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Bible Study: Basic Christian Beliefs in Philippians

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss basic Christian beliefs from the book of Philippians in the Bible. We talk about the gospel, and what it means to partner for the gospel. We talk about loving God and loving other Christians. We talk about Jesus, and what virtues he demonstrates for us to imitate. We talk about how Christians focus on Heaven and eternal things, not the things in this world.

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Transcript

[Music] Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is Basic Christian Beliefs. I'm Wintery Knight.

And I'm Desert Rose. In this episode, we're going to be talking about basic Christian beliefs using the book of Philippians as a guide. Paul of Tarsus is the author of this letter.

It's four chapters long, and it's written to the Christians at Philippi, which is a city in Greece. The letter was written around 61 AD, while Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Okay, let's start with Philippians 1. He starts to talk right away about something called the gospel, and I thought it would be a good idea for you to define it for us before we get too far into any verses.

Okay, sure, absolutely. So first, God is one divine being who exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And everyone who has ever lived has rebelled against God at some point in their life, which deserves punishment.

Rebelling against God is actually the most serious moral crime. And the gospel is the good news that the Son voluntarily entered time and space as a human being and lived a life that was not in rebellion against God. So therefore, the Son's life, Jesus' life, did not deserve punishment.

Instead, he chose to take on the punishment that we deserve for our rebellion in our place. So this undeserved credit cancels the penalty for our rebellion against God. This credit is available for anyone who accepts Jesus' free gift and who commits to following Him.

Yeah, so that's good news because you're in a position where you're guilty of rebellion against God. You can't kind of dig your own way out of the hole. So you have this free gift from Jesus that you can accept and have Him as your Savior and then accept Him as your leader in gratitude for this atoning sacrifice that He's made on your behalf.

And you're reconciled with God who doesn't want to be reconciled with God. It's fantastic. Right.

All right, so I pick verses 3 to 8 from chapter 1, and I'm going to be reading from the New International Version translation. It's very easy to understand. So I'll start with verse 3. "I thank my God every time I remember you.

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you since I have you in my heart.

And whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus and that word partnership, other translations say fellowship, but the partnership is really good." What do you think about Him using that word? Yeah, I think it's a really significant word for this passage. So I think it's worth explaining what fellowship means, what this means, what Paul's talking about.

He's telling the Philippians that he's thankful that they are partnering with Him to defend

and confirm the gospel to people who don't know Jesus. And he calls that partnership, that partnering, fellowship. So I think that's really important.

Yeah. So when I studied this book Philippians, I decided to use a commentary on it by a guy named D.A. Carson. And a lot of people have heard of him.

He's an excellent theologian and Bible scholar. He writes amazing books and he's very connected to apologetics. So really, smart guy.

Yeah, I've been a big fan of his since early seminary days. Yeah, so good. Yeah, the criticism of a lot of Bible scholars is like, do they really know whether this is true from a scientific and historical point of view or are they really just writing lofty language? Well, this guy is totally connected to evidence and you can trust him to give you the thoughts that are rooted in reality.

So this book that he's written, that's a commentary on Philippians that I like, is called Basics for Believers. And he has written something about this fellowship or partnership that Paul's talking about in Philippians 1. So I'm going to quote D.A. Carson right now. Okay.

In the first century, the word commonly held commercial overtones. If John and Harry buy a boat and they start a fishing business, they have entered into a fellowship, a partnership. Intriguingly, even in the New Testament, the word is often tied to financial matters.

Thus, when the Macedonian Christians send money to help the poor Christians in Jerusalem, they are entering into fellowship with them. And that's from Romans 15, verse 26. The heart of true fellowship is self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision.

Both John and Harry put their savings into the fishing boat. Now they share a vision that will put the fledgling company on its feet. Christian fellowship, then, is self-sacrificing conformity to the gospel.

There may be overtones of warmth and intimacy, but the heart of the matter is this shared vision of what is of transcendent importance, a vision that calls forth our commitment. So when Paul gives thanks with joy because of the Philippians' partnership in the gospel, or fellowship in the gospel, he is thanking God that these brothers and sisters in Christ, from the moment of their conversion, from the first day until now, Paul writes, rolled up their sleeves and got involved in the advance of the gospel. They continued their witness in Philippi.

