
WHAT ARE YOU KNOWN FOR

Read: Philippians 2:25

In the Roman Empire, pagans would often call on the name of a god or goddess as they placed bets in a game of chance. A favorite deity of the gambler was Aphrodite, the Greek word for Venus, the goddess of love. During the roll of the dice, they would say “epaphroditus!” literally, “by Aphrodite!”

In the book of Philippians we read of a Greek convert to the Christian faith by the name of Epaphroditus. He was a close companion of Paul who served him well in his missionary enterprise. Of his friend, Paul wrote: “Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier” (Phil. 2:25). Epaphroditus was a spiritual brother in Christ, a faithful worker who shared ministry efforts, a brave soldier of the faith, and the carrier of the inspired letter to the church at Philippi. He modeled brotherhood, a work ethic, spiritual endurance, and service. Certainly, Epaphroditus had a well-deserved reputation that showed he did not live by a pagan deity but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Even more important than our name are the Christian qualities that are seen in our life: dependability, care, encouragement, and wisdom. What words would you like others to use to describe you?

Application:

1. It’s been said before that actions speak louder than words. What would people say of you based on your actions?

2. How does faith in Jesus influence your actions and reactions?

Humble Valor

Read: Philippians 2:29

A report by the *Chicago Tribune* said: “Scores of Americans, from clergymen to lawyers to CEOs, are claiming medals of valor they never earned.” Fabrication of war records and bogus claims of bravery are more widespread than imagined. One man, who falsely claimed a Navy Cross, later felt shame and said that real heroes rarely talk about what they’ve done.

Heroism is marked by an unselfish risking of life for the benefit of another. In Philippians, Paul commends two of his colleagues as true heroes of the faith. Timothy’s unselfishness and proven character gained Paul’s praise as a true son who had served with him in the gospel (2:22). And Paul described Epaphroditus as “my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier” (v.25) who risked his life for the work of Christ (v.30). Paul told the believers in Philippi to “hold such men in esteem” (v.29). Honoring fellow believers for their unselfish service to God is a biblical mandate. It is not hero worship, but an attitude of respect for a life well lived.

Through a word of encouragement or a tangible expression of appreciation, who can you honor today for their humble valor in serving the Lord and helping others in His name?

Application:

1. Who can you honor for their service to the Lord today?

2. Name a way that you can encourage your pastors and spiritual leaders:

True Sacrifice

Read: Philippians 2:30

Teenagers amaze me. So many of them love life with grand passion and face it with unrelenting optimism. Sometimes they demonstrate the Christian life in ways adults can only hope to emulate. Such is the case with Carissa, a teen who loves soccer, basketball, friends, family, and Jesus. In 2000, her mother was diagnosed with cancer. Carissa was just 12 years old, but she began helping to care for her mom.

During the next few years, Carissa often fed her mom, dressed her, and helped her do anything she couldn't do for herself. "It was so hard to learn," she said. "Can you imagine, a mother and daughter literally changing roles? I truly learned to be a humble servant." Sometimes, while her friends were out having fun, Carissa was helping her dad to take care of her mom. She continued to do so until the summer of 2004, when Carissa and her family said goodbye to Mom for the last time. As Carissa puts it, "God took her home and made her perfect."

Carissa reminds me of Epaphroditus, who sacrificially cared for Paul's needs ([Philippians 2:25-30](#)). What examples of caring, love, and compassion! Not all of us, of course, could set aside our lives to give as they did. But their sacrifice can teach us all about the value of servanthood.

Application:

1. Service is an essential part of the Christian life. How can you serve in your church this week?

2. Service is not limited to Sundays and Wednesdays. How can you serve other people throughout the week (home, school, work, etc...)

Author: Dave Branon

Becoming What We Are

Read: Philippians 3:1-11

At a British university, a group of students had raised the question, "What do you want to be?" Different answers were given—a champion athlete, an influential politician, a noted scholar. Shyly, yet clearly, one student said something that caused thoughtful silence: "You may laugh at me, but I want to be a saint."

Imagine—a saint! Whatever his concept of sainthood, many in our secular society would view that ambition as eccentric. Yet if we are Christians, it ought to be the highest priority of our life. The essence of sainthood is simply to be like Jesus. Paul said that the overarching purpose of God the Father is to make us like His Son ([Romans 8:29](#)). Of course, every believer is guaranteed perfect conformity to Christ in the world to come. But God does not want us to wait passively until we enter heaven for that supernatural transformation to take place ([1 John 3:2](#)). We are to be cooperating with the Holy Spirit to grow more and more like Christ "in this world" (4:17).

Yes, we are already saints by faith in Christ Jesus ([Philippians 1:1](#)). But each day we face the challenge of becoming what we are—Christlike in every area of our lives.

Application:

1. What is the first thought that comes into your mind when the word "saint" is mentioned?

2. If sainthood isn't a future thing but a present reality, how - according to this devotional - can we practice our sainthood?

Author: Vernon Ground

What's the Cost

Read: Philippians 3:7

Years ago when Romania was under the control of Communism, Bela Karolyi coached gymnastics. He skillfully developed the talents of stars such as gold-medalist Nadia Comaneci. For his success in training athletes who were bringing fame to his Iron Curtain country, he was rewarded with an expensive car and many other favors. But Bela hungered for freedom. So one day, carrying only a small suitcase, he resolutely walked out of Romania into penniless liberty.

There's also a cost in following Jesus and experiencing the freedom He gives. When fishermen Peter and Andrew heard Jesus call, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men," they "immediately left their nets and followed Him" ([Matt. 4:19-20](#)). Similarly, James and John left their father and their livelihood to embark on a precarious life of discipleship. They knew the cost and chose to follow Jesus, leaving everything behind (vv.21-22).

What an example for all of us who claim to be disciples of Jesus! He said, "Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" ([Luke 14:27](#)). Are we willing to make sacrifices—major and minor—for our Lord? Let's respond to the Savior's invitation, "Follow Me," not merely in word but in action.

Application:

1. Name three things that following Jesus might cost you?

2. Why do you think many people resist totally following Jesus?
