

How to Keep From Being an Undercover Christian Philippians 2:12-16

Introduction:

1. There was a man that lived during Christ's earthly ministry named Joseph of Arimathea. He was a rich man whom **Matthew 27:57** calls "*Jesus' disciple*." It was Joseph's tomb that was used to place the body of Jesus in.
2. **John 19:38** makes an interesting observation about Joseph. It says that he was a disciple of Jesus, "*but secretly for fear of the Jews*." The word "secretly" means "to conceal, to hide."
3. Joseph was an undercover disciple of Christ. But that changed and after Jesus' death on the cross, the Bible says that Joseph went in boldly to Pilate and craved the body of Jesus.
4. I think today there are many undercover Christians. But notice Paul's desire for believers in **Philippians 2:12**. He said to "*work **out** your own salvation*."
5. He did not say to work **for** your own salvation. This is impossible. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, and anyway, the Philippians were already saved (1:1).
6. Paul said to work it out! At the moment of salvation, the Spirit of Christ comes to live and dwell **in us**. God's desire is that the light of Christ in our hearts shines **through us** - that it be worked out, lived out, and evidenced in our daily lives. vs. 15
7. How can we keep from being an undercover Christian and live out that salvation we have been given in Christ? Let me give you three key words from our text.

Obey - vs. 12

1. There was a tremendous bond of love between Paul and the Philippians. The tendency would be for them to obey God when Paul was around, but then let things slip when Paul was gone.
2. Paul reminds them that their obedience had nothing to do with whether or not he was physically there with them. vs. 12
3. Regardless of the circumstances, they needed to walk in obedience to God. You are not living your Christian life unto Dan Proctor, but you are living unto Christ in the sight of God your Father. **1 Thessalonians 1:3**
4. It would be easy to obey when you are at church or in front of your kids, but then live differently when you are at work, at the gym, in your car, or alone.
5. If we are to keep from being an undercover Christian, consistent obedience, regardless of the circumstances, is crucial.

Yield - vs. 13

1. If you are saved, God is at work **in you**. In **Colossians 1:27**, Paul says, "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*." He goes on to say that he is striving "*according to his (Christ's) working, which worketh **in me** mightily*."
2. In verse 13, the word "*worketh*" is the Greek word from which we get our English word "energy" and it means "to be active, efficient."
3. Paul says that there is a divine energy actively working in you. The purpose is so that God can do through you **His** good pleasure (delight, satisfaction).

- The purpose isn't to make us healthy, wealthy, prosperous, and happy. God is working in us to do **His** good pleasure - that which satisfies and delights Him.
4. Did you know you can quench God's working in your life? Through self-will and sin, we can quench what God is trying to do in us through His Word.
1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30
 5. The key is to daily take our hands off the wheel and yield ourselves to God (**Romans 12:1**). As we do this, God works **in us**, and then **through us**.

Shine - vs. 14-15

1. God wants us to go out in a wicked world and live in the identity of who He has made us in Christ. vs. 15
2. The world is "cut throat." It was the same in Paul's day. Paul said it was crooked (warped) and perverse (corrupt).
3. But, the darker a room gets, the brighter and more noticeable the light shines. Some Christians look at this wicked world and get a very cynical, negative, pessimistic, grumbling attitude. I think this is what Paul is talking about in verse 14.
4. Paul admonishes them to keep away from a negative, pessimistic attitude. Look at the wickedness of the world as a great opportunity for you to shine for Jesus.
 - Don't look at the world and expect lost people to act like they're not lost.
 - Christians that get involved in the political arena make a strategic mistake when they think they can win and change the world without changing the hearts of the people involved.
 - They throw their hands in their air and get all worked up into a rage when lost people act like lost people. Wisdom says, "They act that way because they are lost and without Jesus." More than they need a law, they need a spiritual transformation of the heart. They need the gospel of Christ!
5. Here is God's plan: Live out who God has made you in Christ. Live out your faith. Live blameless, harmless, without rebuke, and shine as a light in the darkness. The darker it gets, the greater opportunity you have to live out your faith and demonstrate the difference that Jesus makes.
6. **Titus 2:12-13** - let's live as a people with hope.

In Conclusion:

1. Paul likens his Christian life to a race in verse 16. Paul had given his life to impact lives for Christ. He was running and laboring to impact souls.
2. Paul had spiritually invested in these people's lives. One of his greatest joys would be to find out at the Rapture (Day of Christ) that these people had faithfully held on to God's Word and obeyed God.
3. Christian, others have made spiritual investments in your life. Don't let their labor be in vain. Refuse to become an undercover Christian, and boldly live out the salvation you have been given in Christ.