

Philippians: Lesson #42: Emptying Ourselves Like Christ
Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children
For Wednesday, Oct. 1st

Read Phil. 1:27 – 2:18 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: Phil. 2:5 “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

A Christian’s Life Should Match the Gospel

- Some things just don’t match. They don’t go good together, kind of like peanut butter and ketchup.
- Jesus wants our lives to match the gospel. The gospel is about Jesus living for us, working for us, teaching us, and dying for us. Jesus never thought about Himself, only about what we needed. If we live selfish, it doesn’t match what the gospel teaches.
- Jesus loved the church and died for it. We should love it enough to do everything we can to stay unified with our fellow Christians in the church. It’s easy to argue with others and get upset at other people, but it takes great love, a love like Jesus had, to want to keep working together with others for the gospel.
- Christians are commanded to be like-minded, to keeping the same love, to have one spirit, to have one purpose. Parents, ask your children if they know what those mean. You might talk about your own family and how at times you may disagree, but because you love each other you have to keep working on being a happy family.

We Must Never Be Self-Centered

- What does self-centered mean? It means to think only about you and not about other people.
- We should think about other people’s feelings and what other people need.

Jesus Didn’t Act Selfish

- Jesus lived in Heaven equal with God, the Father. John 1:1 says He was “with God” and that He also “was God”. Jesus lived in His beautiful home of Heaven, and lived a glorious life.
- But when the Father wanted Jesus to come to earth and live like a man and die on a cross, Jesus did not cling to all those nice things He had in heaven. He gave them up for a while to come live like a man. He gave up His glory to live in a human body. And He also was willing to be mistreated by others and die on the cross to make a way for us to be saved.
- Paul says that Jesus emptied Himself. That means that Jesus gave up all His heavenly privileges. All this shows us that Jesus was not selfish.
- We should act like Jesus. We shouldn’t think just about ourselves or what’s good for us. We have to think about other people and what’s good for them. And sometimes that means not getting our way.

Christians Should Let Their Lights Shine

- Christians have to keep working at their salvation. They have to take it seriously.
- Christians don't belong to the devil. They are children of God.
- Christians should do everything they do without going about whispering complaints and grumbling, and arguing.
- We live around so many people who don't live God's way. Paul calls their ways crooked. Christians should be different. They should live innocent and live so that no one will be able to find fault with them. We need to let our lights shine.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Stand Firm Together

1:27 The only way you should ever live as citizens of God's kingdom is in a life that matches the gospel of Christ. That way whether I come to see you or I'm absent from you, I will hear about how you stand firm in one spirit, one soul striving together for the faith of the gospel.

What if People Are Against Us Because We Are Christians

28 And never be afraid or intimidated by those who are against you – their opposition to you only shows that they will perish, but you will have salvation, and that this all comes from God.

29-30 For God is granting you the opportunity in behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer in His behalf, experiencing the same the same kind of struggle that you saw in me, and now hear about me having.

Staying Unified

2:1-2 Now all of this being so, if there is any comfort in Christ, if there is any cheerful words of love to be spoken, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if there is any inward affection, then make my joy full by being like-minded, keeping the same love, having one spirit, one thought and purpose.

Getting the Emphasis Off of You and On to Others

3 None of you should act in ways that are selfish or promoting yourself. Nor should you act with some exaggerated view of yourself that longs for vain praise. But in humility think of each other as having more importance than you.

4 Each of you should have your attention, not on yourself, but on things of others.

Being Like Jesus

5-6 Let the same kind of thinking be in you that also was in Christ Jesus, who continually existed in the nature and character of God, but did not consider being equal with God something to be grabbed and held on to.

7 Instead, Jesus emptied Himself taking on the nature and character of a servant, and became the likeness of a man.

8 And when He was found to outwardly appear like a man, Jesus lowered Himself in humility becoming obedient even to death, even to death on the cross.

9-11 Because He did this, God has also highly exalted Him and has gladly given Him a name that is above all names so that at the name of Jesus ever knee will bow in reverence – those in heaven, those on the earth, and even those under the earth. And every tongue will openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Work at Your Salvation

12 So then, all of you that I love so much, just like you have always obeyed, not just when I was there with you, but also even more so when I've been absent, work hard to successfully accomplish your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 Show great respect remembering who we serve because it is God who is actively working in you to accomplish His will so you can do what is pleasing to Him.

Be Innocent

14 Continue to do everything without going about whispering complaints and grumbling. Also do what you do without arrogant questioning and arguing.

15-16 Live this way so that you will be innocent and that no one will be able to find fault with you. That you will be children of God without any stains or blemishes in the middle of a crooked and twisted generation. Among whom you shine as lights in the world as you hold firmly to the Word of life. By living this way, I will be able to rejoice in the Day of Christ knowing that I have not run my race and labored in vain.

Paul Was Glad to Give His Life for Others

17 But if my life is poured out like a sacrificial offering and sacrifice to serve your faith, I rejoice and rejoice with all of you.

18 And I urge you to rejoice the same way and rejoice together with me.