

THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST PHILIP

Unlike James and John, the "Sons of Thunder," Philip is less of a fireball than his co-apostles (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18). Yet, Philip is listed right along with the other 10 faithful apostles at Pentecost in Acts 1:13.

Philip is only referred to a few times within the Biblical text. However, we can learn some important lessons from this apostle.

First, we learn some people just need to be asked. Philip's initial encounter with Jesus is different from Andrew and John's (John 1:35-43). Herbert Lockyer in his *All the Men of the Bible* explains, "Unlike Andrew and John, Philip did not approach Jesus, but waited till He accosted him and invited him to join him to join His company. Andrew and John found Jesus—Jesus found Philip..." (p. 274).

As Christians, some people will come to us seeking to learn more about Christianity. Co-workers may ask us about our religious beliefs, family members may question our faith and visitors may curiously walk in the doors of the church building.

Yet, in many cases, people are waiting for us to talk about Christ to them. Philip, as an apostle, has such a disposition. Like Philip, great disciples of Christ are out there. Some of them are just waiting to be asked!

Second, Philip needed the strength of his companions. John 1:44 notes Philip was "from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." Immediately following this verse, Philip goes to his friend Nathanael and says, "We have found Him... Jesus of Nazareth" (1:45).

Note Philip uses the pronoun "We" as he talks to his friend. Could it be Philip was referring to his two friends from Bethsaida as he appealed to Nathanael? Some disciples can stand alone more easily than others. However, some are strengthened by the fact others share their faith. Philip was not just one loony disciple who lost it. Other intelligent friends were being convinced of this important message too and shared his belief.

Third, we see excellent traits of the personal evangelist in Philip. Further notice the

approach of Philip toward his friend, Nathanael, in John 1:45-46, "Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' And Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.'"

In Philip's remarks to his friend he cuts right to the chase. He points out he has found the Messiah written about in "Moses and the prophets." His appeal is based on logic and reason, not feelings or selfish motives. The idea Philip presents is you can talk to this guy and learn He meets the prophetic requirements of the Savior of the world!

As Nathanael questions Philip, his response is beautiful saying, "Come and see." Philip does not just say "take my word for it." Instead, he asks Nathanael to take the time to search out the claim for himself. The least any honest person can do is give Christ a hearing—a chance to state His case and consider.



So many of our friends and neighbors live without purpose and without Christ because no one has talked to them about it. We may be missing out on valuable disciples because we are too afraid to ask!

Yet, after we obey the gospel call, we should not underestimate the importance of our Christian friends. Knowing others share our faith and values can be an encouraging, empowering concept. For this reason, it is important for us to assemble with our brethren on a regular basis so we are encouraged and "stirred up" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Finally, may we appeal to the lost world on the basis of facts, not feelings. We do not want you to follow Christ because we have an eloquent preacher, a nice church facility or friendly people. Instead, we want you to come to Christ because He is the Son of God and there are facts to prove it. Like Philip, we ask you to "Come and see." Like Nathanael, we hope you'll take the time to examine the evidence and make a decision. *Joshua R. Welch*