

Put the Gospel First (Part 3)

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[0 : 00] And so remember, the name of this book is called Basics for Believers. So as we go through the content in Philippians chapter 1, let's not overthink this.

! This is really, listen, we've spent three Wednesday nights, tonight will be the third Wednesday night we've spent in Philippians 1, and I love digging through the rich truths of Scripture. But hopefully, as we go through what D.A. Carson, how he sort of chops up chapter 1 and gives us some things to remember, these are really straightforward truths, right?

It's how to live the gospel first, right? Some very practical applications. I've chosen to, last Wednesday and tonight, I've chosen to sort of pause after each section and sort of talk about some application, some questions, some probing questions for ourselves.

And so let's not be intimidated by this study or by Philippians 1 or by, you know, again, D.A. Carson's brilliant. He's intellectual. He's such a faithful man of God.

And he's just, again, I so much appreciate this book and how he's presented and organized thoughts. They shouldn't be overwhelming to us. But I also, I just wanted to encourage us that these are just wonderful truths, especially chapter 1, and just the focus is, what's it mean to live the gospel, right?

[1 : 22] How basic can you get than that? Once we understand the gospel, how do you live the gospel in light of some of the concerns that is happening in our culture today? And so that's where we sort of kicked off the study.

Josiah, can you give me focus on the PowerPoint? All right. Can you just advance it? Oh, there it goes. There it goes. All right.

So if you remember, so this is in review. So on pages 13 and 14. Now, hey, on the slides, be sure, when you see a number, if there's a P in front of it, that means page.

That's in here. If there's a V in front of it, what's that mean? Verse. So that'll be in Philippians 1. So I don't mean to fool you, but we could be on page 14, or I could be referencing verse 14.

So watch that closely. I got myself confused when I was putting some of these slides together. So if it'll happen to me, it may happen to you. So these three points, again, by way of just very quick review, right?

[2 : 22] Modern developments that contribute to the dangerous temptation to domesticate, right? Or to tame, to take the teeth out of the gospel. And if you recall, we talked about those, right?

Secularization. That's just a fancy word of saying what? What does the world end up doing to the gospel as they secularize the Christian? Yeah. Watering it down and just moving it to the periphery. And Carson made the point, you know, it's not necessarily the goal of culture to remove religion, right? Because that could get us our attention and us to push back and fight back.

But if it can slowly just move it over, it become one of the low priority in your life. Still there. What was the funny phrase that Carson used?

Three dollars worth of gospel, please. Just three dollars, right? Not a lot, but just a little bit, just to make me comfortable and aware. So that is just so deceptive, I think, is how we just see that happening in culture.

[3 : 20] So secularization, fancy way of saying processes that we see in the world today that sort of move religion over to the periphery to be unimportant. I mean, if I go to church on Sunday morning, man, I'm living the Christian life.

I've punched my ticket for this week. I'm good. No guilt. No worry. Man, we don't want that to happen to us. So, Philippians 1, Paul addresses how we fight that.

And that's why we're going over some of these sections. The second one, probably, we probably live this every day, right? Self-indulgence, right? The world. It's all about you.

It's making you happy. What can the world do to make you happy? To be comfortable, to be secure. So, again, the world will force us, will motivate us maybe to put self-indulgence, to put comfort and ease as the top priority in life, right?

Rather than, as believers, how should we live our life? Self-sacrificing, giving. We should live as Jesus lived, right?

[4 : 26] And so, that's another sort of goings-on that's happening in culture that we want to be aware of all the time as we fight the good fight, is not allowing our Christian faith, our faithfulness, to be moved to the periphery, and not to prioritize ease and comfort over everything else, including loving one another, loving others, and considering them more important than yourself, as Scripture says.

And the third one, philosophical pluralism, again, that's sort of a fancy phrase, but it basically means, hey, pluralism, right? So, as we sort of blend and mix in this big vat, all these different belief systems that, you know, it sort of results in, there's really no absolute truth, right?

It's a little bit of truth here, a little bit of truth there. You know, I'm okay, you're okay, we're all okay. You can believe whatever, I can believe whatever, just leave me alone. And so, it's just, there's no absolute truth.

What my truth is, is not your truth. And so, you can just see the disastrous effects when there is no truth in the world. We see that today all the time. So, again, just in brief review on pages 13 and 14, D.A. Carson sort of set up our study.

And we probably won't go over this again as we move into chapters 2 and 3 in the book. But just be sure and keep this in mind. He really sort of set the footing as to some important reasons why we want to look at some of the truth in Philippians 1.

[5 : 52] It's to counter all these effects that the culture gives us. So, on the next slide. So, in his absence. So, this is on page 16 if you're looking for the answer.

Question for you, just to sort of probably prompt your memory a little bit. In his absence, what two actions does Paul encourage the Philippians to do? So, in his absence, his absence from being at the church in Philippi.

Where is Paul as he writes Philippians? The epistle. He's in jail. Yeah, he's in prison. Right? So, in Paul's absence from the church in Philippi, what two actions does Paul encourage the Philippians to do?

Do you remember that? Yeah. Yeah. Oh, I got too far. I don't have the answers in the slide. Right. Maintain basic commitments, good memory, or you're looking at your good notes.

That's fine. That's fine. I underlined it. And you underlined it. All right. Or you're looking at page 16. I put the reference there. All right. That was one. So, maintain basic commitments, right, in the Christian life.

[6 : 49] Keep the spiritual disciplines going. Right. Don't stop that. You're going to be in a world of hurt, right? If you've moved things so much to the periphery that you've just forgotten basic commitments, basic spiritual disciplines of the Christian life.

And then what was the other one to be aware of? To be aware of something. Be on guard against the delay of danger, which were temptation from within and seduction and opposition from within. Yeah. So, Paul's encouraging the Philippians, hey, maintain your basic Christian commitments, right, and then be on guard. Be aware. Don't be asleep at the wheel. Right.

Be aware. And be aware not only of the external influences, right, the opposition and the seductions of the world, a little bit more, probably a little bit more obvious. And you sort of anticipate those, but also temptations from within as well.

All right. So, both within the church, got to be careful, unfortunately, right? But more importantly, or not just as importantly, seductions and oppositions from without. We had shared with you some Bibles, some Scripture references on the temptations from within and without.

