

Living Above Your Circumstances—the Key

Charles Stanley

I. Introduction. Text: Philippians 1:19-24.

II. Focusing our attention on Christ instead of our circumstances.

A. We need to understand our oneness with Christ. God's goal is oneness with Christ.

B. Paul's philosophy was summed up in this – for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. This means that Paul had the power to live a life different from the one he lived before. He was able to live out of resurrection power. For Paul to live with resurrection power meant for Jesus to live on this Earth once again.

C. For the Christian every single aspect of life ought to be sifted through Christ.

D. If anyone can describe his life as anything but Christ, he has an idol in his life.

E. For Paul, his whole life was Jesus.

F. It is unscriptural to separate the spiritual and the secular in one's life.

G. If Christ is one's life one's circumstances do not matter. As long as a person has Christ he has everything. Paul wanted his whole life wrapped up in Christ.

H. Jesus is our very life living on the inside of us.

III. Focusing our attention on the sovereignty of God and not the will of man.

A. We need to understand our purpose in life.

B. The purpose of life is that Christ is magnified in the body whether by life or by death. The goal is that Jesus Christ be exalted.

C. The physical body of a believer is like a telescope for a nonbeliever. God uses a believer's body to show Christ to the nonbeliever.

IV. Focusing our attention on positive potential rather than our personal pain. Paul also saw that his purpose was to serve those around him.

V. Paul understood his destiny in death.

A. Death was a rival and it was a departure.

B. There is nothing to fear in death for the believer.

C. Paul saw death as gain.

D. Paul believed that he would immediately be with Christ upon death.

E. Death is not about the end of something, it is about the beginning of something.

F. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. (II Corinthians 5)

G. To die without Christ is to be eternally separate from God.

H. God is sovereign, shaping every believer into the likeness of His Son. We must focus on Christ, the sovereignty of God and the positive potential of pain.

Application questions:

1. What does it mean, “to live is Christ?”

2. How would you counsel a believer who regularly fears death?

3. How would you respond to someone who says that personal pain is always a work of the devil in light of this passage?
