



INGman 4

Focused Living Ministries

Pushing Against The Rock

Philippians 1:12-30

A man was sleeping when suddenly his room filled with light and Jesus appeared. The Lord told the man He had a great work for him to do and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. He explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. So the man did faithfully, day after day. For months he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock pushing with all his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain. Seeing that the man was discouraged, satan lied saying, "You have been pushing for a long time and it hasn't budged. Why kill yourself? Your Lord is playing a cruel joke on you!" After weeks of hearing such lies, the man became disheartened as he started to believe the task was impossible and that he was a failure. "This is stupid!" he thought. "I'll just put in my time, give the minimum and do just enough to get by." One day he decided to pray. "Lord, I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, I have not even budged that rock. Why am I failing and, more importantly, why have You failed me?" The Lord responded tenderly, "My son, when I called you to follow Me I also promised to do what is best for your life and you said you would trust Me. So I told you to simply push against the rock. Not once did I tell or expect you to move it. And now you come to Me thinking that you have failed. But, is that so? Look how you have grown. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown, your legs have become massive and hard, your heart humble and disciplined, and your mind focused and purposed. Through opposition you have grown and matured. True, you have not moved the rock. But your calling was to obediently push and to faithfully trust in My wisdom. This you have done. Rest my son, as I will now move the rock."

Muscles need tension to strengthen. Relationships need tension to deepen. Brains need testing to connect dots. 401ks need time to grow. There is no growth apart from tension! God is committed to your matur**ING**, grow**ING** and chang**ING** so He places various 'rocks' of opposition to create tension. He does not expect you to move them but He does expect you to push faithfully as He morphs, molds and makes you into the man, husband, father and leader He has called you to be.

(1:12-25) What rocks of opposition did God strategically place in Paul's life to help him become more of an INGman? With which can you identify? Why?

(1:12-14) Describe a current **chain** God is using to mature you.

(1:15-20) What **critic** has God asked you to forgive so your love can deepen?

(1:20-25) How has God used a **crisis** to mold you more like Christ?

(1:12-18) How did Paul's chains, critics and crisis open up new areas of ministry and service? Where is there an example of this in your life?

(1:25) Paul dealt maturely with the rocks in his life, not just for his own growth but for what other two reasons? Do these motivate you as well?

(1:21; 3:13-14; 4:13; Gal 2:20) What was the secret to Paul's incredible resilience and response to the rock(s) God put in his life and how might this mindset dramatically change your life?

Fill in the blanks in this verse according to how you really live?

"For me to live is _____ and to die is _____."

"For me to live is money and to die is tremendous loss."

"For me to live is fame and to die is to be forgotten."

"For me to live is control and to die is to lose it all."

"For me to live is doing things my way and to die is to admit failure."

"For me to live is pursuing happiness and to die is great sadness."

(1:27-30) What practical things does Paul command his readers to do as they daily push hard against their rocks waiting for the Lord to move?

(1:19) "PUSH" (Pray Until Something Happens)! When all goes wrong, PUSH. When your job implodes, PUSH. When people trash you, PUSH. When disheartened/ discouraged, PUSH. Father, in response to the truth of your Word, I pray...