[8 : 01] They're on the slides from the previous two weeks. I don't know if you happen to have a pen and notes here and you don't have those verses. Let me give those to you just real quickly. So, the temptations from within, there were three references.

Proverbs 4.23. And then Proverbs 3.5-8. And then Jeremiah 17.9-10.

Now, some of those references may be familiar. You know what Jeremiah 17, right? 9-10. What, it's something about the heart? The heart being deceitful?

Sick? So, that's the within part, right? The be on guard, temptations from within. And then opposition from without. There were two references.

One from 1 Corinthians 16.13. 1 Corinthians 16.13. And then the second reference was 2 Corinthians 11.3. So, there's some Bible references there.

[9:03] It's handy. Carson didn't include those, but Jeff had pulled those together when we kicked this study off back in January. So, those are great, great, great references for there. All right.

Lastly, so what is Paul's burden as he writes to the Philippians? And this is, again, I think on 16. It's a couple of paragraphs down, right?

What is God telling us by or through His Holy Spirit? I'm sorry. What is God telling us by His Spirit through these same words today? So, these words that Paul wrote 2,000 years ago to the church in Philippi.

What's God telling us today with these same words as we study Philippians? And this is the theme of chapter 1. It's right above the big section break on page 16.

The first thing this book emphasizes is put the gospel first. Right. Put the gospel first. And so, when we think about this theme, if you would, of put the gospel first, in everything that we do, we've hit a couple of areas the last couple of meetings.

[10:07] Again, we'll hit two other areas tonight. And I've summarized them here, right? So, the first one is put the fellowship of the gospel at the center of your relationships with believers.

Remember that one? Put the priorities of the gospel at the center of your prayer life. Those are the last couple of studies. Tonight, we're going to hit two more.

Put the advance of the gospel at the center of your aspirations. Okay. All right, Greg. You're getting a little more. You're hitting a little closer to home now. Now you're talking about my aspirations, my goals in life.

And then, fourthly, put the converts of the gospel at the center of your principled self-denial. And again, these are the section headings in the book, right? Those come right from the book in chapter 1.

Hey, on number 4, again, we'll get to this in more detail tonight. What's the converts of the gospel? Who's he referring to? Yeah. That's a fancy way of saying believers.

[11:07] All right. You notice how, again, his cadence here of these section titles, right? Put the something of the gospel, right? So he's just sort of fitting in the cadence of these section headers to be consistent.

So he could have said, put believers at the center of your principled self-denial. But it didn't fit the put the something of the gospel. So he put the converts of the gospel.

Again, that's why I'm saying don't be intimidated by some of this phraseology, right? Again, this is basics for believers. Basic truths about how to live the gospel. All right.

So quick review. Let me jump back to number 1. I put the whole slide up here for us just to refresh our memories, right? So the first one, do y'all remember how we talked about fellowship?

What was the other word fellowship? Partnership, right? Depending on your translation, partnership or fellowship in Philippians 1.

[12:04] So put the fellowship of the gospel, the fellowship, the partnership, if you would, at the center of your relationship with believers. And the three points that D.A. Carson made in this section, right?

He was focusing in on Paul's thankfulness. Let me pause right here. Let's go ahead and read Philippians 1. I meant to do that before we got started. Let's pause here since we're starting to dig in now to the verses, even though we're doing the first few minutes for review.

But let me read Philippians 1 to you. Now, in his book, in chapter 1, we're going to end at verse 26 tonight. But Philippians actually goes to verse 30.

But we're going to end at verse 26, because that's sort of how Carson organized this. But let me read Philippians 1. So, chapter 1. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the overseers and deacons, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All right. Now, look for Paul's thankfulness. This was sort of the highlight of verses 3 through 8. I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy because of your partnership, some of your translations say fellowship, because of your partnership or fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

[13 : 26] And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you all are partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. Verse 9. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Verse 12. I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. You see, in the ESV, there's that phrase, advance the gospel.

That will be one of our main points tonight. So that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, the whole praetorium guard, and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. How about that? And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, they are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill.

[14 : 56] The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

Well, what then? Well, only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. And in that, I rejoice. So you see some more joy, some more thankfulness coming from Paul. But that doesn't end there. So midway through verse 18, Yes, and I will rejoice. So this is our fourth point that we'll go to tonight. Yes, I will rejoice. So even more rejoicing.

For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance. As it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose, I cannot tell.

[16 : 06] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. Would you all agree with that? That's far better to be with Christ.

Yeah. Far better. Verse 24, Now get this. This is what Paul writes. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

Remember that. We're going to get to that. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. So convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again.

And I'll stop right there on verse 26. Oh, I'm so eager to get to our new content tonight. But let me finish up reviewing the first two points. All right. So if you all remember, so put the fellowship of the gospel at the center of your relationships with believers.

So in verses 3 through 8, we see that Paul is thankful for many, many things. So the three points, again, were, he's thankful, number one, for their, for the Philippians, for their faithful ministry of him.

[17 : 21] He shares there how he sees that church, that they are committed to Paul's success. They're praying for him. They're encouraging him. And so Paul just says, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you.

Now verse 4 says, Always in every prayer of mine, for you all making my prayer with joy. How about that? Have you ever, have you told anyone in our church this week, you know what, you make me have joy when I pray for you.

All right. That's the second point. We'll get to the prayer in just a minute. But I think that's just fantastic. What a way to start off a letter. So that's just so, so sweet. The second point is their fellowship in the gospel.

And again, fellowship, partnership, you know, working together for a common cause. And we talked about out of page 18, Carson was explaining that the heart of true fellowship, the heart of true partnership, as we work together as a church, right, is self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision, a vision that calls forth our commitment.

So question for you, as we remember and recount this teaching from the last couple of sessions, right? What is our shared vision? Huh? Christ.

[18 : 34] Yeah. So Derek said for the recording, Derek said Christ. That's our shared vision. That's, that's the part of the top of the shared vision, right? Is Christ to glorify him, to live for him, right? And so what's it mean?

