

# Be Encouraged

## You Think YOUR Life Is Hard

12/24/2001

Reading: [Acts 9:10-19](#)

Text: [2 Corinthians 11:23-33](#)

### Introduction:

1. Many of us have it rough! Life is not easy!
2. Consider what Paul went through for the sake of Christ.
3. Keep in mind, if Paul did it, WE can do it!

### #1 Paul Knew Persecution! - v. 23-25, 32-33

[Hebrews 12:3-4](#)—For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. *You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.*

1. It could be WORSE for us, but it isn't, so, live faithfully while you can!
2. It is in times of trouble that MOST people are MOST faithful.
3. Maybe it would be better for us to encounter persecution!
4. Otto von Bismark said, "There are no atheists in the foxholes of Bataan."

### #2 Paul Knew Peril - v. 26-27

#### What peril have we ever seen?

1. Getting up in time for 9:30 a.m. Bible Classes?
2. Coming back for 6:00 p.m. Sunday Services?
3. Maybe standing in front of the congregation to hold a tray?
4. Have we ever gone out our way for anything?

### #3 Paul Knew Parenting v. 28-29

#### A. But Paul was not married!

1. That's true, but he parented the congregations he established.
2. They were his children figuratively speaking.
3. He called several his "son in the faith." [1 Timothy 1:2](#)

#### B. Parenting is a hard job

1. [2 Corinthians 11:28-29](#)
2. Every parent is concerned daily for their children.
3. When they hurt we hurt. When they are happy, usually we are happy!
4. In this way, he was faithful, so must we be faithful.

### #4 Paul Knew Peace

[Philippians 4:11-13](#)

## Conclusion: How did Paul know all this?

#### A. He Had a God-given, meaningful purpose for life.

[Philippians 1:12-14](#)—But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

#### B. He knew tough times make us better people

[Romans 5:3-4](#)—... we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

#### C. He made a decision to leave the past (bad and good) behind

[Philippians 3:13-14](#)—Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

#### D. He had self-control to say "no" to activities that enslave

[1 Corinthians 6:12](#)—All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

#### E. Dependence on Jesus in every circumstance.

[Philippians 4:11-13](#)—Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.