

## Lose-Win

*“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21.*

This is a well-known verse but it's not always well understood. By our actions at times we treat this verse as if it were painting the picture of a lose-win situation. In fact, this is often our attitude toward our own lives. We sacrifice everything to Christ (lose) but we gain everything in the end (win). We give up earthly pleasures (lose) but we gain an eternity in the presence of God (win). We forgo the pleasures of this world even though we want them (lose) but it will all be worth it in the end because of the unimaginable pleasure of heaven (win).

This is not what Paul is writing. Paul is writing something much bolder. Paul is not painting a lose-win situation. He's not slightly bummed that he'll never get to do the things he used to enjoy doing. Paul is painting a win-win situation. He's saying, *My life is already good because I live for Christ. And death, the thing people most fear, will give me even more than I have now.* Paul continues, “If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.”

Paul saw living a life for Christ as a winning situation. He saw it as a tremendous benefit and honor. He was happy to be a laborer in the service of Christ, serving the needs of other Christians. He saw his earthly labor as being fruitful and we should see our lives for Christ in the same way. To live a life for Christ is not a burden and we should never treat it as one. Christ didn't set us free so that we can grumble about cutting time out of our day off to attend services, or begrudge Him because we feel obligated to pray before a meal whether we want to or not. To live for Christ is not a loss. It's a gain. And when we die, we will not have gained a little bit over what we've given up on earth. We will gain even more than what we've already gained on earth. Because to live for Christ is already a win, and when we die, we will win all the more.

[DJR]