They persevered in their prayers for Paul. They sent money to support him in his ministry, all testifying to their shared vision of the importance and priority of the gospel. That is more than enough reason for thanking God.

Excellent. I love that quote. D.A. Carson is right on there.

And, you know, today so many Christians seem to view fellowship as playing games together, doing fun activities, maybe singing songs together, having discussion groups, sharing a meal, things like that. But Paul sees fellowship as people making plans together and then sacrificing of themselves to carry them out. The Philippians sacrificed their money.

Paul defends the gospel. Everybody prays. They're working together to accomplish kingdom purposes.

This is fellowship, as Paul is discussing it. Right. A lot of people like to read those novels, "The Lord of the Rings." And the first one is called "The Fellowship of the Ring." And it's because a bunch of people band together to carry the ring to Mordor and throw it into Mount Doom so they can destroy it.

And, you know, they're going to do battle with people. They're going to make financial decisions. They're going to work together.

It's that kind of vision that Paul has for gospel fellowship or gospel partnership. And this is kind of what I do with my friends as well. So I have a bunch of friends across different college campuses and they invite excellent speakers to come and speak at the campus.

And they do the work of organizing security and booking a room and bringing the speaker and booking the hotel. And then I send them some money to help with one or two of those small things. And they collect a bunch of money from other people who are also part of the fellowship or part of the partnership.

That's how we do it. Excellent. Yeah, I love that.

Notice also how Paul expresses his love for these partners in fellowship. In the New Testament, the word love is most often used to describe how Christians are supposed to treat other Christians. It does not mean anything like what our culture says love is.

Our culture says that love means things like accepting whatever immoral behaviors other non-Christians are doing, even celebrating what they're doing that is opposed to God that's in rebellion against God. Love is not affirming people in whatever they do and making them feel good in this moment. It's largely what you do and feel for the people who partner with you on gospel adventures as we see in this passage.

Yeah, and that's quite shocking. Yeah, exactly. And the New Testament also talks about what love looks like toward non-believers, but it is not ever affirming people in their sin.

Yeah, in fact, quite the opposite. I think it's really interesting that there is this kind of big difference between how people understand Christianity. And you kind of think we did a

whole series on what church is like and so on.

A lot of times you walk in there and it's very passive. You walk in, you take a seat, someone else is prepared to sermon, they lay it out. And the goal of the sermon is often to make you feel comfortable.

The praise and worship is, again, to give you feelings. And then you walk out of there and there's nothing for you to do. And there's no team that you're partnering with.

Exactly. Yeah, you're just expected to come back the next Sunday and listen passively again and feel things. Right.

And even for us, we're doing this podcast and we write scripts. We edit scripts. We sometimes even rehearse a bit.

We think about books to read and we have dates and deadlines and we bought microphones. We bought computers. We put effort into it.

And the purpose of doing that is so that we can communicate truths about Christianity to the people who listen. It's kind of a different view of what Christianity is about and what is the cause for these feelings of love that people sometimes want to have. Sometimes people want to do something spiritual and they go, I'm going to go on a short term missions trip.

And they're thinking if I travel somewhere and I have photographs taken and I do something like that, it's going to give me a feeling of spirituality. But you can have spirituality at home just by finding some people who are willing to do gospel enterprises with you and put some effort into it. I think the key is everybody has to put some effort into it and it has to be a joint effort.

Yeah. And we see in this passage and really throughout the New Testament that as you kind of alluded to, there is work for us to do that's an adventure that's exciting, that's even dangerous. And whereas I'm thinking about church services where people are given prescriptions for how the week should look in between Sundays and it's more frequently, don't do this.

Don't hurt people's feelings. Don't be too angry. Don't sleep with anyone you're not married to.

Don't, you know, but there's positive work for us to do as well. That's really fun and exciting. Right.

Okay. So let's move on to verses nine through eleven. We talked about this and in one of our previous favorite Bible passages, podcasts, but I wanted to give you a chance to comment on it.

I'll go ahead and read the verses starting with nine. Paul's writing and he says, and this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best and maybe pure and blameless for the day of Christ. Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

So his goal is that their love may abound, grow, you know, be seen everywhere and achieve everything. He wants our love to increase and he says it's going to increase in knowledge and depth of insight. And reading the day Carson commentary, I won't quote it here, but he basically says he thinks that by gaining knowledge and insight and discernment that they will gain the ability to love and the willingness to love.