What's it look like to have it be a self-sacrificing community as we have that shared vision? So again, we're not gonna have time to, we've, we've discussed that in previous sessions, but, but these are the sorts of things as you sort of review and recount, um, chapter one, both of Philippians and of the book, these are things that are sort of hope, hopefully jogging your memory. Um, how do we live as a church with that shared vision, self-sacrificing? And then the third point that, that Carson makes about Paul's thankfulness, right?

Is that God's content, he sees God's continuing work in the lives of Philippians. And again, he, you know, the evidence there of the, the Philippians are persevering. I think, uh, um, in scripture, Paul writes, yeah, I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion. That means that I see, that you are going to persevere through your life because of your commitment and your faith and living for holiness and truth. Right? And so, so he's so thankful that he's confident that he sees again, that he's, that God's going to complete that good work.

[19 : 52] Again, have you, have you shared that? Are you thankful for that? Um, are you thankful that as you look at your spouse, if you're married, um, fellow church member, um, what a great, there's so many ways that we can communicate to one another and encourage one another.

Right? And these are, Paul is a great example of this as well. So, so chapter, I mean, so, so section one point one is as we live the gospel individually, as a family, as a church family, right? Are you putting the fellowship of the gospel, the partnership of the gospel, the shared vision, the shared work, the shared labor? Are you putting that at the center of your relationships with believers?

What do you talk about when you get together with believers? We talked a little bit about what, what's the application of that? Um, is, is, um, when you get together for coffee, are you talking two hours about the, the most recent football game or, or the, the, the, the latest style that's out in, you know, in culture?

Um, which again, there's nothing wrong with that. If you're talking about that part of the time, right? But, but think about the content of your discussions, the content of your prayer life.

[21 : 03] We'll get to that in just a minute. Just the content of life and living together. What are you talking about? Hopefully you're talking about what you're jazzed about, what you're excited about, what's important to you. And, uh, if there was a, I'm glad I'm not, I'm not, I'm glad not all my words are recorded during the day.

I would wonder how much of that, how much of that percentage would be, sort of focused on being excited and sharing or, or ministering, right? It doesn't have to be all happy, happy. It can be some really sober speaking truth and hard, hard stuff as well.

Okay. Yeah. Uh, verse six is really the most heartwarming, encouraging, hopeful verse, in any adversity.

You know, when you read that, I thought it just, and just waiting for you right now. and, um, um, in a desperate time, that verse so powerful.

Well, that's right, Carolyn. So again, just sort of repeat what you said for the recording that if you look at Philippians one, verse six, you were just sharing how that's the most encouraging, heartwarming, just as, as we were reading that hope, yeah, full of hope, uh, in any circumstance that one has.

[22 : 14] And you're sort of, again, mindful of our, of our pastor, Jeff going through prolonged physical challenge. Yeah. I'm sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.

Now that word completion in Greek, I did a little, little word study. Wasn't going to include it tonight. Uh, but, um, the, the inference there, the context there is, is really talking about more about salvation, living through persevering, right?

To salvation, but certainly it's very encouraging for those who are saved, right? We're, we're going to persevere because we're saved, right? By definition. Um, and that means living through, going through trials and tribulations.

Yeah. It's a continual work until it's finished when Jesus returns. Yeah. And it's a work, which means we're not there yet. We're not our glorified body, right?

We're still in the flesh. So it's a work. Thank you, Carolyn. That's great. All right. So again, as I try to quickly go through review, so that, that was the first, first point, second point. Um, Oh, this was the second slide of the first point, the application slide.

[23 : 15] And we, we talked about a little bit about that. So I'll move on to the second point. So we're, we're going to put, the first point is we're fellowshiping. We're partner shipping, if you would, with other believers.

The second point is more focused on prayer life. As we looked at verses nine, 10 and 11 in Philippians one. So put the priorities of the gospel at the center of your prayer life.

And, uh, we looked at, uh, in verses nine, 10 and 11, Carson sort of highlighted three features of Paul's prayer for the Philippians. And, uh, and we could, let me read verses nine, 10 and 11.

And again, well, those just come straight out of there. It's, it's there right in front of us. So verse nine is my prayer that your love may abound more and more.

Right? So that's part of his prayer. Um, that, that, that your love Philippians, that your love may abound more and more abound in what your love and what?

[24 : 11] With knowledge and all discernment. So there he goes. That's the second point, right? That their love will become more knowledgeable of God. So, so, so there's two things already there in verse nine alone that Paul's, uh, Paul's praying that their love may abound more and more.

And they may abound in the knowledge of the Lord with all discernment, with all wisdom. Verse 10. So you may prove, approve what is excellent. And so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. And so that, that, that verse is not intent or sort of, summarized or 10 and 11 are summarized in the third point on the slide that he's praying that, that the Philippians will pursue what is best or what is excellent in the sight of a God.

Wouldn't it be great to have brothers and sisters here at Grace Church Williamsburg be praying for each other on, on those points? Right. Wouldn't that be awesome? like Derek, I just pray that your love may abound more and more, that there's no end, that as God fills you with love, that your love will just abound and not, and not just abound just everywhere more and more, but specifically in the knowledge of God.

Right. Well, that's, that's pretty great, isn't it? And that's also, that's, that's gospel talking. That's going back to the fellowship and partnership. And that's just sort of gospel speaking, gospel praying.

[25 : 33] And so again, Paul's great example of just praying for one another. Growth. There was a point that we made in the second point around knowledgeable of God. And you'll see that on the slide on the screen.

Growth in the knowledge of God and gaining insight into his ways. It does require at least one thing, according to the D.A. Carson, right? It requires repentance. We talked about that last Wednesday. Now, why does it require repentance? And I want to give a, give a shot at, why does Carson think, if we want to grow the knowledge of God, gain insight into his ways, how does repentance play a part in that?

Or repentance, repentance with the lack of repentance blocking that? I think being humble makes you more teachable. Being humble makes you more teachable.

Yeah. Yeah. How can you possibly pray for someone if you're always stuck on yourself? Right. If you're inward focused, if you're, I think in the, in the book, he talked about bitterness or rivalry, you know, the, the sort of lack of love.

[26 : 37] And how can you possibly grow the knowledge of God and his insights when you're all sort of hung up on yourself? And so you need to repent. It wouldn't be sincere. Yeah. It wouldn't be sincere.

