

The Marks of a Bold Witness

"WE > Me" Series- Part 03

Share/Connect time: What is something that you always keep organized and why?

Been there and done that:

I read the story once of a professing Christian who got a job in a lumber camp that had the reputation of being very ungodly. A friend, hearing that the man had been hired, said to him, *"If those lumberjacks ever find out you're a Christian, you're going to be in for a hard time!"* The man responded, *"I know, but I need the job!"* The next morning he left for camp. A year later, he came home for a visit. While in town, he met his friend who asked, *"Well, how did it go? Did they give you a hard time for being a Christian?"* *"Oh no, not at all,"* the man replied. *"They didn't give me a bit of trouble—they never even found out!"* ("Our Daily Bread," 11/83.)

Ouch! Sadly, I can identify with that guy. There have been times when my "reflection" of Christ has been very dim. Can you relate a time when you felt prompted by the Spirit to speak about Christ or share your story and yet failed to follow through?

What are some of the challenges we face today that discourage us from speaking to others about the things of God?

Today, let's look at the testimony of a man who was jailed because of his Christian witness and who chose to continue on with his "offense".

Book: Philippians 1:10-18

Php 1:10 For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return.

Php 1:11 May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

Php 1:12 And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News.

Php 1:13 For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ.

Php 1:14 And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear.

Php 1:15 It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives.

Php 1:16 They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News.

Php 1:17 Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me.

Php 1:18 But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice.

Let's get into the Word:

In verse 10, Paul states that in this letter he wants Christians to understand what really matters...in other words, "This is the bottom line"! So looking only at the verses of our study, what really matters? What is the bottom line?

Read verse 12 again. Paraphrase this verse in your own words. Imagine for a moment the following situations and an example of each that occurred in your life last week. How does the truth of verse 12 speak to or define your personal situation?

- A very frustrating situation or circumstance
- A time of joy and laughter
- A time when someone requested assistance or help
- An occurrence when you experienced hostility or opposition

In a recent Google search on the subject of sharing our Christian faith, the following common denominators were found about the characteristics or marks of those who boldly share their faith. Please look at each one and look for evidence of this characteristic in Philippians 1:10-18. Then discuss a step that every Christian can take to ensure we meet the mark.

The Mark	Philippian 1:10-18 Evidence	Purposed Action Steps
A Mature Witness Shares the Gospel in Every Circumstance		
A Mature Witness Encourages Others to Share Their Faith		
A Mature Witness Should Expect Attack and Respond to It in a Godly Manner		
A Mature Witness Has the Right Motives		
A Mature Witness Is Gospel-Centered		

Application Question: What are some common things that take away your joy or give you joy? What does that say about what your life is centered on?

Application Question: What are possible wrong motives one might have in sharing the gospel or serving in ministry?

Application Question: In what ways is God calling you to love others in order to be a better witness?