

CHRIST'S LIFE IN THE BELIEVER

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. Follow this procedure to meet the needs of your students.

Lesson Aim: Challenge believers to magnify Christ in their bodies whether it be by life or by death.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson and insert the questions and answers given below for class discussion or for specific application

Introduction: Paul was in Rome awaiting his trial before Caesar. He did not know if he would be set free or be sentenced to death, but he determined to magnify Christ by witnessing to the Roman guards about the gospel of Christ; many of them received Christ as their Savior. He wrote in his letter to the church in Philippi: "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Phil. 1:20).

Here are five areas by which believers can magnify Christ in their bodies:

1. They can magnify Him by PRAISE — 1:1-8.

Paul praised God (both the Father and Jesus Christ) for the believers at Philippi - 1:2-3. He was confident and joyful regarding the salvation these believers had received through Jesus Christ - 1:4-6. He loved these believers, who shared in his grace, and he longed for them with the love of Christ - 1:7-8. We need to praise God for His great salvation, and especially for those who have accepted Christ through our witness. This will magnify Christ by our lips.

2. They can magnify Him by PRAYER — 1:9-11.

Paul prayed for four blessings to be given to the believers at Philippi, all of which would magnify Christ. (1) He wanted them to have **love** that overflowed in their lives. This love would be characterized by knowledge and judgment: a knowledge of God's Word and a judgment to act upon it with holiness - 1:9. (2) He wanted them to have **discernment** by approving (testing) things to discover that which is best - 1:10. (3) He wanted them to be **pure and blameless** by being genuine Christians who conducted themselves as stepping-stones and not as stumbling-blocks - 1:10. (4) He desired them to be filled with the **fruits of righteousness** - 1:11. We need these blessings in our own lives, if we are going to magnify Christ. Furthermore, we need to pray that God will impart these blessings to our converts and fellow Christians.

3. They can magnify Him by PERSISTENCE — 1:12-20.

Paul's imprisonment gave him an opportunity to preach Christ to Caesar's elite guards who were chained to him 24 hours a day with a different guard every six hours - 1:12-13. His imprisonment inspired many believers to preach Christ boldly - 1:14-18. Some preached with wrong motives, and others with right motives, but Paul rejoiced in either case because Christ was preached. He was confident that he would be vindicated and delivered from his imprisonment and also from this mistreatment by certain believers - 1:19-20. Nevertheless, he wanted Christ to be magnified in his body, whether it was by life or by death. We can magnify Christ by our persistence, by refusing to get discouraged, by seeing God's hand of blessing in every trial.

4. They can magnify Him by having PURPOSE — 1:21-26.

Paul had a fourfold purpose in life or death. (1) His purpose in life was to live for Christ - 1:21. (2) His purpose in death was to be a gain for Christ, for believers, and for himself - 1:21. (3) His purpose was to help believers rather than please himself - 1:22-24. (4) His purpose was to cause believers to overflow with joy in Christ - 1:25-26. We will do well if we have the lofty purposes of Paul in our lives. Such purposes will certainly magnify Christ.

5. They can magnify Him by being PRUDENT — 1:27-30.

Paul wanted the believers to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. This would demand that (1) they be steadfast - "stand fast" - 1:27; (2) they be united - "one spirit ... one mind" - 1:27; (3) they be zealous - "striving" - 1:27; (4) they be bold - "in nothing terrified" - 1:28; and (5) they offer for Christ's sake - 1:29. We need to conduct ourselves in a prudent manner, if we are going to magnify Christ in our lives.