It's just, you know, sin. All right. It's just blocking, blocking that. It serves as a blocker. So how do we, how do we address sin? Repent of it. So I think that, that's sort of where he, he sort of goes in a little bit of the back door.

Repentance is required, but why is repentance required? Because sin is blocking it. So lack, so lack of repentance means you're wallowing in your sin. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. You got to get rid of that. What's, what's encumbering you, what's slowing you down so that you can run the good race, so to speak, and, and grow in the knowledge and the love of God.

So, so that was, he was meddling a little bit with that one. That's on page 23, right? Of the, of his book. So a lessening of self-focus, an increase in our love for God and others.

[27 : 38] All right. So that, those were, so that, hopefully that, I tried to go pretty fast, maybe too fast, but we've got these sessions recorded and we got the slides. And so you're good to go. I have complete faith that, and then Jeff's around.

Well, he'll be around soon. Lord willing sooner than later, I'm around so we can talk about all the stuff. He won't give you an exam. I'm the exam guy, right?

So he'll share, he'll share, right? He's, this is on the recording and he'll, Jeff, if you're listening to this, please affirm this because you've said this, right? I'm the quiz guy. Cause I, and I, if I, I just didn't have enough time, I was going to put some questions up on the slide and sort of go through this.

Cause that's a fun way to remember. He's not the exam guy. He, he, he hates being put on the spot and he doesn't want to put anyone on the spot. I'm a little more fun. I'm a little more mean. I'm a good cop, bad cop.

I'm the bad cop. When it comes to that little pressure, no exam. Now he may make me a liar. He may do that, but I don't think he will. I don't think he will. So, all right, let's move on to verses 12 through 18.

[28 : 42] And we're going to be in page, page, where are we in the book? Here we go. 26. Oh, thank you. Yeah. 26 in the book. So, the third point that we're about to dive into is put the advance of the gospel.

All right. Stop right there. Does that, does that make sense? What that means? Advance of the gospel. Does that, that phraseology make sense? Elaborate. Just the event, the movement, the growth, the, the advance, the, the, the continuation of the gospel, right?

As we live, we want to continue to advance the gospel, like, like advancing a cause. You know, we want to continue to gain momentum and gather those around us and advance the gospel, the good news message.

And that word actually comes out right out of verse 12, right? I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to, in the ESV, it says to advance the gospel, right? To further the gospel. And so, the, the section header here is put the furthering or the advancement of the gospel at the center of your aspirations.

[29 : 53] We'll, we'll talk just a minute about what's he mean by, I mean, if you understand what aspirations are, you know, life goals, you know, priorities, then, then this will make a little bit of sense to you.

So let me read verses 12, 13, and 14, the first part of this. And I'm going to ask you a question. All right. I'm going to ask you, let me give you the question first. Simple question. Just, I want you to, I want you to tell me what you glean from verses 12, 13, and 14.

All right. Simple, straightforward question. What do you, from verses, don't, don't make it up. All right. But what do you glean? What do you observe? These are observation questions. For those of you homeschool, observation questions, or do inductive study, right?

Observation questions, right? Just, I'm going to add, the question comes right out of, right out of what we read. Verses 12, 13, and 14. So I want you to know, brothers, Paul writes, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to all the rest, that my imprisonment is for Christ.

And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord, by my imprisonment, they are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

[31 : 08] All right. So tell me, tell me what we learned from just those three verses. And I'll, I'll repeat it back again for the recording as you, as you speak up. Why is he so joyful?

Maybe. Now, now, that's not in verses 12, 13, 13, and 14, but, but, yeah, yeah. Yep. So what's, what's happened to me?

Okay. All right, good. So Michelle, you said, so the word's getting out. We, it doesn't really say how word's getting out, but, but Paul sort of bottom lines it. It's getting out.

So you mentioned the whole praetorian guard, the whole imperial guard has become known. So something has become known to them. Yeah.

My imprisonment is for Christ. All right. So that's one observation. What else do we glean from these two, these three verses? There you go.

[32 : 31] So, and yeah, the second half of verse 13, and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And then verse 14, I think you were, and most of the brothers, right?

Why have they, why have they become confident in the Lord? He can do it. I can do it. Exactly.

Yeah. By my imprisonment, by me being here, has emboldened them.

So, does this, does this ring true to you? I mean, does this make sense? Think of your own context. I'm trying to, have you ever been put in a situation where you were sort of, maybe to pray out loud. Maybe it was at a prayer meeting and, and you've had an opportunity to pray out loud. You're kind of shy and don't want to, but as you hear others pray out loud, all right, that gave you a little bit of courage that, okay, that's not so bad.

I think I can do this. That's just an example off the cuff. But have you, have you been in any context before in work, at home where you're sort of shy and sort of tentative about doing something, but after you saw some other people do it, then okay.

[33 : 36] Yeah. Everywhere. I think it's a common, common sort of thing, right? It is. Like, if I have another believer with me, and they, maybe they're more familiar with the people around, and, you know, and they, they, they start, you know, advancing the gospel, the forehead.

Yeah. I might be a little bit more timid to, you know, run into it, but, you know, my, my friend is doing it. Yeah. So, I have a little bit more confidence, you know.

There you go. All right. So, Derek said, yeah, if you happen to be with another brother in Christ, and you see him sort of speaking, and, and sort of maybe laid, laid some of the groundwork, then that's given, that gives you some confidence, some boldness, to, to also speak up.

Yeah. Yeah. So, so that, that, that dynamic, when we read that, I mean, this is something that would be, yeah, that, that, that's cool. That makes sense. It's especially fantastic because it's further in the gospel, right?

Um, not, not just maybe he was first in line to go get something to eat. So, okay, that gave me boldness to get it second in line or third in line, right? Um, this is the one where, um, they're able to, and most of the brothers haven't become confident in the Lord, by my imprisonment.

[34 : 54] They were much more bold to speak the word. And then ESV says without fear. All right. You know, there's a difference between speaking the word with fear, sort of tripping over yourself and sort of, you know, your, your verbal doesn't really match your nonverbal.

You're talking about, you know, you're, you're trying to share the gospel, a goal book gospel. It's the truth. It's the good news, salvation, but maybe you're doing it with fear. I wonder if maybe the recipient that's listening is trying to reconcile your verbal and nonverbal.

