

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

Press On

Lesson Thirty-Four

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

Lesson Goal: To encourage students to continue to move forward in their faith.

Scriptures: Philippians 3:12

For Memory: “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” Philippians 3:12

Press On

We will look at the idea of “Pressing On” in two lessons. In this lesson, we are going to see three important things about what God can do with someone who is willing.*

First, Paul was obligated to do God’s will, growing as a Christian witness. He said, “I press on.” Second, Paul understood that there was a reason that God had called him. He was to “take hold of that for which” he was called. And third, he had no excuse for ignoring God’s call. Jesus took hold of him and that meant that He had to take hold of the ministry God gave him. He had to “press on.”

Paul acknowledges that he has not done all that he could do...in serving God and God’s purposes. He wants them to know that he is not perfect. (Most of us would not have to tell anyone that we are not perfect. They would be well aware of our imperfections.) Paul has just reminded the Philippians about his background and has reminded them of his total commitment to be like Jesus. Some think that the Judaizers were claiming that they were perfect because they kept the Jewish law.

Paul told the Philippians to do and to be something that he had not yet fully done or been. And, though Paul knew that he would never be perfect and would never completely please God, he had to try. He had to press on. Living in and for Jesus is called discipleship. And, discipleship is always personal. We are individually accountable. God doesn’t lump His plans for your life in with those of someone else. There is no “family plan” in discipleship. God calls us personally. Paul put it, “Christ Jesus took hold of me.” And, with Paul, we must remember that discipleship has a high cost. Paul was in prison when he wrote the church at Philippi and the chains that kept him locked up were a testimony that Paul was paying the price of his Christian ministry.

The second thing we learn from this verse is that Christians are called for a purpose. Some have the idea that they are called so that God can take them to Heaven when they die. It is a fact that Christians go to Heaven. However, we are called by God to do something. We must look for the purpose of God’s calling. God is not hiding His purpose for your life. However, you must be open to His leadership as He leads you to the plans He has for you. Romans 8:28 says that we have been called according

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to His purpose. The next verse tells us that He called us “to be conformed to the likeness of His Son.” That means that, as Paul is saying here, we will want to be like Jesus in everything we do.

The third thing we can learn from this verse is that Paul, and every Christian is called by God. Paul says that Jesus took hold of him. If we are to grow as Christians, if we are going to fulfill God’s purpose in our lives, then we must be called by Christ. Think about it. We are, according to Scripture, dead in our sins until Jesus comes to make us alive. You can’t expect a car to take a trip until it is started. It comes alive when we turn the ignition key and start the engine. The car can’t start itself. Humans are like that. We can’t get going... press on... until God, through the death and resurrection of His Son and the work of His Holy Spirit, makes us alive. (Ephesians 2:4)

Jesus summarized what Paul is saying here. He said, “You did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.” (John 15:16)

In our next lesson, we will continue to discuss Paul’s determination to press on.

*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. The “Easy-To-Read” version of Scripture translates verse 12: I don’t mean that I am exactly what God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach it and make it mine. That’s what Christ Jesus wants me to do. It is the reason He made me His.”
2. There was a the idea in Jesus’ day that you could keep all the law. Refer to the story of the “Rich Ruler,” Luke 18:18. He had kept all the law from childhood.”
3. There are several good illustrations for what Paul is saying in this verse, both from the military and from athletics. Pressing on to take hold could be likened to the runner in a relay race running hard to put the baton in the hand of the next runner.
4. Songs that emphasize faith, Jesus as our personal Savior, commitment, perseverance, and giving our all to Jesus are appropriate.
5. Pray with your students: Thank God for choosing us to be not only His children, but to tell others about Him.
6. God chose Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and many others. For each one chosen, He had a purpose for their life. Since He also chose us, what is our purpose?

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Student Worksheet

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For Memory: “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” Philippians 3:12

Press On

=Three important things about what God can do with someone who is willing:

First, Paul knew that he would never be _____ and would never completely _____ God, he had to _____. He had to press on. Living in and for _____ is called discipleship. And, discipleship is always _____.

The second thing we learn from this verse is that Christians are called for a _____.

You must be open to His leadership as He leads you to the _____ He has for you.

The third thing we can learn from this verse is that _____, and every _____ is called by _____. If we are to _____ as Christians, if we are going to fulfill God’s _____ in our lives, then we must be called by _____.

We can’t get _____... press on... until God, through the _____ and resurrection of

His _____ and the work of His _____, makes us alive.

=Jesus summarized what _____ is saying here. He said, “You did not _____ me, I _____ you and appointed you to go and bear _____—fruit that will _____.” (John 15:16)

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.