Paul wants his team of fellowship partners to be more loving. He thinks that the more they learn about God, the more they'll love each other. That's why it's important for Christians to read about Jesus, to read the gospels and to read commentaries by scholars and other things like that.

Because every time you read about this, you learn kind of what your boss is like. And then you have the capability of saying this is what Jesus would do. That's not free.

It doesn't come from your feelings. It comes from knowledge and depth of insight, which is not what many people think. Right.

Yeah, absolutely. And it's not what our culture says it is either. Following Jesus isn't just the same as following your heart or doing whatever you feel like and then attributing it to God.

I actually had a really incredible first year as a Christian decades ago. When I first became a Christian, I started reading the New Testament right away and I started with Matthew chapter one. And as I was reading through the Bible for the first time, I was also living and working at a group home for troubled teenagers called Dulos Ministries in Colorado.

Dulos is the Greek word for servant. We were ministering to troubled teenagers as we were being mentored and disciplined by more mature older Christian pastors and scholars, seminary professors and godly women of maturity and depth. So as I was reading through the Bible and reading about the life of Jesus and reading excellent books like, for example, the normal Christian life that had a big impact on me, I was also watching and seeing the lives of others around me who were loving one another exceptionally well.

And, you know, I don't know if you've heard pastors say or Christians say, you know, your life may be the only book or Bible that non-Christians ever read. And so how we treat others and one another in particular within the body of Christ really matters. Well, this was this was an experience in which I was reading the Bible.

I was reading excellent books and I was in a sense kind of reading the books of the lives of others around me and learning from the way they would come to one another and ask for forgiveness after they had been really offensive, genuinely offensive or messed up or been selfish because we had to be really unselfish and sacrifice everything about our own comfort and personal desires in order to work as a team to look after these troubled teenagers. And so absolutely, you know, as we are learning through reading and through surrounding ourselves with excellent Christians, our love grows in knowledge and depth of insight. That was an enormously momentous time in my life of growth.

So how about you? Have you got anything in this chapter that stood out to you? Yes. So in verses 12 through 14, Paul says that he endures the suffering he's experienced by thinking about the benefit that God gets out of it. So I'll read verses 12 through 14.

Paul writes, Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

And then if we look at verses 29 through 30, Paul writes, For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had and now hear that I still have. So what really stood out to me from this chapter and from these two passages in particular is that Christians should not expect their gospel adventures to be free of troubles. Instead, we should be expecting troubles and enduring those troubles, rejoicing in the good service that we're giving to God.

We can learn from Jesus that it's okay and even expected to suffer shame for our allegiance to God. So if we're being faithful to God and suffering as a result, then we are being like Jesus and Christians ought to want to be like Jesus. I think that passage is very significant also because it's just so countercultural.

Yeah, it's very much countercultural. We expect that Christianity should be something that makes us feel good or makes us feel or makes us be more accepted by the people around us. And yet if you look at the life of Jesus, He's experiencing suffering for obedience to the Father.

And if you happen to do the same thing, you're close to Him. You're imitating Him following in His footsteps. And I don't think if you read the New Testament, you would immediately recognize that and you'd say, "Oh, wow, I'm experiencing something similar to what Christ experienced." And then His disciples after Him.

Right. So you're kind of doing the real thing, experiencing the normal Christian life. And it was really neat what you said in the 12 to 14 verses because I don't think most people

have that ability to say, "This is a loss for me, but it's a gain for my boss.

And therefore, I'll take the loss for the sake of my boss getting something out of it." I don't know if people admit that that's a possibility. That's a possibility. If you really believe, if you're a church-going Christian and your view of Christianity is that God is your cosmic butler and His job is to make you happy and something makes you unhappy, then somehow God's failed because His job was to make you happy.

But if God's job was to be glorified, say, in your patient endurance of suffering, right, or in your bold stand for natural marriage, you know, you defend Jesus's teaching about marriage being for one man and one woman, you get set back for that. And you say, "This is a loss for me, but it's a gain for God," because what Jesus thinks about marriage was defended. You know, do people have a category for that? And the New Testament makes it really clear that it should be a category, that it is possible for you to take a hit and lose happiness and lose acceptance and that God would benefit.

Right, exactly. And that loss of happiness is only temporary. I mean, if we have an eternal perspective of things, it's not an ultimate loss of happiness.

