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Servants of Excellence

Encouraging pregnancy care center volunteer & paid staff

Before “I can do all things through Christ”

By Kirk Walden, Publisher of The LifeTrends Connection

“. . . I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.” *Philippians 4:12B*



Whenever I see a football player score the winning touchdown and tell the media, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!”—I wonder about the poor defender who missed the tackle. Are we to believe Jesus must have *failed* him?

Understanding is all about context of course and while I understand the joy of the moment for winners, Phil. 4:13 is not simply about fantastic accomplishments in the name of Jesus.

In the verses preceding the famous Phil. 4:13 we see Paul talking about being content in whatever circumstances he finds himself (4:11) and then in verse 12, he talks of the secret of “being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.”

While I’m no scholar, it seems Paul’s vision is so much larger than perhaps I give him credit for. Paul is talking about succeeding in Christ *regardless* of circumstances, not simply working to make our life’s circumstances better.

For Paul, his life was one of a powerful mission: Spreading the reconciliation story of Jesus Christ throughout the known world. Having seen Jesus himself, he wanted everyone to know Jesus as messiah, as savior, as Lord, as master and as the way, the truth and the life.

As one who can get caught up in circumstances I have quite an admiration for Paul. Here was a man who refused to get caught up in the travails of the day. If he found himself poor, he used it as an opportunity to share the message of Christ. If he was in a time of wealth, he used it as an opportunity to share the message of Jesus Christ.

And of course, we know that jail didn’t hold him back either.

When Paul talks about “all things” then, perhaps personal circumstances aren’t entering his mind. Instead, maybe Paul is telling us that “all things” are the eternal goals in our lives—those times when, through Christ, we make a life-changing difference in the life of another.

When we set our minds on things above, we get a new perspective on “all things,” just like Paul and so many who walked before us. And when we serve at the ministry, it’s a reminder that this is a tremendous opportunity to remember Phil. 4:13, because we can do “All things through him who strengthens” . . . Us.

Servants of Excellence is a LifeTrends publication
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