

its implications. That's what we are doing with our characters here. First off, Paul is hurting in verse 15. He is experiencing some hurtful rejection. This is not like getting picked last for the basketball team rejection this is more than likely rejection from those who were close like family to Paul. Jesus says some pretty shocking things about what those who follow Him have to face. In Matthew 10 Jesus says, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Jesus himself knew rejection. Spends three years with a guy who sells him out for some silver, then one of his inner friends denies knowing him three times, and how many disciples were at the cross? Jesus knows rejection, and Paul commands Timothy in verse 8 to share in His sufferings, which Paul himself is currently doing. So what do we know from verse 15 here? Asia does not refer to modern day Asia, except for maybe a way southwest portion of it that was a province of Rome which Ephesus was the capitol of. Paul had spent three years in Ephesus, and Timothy was currently serving at the church there. Phygelus and Hermogenes' rejection hurts because at one time they had a shared identity. There was a sense of belonging with each other probably because they served in the same church together, in the same local body of believers. But they lost their perspective. They did not guard their perspective or stay in the Word to keep it. They quit running Jesus strong. Their rejection hurt because of what they did share with Paul at one time. These people who we know very little about serve as a warning to you and I. You can be coasting in neutral and still be affected by momentum in from the past. Do not find your security in past times of keeping in the Word at the expense of presently guarding your perspective. Even a train or a battleship will eventually lose momentum. What did you do yesterday or what will you do tomorrow to guard and keep the perspective of being unashamed of the gospel?

If you reject this perspective, it harms the body. Don't let that be your impact on other believers.

On the flip side,

4. Your Embracing This Perspective Fuels the Body (16-18).

Alright detectives, what do we know about Onesiphorus? His name means useful, or who brings profit, but there are three actions in his brief account. 1. He refreshes Paul. Just because you are not called to preach a sermon or sing a solo does not mean you do not have a ministry. Paul is clinging to the joy he received when another from the family of God simply refreshed him. Food, clothes, a pillow, even Paul needed others in the body. Second thing is that Onesiphorus was not ashamed. It seems as though most people did not want to associate with Paul because of his prisoner status and the risk that would involve, but Onesiphorus did not care. He kept his perspective. Those of you in middle school, high school, grab onto this. Do you hesitate to hang around someone because the popular kids are too good for them, so you want to appear too good for them as well? Be unashamed of the gospel and look at and love the world around you in the unashamed way Jesus did. Don't lose your perspective! Third thing Onesiphorus did, he searched earnestly. It's not like he could contact the local department of justice and they could search their database as to where Paul was located. He had to search earnestly for Paul. Are brothers and sisters in Christ worth acting in an earnest manner for? Are you keeping your perspective? Notice the play on words from 17-18, since Onesiphorus found Paul, then Paul wants him to find mercy on judgment day. I promise you, for every one of us the dime and the sun will be seen in honest proportions. Keep your perspective. Some commentators debate as to whether vs 18 indicates if Onesiphorus was dead or not. I don't see that debate as all that important, I mean, he is dead now, what is important is the impact he made because he kept and guarded the perspective of being unashamed. I want to conclude with a story some of you may know, of a man who kept this perspective and how God used it to shape me.

My sophomore year of high school my Grandpa was diagnosed with liver cancer. Papa J is what we called him. Now cancer was what my friends brought up during prayer requests or what other families had to deal with, not me, so I did not have a category for it. I remember he looked awful that year at Christmas as a result of being in the thick of the chemo treatments. He was happy to be with family, but soon he returned home to more treatments. Well then he moved up here, which gave me a chance to actually get to know him. Cornerstone became his church for a little while. The cancer was continuing to progress, but in my head, Papa J was noticeably happier, at least when he could get out of the hospital and be here, serving the body of Christ. I remember thinking you just want to get out of the hospital to be at church. At that point in my life I was looking into colleges, mainly for what job would get me the most money so I could be most comfortable, and here God puts this glaring example of a man whose circumstances not only could not shift his perspective, but made it shine even brighter. It was a real heart check for me as to whether I was keeping the perspective of Christ or not. Your embracing this perspective fuels the body and allows for your temporary life to make eternal impact for the glory of God! So as we move into taking Communion and you have a few moments to reflect and pray, ask God to reveal to you what is waging war for your perspective, and consider what opportunities you have to invest into eternity and how you are stewarding them.