



As Paul writes to the church at Philippi, he applauds the support they had given him, in friendship and spiritual support, as well as financial help. Paul uses this history as a lesson:

- When they had “opportunity,” they seized it and responded.
- He writes that he has learned to be content, whatever the circumstances.
- He knows how to get along with a little.
- He knows how to get along with a lot.
- Paul then shares his secret, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!”

When we sometimes think the evidence of faith is abundance and miracles, here the Bible teaches the evidence of faith is strength and courage!

What can we learn when we experience lean times? What can we learn when we experience abundant times? Why is faith and courage of more value than a miracle?

GPS for Families

GrowPrayStudy.org/family

Have kids close their eyes or blindfold them if they are a bit older. Lead them around by the hand and carefully let them tell you where they think they are in each room. Then lead them by voice only, telling them the way to go. After they remove the blindfolds ask, “What did you have to do to make it through the obstacle course?” (Listen to my leader, follow instructions, trust my leader.)

Was it easier when you had a hand to hold? Why? Why is it important to listen and follow instructions? What do you think would have happened if you just walked through the course without someone guiding you? (You would have bumped into things, knocked things over.)

Why do we need God’s help and guidance to go the right way? (We don’t always know the right thing to do, we can’t see what’s ahead like God can, we need someone to walk beside us and guide us when we make a mistake.) How does God guide us? (Through the Bible, prayer and other trusted people.) Give an example from your life where you have to trust God.

Explain that in this “season” of their lives they need to both listen and accept guidance, rules and instructions from their parents and from God. Just as God knows what lies ahead and we do not, parents are the same for children. They know what might happen and are given the job of guiding their children.

MESSAGE

“Summer”

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SCRIPTURE

Psalm 39:4-7

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon:

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PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Heavenly Father, we live through the seasons of life you give us; grant us the miracle of strength and courage. We desire to live a life that pleases you and to make a difference as we serve the Kingdom of God. Sometimes the changes we experience leave us confused and afraid. Give us clear direction and the courage we need to find our way as your way. Amen.

In every season of life there are biblical guidelines that we have been given to help us keep life on track, as well as keep us available to God. In this passage, Timothy is given some advice by Paul as we are given advice by these same words. There are some things we should run from and other things we are told to pursue. If we don't pay close attention to this advice, life can get away from us, and we can experience a lost season of life, each with its opportunities and challenges.

What are some of the ways we can pursue godliness, faith, love? Why do these disciplines take effort when so many things that are more damaging seem to slip up on us? What should you flee from?

Why do you think the Christian journey is compared to a good fight?

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God has given each human being free will; we choose our course, our path and what we live for. In Romans we are challenged to present our bodies to God, not as a dead sacrifice but a living, breathing one. With this done, we begin to make new decisions, not to be conformed to whatever culture we live in but instead to be transformed by a change of mind, a change of heart — beginning a life that struggles with the will of God more than our own will and certainly more than the insistent will of the world we live in.

Why is it that most of our struggles are with ourselves, with others and not with God?

God created us with the ability to seek the truth, to seek God, to seek redemption. What is the one thing you might change in your life to reset these priorities?

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Jesus had one last opportunity to speak to His disciples before He ascended into heaven after the resurrection. He could have said many things, but He chose to offer them the power of the Holy Spirit and to give them a driving, even divine purpose — to be His witnesses, beginning at home and then moving into the entire world. This they would do. Soon they would be sharing their faith in Jerusalem, then around the nation of Israel, then to Asia Minor, Greece, and in a few short years, in the great city of Rome itself. These early disciples would change their world.

Why do you think the power of the Holy Spirit seems to be reserved for those who choose to be witnesses for Christ?

In our God Is Big Enough campaign, do you think that this promise from Acts is connected?

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These words in Ephesians liken life to a struggle. But here is what is interesting. The struggle is not with people, situations or the world we live in but against powers, spiritual forces, even evil that exists in the world. The Bible teaches this many times, that there is an overriding battle between good and evil, life and death, the holy and the unholy, a battle that is bigger than just the usual struggle to pay the bills and get through life as successfully and comfortably as we can.

Why is it important to understand that our daily lives have more invested in them than sometimes what we see, that the tools that God gives us are important in walking this journey the way God wants for us?

What needs to change so that you can stand firm even during times of temptation or difficulty?

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