

Pt 1: Observations from the Apostle Paul's life.

1. HIS UNDERSTANDING OF HIMSELF – WHO HE WAS - as a believer.

He knew that he was in Christ – and that Christ was in him.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (tlb) *When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!*

Colossians 1:27 (amp) *To whom God was pleased to make known how great for the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ within and among you, the Hope of [realizing the] glory.*

He understood WHAT THE CROSS WROUGHT FOR MAN - what through happened to man through Salvation

He understood THE DIGNITY that had been RESTORED TO MAN - through that salvation.

He understood THE BENEFITS (inheritance) that WERE HIS through the Cross

He understood that the Cross MADE PEACE between God and man – that God was NO LONGER ANGRY with him.

He understood that he was NOW a NEW CREATION – A BRAND NEW PERSON – (through Christ's atoning death) and that THE OLD (his past) HAD GONE (severed from him) – and he had been given A BRAND NEW START.

He understood that God (through Christ) FREELY AND UNRESERVEDLY RECEIVED / ACCEPTED.

He understood that the DIGNITY that HE NOW HAD through the Cross GAVE TO HIM CONFIDENCE (authority) to live without fear and doubt and TO BE SOMEONE. (not a no body)

It gave him a NEW SENSE OF WORTH and MEANING to his life

He NOW understood the PURPOSE FOR HIS LIFE and THE ETERNAL DESTINY that was his through Christ!

2. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES - HE WAS A READER.

2 Timothy 4:13 (tlb) *When you come, be sure to bring the coat I left at Troas with Brother Carpus, and also the books, but especially the parchments.*

He studied. When he was in prison he asked for those things that were important to him.

What he asked for portrayed what was a priority to him at that time.

HE TOOK DELIGHT IN READING AND WRITING

Reading and writing were important in the life of the believer. WE LIVE IN A SOCIETY WHO WANTS TO BE ENTERTAINED.

People read less and write less. People come to church without their Bibles.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MIND through these two things – READING AND WRITING - are essential for the believer TO BE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY HANDLE the everyday things of life.

KNOWING (knowledge) THROUGH READING - BRINGS FAITH – HOPE – TRUST AND BALANCE TO OUR LIVES in those times of crisis and things which WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

READING & WRITING positions us to be able to effectively help others. This is consistent with what we are called for – FOR GOD AND FOR OTHERS.

IT BRINGS BALANCE TO THE MIND IN THE TIMES OF IDLENESS. Imagine in prison day after day with nothing to do?

HE WANTED HIS LIFE TO BE PRODUCTIVE in all circumstances. He knew the DANGERS OF IDLENESS.

He understood that his life MUST HAVE MEANING and PURPOSE and this he HAD TO FIND in every place and in every circumstance.

3. HIS COMMITMENT TO CHRIST - I will go to Jerusalem and bear witness to Christ – not know what shall happen – but also aware that bonds and afflictions await me – BUT NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME.

Acts 20:22-24 (niv) *"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."*

4. HIS SENSE OF REWARD AND GENUINE APPRECIATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE SAVED.

My crown of Joy (the Philippians)

Philippians 4:1 (tlb) *Dear brother Christians, I love you and long to see you, for you are my joy and my reward for my work. My beloved friends, stay true to the Lord.*

Philippians 4:1 (niv) *Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!*

He calls the believers in Philippi HIS CROWN OF JOY!

This was a joy which crowned his life daily as he reflected on what they were and what they are now.

HIS JOY WAS IN SEEING THEM GROW IN CHRIST AND IN GODLINESS.

HE REJOICED TO SEE THEIR PROGRESS IN FAITH AND LOVE.

THIS WAS NOT ABOUT CONTROL OR ABOUT MANIPULATION of people's lives.

HIS JOY WAS DERIVED FROM them BEING SAVED – KNOWING CHRIST - and PROGRESSING positively in their JOURNEY OF GODLINESS.

HIS PLEASURE WAS DERIVED PURELY AND SIMPLY FROM THEIR GROWTH IN GOD.

This is HOW HE SAW people. This is WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR in people.

HE MEASURED PEOPLES WORTH by their response to GODLY THINGS – to good things.

This determined HOW HE TREATED them. HOW HE APPROACHED them in their struggles in life.

This determined his dealing with people and his use of authority. It was not to be "over" but to serve "under."

HE JUST WANTED THE BEST FOR THEM.

HE KNEW THE GENUINE JOY which comes from what CHRIST IS ACCOMPLISHING IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE.