

God Determines the Conditions Necessary to Maximize Our Value as Christ-Expressed People and He Sets Them into Motion - 1:12

- We may have little or no control over our circumstances, but we do have a choice concerning our response - 1:18,20
- Paul's "chains": any limiting, restricting circumstance ("If it only weren't for \_\_\_\_\_.")

Our Focus Must Be on the Lord of the Circumstances - 1:21

- Our inability to live as God intends is not due to our circumstances - 1:20
  - ...but more likely to our refusal to acknowledge the Lord of our circumstances - 1:13
  - ...or to our resistance to His Divine purpose/meaning - 1:28
- He is using "all things" for the "greater progress" of the gospel - 1:12
  - ..."progress": pioneer, blaze a trail into new territory
  - ...every event is sacramentalized into a means of knowing and expressing Christ
- Our circumstances are appointments, not accidents - 1:28; I Thess 3:3
  - ...exalting and magnifying Christ is primary - 1:20
  - ...we are the signs of His sacrifice to the world - 1:18

Glorifying Christ in Our Hardships/"Chains":

- Hardships are a given - 1:28-30; Acts 14:22; I Pet 4:12; 5:10
  - ...not necessarily signs of faithlessness, but a promise to the faithful - Jo 16:33; II Tim 3:12
- To make use of our "chains", we must learn to...
  - ...endure them, for they are temporary - II Tim 4:5; I Cor 10:13; Ps 23:4; 30:5; Heb 12:2-3
  - ...embrace them, for they are from Our Father - II Tim 1:8; Jo 18:11; Ro 11:36
  - ...exalt God in them, for they are a call to worship - Eph 5:20; Phil 4:4; Heb 13:15

Our Lives Become Living Apologetics to the Reality of Our God - 1:16