

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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CHRIST

BY

LIVING HIM

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Scripture Reading: [Phil. 1:19-21](#)

In this booklet we shall consider the matter of magnifying Christ by living Him ([1:19-21](#)). In [verse 20](#) Paul said, “According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.” In Paul’s bodily sufferings, Christ was magnified, that is, shown or declared great (shown to be without limitation), exalted, and extolled. His sufferings afforded him opportunity to express Christ in His unlimited greatness. Only Christ would he have magnified in him, not the law or circumcision. Philippians is concerned with the experience of Christ. To magnify Christ under any circumstances is to experience Him with the topmost enjoyment.

MAGNIFYING CHRIST

In [verse 20](#) a number of expressions are related to Paul’s statement that Christ would be magnified

in him: “with all boldness,” “as always,” “even now,” “in my body,” “whether through life or through death.” Paul does not simply say “with boldness,” but says “with all boldness.” Then he specifically points out that Christ would be magnified in his body. He said this because his body was in chains. At least during the night, if not all the time, Paul was chained to a guard. Nevertheless, even though his body was in chains, Christ would be magnified in his body. Moreover, Christ would be magnified whether through life or through death. This indicates that no matter what the circumstances were, Paul expected Christ to be magnified in him.

Now we must consider what it means to magnify Christ. The word magnify means to make something large to our sight. Perhaps you are wondering how Christ can be magnified since He is already universally great. According to [Ephesians 3](#), the dimensions of Christ—the breadth, length, height, and depth—are immeasurable. They are the dimensions of the universe. Although Christ is vast, extensive, and immeasurable, in the eyes of the praetorium, the imperial guard of Caesar, Christ was virtually nonexistent. In their eyes, there was not such a person as Jesus Christ. However, Paul magnified Christ; he made

Him great before the eyes of others, especially before the eyes of those who guarded him in prison. As a result, some eventually turned to Christ. Evidence of this is found in 4:22, where Paul speaks of the saints of Caesar's household. Through Paul's magnification of Christ, even some in Caesar's household were saved.

At the time of Paul's imprisonment, the Jews were despised by the Romans. The Romans were the conquerors, and the Jews were the conquered ones. Among these conquered ones there was a man named Jesus. Although He is great and most wonderful, in the eyes of the Romans He was nothing. But as Paul was held captive in a Roman prison, he magnified Christ, making Him to appear great in the eyes of his captors.

In our daily living we also should magnify Christ, making Him great in the eyes of others. Where you work or go to school people may look down on Christ. They may ridicule Him and take His name in vain, in violation of the third commandment. Therefore, you need to let others see Christ not in a small way, but in the way of enlargement, of magnification.

We should also magnify Him at home. The parents of some of the young people may not believe in Christ, but rather may despise Him.

Hence, these young people must bear the responsibility to enlarge Christ before their parents. Instead of simply preaching to their parents about Christ, they need to magnify Him. We need not simply the life within, but also the living without. Through the proper living, Christ will appear to be great in the eyes of others. Young people, let your parents see Christ's greatness in you.

We can magnify Christ even in situations where we have little or no liberty to speak about Him. Although teachers may not be able to preach the gospel to their students, they can magnify Christ in the classroom. They can cause Christ to appear great in the eyes of their students. I do not believe that when Paul was in prison, he was free to do much preaching of Christ. On the contrary, he was very limited and under strict control. However, even in such circumstances, Christ was magnified in his body. With all boldness Paul sought to magnify Him always.

Paul says that Christ would be magnified in him whether through life or through death. No matter what faced him—the opportunity to go on living or martyrdom—Paul expected to magnify Christ. In his living Paul magnified Christ. This is to magnify Him through life. As he was expecting to be martyred, he also magnified Him.

This is to magnify Christ through death. Thus, whether through life or death, Christ was magnified in Paul's imprisoned and chained body. This is the genuine experience of Christ.

In verse 19 Paul mentions the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. If we allow the bountiful supply of the Spirit to work in us, our daily living will be changed. We shall be burdened to magnify Christ always and with all boldness. Through our magnifying of Christ, others will see His greatness and His unlimitedness. To magnify Christ in such a way surely is to live Him.

