

## Philippians 2:19-30

### *Proven, Genuine Christians*

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With nothing exciting going on—no conflict, doctrine, trials, theological statements— this is a fairly non-controversial passage. Paul is just talking about two of his buddies. Whenever we come across a seemingly uneventful passage of Scripture we need to remember: *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)* **So why is this passage here? What does it reveal about Paul or about our God?**

**Paul said that he hoped “in the Lord Jesus” to send Timothy soon. Meaning...?** This is a picture of Paul’s submission to the Lordship of Christ, that his plan was subject to the will of God. There is nothing wrong with planning as long as you give God the prerogative to overrule your plan. Paul knew Jesus as Savior but he also knew Him as Lord of his life. We initially make Jesus our Savior and then hopefully we progressively make him Lord on this Christian life journey. Then we will experience the reality of the abundant life Jesus has promised for those who will walk with Him.

**What observations do you have about Paul’s relationship with the Philippians? How would you describe it?** Paul is feeling a sense of urgency toward these believers—though Paul couldn’t be there himself, he felt responsible for their spiritual welfare. He didn’t just leave their spiritual maturity up to God, he felt keenly responsible also.

Paul and Timothy were not just putting on a show of affection for these believers. They were sincerely concerned about their estate. Here we have one of the primary prerequisites for spiritual maturity—not how much they knew but how much they cared.

**Application: Who am I caring for today? How am I showing it?**

**What was to be the primary purpose of Timothy’s visit?** To learn the condition of the Philippian believers and then report that to Paul to encourage him and to enable him to know how to pray, plan, and minister to better help this church.

**Who is Timothy? What do we know about him?** His father was a Greek, but his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were Jewesses. They provided Timothy with excellent spiritual training. Paul picked Timothy up on his second missionary journey. He had Timothy circumcised because he would be sending him to proclaim the gospel to the Jews. Paul was loving toward Timothy. He was a favorite of Paul’s.

**(v. 22)** Timothy had been with Paul for ten years now. ~~Can you imagine,~~ When Paul sent Timothy he sent his best—not a rookie. He didn’t send a boy to do a man’s job.

**What were the character traits of Timothy?** He was spiritually head and shoulders above his contemporaries. Timothy was concerned about and cared for others. He put Christ first, and the other things naturally fell into place. He demonstrated the value of being single, able to follow Paul for Kingdom purposes—no wife, kids, house, career, etc. Timothy’s focus for the Lord’s work is a great challenge to singles on how to submit your single years for God.

Timothy had demonstrated his worthiness as a servant of Christ and of Paul over more than 10 years. He had served as Paul’s fellow worker and protégé. He had established an excellent reputation throughout the Christian community.

**Application: You will establish a reputation that will precede you as you move from place to place. How do you want to be known?** Be intentional.

**Why did Paul chose to send Timothy (v. 20-22)?** No one else was qualified for the task.

**What qualified Timothy (v. 20-22)?** He was a believer who put the interests of Christ before his own.

Timothy had proven himself under fire—a battle tested, faithful man (v. 22). God does not use just anyone; we must qualify just as Timothy had.

Paul only gives two options for a man to seek after: the things of self or the things of Christ. Whether we realize it or not, each day we choose one of these paths.

**Paul is in jail. How is he confident he will soon come to them (v. 24)?** His trust or confidence is not in the Roman system of justice, but in the Lord. If the Lord wants him free, no system or government could keep him in bondage.

**We don't know much about Epaphroditus except what Paul write in this passage, describing him as Paul's...?**

- Brother in the faith, a sharer in spiritual life by God's grace.
- Fellow worker, a partner in the gospel ministry joining in the building of the church of Jesus Christ.
- Fellow soldier, not just a worker, but also a warrior entering spiritual battle in a hostile environment by standing up for Christ and boldly proclaiming the gospel.

Many men are brothers, some are workers in the field, but only a relative few are willing to do real combat with the prince of this world.

In relation to the Philippians, Epaphroditus was their messenger to Paul, carrying their gift to him. Paul wanted Epaphroditus' homecoming to be a joyous occasion (2:29). He urged the Philippians to regard him highly and welcome him wholeheartedly. He had successfully carried out his mission of ministering to Paul with distinction.

**How would you describe Paul's attitude toward Timothy and Epaphroditus?** Proud, tender. They brought him great joy. He sent both men away for their benefit, for their best interests. If Epaphroditus had died, Paul would have had "sorrow upon sorrow."

**Application:** Look at the relationship between these men: Paul—an older man, a mentor; and Timothy—a younger man to invest in. **Do you have a Paul or a Timothy in your life? Where could you find them?**

**"Honor people like them" (v. 29). Can you think of Christian people that you are critical of, don't honor?**

**We've seen three godly men of great character that we're supposed to model our lives after. How do you develop character like Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus?** It is a progressive thing. Their character was the product of a long relationship with God. We need to become battle tested like Timothy. Like most character traits, they came through adversity. Perseverance, along with humility, is foundational and a common character trait among strong Christians—especially these three!

NOTE: It's important not to get caught up in a comparison game by measuring our performance or value to God based on how we stack up against others. God didn't call us to be a Paul. Paul is setting the bar for the Philippians. He is not trying to send them on a guilt trip.

**How do we walk this walk?** The great hope of the Philippians in the journey is found in 1:6 & 2:13. As we partner with God through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, He will enable and empower us. He asks of us the same thing that He asked of the Israelites – *give Me your heart!*

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