

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

Courageous Teamwork

Lesson Eleven

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

Lesson Goal: To encourage students to work together with other Christians.

Scriptures: Philippians 1:27

For Memory: “Stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the Gospel.” Philippians 1:27b

Courageous Teamwork

The language Paul used when he wrote this letter was Greek. It is a very descriptive language. As we saw in our last lesson, it sometimes takes several English words to translate one Greek word satisfactorily. Such is the case today. There is a Greek word from which we get our English word athletics. In our memory verse it is translated “contending as one man.”

Paul was picturing for the Philippians the idea of teamwork. At the time this lesson is being written, the 2010 Winter Olympics are taking place in Canada. We are seeing a lot of teamwork. People working hard together to create a picture of beauty: skating on ice. Those who do it best win the Gold, Silver, or Bronze medals. To do this, they must be totally tuned in to the other team member. They must move as one. They must be totally focused on what they are doing. They must want to do it well with their mind, their strength, and with all their heart...together.

Paul says that the first requirement is that they “stand firm.” Christians should not be on a slippery slope. They should never retreat. They should have very firm footing, braced for whatever happens, and balanced on both feet, ready for God’s work.*

The Apostle was sitting in prison in Rome thinking about his dear friends in Philippi and really wanting to encourage them. He had just told them to live like they were citizens of the greatest Kingdom that humans can imagine...God’s Kingdom. He followed through with a goal for them. That is, that they stand strong...that they stand strong together. He knew that if they were committed to each other and to their Lord they could work together to accomplish anything.

Then, he told them to what that total togetherness should be applied. He said they should be a strong team “contending”...“straining forward” is another way to say it...for the “faith of the Gospel.” One scholar translated the phrase: “fighting with one soul.”

They had the God-given opportunity to do this for God and for the Good News. It was their privilege and opportunity to represent faith...faith in God as Jesus revealed Him.

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The idea here is that the church, or any group of Christians, can and should work together to tell others about Jesus and invite them to ask Jesus to be their Savior. Part of that working together is the Kingdom citizenship we talked about in our last lesson.

Together we stand firm, not giving an inch in our faith in God. Together we serve one Spirit...that's God's Holy Spirit. Together we work to tell others about Jesus. We do this as citizens of God's Kingdom. We show the world what it is really like to be together in Christian love and service. And together, we focus on what can be done, not on things that distract us from our purpose as God's children.

E. Stanley Jones, the great Methodist missionary to India said, "The early Christians did not say in dismay, 'Look what the world has come to,' but in delight, 'Look what has come to the world.'" This was Paul's attitude. He knew what great things would happen if God's people "teamed up" to live out and tell the Good News...the Good News that Jesus, God's Son, had come to the world.

We really need this courageous teamwork today to take the news about Jesus to everyone in our world. We can, and should, begin with our family and friends. Getting together in courageous teamwork is what Jesus wanted us to do. And, He prayed to His Father that we would do just that. (John 17)

*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.



Teaching Tips:

1. Paul begins this "challenge to Christian growth," 1:27 to 2:30, with strong words about how we should live and how we should work. "Live worthy...teamwork."
2. Songs that emphasize telling the Good News, serving God with other Christians, and standing firm and strong as Christians will be appropriate.
3. Pray with your students to live courageous lives and to work together as witnesses.
4. Reading the "Lord's Prayer" from John 17 will be helpful in preparation for teaching and to help your students understand Jesus' intention for our unity and teamwork.
5. You might use some games that teach teamwork. Encourage your students to work together for a few minutes to write a brief description as to how they might tell someone about Jesus.
6. There are many analogies and metaphors that teach teamwork. Be careful to choose those that have positive and appropriate lessons. Violent teamwork is not positive.

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Student Worksheet

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For Memory: “Stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the Gospel.” Philippians 1:27b

Courageous Teamwork

=Paul says that the first requirement is that they “stand _____.” Christians should not be on a slippery _____. They should never retreat. They should have very _____ footing, braced for whatever happens, and balanced on _____, ready for God’s _____.

=He knew that if they were committed to each other and to their _____ they could work _____ to accomplish anything.

=He said they should be a strong _____ “contending”... “straining forward” is another way to say it...for the “faith of the _____.”

=It was their privilege and opportunity to represent _____ in God as Jesus revealed Him.

=The church, or any group of Christians, can and should work _____ to tell others about Jesus and _____ them to ask Jesus to be their _____.

=We show the world what it is really like to be together in Christian _____ and service.

=We really need this courageous teamwork today to take the news about _____ to _____ in our world.

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