

Philip: The Analytical Administrator Transformed for Team Jesus (Luke 6:12-14)

(12) In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. (13) And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: (14) Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip... (Luke 6:12-14)

1. See additional notes below for detailed information about Philip (bottom of page).

(43) ...He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." (44) Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. (45) Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (46) Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." (Jn 1:43-46)

1. Jesus found us, we did not find Him. Jesus pursued us, even when we were not pursuing Him. Jesus called us, and He called us to follow Him with all our heart, with our entire lives.
2. As we follow Jesus we listen to His instruction. He becomes our teacher and Lord. We follow His example in the way we live, talk, listen, emote, love, hate, etc. He becomes our model and our King.
3. Followers of Jesus call others to follow Jesus. We start with our friends and family, and then move on to our neighbors, our coworkers, and the nations. We: 1. Share the Word with them (Evangelism) 2. Show the Word to them (model the Christian life) 3. Teach the Word to them (Discipleship) 4. And Serve the World with them.
4. Who are we inviting to "come and see?" Who is our "Nathanael?" Will you invite people to learn more about Jesus from you, the body of Christ, and the Word of Christ discussed, read, taught, lived out, and preached? How are you getting people around the Word, around Christ?
5. Are you teaching your children and/or other children the Law and the Prophets (The Old Testament)? Philip was prepared to see Jesus for who He was because of his understanding of the Old Testament.

(5) Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" (6) He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. (7) Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." (Jn 6:5-7)

1. Sometimes God will put us in a situation that we can't fix in our own strength, wisdom, and action. The test is to see what is in our hearts. God already knows what's in our hearts, but we don't always know what's there. The test brings what's in our hearts to the surface.
2. God already has a plan for our future problems. Will we look to Him and trust Him when they come?
3. Some of us are more tempted than others to try to figure things out on our own. Philip analyzed the situation, counted the people, counted the money, and counted the cost. But, he had not taken into full consideration who was with Him and who Jesus really was, and what Jesus could really do.

(20) Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. (21) So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." (22) Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. (Jn 12:20-22)

1. When it comes to seeing others meet and come to know Jesus, don't let anything get in the way. Jesus will welcome any who come to Him with a sincere heart, and so should we.
2. God has designed our gifts to be used so that others might come to know Him, not to keep them from Him.

(6) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (7) If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." (8) Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." (9) Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? (10) Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. (11) Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. (Jn 14:6-11)

1. Philip followed Jesus for 3 years and he still did not understand the fullness of who He was.
2. When we understand Jesus rightly we will recognize that He is the only way to God and the only way to know God as Father. We will also recognize that Jesus is fully God, fully divine, and that He and the Father are 1. Jesus is God and is worthy of our worship.

(16) You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. (Jn 15:16)

(37) All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out... (44) No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ... (65) And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."... (Jn 6: 37, 44, 65)

(25) And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe... (Luke 24:25)

(19) ...the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" (20) He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you." (Matt 17:19-20)

Additional Notes:

1. Philip is known by some as the "bean counter" of the group. Of the 4 lists of the 12 apostles (Matt., Mr., Lk., Acts), the 5th name on every list is Philip. Jesus divided the apostles into 3 groups of 4. Since Philip's name is listed 1st in the 2nd group of 4, he was probably the leader of the 2nd group, like Peter was the leader of the 1st group.