But I think we'll talk about that later in the passage. At least I will. Yeah, this is all chapter one.

So we're not even done with it yet. I hope we have enough time to cover everything we need to cover. But I did have a quote from D.A. Carson that I think is important because sometimes the core Christian, you know, this is what the podcast is about, these core Christian beliefs.

So D.A. Carson says this. He goes, this is still from basics for believers. Recall what Jesus tells his disciples in Mark eight.

And the quote from Mark eight is, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." That's Mark chapter eight of verse thirty four. So Carson goes on to say this about that passage. He goes, "For Jesus's disciples to take up their cross, even to take up their cross daily," which is from Luke nine, verse twenty three.

"Is to say in spectacularly metaphorical terms that they are to come to the end of themselves, no matter how costly that death in order to follow Jesus. This lies at the heart of all Christian discipleship. Every time and every place that we refuse to acknowledge this is so we sin against Christ and need to confess the sin and return to basics." So the main thing is, is that the expectation of a normal Christian life is the self-denial in order to follow Jesus.

So you say, I'm going to do what Jesus does in the New Testament and that's going to cost me, you know, it's going to cost my I'm going to feel shame. I'm going to lose

professional advancement. I'm going to lose a promotion.

I'm going to, you know, this is an experience I had is, you know, you're going to go to church and you're going to like a Christian girl and you're going to say, I believe in a literal hell because Jesus talks about it. And she's going to say goodbye. And you're gone.

And I'm going to be experiencing a recession and I'm going to sign a check to a good Christian charity, you know, and take the hit, you know, of that sense of anxiety that you have about your future. So every time you make a decision to put what Jesus wants ahead of what you want, you are acting consistently as a follower of Jesus. That's authentic Christianity.

If what you're doing as a Christian always feels good to you and it makes everyone like you, that's a bad sign. That's not authentic Christianity. I've talked about people like this before, but I work with Christians who were raised in non-Christians now, people who were raised in Christian homes and went to Christian schools.

And they did everything correctly as Christians. They showed up in church. They apparently prayed.

They showed up in Bible study. And at every step along the way, they were praised by their parents and their friends and the youth group and the pastor. And Christianity never caused them to experience shame or suffering or a cost.

You know, they were just doing this for social reasons. And later on in life, those people fell away often when they hit high school, late high school and university because what they were really doing when they were acting like Christians was they were doing what was expected of them, what worked for them, what made them feel good, what made them look good. And that was what they understood Christianity to be.

They never experienced it as shame and suffering, which is right there in the New Testament, right? It's not popular, nor does it feel good to take up your cross and follow Jesus. And yet people can exist in a kind of Christian bubble where this works for them and they never have to do anything that costs them time, money, popularity, good feelings in order to achieve anything or even imitate Jesus. No partnering for the gospel, no obedience to the Father, nothing that's going to cost them.

Yeah, such an important point. So, yeah, why don't we move on to chapter two? Okay. So verses five through eight are really important as well because they show how Jesus modeled humility through his incarnation.

So I'll go ahead and read those. It says, in your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. Rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man.

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Right. And that goes back to what you were saying about the gospel.

Everybody has an experience of saying, I want my autonomy. You know, I don't want to know whether God is really there. I want to play video games today.

I don't want to read a book on God's existence or the resurrection. You know, we're trying to turn away from God, everyone, in order to have space for us to decide what is best for us without giving any respect or obedience. Or relationship to him.

We don't want a relationship with him. And so this Philippians 2 is incredible because it's saying God the Son, starting off, you know, exalted, divine, you know, eternal, and then taking on this role as a human being in order to experience suffering and death in order to rescue all the people who have rebelled against God the Father. If you actually look a little bit further along in that same chapter, it talks more about this humility where Timothy models the same humility again by going to Philippi to encourage the Christians who are there.

So he's looking after the needs of other Christians rather than his own needs. Here's what Paul says. And this is in verse 19.

"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him who will show genuine concern for your welfare, for everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ." So again, if you look at that first part that you read from Philippians 2, Jesus is saying I'm going to be concerned about other people's welfare and look out for their interests. And Timothy is like this, and we should be like this too.

So if you just look around at the people around you looking out for the interests of others, they're kind of exhibiting humility in the sense that they are putting themselves second. Did you have any more from this chapter? Well, in verses 25 through 30, Paul talks about Epaphroditus and praises him. And Epaphroditus is another really great example who I admire.