I, you know, that, that could happen. I mean, again, the Lord's will will be done in all situations, but, but I love that phrase at the end of verse 14 are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, and that's what it says there. Yeah. They have, having become confident, but what? Having become confident in Paul, what scripture say, well, what did they become confident in?

Yeah, they've become confident. They, they see, wow. All right. So Paul follower of Jesus Christ, the Lord providing for Paul and wow, check out Paul's attitude.

[36 : 04] He's not groveling or complaining. He's using this opportunity to share the gospel and to proclaim that however it happened, this imprisonment here is for Christ.

I didn't do anything wrong, but it doesn't matter. I am here. God's put me here for Christ. And so, and so Paul writes, the brothers, they've become confident in the Lord by his presence.

They are in prison. And the result of that is they're much more bold to speak the word without fear. All right. So let's see. So we've observed quite a few things in verses just 12, 13, and 14.

So on the slide, I've got two outcomes. We hit them both just now. Two outcomes of Paul's caring more about the advance of the gospel. There's that phrase again.

Rather than for his own personal comfort. And we just hit those. The first one is the whole guard and everyone else. It's not just the guard, right? Scripture says, so verse 13, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest.

[37 : 09] Does that mean they have a prisoner? All the rest that are there. Because, who knows? Who knows? In, in, in Carson's book on the top of 27, he's given a little bit of context to this.

The bottom of 26 says, because the full pretorian guard, when it was up to full strength, numbered close to 9,000. That's, that's a, that's, that's a lot of people.

Up to 9,000. Now, now we could think, and then Carson goes on to explain, wait a minute, that, that, come on. How can, nine, I mean, they're busy, right?

They're, they're, they're serving. How can 9,000 guard members possibly understand that Paul is there, his imprisonment's for Christ? So, you could read that and sort of, just because you don't understand how they might happen, you, you may, you may read that and be a little bit skeptical. Well, Paul, didn't really mean all. Let me, let me look back at what scripture says. Throughout the whole imperial guard. I mean, it's pretty clear.

[38 : 11] The whole guard, right? So, yeah, true, true. He's probably a lot different than most other prisoners that they had, right?

Bold, courageous. Yeah. So, so, so who knows the numbers, but, but Paul sort of gets them all. The whole imperial guard, the, all the rest.

And then he refers to, in verse 14, and most of the brothers. I, that, I think that pretty much covers whoever he was in prison at the time to me. So, that's pretty cool.

So, and again, his whole imprisonment is for the sake of Christ. There's more going on than meets the average eye there. As, as these, as these guards and the, whoever runs the prison and whatnot, as they're seeing this, this was no ordinary man.

And he was there for no ordinary reason. That's fantastic. And the second part we just shared as well. So, the second point is, you know, most of Paul's brothers in the Lord, right? They were encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

[39 : 16] So, this is, so let's think about the, now let's look at the term aspirations, right? So, put the advance of the gospel at the center of your aspirations. What was Paul's aspirations?

What can you glean from Paul, either in this short account or just in general? What, what are his aspirations? That people know Christ.

That is, that's one of his aspirations. Yep. Yeah, I mean, yeah, we definitely see that his life. At least post conversion. Yeah.

All right. So, now it's time to bring it home. It's time to be personal. So, I will say, we're going to talk about principled self-denial in just a moment as the fourth and last section.

But this section is about your aspirations. So, this does get a little bit more personal, these two topics, because it really drives home the fact of what are your priorities in life? Let me put it this way as I have put on the slide.

[40 : 17] What does putting the advance of the gospel at the center of our aspirations, what's that look like? What's that look like? What's that look like?

Again, using Paul as an example. And we, and by the way, there's a few more pages on this section. We just don't have time to get to. But at the top of 28, I will, if you haven't read this, or you need to reread it because you've forgotten, Jim Elliott, Nate Saint, right?

You know, Ecuador, back in the, back in the 1950s, right? They went, and they gave their life to spread the gospel. He uses that as a, you know, what were their aspirations?

Nate Saint, Jim Elliott, what were their aspirations? Was it to live a comfortable life? Secure, safe, comfortable?

Or was it, now this is a, you know, when you think about international missionaries going out in the, you know, the uncivilized parts of the world, that's a, that's a pretty bold thing to do.

[41 : 19] I don't think God had, God has not knitted us all to be that way necessarily. But certainly it's a great example of, of what's it mean to put the advance of the gospel at the center of your aspirations.

So think about that for a minute. Anybody want to sort of, what might that look like? Maybe not in your own life, but someone else's life. Someone else's life. For me, it's easy for me to be hesitant to share the gospel with like a family member.

Because I don't want to cause a disagreement. You know? And so, putting the advancement of the gospel at the center of my aspirations would be to just go ahead and say something.

You know? And maybe just know when to stop. You know what I mean? Yeah. Because there's also an, the element of trying to discern whether or not they have willing years.

But, it's that hesitation. You know, letting that hesitation go of, well, what if I make them mad? Yeah. Yeah. So, so again for the recording, Michelle, you were just sharing the context of your aspiration is that your family members would know Christ.

[42 : 54] And so, the desire to want to share Christ with them, but knowing that if they're receptive, not receptive, could it, could it actually, you know, widen maybe a chasm, a chasm in the relationship, or maybe make it worse.

And knowing, so your, your aspiration, you aspire for your family to know Christ. All right. So, that's, that's a little bit of a twist on this question, but nonetheless, wow, that, that's a, that, that, no, that's a, that's a great practical, that applies to probably many of us, many of us in here.

Okay. So, yeah, not being so hesitant in those times when, yep, yep. Let, let me read, on page 30, let me read the top two full paragraphs, just as we sort of consider, um, Paul's example, and then how that might apply to us.

Um, so the top of 30, the first full paragraph, Paul's example is impressive and clear. Put the advance of the gospel at the center of your aspirations. Our own comfort, our own bruised feelings, our reputations, our misunderstood motive, all of these are insignificant in comparison with the advance and splendor of the gospel.

As Christians, we are called upon to put the advance of the gospel at the very center of our aspirations. What are your aspirations? To make money? To get married? To travel?

