

Devotions For Students

Lesson 3: The Church United

DAY 1

Take a second and read Philippians 2:1-4. Here Paul gives us a command and then he gives us the way to implement that command.

First, find the command. (Hint: It's in vs. 2) See it? What is the command? That's right, the command is to be unified, like-minded, united in purpose. That's pretty cool, as far as commands go.

See, Paul was interested in one thing: spreading the Gospel. And Paul knew that for a church to be effective, it had to be on the same page. It doesn't mean we all have to have the same personalities, or be copies of one another. It simply means that everyone has to be motivated by the same purpose.

Now, look and see where Paul spoke to implementing the command. Where do you see him talk about how we're to go about doing this? (Hint: vs. 3) Got it? Paul basically says to be unified, and then he says, "here's how you do it." Paul states that to be on the same page, we have to be willing to put our own agendas second. We can't look after ourselves and still be united with others. We have to live humbly and seek to put other's needs above ourselves.

It might seem counterintuitive. But if you think about it, if everyone did this, we would definitely all be unified in how we are to reach the world. All the selfishness would disappear. And the only thing that would matter is being on mission for God.

Think About This . . .

1. OK, so, does this seem like a reality for you and your group? Could you see your youth group ever truly being unified?
2. Why is it so hard to put others before ourselves?

3. What are some sticking points for you? Those areas that you are inclined to be "me first" about? How can you work toward surrendering some of these to Christ?

DAY 2

What are you passionate about? What gets you fired up? What issue or activity gets your energy flowing? Write your answer below, in your journal, or on your device's note taking app.

Now, can you name three of four people in your youth group who share your interest?

It's fun to have people in our corner. It's always better to share experiences with others, especially when you're doing something fun. But let's take this a step further. How would you define God's call on your life, in your own words? Write your answer below, in your journal, or on your device's note taking app.

OK, now let's wrap this up . . . How often have you and your friends in your youth group worked together to carry out God's call on your lives, as you defined it above? Is this a question that feels weird to you? If so, maybe it's because you don't see your youth group the way Paul described the Church.

You are called to be unified in vision. That means all being on the same page for how you can work together to share the Gospel with those who need it most. If you don't see yourself and your friends like this, maybe you should pray that God would help you move toward this concept.

DAY 3

Read this quote:

“We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus’ claims are true and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians.” - *Francis Schaeffer*

Ouch. Seriously. This quote stings a bit doesn’t it? After all, it’s true.

If the world judged how true the Gospel was by the way in which you treated your fellow Christ-followers in your church, what would that say about the Gospel?

What if you were judged by how you treated other Christ-followers from other denominations?

There is no denying it: many of us have a long way to go in this area. What can you do today to be ore unified with your Christian friends? Start with prayer: Pray that God would convict you of your attitude and your actions toward your Christian friends. Then, extend this to other Christ-followers in other churches. It’s important. And people will form their opinions about Christ based on the actions of the Church.

What do your actions say?

DAY 4

Over the next couple of days, pay attention to how you interact with people who you know are not Christ-followers, but who know that you are.

Does that make sense?

As you engage with people who know that you identify as a Christian, think about your interactions with them, especially if they are people who do not believe in God.

What do your actions and words say to them about Christ’s ability to transform you into His likeness?

Make it a point to pay attention to these interactions. Let them teach you about where you are in terms of your life being used to draw others to Christ.

DAY 5

As this is the final day of devotions for this week, take a few minutes and use the space below to express your thoughts to God, especially as they pertain to what you’ve learned about the Church.

Write a prayer. Draw a picture. Ask questions. Whatever you do, take this time to express to God your understanding of the Church and how your understanding has changed the way you know and relate to Him.