At the time Paul wrote the book of Philippians, he was an elderly person. No doubt, the guards expected him to be exhausted by his imprisonment. But far from being exhausted, Paul was full of joy and rejoicing in the Lord. I am confident that he was shining forth Christ and expressing Him. Such an expression was a declaration of the unlimited greatness of Christ and a declaration that Christ is inexhaustible.

Our love is eventually exhausted, but Christ as love is inexhaustible. Likewise, our natural patience is limited, but Christ as our patience is without limit. We all have the capacity to be patient, but only to a certain extent. Then we become provoked and angry. For example, a brother

may exercise patience with his wife. Eventually, however, this patience reaches its limit, and he becomes angry with her. Although our natural patience is so limited, Christ as patience is inexhaustible and immeasurable.

Even though Paul must have been mistreated in prison, he could be happy and display to the guards the unlimited greatness of Christ. In particular, Paul displayed Christ's inexhaustible patience. Christ certainly was magnified in Paul's physical body. Day by day, Paul was happy in the Lord. His happiness did not diminish as time went by. In his happiness he could show forth the immeasurable Christ he experienced and enjoyed. By this way Paul expressed, exhibited, exalted, and extolled Christ. I do not believe that Paul was offended by the jailers or that he offended them. Rather, he was a living witness of Christ, testifying of His ability, power, patience, love, and wisdom, all without measure. The guards may have considered Paul to be strange or peculiar, viewing him as possessing something which they did not have. What they sensed in Paul was Christ magnified. While he was in prison, Paul expressed the greatness of Christ in an enlarged way. He magnified Christ with all boldness both through

life and through death. By magnifying Christ in this way, Paul could overcome any situation.

LIVING CHRIST

In [verse 21](#) Paul goes on to say, “For to me to live is Christ.” The little word “for” at the beginning of this verse is important. It indicates that what is to follow is an explanation of the preceding verse. Christ could be magnified in Paul’s body because Paul lived Christ. In order to magnify Christ, we must live Him. Although the matter of living Christ is of such tremendous importance, not many Christians have paid adequate attention to it. The word “for” in [verse 21](#) helps us to see that Paul could magnify Christ because to him to live was Christ. In Paul’s chained body Christ was exalted, extolled, praised, and appreciated because Paul lived Christ.

If we would live Christ, we must take Him as our person and be one person with Him. He and we must be one in a practical way. In [Galatians 2:20](#) Paul declared, “Christ lives in me.” For Paul, this was not a mere doctrine; it was a fact. It should also be real to us that Christ lives in us. It is said that some Christians do not believe that Christ actually lives in them. Neither do they believe that we can abide in Christ and have Him

abide in us. But the Bible tells us definitely that Christ is in us and lives in us. Furthermore, we should abide in Him and allow Him to abide in us.

Paul could say not only that Christ lived in him, but also that to him to live was Christ. On the one hand, Christ lived in Paul; on the other hand, Paul lived Christ. Inwardly Christ was Paul's life, and outwardly Christ was Paul's living. Paul and Christ thus had one life and one living. Christ's life was Paul's life, and Paul's living was Christ's living. The two, Christ and Paul, lived as one. [First Corinthians 6:17](#) refers to such a living. In this verse Paul says that we are one spirit with the Lord. The organic union that has taken place between us and Christ causes us to be so close and intimate with Him that we are even one spirit with Him.

To live Christ is not merely to have a holy life or to live holiness. To live Christ is to live a person. We admit that the expression "live Christ" is new. We use this term deliberately. In the past we have spoken of living out Christ. Although this expression is not incorrect, to add the word "out" may detract from the proper meaning. We should simply live Christ. We should live a life which is Christ Himself.

From my experience I can testify that the most difficult thing in our Christian life is to practice to live Christ. We may be “holy,” “spiritual,” and “victorious” without living Christ. Even though we may be “holy,” “spiritual,” and “victorious,” we are still the ones living our natural life. We are not living Christ.

