

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

A Role Model

Lesson Thirty-Seven

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

Lesson Goal: To encourage students to live up to God's calling...His expectations.

Scriptures: Philippians 3:17

For Memory: "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you."

Philippians 3:17

A Role Model

This is one of the most courageous human statements in Scripture. Think about it. How many of us who are studying this lesson today can say "follow my example." One might say such a thing to people who didn't know him or her well, but the people to whom Paul was writing knew him very well. He couldn't say that and not live up to what it implied.

Just a few verses earlier, verse twelve, he had said that he wasn't perfect. Then, he said in verse fifteen that he was mature, or perfect. So, what we have, by Paul's own testimony, is this contradiction of imperfect and perfect. This makes his challenge, "follow my example," more realistic.

When he said that he was not perfect, he was speaking of his humanity. The writer of Hebrews called it "sin which so easily entangles us." Hebrews 12:1 Paul said in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." So, Paul couldn't possibly be talking about sinless perfection in verse fifteen. What he was talking about, as we said in an earlier session, was having maturity. This is about making decisions that are wise and that always take into account God's will. For Paul, perfection was a heart totally given to God, a mind that had only one view. That view was to please God.

Paul was a preacher, he was a teacher, he was a writer of letters. In other words, he was known for his words. He could very well have said here that the Philippians should live up to the words he had spoken and written. That would have been saying a lot.

However, Paul didn't just say do as I say, he said do as I do. Wow! How comfortable would you be if you encouraged all your friends to live exactly as you live...to speak exactly as you speak...to treat other people as you do...to worship and serve God exactly like you do? And yet, Paul is saying just exactly that right here.

He asked the people in the church at Philippi to get together...to form groups that would follow his example. Paul has called for unity throughout this letter. He was very concerned that the Christians at Rome be together in their Christian life and

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witness. He knew that if they thought together, depended on one another and served God together, they were much more likely to succeed. Christians today need to understand that truth. We are definitely more productive, more likely to be strong in the face of temptation, if we join with other Christians. That is a basic benefit of being part of a church.

Then, Paul encouraged the Philippians to “take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.” There were good role models in the Philippian church. Paul was not the only one they could look up to and choose for a role model.

Paul did have a qualification in his recommendation. He encouraged them to pattern their lives according to what they had been taught. Notice that there is no mention of wealth, power, intelligence, looks, or any other factor in Paul’s description of good role models. The only qualification was living according to Christian teaching.

If you are looking for a role model, look to those who live like Jesus. If you want people to follow your example, live like Jesus. It is the very best way to live.

*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. People have a lot of role models these days. They look to sports figures, entertainers, politicians and successful business persons. You have the opportunity in this lesson to encourage your students to look the right way in choosing a role model.
2. You can point back to some of the things that Paul said about himself in the previous two chapters and make a list of character traits that made Paul a great role model.
3. One commentator thinks that Paul may have been saying, “Join me in imitating Jesus.” We can certainly agree that this was always on Paul’s mind.
4. Songs about God’s call, Christian service, being a good example, and serving others are appropriate. Maybe, “Lord, I want to be more like you.”
5. Pray with your students: Ask God to make you a good example. Thank God that He teaches us His ways and that when we do things according to His ways, others will see Jesus in us and want to imitate Him.
6. We are not to judge others. Jesus and Paul were very clear on that. However, Paul in this verse encourages us to look for those who are living according to Christian teaching and to follow their example.

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Student Worksheet

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=Paul didn't just say do as I say, he said ____ as I _____. Wow! How comfortable would you be if you encouraged all your _____ to live exactly as you live...to speak exactly as you _____...to treat other people as you do...to worship and serve _____ exactly like you do? And yet, Paul is _____ just exactly that right here.

=He asked the people in the church at Philippi to get _____...to form groups that followed his _____. Paul has called for unity throughout this letter. He was very concerned that the Christians at Rome be together in their Christian _____ and _____.

=He knew that if they thought together, _____ on one another and _____ God together, they were much more likely to _____.

=We are more productive, more likely to be _____ in the face of _____, if we join with other _____. That is a basic benefit of being part of a _____.

=If you are looking for a role model, look to those who live like _____. If you want people to follow your example, live like _____. It is the very best way to _____.

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.