anything else because our work must be done while it is day (John 9:4). This is the race to run (Hebrews 12:1-3).

### **C. Win-Win for Us (vs. 25-26):**

1. Convinced of this – Paul now has a settled, confident conviction after having turned the matter over in his mind so that he is now persuaded that this is the way to go.

a) The word “confidence” in Greek means “to persuade” and is in the perfect tense. It speaks of a settled conviction, which results from the past completed process of turning a matter over in one’s mind until one is persuaded of it. Paul had turned over in his mind the need that the Philippian saints had for his ministry and had come to the settled conviction that they needed him more than he needed to go to heaven just then. That was just like Paul. [\[7\]](#)

2. I know – Paul’s conviction provided him a full divine knowledge and a clear understanding of how the Lord is leading him to serve those in Phillippi.

3. Will remain – When we truly have a deep conviction directed by faith, we will stand firm, and be steadfast despite the troubles we may experience in our service to the Lord. Paul chose to stay even though he clearly understood it would be painful for him.

4. For your progress – Everything Paul endeavors to do is for these believers' spiritual and eternal benefit.

a) Paul was not satisfied that the Philippian Christians should simply be saved but that they should advance to maturity in Christ. He felt a responsibility to continue to teach them. As the Philippians matured in their understanding of Christ, their joy in the faith would deepen and would be encouraged. This thought is repeated in v. 26.

5. Joy in the faith – Because Paul’s staying is spiritually appraised and is going to be advantageous for the believers in Phillippi, he is convinced that his ministry would cause a sense of gladness that is so excessive in their hearts it is like their hearts are shouting within them. He also is no longer hard-pressed.

a) “Rejoicing” literally means “boasting” or “glorying.” More abundant: Their rejoicing was to grow dramatically because of the work of the Lord.<sup>[8]</sup>

6. Joy in the faith – Their excessive gladness is shaped by how Paul’s conviction to serve them has led them being controlled by the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, who now empowers them to trust the Lord with all their hearts. Paul’s full surrender to God inspires their complete trust and confident commitment to the will of God.

a) Naturally, the gift brought joy, but the greater joy was what it meant in the work of the Lord. Applying that understanding here, Paul realized that his presence provided an occasion for worship and praise. Despite the similarity of 1:26 and 4:10, two different words describe “joy.” In 4:10, Paul used *chairō*, “to rejoice” or “be glad.”<sup>104</sup> Here, the word is *kauchēma*, “to boast or be proud.”<sup>105</sup> *Kauchēma* often suggests an occasion or object of joy and has the sense of “taking pride in” something specific.<sup>106</sup>

7. Joy in the faith – Our willingness to ultimately serve the Lord can become a lightning rod for other believers’ full surrender to God.

8. Your proud confidence in me – Because of Paul’s commitment to Christ and heart for them, they can boast in Paul because they are fully persuaded that Paul had their full interest at heart.

9. May abound - Their decision to trust Paul’s heart would become exceedingly great as they continue their walk in Christ.

10. Through my coming to you - Paul was convinced that the Lord’s direction to go to the believers in Phillipi so that he is near them to serve the ministry would cause him to experience a safe journey.

11. Through my coming to you - Our faithfulness to listen to the Lord and serve Him with all our hearts should bless us to be exposed to His promise not to leave us or forsake us (Matthew 28:20).

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<sup>[1]</sup>Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary* (Php 1:21). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

<sup>[2]</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [\*The Bible exposition commentary\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 69). Victor Books.

<sup>[3]</sup>Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [\*Tyndale concise Bible commentary\*](#) (p. 604). Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>[4]</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:651). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>[5]</sup>Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F., eds. (1962). [\*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Php 1:23). Moody Press.

<sup>[6]</sup>Wuest, K. S. (1997, c1984). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English reader* (Php 1:23). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

<sup>[7]</sup>Wuest, K. S. (1997, c1984). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English reader* (Php 1:25). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

<sup>[8]</sup>Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary* (Php 1:26). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

<sup>104</sup>BAGD, 873.

<sup>105</sup>BAGD, 426.

<sup>106</sup>Vincent said it “is the *matter* or *ground* of glorying, not the *act* of glorying” (30).