

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

## *Philippians: A Choice to Rejoice*

### Lesson 6: Follow Jesus' Example

**Bible Text**  
Philippians 2:5-11

#### **Memory Verse**

"The person who thinks he is important will find out how little he is worth. The person who is not trying to honor himself will be made important." (Matthew 23:12)

#### **Word List**

**attitude:** a feeling or way of thinking that affects the way someone acts

**authority:** the ability or right to control people or things

**stubborn:** refusing to change your ideas or refusing to stop doing something; difficult to deal with or to control

A middle school teacher had a very challenging student in his class. We will call this student Bill. Bill was very **stubborn**. He was often angry. He rarely got along with the teacher. He often caused trouble with other students, too. He did not show respect to his teacher or his classmates.

During one class period, Bill behaved

very badly. He yelled at the teacher. He fought with other students. Bill would not calm down. He would not stop his bad behavior. The teacher spent 30 minutes focusing on the problems Bill caused. The teacher could not teach the class. The other students could not work or learn during this time. Even the school principal could not correct Bill's behavior. It was a negative experience for the whole class.

After this problem, the teacher learned something about Bill. If Bill started the class with a good **attitude**, then class went well that day. If Bill started class with an angry attitude, problems lasted all class period.

Bill and his teachers took action to change and improve his attitude in the classroom. For example, the teacher began to talk and joke with Bill before class each day. This made Bill laugh and smile. Then things would go well during class that day. Another teacher took time to talk with Bill about his favorite sports team before class. This made a difference in Bill's attitude each day. These teachers helped Bill succeed by shaping his attitude in their classrooms.

A person's attitude can determine his or her success. The same thing is true for Christians. Paul understood this. He knew that a Christian's attitude in life is very important. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, Paul

encouraged each person to look at his or her own attitude. Paul encouraged members of the church to have the attitude of Christ.

### **Think Like Christ (Philippians 2:5-7)**

**5 Think as Christ Jesus thought.**

**6 Jesus has always been as God is. But He did not hold to His rights as God.**

**7 He put aside everything that belonged to Him and made Himself the same as a servant who is owned by someone. He became human by being born as a man.**

Attitude begins with the mind and thoughts. The thoughts you think affect your attitude. Paul saw this truth clearly. He reminded the Philippians that their thoughts would determine their attitude. He pointed to Christ as an example. He commanded the Philippians to “think as Christ Jesus thought” (v. 5). This meant that the things that were important to Jesus should also be important to the Philippian Christians.

So what was important to Jesus? Jesus became a servant (v. 7). Even though Jesus was fully God, He gave up everything that belonged to Him. He left heaven and came to earth. He left the presence of God to enter this fallen world. Jesus was God, but He became a man. He experienced the same

things all people experience. Hebrews 4:15 states that He “understands how weak we are. [He] was tempted in every way we are tempted, but He did not sin.” When He became a man, Jesus gave up “everything that belonged to Him” (v. 7). This kind of sacrifice shows that Christ was a humble servant.

As a servant, Jesus thought of others. He thought of their needs. He thought of their problems. He thought of God’s love for them. He thought of God’s plans for them. Jesus put others before Himself. Paul knew that the Philippians must think of others, too. They must think this way in order to reflect the attitude and life of Christ.

### **Be Humble Like Christ (Philippians 2:8)**

**8 After He became a man, He gave up His important place and obeyed by dying on a cross.**

As a servant, Jesus lived a humble life. Jesus dying on the cross is strongest proof of His humility. In choosing to die on the cross, Jesus obeyed God the Father. Jesus died on the cross to save people from the punishment of sin. Jesus never sinned. He did not deserve to be punished for other people’s sins. But Jesus did not focus on Himself. He did not focus on the honor and glory He deserved. Instead, He focused on others. He obeyed

God's plan. He died on the cross. He made a way for all people to be saved from the punishment of sin. Jesus was the humble servant of all mankind.

### **Bring Honor to Christ (Philippians 2:9-11)**

**9 Because of this, God lifted Jesus high above everything else. He gave Him a name that is greater than any other name.**

**10 So when the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow down before Him.**

**11 And every tongue will say Jesus Christ is Lord. Everyone will give honor to God the Father.**

God honored Jesus' obedience and sacrifice. God gave Jesus the honor and status that is above all others. Jesus is above all

people of all time and every place. In all of history, there is no greater name than the name of Jesus (v. 9). Jesus' high honor will never end and will have no limits.

Paul stated that "everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow down before [Jesus]" (v. 10). The act of bowing shows an understanding of power and authority. The idea that all people will bow down before Jesus shows His power. It shows Jesus has the full **authority** of God. Because Jesus has God's strong authority, He is called "Lord" (v. 11). Other words for *Lord* are *master, boss, ruler, or king*. Jesus' obedience and suffering brought Him much honor, glory, and power. Even more, God the Father is honored when people see Jesus' power.

When Christians live humbly, they show the attitude of Christ. A Christian's acts of service point to Jesus' power in his or her life. When Christians show Jesus' great power, they bring honor to God Himself. Paul's words reminded the Philippians that this is God's will for all Christians.

### **Things to Think About**

1. *A person's attitude determines his or her success.* Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
2. How do we know that being a servant was important to Jesus?
3. Define *humility* in your own words.
4. Tell about a time that obedience to God brought you honor or reward.
5. Think about a struggle you are facing. What would it look like to follow Jesus' example in this struggle?

### **Things to Remember**

Paul's letter encouraged the church in Philippi by pointing them to Jesus. He urged them to follow Jesus's strong example. The church needed to grow in love, service, and humility. These things would make them stronger. These things would keep them

united. These things would help them to honor God.

Love, service, and humility are the marks of a person who follows Jesus. If Christians follow this example, they will find true joy. They will also bring joy to others. Paul knew this was true.

Paul experienced this joy in his own life. He experienced this joy even as he wrote this letter while he was a prisoner in Rome. As a Roman prisoner, Paul showed love to those who guarded him. He served the Christians in Philippi by praying for them and writing to encourage them. He did not think about his own troubles. Instead, he humbly served those around him. Paul followed the example of Christ even when things were hard in his life.

What hard things are you facing? In your troubles, are you following Jesus' example like Paul did? Are you thinking the way Jesus thought? Are you acting with humility instead of feeling sorry for yourself? Are you honoring Christ by obeying God in the middle of your suffering? Be encouraged by Jesus' example and live like He did. When you do, "you are standing under the powerful hand of God. At the right time He will lift you up" (1 Peter 5:6). Remember that God gave Jesus much honor and glory at the right time. He will reward you, too!

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