

# TOGETHER

## PHILIPPIANS 1:28-30

BACKGROUND: If God gives to you the “gift” or time of suffering, He will give you the power of grace to endure. There are many good reasons to belong to a small group, and encouragement in suffering is definitely an important function of a small group.

***WE STAND OUR GROUND.*** These verses describe frightened horses that are spooked in battle, causing great difficulty for the rider to control the animal. The Greek word for being frightened is used only here in the New Testament. “Paul’s instruction to *stand firm without being frightened* calls for Christians not to be agitated and terrified on the battlefield as horses often are. Christians are not to be intimidated *in any way*...No matter how powerful the opposition is, nothing should shake the resolve of those who *stand firm in one Spirit*. Lined up side by side as one person, they should not be scared by any threat or any torture. They should not run from any battle, back down from any attack, compromise anything, or concede *in any way*.” G. Walter Hansen, The Letter to the Philippians, p.98. (Philippians 1:27-28, Philippians 2:29-30, fn 2:29-30, I Corinthians 16:13, fn 16:13-14, I Peter 1:3-9, fn 1:6-7, I Peter 3:13-18, fn 3:15[1<sup>st</sup>], fn 3:15[2<sup>nd</sup>]) *How could we together support our missionaries in hostile situations?*

***WE SUFFER IN CHRIST’S PLACE.*** Our bodies are made in the image of God with eternity set in our hearts and, as believers, we are home to the Holy Spirit. Like Jesus, we should be willing to sacrifice all in order to share God’s infinite love, mercy, and the relationship we share with Him. Suffering is God’s ultimate evangelism. It is God’s gift made bearable by God’s grace, and our patient endurance and steadfast faith in times of suffering is a witness to others of the difference His grace makes in lives committed to Him. (Philippians 1:29, fn 1:29, Genesis 1:26-27, fn 1:26, fn 1:27, Ecclesiastes 3:11, fn 3:11, John 14:15-21, fn 14:15-16, Romans 8:14-18, fn 8:17) *How could your suffering be used for evangelism of the gospel?*

***WE STRUGGLE.*** As believers, we face a common enemy. We do not know the troubles that await us, but we know that our Lord will never leave us or forsake us. He will give us grace and strength to endure. We are encouraged to be faithful in suffering by the Holy Spirit, the promises of God’s Word, and the support of fellow believers who minister to us. (Philippians 1:30, fn 1:30, I Thessalonians 3:1-5, fn 3:1-3, fn 3:4, fn 3:7-8, John 17:20-23, fn 17:21-23, Hebrews 13:3-6, fn 13:3, II Corinthians 1:3-7, fn 1:6-7) *Since you can never know what trials are coming, why would it be important for you and your family to be part of Christ’s body, His Church?*

*Are you taking time to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit with the Living Word teaching you and giving you His joy, His love, and His peace?*