

THE SIMPLE LIFE

By Don Denton, for the elders

Perhaps you have heard someone ask "Why can't life be simple again?" In reflecting on his simple childhood, a sixty year old man wrote that church, school, and work were in the forefront of his family's life. Church attendance was a must (non-negotiable), school was almost like church, and work was necessary and was considered to be good for you. Granted our modern daily life can be hectic, if not overwhelming at times. Job pressures, turmoil in the world, dealing with "terabytes" and "mega hertz", and waiting for the latest "iPhone" to be released can cause us to long for simpler days. However, there is hope for a simple life again.

The apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians offers some help in dealing with pressures of modern life. The first decision a person should make when seeking a simpler lifestyle is to determine what gives life meaning and pursue it with all your might. Paul's focus was clearly on serving Christ. He wrote, *To live is Christ, and to die is gain* (Phil. 1:21). Serving Christ and spreading the gospel gave meaning and purpose to his life. The same focus will give meaning and purpose in our lives.

Paul also had a clear and definable goal for his life. He wanted to live with God in heaven. He had a purpose for living and when his life was over, it would be gain. During Paul's ministry, Rome was at its pinnacle of power, wealth and influence. Distractions abounded, as in our day, but he never lost sight of his goal. He wrote, *Whatever things were gain for me, those things I have counted as lost for the sake of Christ* (Phil. 3:7). Life can be simple when our goals are clear because many of the choices in this life will have already been made.

Thirdly, we should enjoy our journey through this life. God does not just allow us to rejoice, but He commands us to rejoice. Paul wrote, *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice* (Phil. 4:4). We can rejoice because our lives on earth have meaning and after this life is over a better one awaits us. This thought will give us peace of mind in a troubled world.

Our lives can be simple if we approach each day with meaning and purpose, knowing that God has prepared a better place for us. Our reward in this life is that *the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus* (Phil.4:7).