[44 : 24] To see your grandchildren grow up? To find a new job? Or to retire early? I confess, that went home for me. I want to retire early so I can go into ministry more time.

All right, to retire early? None of these are inadmissible. None of these are to be despised. Right? These are all worthy aspirations, he's saying. But the question is whether these aspirations become so devouring, that's a strong word, devouring.

I put, um, so important. But he said devouring, so I'll say it again. So they've become so devouring that the Christian's central aspiration is squeezed to the periphery.

Just like culture does, right? Move religion, move Christian, our belief system to the periphery. Is squeezed to the periphery or choked out of existence entirely.

That was more the spirit of the question. Um, when we think about, and think about Paul, right? So remember in verses, um, and again, we don't have time to, to unpack a lot of this, but, but in verse 15, where Paul was sharing, hey, some were preaching Christ out of good intentions, but others were not.

[45 : 33] Other words were, were, were preaching out of envy and rivalry. So how did Paul respond to that? Right? You know, was, was Paul sort of puffed up or prideful?

Hey, wait a minute. No, no, no. You, you all are, you all are preaching Christ. He says what? To, um, to afflict me in my imprisonment. Right? So he, who has a good sense of justice?

You all have a strong sense of justice? I do. Everybody have a strong, I, most of you have a pretty strong sense of justice. So if I were Paul here, I would be doing something about that right now. I mean, you know, it's like, whoa, hang on a minute.

You're doing this. Your motive is to afflict me more in my imprisonment. But how did Paul respond? Think of his aspirations. Was his aspirations to seek justice? No.

Seek justice is a good thing. Right? But, but in this example, um, the latter do it out of love. Those who do it with a goodwill, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.

[46 : 31] Verse 17, but the former, those who preach Christ from envy and rivalry, right? The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

What then? Verse 18, what then? I'm going to go show them that what Paul writes. I'm going to go fix this up. I'm going to, I'm going to bring, I'm going to read some truth into their life and, and put them in their place.

No, Paul's, Paul's response is only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. And in that, I rejoice.

So I just think about, man, what? You know, it's, I, I, I relate to this so much where I can see where I'd get so bent out of shape. You know, someone's doing, saying the right thing.

Now, maybe the wrong motivations, but the right thing. And they're getting the attention. They're getting the accolades for it. Right. And, and, and at the same time, you know, it's to, you know, it's, you know, afflicting me in my imprisonment, as Paul would say.

[47 : 30] But he didn't care as long as Christ is preached. Now, D.A. Carson on page 31, is it 31 or, no, no, it's, I think, 29. He does caveat this by, listen, if you read, if you study the scripture a little bit more, these are not heretics that are preaching another gospel.

Right. These are those who are preaching Christ. They are preaching truth just with the wrong motivation. Paul would, you're right, you would agree, Paul would have a completely different reaction.

And we see that in scripture. If they're preaching a gospel, it's not Christ. So don't, don't think that, oh, well maybe is Paul, does that mean I compromise when, when I hear someone preaching sort of a half truth, you know, Jesus plus.

No, no, no, no, no. You know, this is the example of where truth is being preached, but, but it's to the benefit of maybe the other preachers, not himself. And Paul's saying, hey, verse nine, verse 18, what then?

Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. And that's what I rejoice in. I think that's the point of this section here is, is at the center of your aspirations, are you able to put aside maybe some of your aspirations, some of the things you long for, or you desire, I mean, order that the gospel might be advanced.

[48 : 49] So that, that takes a little bit, that, that takes a little bit of introspection. I think, is that the right word? to really get to the heart of your motives for doing what you want to do, or to aspire to the place you want to aspire.

What's your motivation? And if it's not for the advancement of the gospel, then I think it's just worth considering, right? It is getting to that, to that point in your life, or that, or that goal, that aspiration, right?

Is it, is it moving the more important thing to the side? Is it, as the, as page 30 says, is, is, is, is your focus, and is the importance and priority of certain aspirations, squeezing out the advancement of the gospel from your life?

That's where we want to be careful. And that's a great, great opportunity to consider introspection, you know, have a, have a dear brother, sister in Christ, a loved one, a spouse, sort of have that conversation and, and lovingly maybe call you on it.

Like, Hey, this is, this is like this consuming you. What, what's your goal here? Because it's really taking you away from living for Christ and, and the witness that maybe you're sharing with others.

[50 : 00] He puts a message over the personality. Yes. And the quirks that the people have. And it just hit me. It's like, man, how many times have I listened to people, or teachers, and you knew something about them, or you knew they had a fault.

You know, I've been going to church a long time, so. And, and you listen to them, and that's, that's floating in the back of your head. Yeah. You know, but they're preaching a message, but you're like, I'm going to be trying to, you know.

Yeah, that's hard, isn't it? Yeah. That's hard. You're judgmental of the personality. Mm-hmm. And how he could overlook that, and the Lord gave me the ability to do that, really speaks to me.

Yeah, he's in, Paul's in prison. I know. He's in prison, and he knows what their motivations are.

Yeah. But yet, the message is more important than their part. And Paul doesn't say, yeah, I'm okay with that.

No, he said, he rejoices in it. How? Yeah, the Holy Spirit, right? How can you not just be okay with it? Like, fine. I'm just going to sit here and bite my tongue. He rejoices in it, and that's how much he loves Jesus.

[51 : 13] And, you know, do we love Jesus that much? That you'll rejoice in those sort of situations. That's a hard one. All right. I wish we could camp out there longer, but I think, I think when either Jeff or I are up here, the clock spins fast.

I can't believe we only have 10 minutes left. So, so time is going by. I love talking. I love talking scripture with you all. This is great. I mean, I feel like I need to come down here, but it's, it's great to just to open up scripture and just have a conversation and highlight some, some beautiful truths.

Let's move on to the fourth and last point. So this is the bottom of page 33 in the book. And we'll move over to verses 18, the 18 B, the second half of verse 18 through 26.

So let me, let me read. Let me focus on the first few verses, 18, 19, and 20 again. So, so again, by, I've read this, but I'll read it again.

Right. So starting, starting halfway through verse 18, Paul says, yes, and I will rejoice. Now this is more rejoicing, right? This is not, you know, verse 18, the first half of 18, what was he rejoicing?

