

LIFE UPSIDE DOWN__3

Work Out



“...Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”
- Philippians 2:12

“May the God of peace...make you complete in everything good so that you may do His will, working among us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever.”
- Hebrews 13:21

In his book, *Axiom*, Bill Hybels refers to a time when he shared a conference stage with Joni Eareckson Tada. She did a Q & A session following one of her talks, and someone in the audience asked how she kept going—how she kept leading and serving and creating—despite her obvious physical challenges. She responded, “This is the only time in history when I get to fight for God. This is the only part of my eternal story when I am actually *in* the battle....This is my limited window of opportunity, and I’m going to fight the good fight for all I’m worth.” Well, Joni got it right. This is your one and only life! This is your one and only shot at following God the way you feel Him prompting you to do so. This isn’t some pre-game warm-up. It’s the game, and the clock is ticking! And as Hybels puts it in his book, “*What life are you waiting for?*”

Opening Up

Are you an early riser? Or do you prefer to stay up late? What gets you going when you are “stalled”?

Digging In

Read **Philippians 2:12-13**

1. Some have misunderstood this passage to state something like, “*Seek your own personal salvation with fear and trembling before God or else you could be lost.*” How is working out your salvation different from working for it?
2. The “you” in this passage is plural. In other words, “work out *your* salvation” refers to “your collective life as a body of saved people.” What difference is made when we think of “you” as “all of you *collectively*”?
3. The expression, “*with fear and trembling*” could very well refer to the attitude we should have toward one another, not just our attitude toward God. Notice, for example, the way in which this same expression is used in **2 Corinthians 7:15**. Paul described the attitude of the Corinthian church toward Titus as one of respect and appreciation as one through whom God was working. If this is the case, how does this reframe the way in which we are to regard each other? When was the last time you were struck by what God was doing through a collective group at Southeastern?
4. What is implied in this passage about the place and value of the local church? How do followers of Christ demonstrate a high regard for the local church—both in attitude and action?
5. God promotes both the desire to do His will and the drive necessary to accomplish it. Which of these two is needed most in your life at the moment? Explain.

Living Out

Obviously this lesson lends itself to *group* application (rather than merely individual consideration). As a small group, how would the Lord have you apply the truths of this passage? What can you do to keep this passage in your group’s collective mind throughout the coming year?

Lifting Up

The local church is God’s instrument of redemption for the world. Reaffirm your desire to obey Him and to depend upon His strength to do what pleases Him. Possible songs: “We Are the Body of Christ (*Zoe, A Consuming Fire*), “Let Us Be You (*Zoe, In Christ Alone*), “The Church’s One Foundation (715), “Sing Hallelujah to the Lord (242), “Rise Up, O Men of God” (557).