So starting in verse 25, Paul writes, "But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed, he was ill and almost died.

But God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore, I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again, you may be glad, and I may have less anxiety. So then, welcome him in the Lord

with great joy and honor people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ.

He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me." What's impressive to Paul about Epaphroditus is not the types of things that our culture values. It's not his tallness or his handsomeness or his fame or his awesome new stylish clothes or his ability to attract a crowd and be charismatic and humorous and attractive. What Paul respects is that Epaphroditus suffered for the gospel and risked his life for the gospel.

Paul likes people who sacrifice their own interests to defend the gospel. I really think that Christians should choose role models who pay a price for following Jesus. If we're not reading and learning about others who are sacrificing, then I think we're less likely to be equipped to endure and stick with Christ when suffering comes our way.

And I say "when" because it's guaranteed to us as Christians. Yeah, so if you go into a church and somebody stands up there and delivers a speech that produces a whole ton of feelings in you, that person, maybe we shouldn't think that much of them for their ability to gather a crowd and say what people want to hear. But instead what we should do is we should look for someone who is, you know, I just think of someone like William Dempski, you know, who goes and does a career in academia and then takes a controversial stand defending design in nature and in biology.

And his career takes this huge hit. He definitely gets a lot of opposition to what he's saying from Darwinians and naturalists in the educational establishment. So this guy is a genius and he does genius level work, but he has to, instead of being celebrated like he should be for his excellence.

Because people don't want to hear what he has to say, they don't agree with his conclusions, he faces this discrimination. So he incurs costs for being a Christian rather than simply saying what people want to hear so that it's like, you know, I'll name names, you know, someone like Joel Osteen, you know, who kind of says what people want to hear. And he gets a lot of people who are looking for benefits to their own lives.

But, you know, maybe that person, he has a nice haircut. I don't really know what he looks like. But a lot of people like him and I know they're not liking his peer reviewed research.

Right. So because he doesn't have any. So to me, someone like a Bill Demsky, you know, is probably more who we should be looking at somebody who sacrifices their self interest in order to defend a core claim of Christianity, namely the existence of God and his.

I know that's not his conclusion he argues for, but it is consistent with that. But his work is for recognizing design and nature, which is useful to Christians. And that should be celebrated.

But it isn't. I think that makes him more authentic as a Christian. Let's move on to chapter three.

So looking in verses eight and nine, I think there's something useful. I mean, the whole book is useful. But we'll look at verses eight.

Everybody read the book. It says, what is more, this is Paul talking, what is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

So again, he he's not trying to fix his own rebellion. He's not saying, hey, I was speeding a couple of years ago and got a ticket. But look, I've been driving under the speed limit since then.

Therefore, I should be okay. He's saying, forget that. I know somebody who has never broken the moral law and I want his performance and his obedience to count for me since the offer is being made to me.

Absolutely. I think today we have a crisis where people think, well, if there is a God, I'm going to find my justification for being good by talking to the people who are in my crowd. I serve on the faculty of women's studies or whatever at the university.

And I'm just going to ask the people in my department if I'm a good person for supporting abortion rights, you know, or I'm in the department of gender studies or whatever. And I support gay rights. And I'm just going to ask my six year olds when they think and I'm going to ask for their approval.

And if they give it to me, that's confirmation. That's what I need. That should be really impressive to God.

You know, I'm going to get my crowd to tell me that I'm good. And since they're telling me I'm good, God should be really convinced that I'm a good person, you know, and I should be getting the same bodily resurrection to eternal life that Christians are getting. But Paul is saying, no, nothing that you do apart from God, apart from the forgiveness of Christ, apart from apart from the imputed righteousness of Christ, where the righteousness that Christ exhibits in his sinless life, no rebellion life is imputed to you.

That's a term from the insurance industry. This is going to count for you in the trial. OK, if you don't have that righteousness of Christ counting for you and you're saying, well, I've done this and I've done this and I've done that and my friends all agree this is deeply significant.

So God, you ought to agree. No, you're out of luck. It doesn't work like that.

Yeah, exactly. That's not the standard. And I also think of a lot of the people I was around up through college age who would look at someone who had a higher title, you know, a more impressive title in the workplace and earned more money and had a bigger house and nicer car or more popularity and think, yeah, that is where it's at.

