

The Christian's Great Challenge

Phil. 2:14-16

Introduction:

- A. Accepting Christ is a challenge — but not that great.
 - 1. The faith-producing evidence is clear (cf. Rom. 10:17; John 20:30-31; 2 Pet 1:16).
 - 2. The plan of salvation is quite simple (Mark 16:15, 16; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:37,38).
 - 3. The basic incentive to be a Christian is enticing. (Rom. 5:9; Rev. 2:10).
- B. Living for Christ, of itself, is challenging — but not that great.
 - 1. The worship expected is quite simple and straight forward.
 - 2. The work, as individuals, as families and as congregations, is also quite straight forward.
- C. The great challenge is doing it all “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.”
 - 1. Surrounded by social and political corruption.
 - 2. Surrounded by moral and religious perversion.
- D. Three aspects that make this so challenging:

Discussion:

I. **The *Hostility* of the Crooked and Perverse Generation.**

- A. Faithful Christians can expect hostility (Matt. 10:34-36; Heb. 12:3; 2 Tim. 3:12)
- B. People are hostile for different reasons.
 - 1. Feel threatened by anyone different. (1 Pet. 4:4).
 - 2. Feel threatened by teachings of Christ (Acts 19:24-27).
 - 3. Envy (Matt. 27:18; Acts 13:45).
- C. The challenge is to endure without retaliating or accepting deliverance (Heb. 11:35)

II. **The *Discouragement* of the Crooked and Perverse Generation.**

- A. As a lover of peace, discouraged by strife, war, and turmoil.
- B. As lover of righteousness, discouraged by corruption (2 Pet 2:7-9)
- C. As small minority, discouraged by how few want to do right. (1 Pet. 3:20).
- D. The challenge to continue knowing the end result.

III. **The *Subtle Influence* of the Crooked and Perverse Generation.**

- A. This is likely the greatest threat to our eternal well being.
- B. It is hard to be in the world without being of the world. (Cf. Rom. 12:2)
- C. Attitude, views and conduct of people around us often adversely influence us:
 - 1. Our morals and ethics.
 - 2. Our general appearance
 - 3. Our concept of the church.
 - 4. Our spiritual responsibilities.
 - 5. Our priorities.
 - 6. Our family matters.
- D. The challenge is keep ourselves *unspotted* from the world (Jas. 1:27)

Conclusion:

- A. If we live at all it will be in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.
- B. If we make to heaven, we will have to do in spite of the environment in which we live.
- C. We cannot blame any personal failures on the times and places in which we must live.