



# Thinking Right-Side Up In an *unog-apjdn* World

## ...about Setbacks

(Philippians 1:12-18a)

Introduction: What if there was a better way to think about setbacks?

### Setback #1: Being Taken Out of the Game (1:12-14)

"Upside-Down" Responses: Despair or Anger.

"Right-Side Up" Responses:

- God wanted to reach someone else.
- God wanted to use someone else.

### Setback #2: The Haters (1:15-18a)

"Upside-Down" Responses: Fight back and defend yourself.

"Right-Side Up" Response:

- Getting the job done is more important than getting credit for it.

Conclusion: When your plans get changed, can you trust God enough to make the choice to keep doing what's right?



**Icebreakers:**

1. Let's assume you spent all night writing a paper for a college class, only to lose all your work through a computer error of some kind. Would you rather give up and take the "F", or write the paper over?
2. Tell a story of a vacation you went on where things didn't go "according to plan." How did you handle it?

**Sermon Summary:** Paul was in prison, which was a significant setback to his plan to share the good news of Jesus with the world. Instead of pouting or getting angry, though, he chose to see his situation from God's perspective and discovered that God's plan was better, which enabled him to make courageous and faith-filled choices.

**Discussion Questions:** (*Read Philippians 1:12-18 together.*)

1. Have you experienced a significant setback in your life? What tends to be your *first* reaction to a significant setback?
2. How do you handle sudden changes to "the plan"? Do you handle them better or worse now as an adult than you did as a kid?

**\* Setback #1: Being Taken Out of the Game**

3. Have you ever had a heart-to-heart talk with a stranger because of some change of plans outside your control? How did that go?
4. Would you consider yourself a "doer" or an "equipper" of others? What are the downsides of being a "doer"? Of being an "equipper"?
5. Why are we often dependent on a few "gifted" people to get most of the work done? Can the "gifted" people be part of the problem?

**\* Setback #2: The "Haters"**

6. Why does criticism sting so much? What can we do about that?
7. Everyone wants to feel vindicated (that's when someone stands up for you and defends you to your opponents or enemies). Do you have a hard time continuing to do what's right when you AREN'T vindicated by God or by others?
8. Why do we struggle to leave the punishment of our "haters" to God at the "day of Christ"? Why do we want to "get our licks in"?