That is what makes a person impressive and would downplay the impressiveness of someone who was quietly and humbly ministering to their neighbors, educating their children and not having a really high profile, but doing really important and significant work. They would look at that and say, well, what's their title? Well, how much do they earn? Well, that's not impressive. When are they going to start doing something with their life? And that's just so contrary to the gospel.

Yeah, definitely. What's interesting to me is I just finished that biography of Walter Bradley and he was at the top of his, you know, just at the top of his profession in mechanical engineering and all of his passion was in his Christian ministry and discipleship. And I'm sure if you said to him, you know, what is the meaning of all of your professional success with respect to your vertical commitment? He'd say, oh, it's garbage.

What matters to me is what I did for the gospel. And that's what I'm known for. And that's what I want to be known for.

He's excellent. You know what he does. But yeah, so great.

So great. I can't wait to read that book. Yeah.

Yeah. Why don't we go on to verses 20 and 21? I love these verses. These are very close to my heart because I am always thinking about heaven and the new earth and what it will be like.

You know, the glorious future with God that we as Christians have been promised really drives everything that I do and every sacrifice I make, everything I do that's good and excellent and praiseworthy is driven by eternity. So let me read 20 and 21. But our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

That's just awesome. I love it. Absolutely love it.

And the, you know, the citizenship in heaven. I love that as well. I had lived in 10 different states by the time I was 22 years old.

And when people would ask me where I'm from, even now when people ask where I'm

from, I don't really know the answer to that because I've lived in so many places beyond four reasons, mostly beyond my control. My citizenship is in heaven and that's an encouragement as well. So the kind of things that we've been talking about, like gospel partnering and looking after other Christians require us to disregard in a lot of ways what's best for us in this life right now and what feels best.

It's a lot easier to partner for the gospel, to look after others, to love them well and self-sacrificially if we take the eternal perspective provided by Paul here in Philippians and see our sacrifices as part of our ongoing relationship with Jesus. Do you see that today that there's kind of a problem with people accepting that being in a relationship with someone else means that there are going to be times where your own interests have to be sacrificed? Oh, absolutely. Yeah, I think that's part of the problem.

It's like if I have a relationship, an earthly relationship with someone else, then it always has to work for me. You know, it always has to be, it always has to make me feel good. It always has to make me be more socially acceptable.

And if that other person isn't measuring up, then they have to go. Exactly. It's so selfish and it's not good for anyone, for either of the people in that relationship.

Certainly not good for the children. If there are children involved, it's not good for those around us in the culture as that comes to be a commonly accepted decision when hardship comes about. When you're looking for a relationship with God in Christ, you understand that you are seeking a relationship with the King and that if you have to sacrifice your own self-interest and pay some time and money in order to look after His purposes, you know, to work on the things that are important to Him, you want to do it because you want to have a relationship with the King.

And so experiencing what the King has experienced, identifying with what the King does, the King did this. So I'm going to do it in a smaller level, you know? Right. The King cares about this.

So I'm going to care about what the King cares about at a smaller level. Well, is that good for you? No, it's terrible for me, but I'm with the King, you understand? And what the King wants, what the King likes, you know, the causes of the King, that's my business. Exactly.

Yep. That's what it means to be a Christian. Okay.

So do you have any recommended resources for beginning Christians? Christians looking for a refresher on core Christian beliefs, values, practices? Absolutely. Yeah. So possibly my favorite theologian is Wayne Grudem.

Yeah, me too. He has written a book called Christian Beliefs, 20 Basics Every Christian Should Know. That's a nice introductory resource.

He's, I would recommend anything and everything he's written though. One of my favorite books, and I think the book I've read more times than any other single book is Grudem's Systematic Theology, which is excellent. But that's thousands of pages.

Yes. This one, the one you recommend is much shorter. Yes, much shorter, yes.

I believe it comes in, it comes in audio. So for people who like audiobooks. I also would recommend Essential Truths of the Christian Faith by R.C. Sproul.

He's phenomenal. And that is a very helpful intro book. And then you had mentioned Basics for Believers by D.A. Carson.

Yeah, you can't really go wrong with D.A. Carson either. And that book is very helpful as well. Yeah, I think all three of these guys are evidential, reality based.

You know, they're very practical. So I like all three as well. I think that's a good place for us to end the episode.

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