

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Devotional 1



### Read Philippians 1:3-11

As Paul is writing his letter to the church at Philippi, he expresses great joy and a special place in his heart for them. With Paul being far away in prison, you would almost think he was a little homesick for the place. However, when Paul first visited Philippi, things didn't feel so joyous. Paul was scourged and thrown into the stocks for preaching the gospel and saw little of the fruits of his labor. But somehow, he remembers the church at Philippi with great joy!

Have you ever heard a mother talk about what giving birth is like? It's not an easy thing. And yet the thing you'll hear most is what a joyous occasion it was. You were worth it! Paul looks at his sufferings in Philippi with joy because he was suffering for Christ, and through his labors God moved in a mighty way among the Philippians. Paul is excited because he is writing to fellow believers, brothers, and sisters in Christ. They are his peers now. He'll always be there to pray for them and support them but he's encouraged by their love for the Lord and the growth that they have experienced in his absence.

Your parents find joy in the man or woman you have grown into. Even though they will not always be with you they will continue to pray and support you. The fruits of their labor as parents have been fulfilled in you. Paul wasn't leaving the Philippians all alone, just like your parents aren't leaving you. But it is a great comfort to see that you are continuing to grow on your own.

It's important to note that the Philippians continued to grow in their relationship with the Lord even when Paul wasn't there. You are fast approaching the time that you will be away from your parents more than you are with them. It is your responsibility to continue growing in your love and understanding for the Lord on your own.

It's never too early to begin to think and pray about how you are going to challenge yourself to grow spiritually when you move away from home. If you are moving away for school or work, pray and begin to search for a church and a group of peers that will support you and help hold you accountable.

### **Parents:**

Talk with your son or daughter about the feelings you have as you see them grow into manhood or womanhood. Pray with them and encourage them that even though your relationship is changing, you will always be there when they need you.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Devotional 2



### Philippians 2:12-13

*<sup>12</sup> So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. <sup>13</sup> For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*

Paul was in prison at the time he was writing this letter to the church at Philippi. He was encouraged by their faith and the fact that God was continuing to work in their lives even in his absence. You have come to the point in your life where the full weight of your spiritual walk has come to rest squarely upon your shoulders. Just like the Philippians, it is up to you to "work out your own salvation". That means the buck stops with you.

Paul adds an even greater weight to that thought when he tells them to work out their salvation with "fear and trembling". He's not talking about running away in fright, he's talking about approaching your faith with great respect and reverence, being cautious and diligent. Fear is not always a bad thing. If you are walking through the desert where you know rattlesnakes are everywhere, your natural fear of not wanting to be bitten will make you more cautious as you go.

You'll be more prepared than if you aren't paying attention, carelessly stepping in obvious places that a snake might be lurking.

This time in your life can be exciting and scary all at the same time. Your eagerness to be independent is mixed with the fear of being on your own. How's that for a paradox?! In verse 13 Paul gives encouragement to the Philippians by writing, "For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." Paul sees that they are continuing to grow in faith even when he is not with them and their desire to do so is evidence that God is truly at work in their lives.

Take the time to pray and examine your spiritual walk up to this point. Have you been going through the motions because it's what others expected of you? Take ownership of your faith. What is your plan to continue your walk with the Lord after you leave home?

### **Parents:**

Encourage your son or daughter as they take ownership of their walk with the Lord. Pray for them and let them know that you are there to help them during this time of change in their lives.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Devotional 3



### Read Philippians 2:14-18

*"This little light of mine... I'm gonna let it shine."* Most of us know that children's song. *"Hide it under a bushel... NO! I'm gonna let it shine."* But even a children's song can have profound truths. Paul tells the Philippians that in a world of a "crooked and twisted generation", they will shine like lights in the world.

### Matthew 5:16

*<sup>16</sup> Even so, let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

The bible doesn't tell us to act a certain way so people will notice we're a good person. The bible tells us that when God is working in us and we show that through our actions and how we deal with everyday life, He is glorified. In John 8:18 Jesus says, *"I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life."* You see it's not our own light that people should see, it's Jesus they should see radiating through us.

When Paul tells the Philippians to *"Do all things without grumbling or questioning"* he's letting them know that people are watching. People can see through disingenuous behavior. If you talk one way, but live another, attention is brought to you, not to Christ.

As you go out into life, whether in school, work, or everyday relationships, ask yourself if you are set apart as a light in the world? Can people see that there is something different about you? Paul in verse 16 says that to do this we must, *"hold on to the Word of Life"*. The word of life is the Gospel. By sincerely living out the Gospel in our daily lives, we can shine as lights in the world. People will naturally be drawn to you as they see something different in you. Be prepared to tell them that that *"something"* is Jesus.

### Parents:

Spend a special time of prayer with your son or daughter. Pray for their continued walk with the Lord as they go out into the world. Give praise to God for the man or woman of God they have become.