By nature, I am a quick person. When my sister heard that I had turned to the Lord, she was happy and wanted to help me. In particular, she tried to help me with my natural quickness. She would not rebuke me or correct me. Instead, she would tell me about others who were slow in their speech and behavior. Realizing what she was trying to do, I told the Lord that I regretted my quickness and asked Him to enable me to slow down. But my behavior was like that of a monkey imitating a human being. Although I could deliberately be slow for a few days, eventually I reverted to my natural quickness. Because I had been born a quick person, I just could not make myself slow down. At the time my sister tried to help me, she was teaching me to be slow. But she did not help me to live Christ. Now, more than fifty years later, I can be slow and patient. I can also control my temper. In a sense, I can be holy, spiritual, and victorious. But I have come

to see that it is possible to do all this without living Christ.

In order to live Christ we must take Him as our person and as our life. Although I have made progress in this matter, I admit that still my practice is not very successful. Almost every morning I pray, “Lord, I thank You for another day to practice living You. Lord, in myself, I cannot do this. I ask You to remind me to live You and grant me the grace I need for this.” I have found, however, that soon after praying to the Lord in this way, I may go back to living myself instead of living Christ. Everything about my living may be good, and yet I may not live Christ. I do not yet have the assurance to testify with Paul, “To me to live is Christ.”

In the Christian life it is easy to follow certain practices. For example, we may realize that we are talkative and may adopt the practice of limiting our speech. However, we may succeed in restricting our talkativeness and yet fail to live Christ. It is one thing to follow a certain practice; it is another thing to live Christ. God does not care for how holy, spiritual, or victorious we are in ourselves. Actually, to live in this way by self-effort is to strive to keep the law. What counts in the eyes of God is Christ and the living of

Christ. Concerning the matter of living Christ, the situation of today's Christians is far from God's goal. This is the reason we are fighting and struggling to enter into the genuine living of Christ in a practical way. God wants His people to live Christ. We should not care for holiness, spirituality, or victory as things in themselves, and we should not care for our natural virtues or attributes. Instead, we should focus our whole attention on living Christ and care only to live Christ that He might be magnified in us.

In the book of Philippians Paul encourages us to think the one thing (2:2). This one thing is to live Christ. We should care only to live Christ and magnify Him. Instead of pursuing holiness, spirituality, or victory, we should seek to live Christ and magnify Him always with all boldness, whether through life or through death. God's desire today is that we live Christ.

Do not allow anything to distract you from the direct, personal experience of Christ. Yes, we need to understand the background of Philippians and realize what is the present religious situation. We also need to discern between the different preachings of Christ. But none of this should distract us from Christ Himself. Today we need to focus our attention on the one thing—to live Christ.

HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH THE LAW AND CIRCUMCISION

Paul's life was to live Christ. To him, to live was Christ, not the law or circumcision. He would not live the law but would live Christ, not be found in the law but be found in Christ (3:9). Christ was not only his life within, but also his living without. He lived Christ because Christ lived in him. He was one with Christ both in life and in living. He and Christ had one life and one living. They lived together as one person. Christ lived within him as his life, and he lived Christ without as His living. The normal experience of Christ is to live Him, and to live Him is to magnify Him always, regardless of the circumstances.

When Paul was in prison, he was living Christ. Therefore, he could be found not in the law, but in Christ. At any time, men, angels, and demons could find him in Christ. We also need to be found by others in Christ, not simply in our good behavior. Young people, your parents should find you in Christ. They should sense that there is something different about you. All of our relatives, friends, and colleagues should find us in Christ.

If we would be found in Christ, we must live Christ. Only when we live Christ shall we be found

in Him by others and by the angels and demons. However, if we are law-keepers, we shall be found in the law instead of in Christ. We are not here to express the law or magnify the law; our goal is to express Christ and magnify Him. We all need to pray, “Lord, have mercy on me and rescue me both from sinful things and from good things, even spiritual things, that replace You in my daily life. Lord, rescue me from everything back to Yourself. Also, I ask You to grant me the grace each day that I may truly live You and be found in You.” I can testify that this kind of prayer is effective. Let us all seek the one thing and pursue the one thing—to live Christ and magnify Him.

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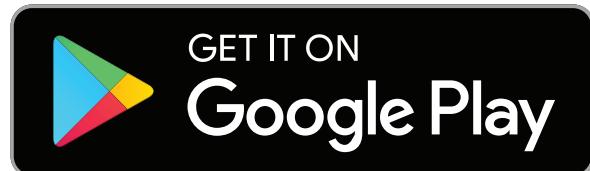
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