

To Phil, age 13, from his Dad, Jim Reese

My Dear Son Phil:

Today you have become a teenager! Congratulations! What an exciting milestone in your journey from hospital to Heaven. Happy 13th Birthday!

And what a joy for me to be travelling along-side you for these first years of your life. Your dear Mom and I are pleased to watch you grow and to see you respond so positively to God's blessing in your life. Nine years ago you received Christ Jesus as your Savior and Lord, and ever since you have been taking visible strides of faith.

We named you Philip because of two Philips in the bible – one was a disciple of Jesus and the other was a deacon and an evangelist. We want you to be all three – a follower of Christ, a servant of people and a carrier of the Gospel.

Philip, your name means “lover of horses.” A horse is a beautiful animal that is known for its strength, its speed and its sensibility:

- May you be strong. God has blessed you with a healthy body which He intends for you to use for His glory. I pray that you will be strong in spirit, able to stand against Satan's pressures. Recently you chose to memorize Ephesians 6:10-18 which begins, “Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”
- May you be swift. You and I have no time to waste. Life at best is very brief. God has placed us here with a high purpose and exactly enough time to fulfill it. May you be quick to do God's will. Let your daily prayer be, “Draw me, I will run after Thee” (Song of Solomon 1:4).
- May you be sensible. ‘Horse sense’ is good for people as well as horses. As you saturate yourself with God's Word your common sense will become sanctified sensibility. You will acquire the mind of Christ and be able to make wise decisions in all that you do, proving “what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).

We often call you Phil, which means lover or friend. With Christ as your best friend, the Holy Spirit will help you to choose life's friends well, and be a friend to all who need you. He will also guide you in the choice of your best earthly friend, the woman who should be your life partner. Keep your heart pure for her so that you can be the faithful lover for life that God wants her to have.

You have just seven short years to be a teenager. I want to help you make them so fulfilling that you will have no regrets, but be fully ready to make life's decisions and to be God's man in your generation. I enjoy being your friend!

Much love always,

Your Dad