[52 : 17] Because Christ was proclaimed no matter what. Right. So, so Paul says, yes, and I will rejoice. He continues. There's more rejoicing. He's in prison. Yes, I will rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance.

What's this? His situation, right? His imprisonment. As it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

Now let me stop right there. So, so some of the points for, for this last section, again, these are just observational, right? As we walk through these last few verses and, and again, they're observations and D.A.

Carson, clearly he picks these up as well. But the first point that he was, he's making here, again, this is what more sources of his rejoicing. So the first point is that Paul's joy is rooted in his deliverance, right?

So that's verses 18 through 20 that I just read. Now deliverance here, and, and Carson also explains that deliverance on the surface, you may think it means, oh, to be delivered out of prison, right?

[53 : 36] To get out of prison. But that's not what, that's not what Paul's really getting to, right? This is, I think Carson used the term ultimate, yeah, bottom of 33. In this context, let me read this to you right out of the book, the bottom of 33, the last four or five lines.

In this context, deliverance does not mean release from imprisonment, but something more important, his ultimate vindication, whether in life or in death.

This will come about through their prayers, that is, owing not least to their prayers, and the consequent, then turn over to page 34, help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Paul will be so faithful that he will be entirely vindicated before God in the end. That Paul wants above all else to be found faithful is made clear by verse 20.

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage, so that now as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. So one source of his joy, the root of his joy here, is that he's just so grateful that he completely trusts in the Lord and his ultimate vindication, his ultimate deliverance, that he will be found faithful at walking through these trials.

[54 : 55] All right? So that's, so as we think about, and again, this section title is, Put the Converse of the Gospel at the Center of Your Principled Self-Denial. All right? So, so think about, he's in prison, right?

So principled self-denial, right? So he's denying himself something out of principle for fellow believers. And so for verses 18 and 19 and 20, I think the point here is that his joy, he's sharing his joy that God will deliver him out of that.

Now let me, let me, let me continue because a couple of the next points speak more to this section header. of principle self-denial. Verse 21, familiar verse, y'all probably have it memorized.

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain, right? Famous line from Paul. It becomes a declaration of self-giving purpose, right?

Life is valuable only insofar as it advances Christ's work in others, right? And that's sort of what that means, to live, what do you, what do you think that means when he says, to live is Christ, to live is Christ.

[56 : 13] For his glory, to live for Christ, means to live for his glory, okay? The next couple of verses sort of help explain what he means. Verses 22, 23 help explain, 21.

For to me, to live is Christ. To continue the gospel to others. Yep, there you go. Continued ministry. That's it. That's it. To live is Christ. It's, again, he's living, but it's all for the ministry of others. That's the point, right? To live is Christ, means living for the ministry of others.

We see 21 explained in verses 22 and 23. So, in verses 22, 23, 24, and again, I'm trying to be brief, because we're about out of time.

Paul's internal tension, we read that, right? Do I want to die and be with Christ, which is far better, or stay, right? I'm hard pressed between the two. Paul's internal tension, as we read here, it's between personal desire and others' spiritual need, right?

[57 : 17] You see that, right? And I just said that. For if I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor. Let me back up.

If I am, yeah, verse 22, if I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Labor, right? Fruitful labor, but labor, ministry to others. Yet, which one shall I choose?

I cannot tell. I'm hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ. That's far better, right? So, there's one side. My personal desire. Isn't that all our personal desire?

Should be. Some of us love the world a lot. Some of us love family members a lot, right? So, but, at the end of the day, our love for Christ, right, has to be the top priority.

So, personal desire to be with Christ, which is far better. But then, what's he say? Yet, which I shall, yet which I shall choose, I cannot tell.

[58 : 12] I'm hard pressed between the two. I'm sorry, I'm repeating that. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that's far better. Verse 24, but to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

There we go. More necessary on your account. To stay, even though I want to be with Christ. I'm in prison, hard life, I'm done. I'm done.

I'm ready to be with Christ. But, to remain in the flesh, to live as Christ, right, is more necessary on your account.

So, who's Paul thinking of when he says to live? Again, he goes back to thinking of others. Again, he's putting the converts of the gospel, he's thinking of his fellow believers, right, he's putting that before or at the center of his principle self-denial.

What's he self-denying? With self, yeah, he's self-denying, but he's denying what he wants, right? What's he want? He wants to be with Christ. Who doesn't want to be with Christ, right?

[59 : 15] So, so, so this section, that's sort of what Carson is getting to when he says, put the converts of the gospel, fellow believers, at the center of your principle self-denial.

What are you, what are you denying yourself of for the sake of your fellow believers, your brothers and sisters in Christ? And we see Paul's example here as the motivation.

So, verses 25 and 26, he concludes that remaining alive best serves the church's joy, the church, the fellow believers, the converts of the gospel, right?

But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Paul, verse 25, convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all.

Why? For your progress and joy in the faith. Right? So, he concludes, he's convinced as he writes this letter to the Philippians, you know, he's sort of sharing some internal struggles that he has, the tension between what he wants versus what he knows is better for his fellow believers.

[60 : 21] I know that I will remain and continue with you all. Why? For your progress and joy in the faith. Why? So that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again.

See, it's all about them. It's all about them. Right? All about them. For your progress, for your joy, so that you would have ample cause to glorify Jesus Christ. That's pretty good.

That's good. That's the four points that Carson brings up in these verses here. Paul's joy is rooted. So first of all, he's rejoicing. Back on the previous section, right, he's rejoicing because Christ is glorified.

Well, let me continue rejoicing. Let me share something else I'm rejoicing about. I know that God's going to deliver me. Ultimate vindication. Right? My hope and prayer is that I'll do nothing. What's he say?

It's my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always, Christ will be honored in my body. So he's got a confidence there.

[61 : 27] He's rejoicing that Christ will ultimately deliver him and that he will not bring shame to his Lord. So that's the first point.

Deliverance. Second point, his focus is on ministry of others. The third point is internal attention. I really want something. I really want to be with Christ, but I'm going to stay in work and minister to others.

So you see that theme of to others. Fourth point, he concludes, all right, not yet, not yet. As much as it is in his power and in God's sovereignty, I will stay to live as Christ.

Why? For the joy, for the church's joy and maturity. Right? All right. So, wow, we went through that fast, but last slide, application.

