

Philippians 1:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

Analysis

Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you (τὸ δὲ ἐπιμένειν [έν] τῇ σαρκὶ ἀναγκαιότερον δι' ὑμᾶς, to de epimenein [en] tē sarki anankaioteron di' hymas)—Epimenein ("to remain, continue") contrasts analysai ("depart," v. 23). Though death is **far better** for Paul personally (v. 23), **to abide is more needful for you** (ἀναγκαιότερον δι' ὑμᾶς, anankaioteron di' hymas, comparative: "more necessary on your account"). Di' hymas ("because of you, for your sake") reveals pastoral priority.

Paul subordinates personal preference (Christ-presence) to others' spiritual need. This models cruciform ministry—choosing others' good over personal gain. The logic: though heaven is gain (v. 21), ministry to believers creates greater kingdom value. Paul's eschatology doesn't eclipse earthly stewardship; heaven-mindedness produces earth-usefulness.

Historical Context

Ancient philosophers debated whether the wise man should remain in life when it becomes burdensome. Stoics like Seneca justified suicide if life lacked meaning. Paul's logic is opposite—life has meaning because of service to others, not self-fulfillment. His other-oriented calculus reflects Jesus's teaching that losing life for others is finding it (Mark 8:35).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's preference for others' spiritual good over personal preference challenge your priorities?
2. Are there ways you're pursuing personal 'gain' (even heavenly) while neglecting earthly stewardship?
3. What would it mean for you to stay 'in the flesh' for others' sake like Paul did?

Interlinear Text

τὸ	δὲ	ἐπιμένειν	ἐν	τῇ	σαρκὶ	ἀναγκαιότερον	δι'
G3588	Nevertheless	to abide	in	G3588	the flesh	is more needful	for
	G1161	G1961	G1722		G4561	G316	G1223

ὑμᾶς

you

G5209