

# ISSUES!

## QUITTING

### Memory Verse: Philippians 3:14

*I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

### Lesson:

Read: Philippians 3:10-14 & 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

#### 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

<sup>16</sup>Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup>So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

#### Philippians 3:10-14

<sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. <sup>13</sup>Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- Have you ever known anyone who gave up on life, who just wanted to quit?

Let people share stories to get the conversation started. Sometimes hopelessness leads to giving up. Sometimes the stress of life can be more than one can take. If we have no hope for the future it is easy to give up.

- What keeps the believer from quitting?

We don't give up but instead, keeping our eyes on Jesus, we press on toward the goal. Hebrews 12:1-3 says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. <sup>2</sup>Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the

author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

- How could understanding and claiming the truth in these scriptures be the answer to someone who wants to give up?

If I really believe that God is for me and He stands with me and hold me up in trial, that He has a plan and a purpose for me then I will not give up. Jeremiah 29:11 says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

- What do you think Paul means, “I want to know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death”?

Ask people to share. I am reminded that when we are in the darkest of times, in the most desperate situations when no person can help, we must lean on God alone and at those points the peace the overwhelms us (Phil 4:5-7) and He gives us a new understanding of knowing Christ , His power, His fellowship, and His victory even in death. Paul understood, as we must, that in the midst of suffering can come the deepening of our relationship with God.

- What does it mean to the follower of Jesus to desire to know Christ, his power, his fellowship, and to become like him?

It means I am willing to give up everything for the gratitude that comes in knowing Christ in a deeper way. He becomes everything to me.

- How would knowing Christ, his power and his fellowship help you endure suffering?

**Let me share a story with you.** In 2007, 23 South Korean missionaries were captured by the Taliban in Afghanistan and held hostage. (You can read the news story below). But I want to share with you what you won't read.

One of the women somehow got a Bible through to the place they were being kept before they were sent off to different cells (mostly small holes in the ground). They prayed together and tore the Bible into separate pieces so that each would have the Word of God as their comfort as they endured as prisoners alone and awaited what they thought could be their death sentence. They committed their lives totally to Christ and His Fellowship as their comfort and truth. As it turned out, only two were killed and the rest eventually released and returned to South Korea.

But what is amazing is that now that they have returned, they on occasion will express a desire to return to that place, not because of prison, not because of the calling, but rather because in those dark times when it would have been easiest to give up, they experienced the closeness of knowing Christ. They experienced the power of His resurrection to

overcome fear. They experience fellowship with Jesus in a way that brought so much peace that they now long for that again.

This should be a lesson to all of us that rather than choosing to give up and quit, we should press on and draw near to God.

**Hebrews 10:22-23** <sup>22</sup>let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.



Korean hostages photo taken before boarding the plane to Afghanistan

The **2007 South Korean hostage crisis in Afghanistan** began on July 19, 2007, when 23 [South Korean missionaries](#) were captured and held [hostage](#) by members of the [Taliban](#) while passing through [Ghazni Province](#) of [Afghanistan](#). Two male hostages were executed before the deal was reached between the Taliban and the South Korean government. The group, composed of sixteen women and seven men, was captured while traveling from [Kandahar](#) to [Kabul](#) by bus on a mission sponsored by the Saemmul [Presbyterian Church](#).<sup>[1]</sup> The crisis began when two local men, who the driver had allowed to board, started shooting to bring the bus to a halt. Over the next month, the hostages were kept in cellars and farmhouses and regularly moved in groups of three to four.<sup>[2]</sup>

Of the 23 hostages captured, two men, Bae Hyeong-gyu, a 42-year-old South Korean [pastor](#) of Saemmul Church, and Shim Seong-min, a 29-year-old South Korean man, were executed on July 25 and July 30, respectively. Later, with negotiations making progress, two women, Kim Gyeong-ja and Kim Ji-na, were released on August 13 and the remaining 19 hostages on August 29 and August 30.<sup>[3]</sup>

The release of the hostages was secured with a South Korean promise to withdraw its 200 troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2007. Although the South Korean government offered no statement, a Taliban spokesman claimed that the militant group also received some US\$20 million in exchange for the safety of the captured missionaries.

## Daily Devotional Reading: Some of Paul's Other Letters

- Day #1: Ephesians 5
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word:
  
- Day #2: Ephesians 6
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word:
  
- Day #3: Philippians 1
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word:
  
- Day #4: Philippians 2
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word:
  
- Day #5: Philippians 3
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word: