



Week 6, Lesson 2: Changing Your Perspective

Paul was on the road to Damascus when he had an encounter with Christ (Acts 9). Nobody else saw the Lord, but Paul fell down and was blinded by the light. The words he heard Christ speak to him changed him from the inside out and rerouted the course of his life. No one else heard the Lord speak. But no one could talk Paul out of what he heard.

He *knew*. And he was forever changed. The Lord struck him blind so he could really see. He threw him down so he could lift him up.

Have you ever experienced a time when you sensed the Lord speak but no one else did? These divine whispers or sovereign shouts may be silent, but they produce a confident inner knowing. They can't be explained, nor can they be denied. When the Lord speaks, you receive an inner perception that gives you a glimpse of wisdom or insight into your future. You have the capacity to see things from far away, from the vantage point of your watchtower.

My sheep hear my voice (John 10:27).

Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. (John 8:47).

How do these verses encourage you with your present situation?

The strength and stamina Paul received from his encounter with Christ made him unwavering. It changed his perspective. He no longer saw his circumstances through a natural realm. He was able to see much further than the now.

Seeing things in the now will keep you stuck. Plastered to the present. But God wants to move you forward.

When chaos and crisis prevailed, Paul was not shaken. When he was shipwrecked, whiplashed, beaten and bruised, Paul did not move. His situations no longer ruled him. In Philippians he wrote that whether he was living in plenty or lack, whether well fed or hungry, he learned the secret of being content. And it wasn't just poetic license. His life proved it. He wrote several books of the Bible while in prison.

Read [Philippians 4:11-13](#). What do you think was Paul's secret?

He was content because he could see the promise on the other side of his hardship. How else could anyone pen words like he wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:10. *That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Read how Paul writes about his prison sentence in Philippians 1:9-14;19 below.

Vs 9-14 “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 may be 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. 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.

Vs 19...for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.”

Paul was in prison when he wrote these words. A place reserved for criminals, bound in chains in a musty dungeon. And yet, because he was able to see his situation through the lens of faith, he had a different perspective.

How does he view his situation in verse 19?

In verse 16, Paul writes, “I have been put here for the defense of the gospel.” Paul recognized the kingdom purpose of his imprisonment. Apparently, even in bondage, Paul felt God's presence. He kept his focus on Him. Proof that **a guard post vision supersedes chains. Perspective prevails prison bars.**

He didn't have to resist his chains because He recognized his confinement was a kingdom calling. **The prison was his pulpit. It may have looked like he was enslaved, but he was yoked together with Christ. His bondage was a bullhorn that spread the gospel faster than a Trump Twitter tweet. Prison broadcasted the gospel** and now even more people were listening to the message of salvation.

What do you think would have happened if Paul thought the enemy had devised the plan to put him in chains?

Instead, he chose to align his vision through the lens of faith. In verse 20, Paul continues: *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

God wants you to **eagerly expect** that you will in no way be ashamed! Not all of your situations are devised by the enemy. Sometimes your troubles serve a divine strategy, not only for the good of others, but also to transform you into the image of Christ. So

that His peace passes all understanding. So that you can do all things through His strength. So you can walk through fire and not be burned. So that you are more than a conqueror. But in order to experience this kind of victory, you have to go *through* the battle.

What battles in your own life have actually turned out for your good?

What battles are you still in the middle of? How can you partner with God to be victorious?

I hope Paul's example encourages you to believe that God will cause all things to work together for your good. Now it's your turn. Ask the Lord for His perspective about your situation. Then fill in the blanks in the passage below, personalizing it as if God were speaking to you today. Circle the words and phrases that bring you the most confidence.

And this is my prayer for you, _____, that your love may abound
(your name)

more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be 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. Now I want you to know, _____, that what is happening to you will
(your name)

actually serve to _____.
(What good does He intend to create out of your situation?)

As a result, it will become clear to _____ that your
(who will benefit from your victory?)

_____ will produce _____.
(trial, suffering or hardship) (what type of outcome for others?)

And because of _____
(what you've endured)

most of _____ have become confident in the Lord
(those who will benefit from your deliverance)

and dare all the more to _____. For I want you to know
(overcome in what area)

that through the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to you WILL turn out for your deliverance.”