



Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

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## The Apostles, Philip and Thomas

### Lesson #5

Lesson #33 (overall)

### Philip

Philip the Apostle was one of the earliest followers of Jesus Christ. Some scholars speculate that Philip was first a disciple of John the Baptist, because he lived in the region where John preached.

Like Peter and Peter's brother Andrew, Philip was a Galilean, from the village of Bethsaida. It's probable they knew one another and were friends.

Jesus issued a personal call to Philip: "Follow me." (John 1:43, NIV). The interesting thing about Philip, one of the Twelve, is that he was personally reached by Jesus himself. While Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus, and Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, no one brought

Philip to Jesus. Instead, Jesus came right to him. John's Gospel tells us, "The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow Me' " (John 1:43). Normally God reaches people through people, but this was an exception to the rule.

Leaving his old life behind, Philip answered the call. He may have been among the disciples with Jesus at the wedding feast in Cana, when Christ performed his first miracle, turning water into wine.

Philip recruited the skeptical Nathanael (Bartholomew) as an apostle, leading Jesus to reveal that he supernaturally saw Nathanael sitting under a fig tree, even before Philip called him.

In the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus tested Philip by asking him where they could buy bread for so many people. Limited by his earthbound experience, Philip replied that eight months' wages would not be enough to buy each person one bite. It also would appear from John's account of the Feeding of the Five Thousand that Philip may have been in charge of the supplies and food, the road manager of sorts. He was the kind of guy who was practical, always thinking about the bottom line.

The last we hear of Philip the Apostle is in the book of Acts, at Jesus' ascension and the Day of Pentecost. Another Philip is mentioned in Acts, a deacon and evangelist, but he is a different person.

Tradition says Philip the Apostle preached in Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and was martyred by stoning, there at Hierapolis.

### *PHILIP THE APOSTLE'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS*

Philip learned the truth about the kingdom of God at the feet of Jesus, then preached the gospel after Jesus' resurrection and ascension.

### *PHILIP'S STRENGTHS*

Philip fervently sought the Messiah and recognized that Jesus was the promised Savior, even though he did not fully understand until after Jesus' resurrection.

### *PHILIP'S WEAKNESSES*

Like the other apostles, Philip deserted Jesus during his trial and crucifixion.

### *LIFE LESSONS FROM PHILIP THE APOSTLE*

Starting with John the Baptist, Philip sought the path to salvation, which led him to Jesus Christ. Eternal life in Christ is available to anyone who desires it.

### *HOMETOWN*

Bethsaida, in Galilee.

### *REFERENCED IN THE BIBLE*

Philip is mentioned in the lists of the 12 apostles in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. References to him in the Gospel of John include: 1:43, 45-46, 48; 6:5, 7; 12:21-22; 14:8-9; and Acts 1:13.

### *OCCUPATION:*

Early life unknown, apostle of Jesus Christ.

### *KEY VERSES*

John 1:45

Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (NIV)

John 6:5-7

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" (NIV)

John 14:8-9 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (NIV)

## **Thomas**

The Apostle Thomas was not present when the risen Jesus first appeared to the disciples. When told by the others, "We have seen the Lord," Thomas replied that he would not believe it unless he could actually touch Jesus' wounds. Jesus later presented himself to the apostles and invited Thomas to inspect his wounds.

Thomas was also present with the other disciples at the Sea of Galilee when Jesus appeared to them again.

Although it is not used in the Bible, the nickname "Doubting Thomas" was given to this disciple because of his disbelief about the resurrection. People who are skeptical are sometimes referred to as a "Doubting Thomas."

### ***APOSTLE THOMAS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS***

The Apostle Thomas traveled with Jesus and learned from him for three years. Tradition holds that he carried the gospel to the east and was martyred for his faith.

## *THOMAS' STRENGTHS*

When Jesus' life was at risk by returning to Judea after Lazarus had died, the Apostle Thomas courageously told his fellow disciples they should go with Jesus, no matter what the danger.

## *THOMAS' WEAKNESSES*

Like the other disciples, Thomas deserted Jesus during the crucifixion. Despite listening to Jesus' teaching and seeing all his miracles, Thomas demanded physical proof that Jesus had risen from the dead.

His faith was based solely on what he could touch and see for himself.

## *LIFE LESSONS*

All of the disciples, except John, deserted Jesus at the cross. They misunderstood and doubted Jesus, but the Apostle Thomas is singled out in the gospels because he put his doubt into words.

It is worth noting that Jesus did not scold Thomas for his doubt.

In fact, Jesus invited Thomas to touch his wounds and see for himself.

Today, millions of people stubbornly want to witness miracles or see Jesus in person before they will believe in him, but God asks us to come to him in faith. God provides the Bible, with eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life, crucifixion and resurrection to strengthen our faith.

In response to the Apostle Thomas' doubts, Jesus said that those who believe in Christ as Savior without seeing him—that's us—are blessed.

## *HOMETOWN*

Unknown.

## *REFERENCES TO THE APOSTLE THOMAS IN THE BIBLE*

Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; John 11:16, 14:5, 20:24-28, 21:2; Acts 1:13.

## *OCCUPATION*

The Apostle Thomas' occupation before he met Jesus is unknown. After Jesus' ascension, he became a Christian missionary.

## *FAMILY TREE*

Thomas has two names in the New Testament. Thomas, in Greek, and Didymus, in Aramaic, both meaning "twin." Scripture does not give the name of his twin, nor any other information about his family tree.

## *KEY VERSES*

John 11:16

Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (NIV)

John 20:27-29

Then he (Jesus) said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (NIV)

## Application/Activity

Philip and Thomas can both be summed up with two words, faith and doubt. These two are opposites of each other yet go hand in hand. Our activity this week is to spend time in prayer with God. Ask Him to reveal the areas in our lives where we doubt God. What areas are we withholding from God for a multitude of reasons? What areas do we doubt that God can help? Also, pray for God to reveal the areas of your life where your faith is strong. Praise God for those areas and pray that God will continue to keep your faith strong.