2. Philip is a Greek name that means “lover of horses.” He probably had a Jewish name also, but we do not know it. Philip probably came from a family of Hellenistic Jews, that is a group of Jews who had adopted Greek culture, customs, and language.
3. Philip the apostle is not the same Philip that we see in the book of Acts who was a deacon and evangelists. Historians have sometimes confused these two men.
4. Philip was from Bethsaida, the same city in Galilee that Andrew and Peter were from. They were probably good friends growing up, and probably even went to the same synagogue together. Philip was more than likely also good friends with James and John before they all started following Jesus. All of these men probably worked together as well since Philip was probably a professional fisherman also. Jesus chose this group of close knit men who already knew each other and got along with each other well.
5. Philip was a common and ordinary man. He did not have exceptional natural gifts, talents, and abilities. Jesus would gift, train, and empower him to do more than he could have ever done on his own.
6. Matthew, Mark, and Luke give us no details about Philip beyond his name. But in The Gospel of John we learn a few things about him. He was a completely different kind of person from Peter, James, John, and Andrew. Philip was unique among the disciples. His gifts were needed on Team Jesus, and people like him are needed today.
7. *Philip was a classic “process person.” He was a facts-and-figures guy, a by-the-book man, practical minded, non-forward-thinking type of individual. He was the kind of man that tended to be a corporate killjoy, pessimistic, narrowly focused, sometimes missing the big picture, a “it can’t be done” kind of person. He was predisposed to be a pragmatist and a cynic, and sometimes a defeatist rather than a visionary.
8. He was the first of the apostles that Jesus called to Himself with the language of “follow me.” Jesus came looking for him, Jesus found him, Jesus physically sought him out. Philip’s natural tendency might have been to hold back from following Jesus, doubt, ask questions, and wait before he followed fully. But God was so evidently and powerfully at work in his heart that he responded immediately in faith.
9. When Jesus called Philip he immediately went and found one of his friends named Nathanael (Bartholomew) and introduced him to Jesus. His evangelism toward his friends was immediate.
10. Philip was a student of God’s Word in the Old Testament (Law and Prophets). He was a man that was looking for the Messiah when the Messiah came looking for him. He was searching for answers with an open heart and open eyes.
11. Friendships are fertile soil for evangelism because love and trust already exist in them.
12. *Sometimes Philip was a man of weak faith. As the probable apostolic administrator (bean counter) it is likely that he was charged with arranging meals and logistics for the entire group. He was probably the apostle that coordinated, acquired, and distributed food and supplies. He was a man of organization and protocol, and everything had to fit into its place and category. He had an administrative personality.
13. In the feeding of the 5,000 plus Jesus was testing Philip to show him what was really in his heart, what he was really like. Philip had probably already started counting heads and money, he was already doing estimates. He had thought through the difficulty of food supply with so many people following them at this time. Rather than seeing the great teaching opportunity before them and Jesus, he saw the impossibility of the food situation. From a purely human perspective he was right. His thoughts were pessimistic, analytical, and pragmatic. His thoughts at this moment were completely materialistic and earthbound. To be a leader he would have to become more visionary and faith-filled over time. But now, Philip was obsessed with mundane matters and overwhelmed by the impossibility of the immediate problem. He knew too much arithmetic to be adventurous. The reality of the raw facts clouded his faith. He was so obsessed with the temporal predicament that he was oblivious to the transcendental possibilities that lay in Jesus’ power. He was so enthralled with the common-sense calculations that he didn’t see the opportunity the situation presented. He should have trusted in Jesus to provide in this moment, especially since he had already seen Jesus’ power time and time again. He should have remained open to the supernatural, but he only saw the colossal size of the natural logistical problem. Everything seemed impossible to him. He needed to set aside his materialistic, pragmatic, common-sense concerns and learn to lay hold of the supernatural potential of faith in Jesus.
14. There were also times that Philip’s over-analytical temperament was too concerned with methods and protocol and he lacked boldness and vision. He became too timid and too apprehensive at times. As an administrative type he probably carried around in his head a full manual of protocols and procedures. He may have actually had a written policy manual, which he fastidiously devised and insisted on following to the letter. He was probably a real by-the-book kind of person. He was the apostle that may have arranged Jesus’ meetings as we see in the visit of the Greeks in John 12.
15. We must know the difference between general principles and ironclad law. People like Philip don’t appreciate general rules of thumb because they want every rule to be rigid and inviolable. If there was no protocol he did not know what to do. He was not prepared to do anything unconventional. He could sometimes be indecisive and overly analytical. He had the right heart most of the time, but his obsessive protocol and procedure filled head sometimes got in the way. At times his greatest strengths became his greatest weaknesses.
16. Even after 3 years of time and training with Jesus we still see that Philip had a lot to learn. In the upper room at the last supper Philip still did not fully realize who Jesus was. He had heard Jesus’ teaching and seen His miracles day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year. For 3 years he had gazed into the very face of God, and it was still not clear to him who Jesus fully was. His earthbound thinking, his materialism, his skepticism, his obsession with mundane details, and his small-mindedness had shut him off from a full apprehension of whose presence he had enjoyed (Jesus’ presence).
17. Jesus still used this man of limited abilities, imperfect understanding, and at times weak faith. Jesus still used this skeptical, overly-analytical, pessimistic, reluctant, and unsure man. He was slow to trust, understand, see, and grasp the big picture of Christ’s divine power, Person, and grace. Jesus would transform him over time to become more balanced, Christ-like, godly, and holy.
18. Tradition tells us that Philip was greatly used in the spread of the early church and was among the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom. By most accounts he was put to death by stoning (or crucifixion) at Heliopolis in Phrygia (Asia Minor, Modern Turkey), 8 years after the martyrdom of James. Before his death, multitudes came to Christ under his preaching.
19. Philip obviously overcame the human tendencies that so often hampered his faith, and he stands with the other apostles as proof that God can use ordinary, normal, imperfect people. Just like me and you. All for His glory!¹

¹ For more excellent details see “12 Ordinary Men” by Dr. John MacArthur. Many notes above were taken from this great book.