

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

Stick With It

Lesson Nine

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Lesson Goal: To encourage students to continue to serve God no matter what.

Scriptures: Philippians 1:21-26

For Memory: “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21

Stick With It

The apostle Paul was torn between two options. If he was going to die, that would be the choice of the Roman emperor. And the thought of dying and being with Jesus was an attractive one to Paul.* Yet, he felt that he was still needed here on earth to continue telling people about Jesus, and encouraging those who already had given their lives to Jesus, to live like Jesus every day.

Rocky the dog loved Jeff, his ten year old master. Late one night, Rocky smelled smoke. The more he sniffed, the more sure he was that it was in the house. Usually, he slept in Jeff’s bedroom upstairs. However, that night, he went downstairs for some water and decided to take a nap on the couch. Rocky realized that the smoke meant danger. He began to bark as loud as he could. Soon mom and dad came running. Jeff’s little sister had sneaked into bed with mom and dad on the lower floor, so only Jeff was upstairs. Realizing that, and ignoring the danger of inhaling smoke and maybe being burned, Rocky ran up the stairs and found Jeff lost in the smoke. He grabbed the sleeve of Jeff’s pajamas, and pulled him toward the stairs. They kind of shuffled, rolled, and stumbled down to safety.**

Paul knew that he had something to do that was more important than saving his own life. He was in real danger. He knew that by continuing his missionary job of telling people about Jesus he could end up dead. But, that wasn’t his greatest concern.

God had called him to begin churches in as many places as he could. Since meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus, he had only one purpose in life. That purpose was being exactly what God wanted him to be, no matter what.

We talked about his courage in our last lesson. In the 20th verse, Paul uses the words “eagerly expect and hope.” He is using a word that really means “straining his or her neck to see what is ahead.” About the only time Paul looked back was to celebrate his conversion to Christ. So here, in our verses for today, Paul is straining forward to see what God has for him to do next.

His conclusion is that whatever comes, He is ready. He could die. If so, he is ready, and eager to be with the Jesus he met on that road to Damascus. He was not gloomy and sad about dying. He knew that he had worked hard (II Timothy 4:6-8), he had

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prepared well (II Timothy 1:12) and he was really looking forward to the wonderful place called Heaven...Jesus is there!

But, he was also ready to continue to live on earth. At this point, it seems that Paul believed that he was going to be released from the Roman prison. We don't know how he knew that, but it did ultimately happen. And, when it happened, Paul was ready to stick with it: the message he had to proclaim. He knew that there were many more people who needed to hear about Jesus. And, he was more than willing to tell them. He also looked forward to spending additional time with his friends in Philippi.

The most important thing to Paul was being near Jesus. He says in our memory verse today that if he keeps on living, Jesus is with him. And if he dies, he will be with Jesus. Either way, Paul has exactly what he wants: Jesus close by.

Can you see a little of Rocky in you today? Are you willing to risk what is necessary to help save some? You can! Just keep telling the Good News about Jesus, and many can be saved to be with Jesus. And they will be, just like Paul was expecting to be, with Jesus...alive or not! Just stick with it.

*Underlined statements in this Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.
**Stories in these lessons are original with the author. The teacher should feel free to enlarge or change the story to be more appropriate to his or her purposes.

Teaching Tips:



1. The ideas taught in these verses are central to Christian discipleship. Teachers should be challenged to be those who "stick with it."
2. Songs that emphasize telling the Good News, loyalty to Jesus and God, as well as being on mission for God will be appropriate.
3. Pray with your students about your commitment to God to share the Good News and be very thankful for His presence in your lives right now.
4. Paul was like Jeremiah (20:9) who spoke of the message of God being like a fire in his bones.
5. The two references in II Timothy are strong and your students will benefit from using them and their context in your lesson.
6. Christians should never fear failure and never give up! End your lesson that way.

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Student Worksheet

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For Memory: “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21

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=The thought of dying and being with _____ was an attractive one to Paul.

=Paul felt that he was still needed here on earth to continue _____ people about Jesus, and encouraging those who already had given their lives to _____, to live like Jesus every _____.

=Since meeting Jesus on the _____ to Damascus, Paul had only one purpose in life.

That purpose was being exactly what _____ wanted him to be, no matter what.

=Paul is _____ forward to see what God has for him to do next.

=He knew that there were many more _____ who needed to hear about _____.

And, he was more than willing to _____ them.

=The most important thing to _____ was being near Jesus.

=If he keeps on living, _____ is with him. And if he dies, he will be with _____.

Either way, Paul has exactly what he wants: _____ close by.

=Are you willing to risk what is necessary to help _____ some? You can! Just keep telling the _____ about Jesus, and many can be saved to be with Jesus.

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer and be determined to live for him all the rest of your life.