

Fact Sheet for “A Long View of Life”  
**Philippians 1:18c-28**

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06/16/2015

Last week: *Looking at circumstances from God’s perspective*

This week: *Looking at life from a long perspective*

Having the right perspective will temper what you say and do. But what is a healthy perspective? There was a phrase I heard when I was in college... the tyranny of the urgent.

We have a tendency to view life from the perspective of what is right in front of us. What do you need to do this moment? What is your schedule today? What’s on your agenda this week? How we think of the distant future typically depends on our age. A long view of life on the other hand takes some thought.

*Only one life, twill soon be past.  
Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

Here’s the challenge. Can you pay attention to what is right in front of you, and the future from the perspective of your own age, and still keep in mind a long view of life? The apostle Paul achieved this balance. Picking-up from the previous context he writes...

<sup>18c</sup> Yes, and I will rejoice, <sup>19</sup> ¶ for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, <sup>20</sup> as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

I know we are talking about perspective, but I want to take a detour for a moment. Two weeks ago I spoke on prayer. I want to go back and revisit those thoughts. Look closer at what Paul says about prayer in verse 19.

<sup>19</sup> for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance,

How important is prayer? How effective is prayer? How does the sovereignty of God figure into this? Prayer is a conversation with the one true God. Our prayers have no force of their own. It is God who has chosen to work through our prayers. Remember, they do not void God’s sovereignty. *There is no name it and claim it.* And we have been commanded to pray.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Philippians 4:6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Doesn't God know what we need? Doesn't He know our requests will be before we speak them? Why do we need to pray? Take a moment to read and thoughtfully consider 2 Chronicles 7:14 ("If") and 2 Corinthians 1:11 ("You also must help us by prayer").

We pray because this is the clear instruction from God's Word, and He has chosen to work sovereignly through our prayers. Paul, a staunch defender of God's sovereignty in salvation writes...

**ESV Romans 10:1** ¶ Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

There is a clear tension here between God's sovereignty in salvation and Paul's prayer for his people. This is what I know.

1. God's sovereignty always wins out.
2. We don't know God's sovereign choice for those we meet.
3. Paul's desire was to present Christ to everyone.
4. This should be our desire and prayer also.

But take another look at these verses. They also tell of Paul's near-term and long-term perspective.

**<sup>18c</sup> Yes, and I will rejoice, <sup>19</sup> ¶ for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, <sup>20</sup> as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.**

Now, Paul continues with the long-term perspective.

**<sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

What a great verse to memorize. This verse clearly speaks of both Paul's mid-term and long-term perspective.

**<sup>22</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.**

**<sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. <sup>24</sup> But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.**

Similar: 2 Corinthians 5:6-9

**<sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup> so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.**

*Notice that although Paul was in prison at that time he would later be released.*

Keeping a firm grasp on a long-term perspective of life will tend to keep your short-term and mid-term perspectives in mind, and this will help you plan your short-term and mid-term choices.