









*then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 ESV*

Opposition makes us an effective and powerful witness.

**The Accuser’s Agenda: Distract Us, Discredit Us, & Destroy Us Shove us off the witness stand**

Catch us in a lie/discredit our testimony

Confuse the facts and begin to doubt what we’ve seen and heard Make our testimony unproductive and ineffective

**As Witnesses, We Must Equip Ourselves**

“ *We fight spiritual opposition with spiritual weapons*

We Connect in Community

We Cover One Another in Prayer

We Go Over the Facts

We Recite and Remember the Details of What We’ve Seen and Heard

We Prepare Together to Become Effective Witnesses

— **3. We Will Experience an Abundant Life**

**Peace**—a clear conscience

“ I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 2 TIMOTHY 1:3 ESV

**Purpose**—rivers of living water

“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” JOHN 7:38 ESV

**Joy**—

“ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. JOHN 15:9-11 ESV

This is what being a part of the unexplainable church is all about: influence, opposition, and abundant life!

**Closing Prayer:** YES, Lord! Yes! I want to be a part of your unexplainable church. I want to be part of a growing kingdom that is so much bigger than myself. I want to be part of the people, the family of God, that live out their lives with peace, purpose, and joy...waiting for our glorious King who is coming soon! Yes, Lord, yes! I will commit myself to connecting with other believers, my sisters in Christ. I will commit to covering them in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit of God to come in among us, to do something only He can do. Yes, Lord!







## The Call

“ Acts 22:6–8 ESV “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’”

A realization of what, or who he had missed: Jesus!

## The Wait

“ Galatians 1:16–18 “[He] was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then, after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.”

Set on a shelf and then sent home.

## The Launch

“ Acts 11:25–26 ESV So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For

*a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.*

## **The Commissioning**

### **— Acts 13:1–4**

**Life as a Pharisee vs. Life as a Missionary**

### **— 5 Tests**

Spiritual Opposition: Elymas

Emotional Opposition: Slander at Iconium

Praise of Man: Lystra

Physical Persecution: Lystra

Letting go/Saying goodbye/Moving on:  
Lystra & Derbe

## **A Time of Rest and Rejoicing—Acts 14:26-28**

## **A Time of Clarification & Evaluation—Acts 15**

## **The Fall Out—Paul & Barnabas separate**

## **Closed Doors**

## **Paul's Macedonian Moment & Your Own**

— Reflection: How have my life experiences shaped my character?

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— What have they taught me about your grace?

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— Have my experiences made me more kind and compassionate or more cynical and self-focused?

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**Closing Prayer:** God, use my experiences to empower me with your grace and allow me to encounter the God who pursues my heart...

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## A Miraculous Word Picture

### — Who is witnessing our freedom?

“ *Galatians 5:1 ESV For freedom Christ set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.* ”

### — What is that freedom?

The freedom of the Spirit vs. the spirit of the Galatians

No more striving, comparing, beating ourselves up

Thanking God for who I am not vs. thanking God for who I am becoming

“ *Philippians 1:3–5 ESV I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.* ”

## Paul's Conclusion

“ *Galatians 2:20 ESV I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* ”

**Closing Prayer:** Restore unto us the wonder and joy of our salvation. Allow us to walk in the wonder of our salvation. Captivate our hearts and minds with this indescribable gift of grace and make us a catalyst to share that work of grace with others. Not because we're perfect. Not because we have it all together.







Discernment is the Greek word **aesthesis**.

Some definitions of aesthesis:

The faculty for distinguishing the real nature of something.

A power to see what is not evident to the average mind.

The power to distinguish & select what is true or excellent.

Understanding of human motives.  
A searching mind that goes beyond what is obvious.

Insight combined with keen practical judgment (a decision toward action).<sup>2</sup>

“ *Many people call the book of Philippians the Book of Joy. But in reality, the joy is just a symptom. The joy is what happens once we lay hold of this proper perspective. The joy is what comes from having the knowledge and the discernment of God’s love in any situation. Because we can be confident that he is working.*”

— **What will this perspective of knowledge and discernment allow us to do?**



## Our Perspective

### — Do you need a spiritual perspective in your circumstances today? Pray!

God is in control. God is able to deliver. He is working even when He is not delivering according to my timeline and in my way.

God is using your difficult circumstances to equip other believers who are watching you. Just in the same way He was using Paul's circumstances.

**Closing Prayer:** In the midst of difficulty and horrible things it is so hard to see you. And it is even harder to trust that you are working. And so, Father, we pray this prayer for ourselves God, that our love for you, our love for others will abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that we may be able to see the truth of our circumstances. That we may be able to know God, that you are bringing forth things in this difficulty that you could not accomplish in the same way in us and through us, if we were not walking this season. And we don't understand it all. And we don't have all the answers. And we definitely don't like it, God, but we ask for you to give us your eyes in our situations, God. The ability to see the good that you are doing in the midst of the hard. Because you are a God who is always at work.

### — My own circumstance

<sup>1</sup> G., Kittel, G. W., Bromiley, G., and Friedrich, (Eds.). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (electronic ed.). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. (Book)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.













## Futile in their thinking (pointless)

### Foolish hearts were darkened

**Definition of foolishness (foolish hearts):** acts without counsel, indiscreet, hot-tempered, ignorant, thick-headed, easily led astray, learning only comes through brutish discipline.<sup>1</sup>

**Definition of darkened:** the whole range of meaning may be understood in terms of the basic sense: darkness, not in connection with its optical effect, but experienced as an enveloping sphere and described in its significance for existence, i.e., as a hindrance to movement and action, to foresight, as the sphere of objective peril and subjective anxiety.<sup>2</sup>

Objective Peril and Subjective Anxiety — the real, and the “what if” or the might be:

### A Path to Freedom—Romans 8:20–25

“ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is

*not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?  
But if we hope for what we do not see, we  
wait for it with patience.*

God is using the corruption of the world to be the brutish discipline, this enveloping sphere of objective peril and subjective anxiety, to be the very thing that leads people to seek freedom. The freedom that we know awaits us. The hope of glory that we hold within our hearts.

*The hope of glory is Jesus!*

### **Our Purpose in The Waiting-Romans 8:25–30**

The Holy Spirit is interceding for the whole world through God’s people

The redemption of the earth itself

The redemption of those lost in darkness and bondage

You are the very vessel which the Spirit of God is using to bring about His eternal plan of redemption for His creation

*Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven*

<sup>1</sup> G., Kittel, G. W., Bromiley, and G., Friedrich, (Eds.). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (electronic ed.). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.







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