

LESSON 4

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Philippians 2:12–30



1 List some of the shining stars of the faith today. Why do they stand out from the crowd? In what ways do you wish you were more like them?



Read Philippians 2:12–30, the chart “Three Stages of Perfection,” and the following notes:

☐ 2:12 ☐ 2:13 ☐ 2:14–16 ☐ 2:17 ☐ 2:19 ☐ 2:23 ☐ 2:25

2 What examples of crookedness and perversity might we have expected to find in Philippi at the time of this letter?

3 What do we know about Timothy and his relationship with Paul? How had Timothy proved himself as a servant of Christ?

4 In what ways had Epaphroditus proven himself?

5 What does it take to become a Christian who shines out in the world?



Paul encourages the Philippian believers to let their “lives shine brightly” (2:15) in a dark world. Then he mentions Timothy and Epaphroditus as outstanding examples. When people give themselves fully to the Lord’s service, there is something unavoidably attractive about them. They stand out like beacons of light in a dark sky. Jesus said we are “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). How brightly do you shine?

6 How do complaining and arguing dim our light?

7 Read the chart “Three Stages of Perfection.” Summarize what each stage means, what Christ has done, and what we must do.

<i>What this means</i> <i>Perfect relationship</i>	<i>What Christ has done/will do</i> <i>Perfect progress</i>	<i>What we must do</i> <i>Completely perfect</i>



8 What prevents you from becoming a shining example of a Christian? What external barriers hinder you? What internal barriers must you overcome?

9 How should we honor those who exhibit fine character and attain the high standards of servant leadership? What would probably be most meaningful to them?

10 In your church, who is most effective in discipling others toward effective Christian living? What can you learn from his or her approach to developing others?

11 What steps can your church take to help exceptional servants reproduce themselves?

12 Who in your own church is a good example of servanthood? How can you learn from that person?

13 What character qualities of Timothy or Epaphroditus would you like to develop in your life?

14 What dims or blocks your light from shining more brightly for Christ?



15 What can you do to brighten your light or remove the barrier? What could you ask God to do?

A How can we put into action God's work in our life? What keeps this from being simply a form of works-based righteousness? What does the phrase "with deep reverence and fear" (2:12) mean in relation to how we ought to translate our faith into action?

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B How do arguing and complaining hinder our spiritual growth?

C What does Paul mean when he describes himself as being "poured out like a drink offering" (2:17)? How might you give your life for someone else?

D How is it possible to rejoice when we are suffering?

E What does it mean to "hold tightly to the word of life" (2:16)?