We see how Paul is setting aside his own desires for the church. What does putting the converts of the gospel, what does putting fellow believers at the center of our principled self-denial look like?

[62 : 32] All right, this is the one that really gets into meddling, right? So this is not just like life aspirations, right? Like we talked about last section. This is now day to day.

This is now denied. How much do you deny self for your brothers and sisters in Christ? Well, I think it speaks to me.

One thing that comes to mind you know, Paul brought up about it's just like it's going here and I have a poor translation Bible for New Living and it says, for I know that as you pray for me and as the spirit of Christ helps me it all turns out of him.

And the first thing he mentioned was, for I know that as you pray for me. Hmm. It goes back to more sources of rejoicing. Yeah. And so, that touched my mind when I saw that question.

I thought, you know, when we love each other enough and he loves the bounty in us and we're tearing it up about people. It is self-denial to spend time in prayer and thinking about and focusing on other people's care.

[63 : 47] Absolutely. And most of the time I think the word changes you more. I mean, the work he does is terrific. You know, when you are doing that.

Amen. Does that make sense? It absolutely makes sense. Yeah. As we, oh, I'm not doing a good job summarizing for the recording, but Carolyn, you were just talking about, you know, one way you see that is as you pray for others, right, and you were going back earlier in chapter one, right, that there's a, oh, there's a, it's almost like a miraculous work that happens, right, as you, you are denying yourself by committing in prayer, but there's something happening where God changes you and that prayer is where.

So it's like, it's like you got a two for one deal there, so to speak, right? You're, you're, you're entreating the Lord, you're going to the Lord on behalf of your brother and sister in Christ, you're committing that time for that, but at the same time, God's doing a little bit of a transformational work in your own heart.

Well, of course, yeah, spending time with the Lord. Yeah, when you're in His presence, you can't help but be transformed, right, in His word. Thank you, thank you. Well, what else does that look like?

What does it look like? To put it in layman's terms, putting others first, right? That's what this is. Putting, not just others, but putting your brothers and sisters in Christ first. Why?

[65 : 07] Because they're the church and the church is God's most important possession. Why? How do we know that that's God's most important possession? Because it says in the Bible, but what's it say in the Bible?

How do we know that the church is God's most important possession? He died for the church, right? He sent His Son. Think of you all with sons.

What more? Not, I mean, me dying for something is one thing, but to send my son to die for someone, you can't get much more love than that, right?

And that's one indication. I mean, to me, that's an evidence that the church is God's most important possession. So if the church is God's most important possession, how should we be treating the church?

And I say the church, but I mean my brothers and sisters, those fellow believers. Yeah. Whatever's most important to God better be most important to us, right?

[66 : 05] To bring Him glory. So yeah. So, well, we could perhaps unpack that some more, but it does, I mean, admittedly, like I said, it does get sort of personal because it gets into life change, priority change, maybe there's some guilt and shame because as you sort of think back about maybe how you haven't been denying self, but you've been feeding flesh, you've been doing sort of what you want to do, maybe you've had seasons in and out, maybe you're in a season right now and you need some brothers and sisters to come alongside you and sort of help you out of that season, get you some good self-denial going for the church.

right, for brothers and sisters in Christ. It's worth, again, just having a time of introspection and just pray, pray that the Lord would reveal your heart in that.

So, all right, last slide and we're done. It's just a recap of the four points that as we close out chapter one of the book, and so we'll be in chapter two next week, Lord willing, but it's all about living the gospel like we started out with tonight, right?

So, the fellowship of the gospel, right, with fellow believers, the priorities of the gospel as you pray, right, the advancement of the gospel as you consider your own personal aspirations, your goals, your priorities, what's important to you, what you want to achieve in life, and then lastly, as you relate to one another, again, the church, your brothers and sisters in Christ, are they the center as you deny the flesh and deny self?

Consider others more important than yourself, right? Not that you're not important, but relatively consider others more important because you, we are a prized possession of God.

[67 : 59] What's Ephesians 2.10 say, right? I think it's 2.10, or is it 1? 2.10, right? We're God's workmanship, right? And He has already readied good works for us to do.

So, I preached on that a few years ago, Ephesians 2, and I love that. I just, it made a huge difference. I just remember that so much when Paul writes that we are God's workmanship. Think about that. I mean, we know we're God's creation. We know that, but we are as, another way, another word that translates that workmanship is masterpiece. We, what?

We're His filthy rags. But yet, Paul reminds us that, true, our good works are filthy rags, but we are His masterpiece. All right? We are made in the image of God.

And so, we ought to be loving on one another, sacrificing for one another, living for one another for the glory of God. All right, let's pray. So, Father, thank you for tonight. Lord, we thank you for your scripture.

[68 : 59] Oh, Lord, I don't want to take for granted that we live in an era where we have your word so readily available to us in so many translations, in so many formats.

Father, you're so gracious with revealing yourself to us through your word. And so, Father, tonight I would just pray for those here and for the rest of our church family, Lord, that we would be soberly aware of the opportunity and the privilege and the honor that we have of being in your word.

So, I pray that you would enrich our time, that you would help us to have the self-discipline to commit to be in your word. Father, and then when we're in your word that you would grow us and it would be time of just phenomenal relationship with you, Lord, help us to live the gospel.

Father, this has been the focus of this first chapter in this book, Lord. So, in all the facets of our life, Father, in our prayer life as we relate to one another, as we live, Lord, as we day-to-day deny self, help us, Father, to put you first and to put the things that are most important to you, the church, that that would be most important to us, Father.

Help us to remember that we're just passing through this world. Lord, help us to hang on loosely to earthly things, to aspirations that will mean nothing in the view of eternity.

[70 : 22] Lord, but let's help us to recognize and do the things that will mean something for eternity to invest in one another, Lord, to love one another and to share the good news of Jesus Christ with both the lost and then to encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ on your rich truths.

So, thank you for this night, Lord. Lord, again, we're mindful of those of our church who are in need. And again, we would just pray once again, Father, that you would just envelop them, overwhelm them with your love and grace and peace and mercy right where they are, Father.

Help them to cling to your truth and hope in you, Lord. We thank you for this night. In Christ's name, amen. Amen. Thank you.