

Read Scripture: Philippians 1:27-30

Bible Study Topic: Standing Firm (Life Lessons With Max Lucado)

## SITUATION

Writing from a Roman prison to the church at Philippi, Paul expresses his joyous confidence that, despite life's hardships, God remains in control. In this scripture, he urges the Philippian Christians to live with a steadfast unity that will attract others to the gospel.

## EXPLORATION

1. Why is it so hard for churches to stand "strong with one purpose"?
2. Paul's only real concern for the Philippians was an apparent lack of unity. What factors pose the most dangerous threat to the harmony of a local church?

## REACTION

1. What precise role does the Holy Spirit play in helping preserve unity among God's people?
2. Paul alludes to the reality that people will notice and discuss the behavior of believers (see verse 27). What is the reputation as a Christian? What about your church's?

## LIFE LESSONS

As Jesus' earthly life and ministry ended, Jesus spoke urgently and prayed fervently about the unified way followers should live. In short, Christ wants us living in harmony (John 17) and loving one another sacrificially (John 13:34-35). Such unconditional devotion sets us apart and causes the world to stare in awe. Conversely, when Christians bicker and feud, when churches split, we bring shame on the name of Christ, and the world mocks. It is only in unity that we shine, only together that we fully enjoy all the blessings of God. Shared sorrows are halved sorrows. Shared joys are double joys.

## APPLICATION

What will you change this week to ensure that all your interactions with other believers are worthy of the gospel?