

Introduction: A Tale of Two Stories

- The Divine Equation: $C+P = E$

C _____ + P _____ = E _____

Living above my circumstances occurs when my _____
interprets my circumstances rather than my _____
determining my perspective.

- The Fundamental Question: How can we develop the kind of **perspective** that transcends our circumstances?
- The Answer: Four Keys & Four Questions

Key #1 = _____

Question #1 = Where is Your Focus?

A Lesson from the Life of Paul

Paul's Circumstance - Philippians 1:1-11 (NASB)

¹Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (vs.1-2)

Paul's _____ Focus

³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ⁵in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (vs.3-6)

Paul's _____ Focus

⁷For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. (vs.7-8)

Paul's _____ Focus

⁹And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (vs.9-11)

How to Develop an Upward Focus (vs. 3-6)

A Choice = _____

How?

An Action = _____

How?

An Attitude = _____

How?

Summary = Our _____ always follows our focus!

Three Observations about an Outward Focus (vs. 7-8)

Difficult circumstances reveal our true _____.

Living above our circumstances occur when our hearts are so full of people, there is no room for _____.

Sometimes God allows adverse circumstances to realign our _____!

Summary = Our focus always follows our _____!

How do You Pray with an Outward Focus When Times are Tough? (vs. 9-11)

- The request – v. 9
- The reason – v. 10
- The resource – v. 11

Summary = Our affections always follow our _____!

Application: Three timeless principles when you find yourself living below your circumstances:

1. Our _____ always follow our focus.
2. Our _____ always follows our affections.
3. Our _____ always follow our thinking.

Conclusion: C + P = E

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the most “pressing” or difficult circumstance you are facing in your life right now?
2. How does your circumstance compare to being held in prison and awaiting possible execution?
3. What specific steps could you take today to develop an upward and outward focus even amidst your difficult situation?