

A Why To Live By
Philippians 1:12-26 (NIV)



“I expected to hear discussions and presentations about maximizing profits and improving systems. But what I witnessed was profoundly different. On the first day someone asked the group how many of them had achieved their financial goals. About 80% of the hands went up. I thought that alone was quite impressive. But it was the answer to the next question that was so profound. With their hands still in the air, the group was then asked, “How many of you feel successful?” And 80% of the hands went down...Many of them reported that they’d lost something since they started their business. They reminisced about the days when they didn’t have any money and were working out of their basements, trying to get things going.”

—Simon Sinek, *Start With Why*

Phil 1:12-13

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

(v.13) As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

Question: Can you name your chains?

Our Chains Can Open Chances

A chance to advance the gospel (v.12)

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.

A chance to advance courage (v.14)

...because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

A chance to advance freedom (v.18-19)

But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

“God, if He was merely my accomplice, had betrayed me.
If, on the other hand, He was God, He had freed me.”

—Elizabeth Elliot, No Graven Image

Question: What Chances might your chains be opening?

To see our chains as chances we must choose the WHY we'll live by.

Phil 1:20-26

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

It doesn't interest me to write about the idea that money doesn't buy happiness or, in this case, the feeling of success. This is neither profound nor a new idea. What does interest me, however, is the transition that these entrepreneurs went through. As their companies grew, and they became more and more successful, what changed? Every single one of these successful business owners knew WHAT they did They knew HOW they did it. But for many, they no longer knew WHY.

—Simon Sinek, Start With Why

(v.22) If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

Phil 1:22-26 (MSG)

As long as I'm alive in this body, there is good work for me to do. If I had to choose right now, I hardly know which I'd choose. Hard choice! The desire to break camp here and be with Christ is powerful. Some days I can think of nothing better. But most days, because of what you are going through, I am sure that it's better for me to stick it out here. So I plan to be around awhile, companion to you as your growth and joy in this life of trusting God continues. You can start looking forward to a great reunion when I come visit you again. We'll be praising Christ, enjoying each other.

“Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

—C.S. Lewis

Reflection Question

Dear Father, What WHY are you calling me to live by?