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A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What does it say?*

- ❶ Read Colossians 1:24 and Philippians 2:17-19 & 28, circling the word "rejoice/joy". What made Paul happy?
- ❷ Read Philippians 2:4 & 21. What are the **three** options for **whose** interests one can seek?
- ❸ According to Mark 8:33, in what **two** broad directions can one's interests go?
- ❹ Sketch out a profile of Paul's, Timothy's and Epaphroditus' virtues.

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- ❺ We know nothing of Epaphroditus beyond Philippians, some about Timothy, and much about Paul. From Acts 16:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:4–8 & 3:15, sketch out a profile of Timothy as a person.
- ❻ From Philippians 3:2-6; Acts 8:1-3 & 9:1 and Galatians 1:13-14, sketch out a profile of Paul pre-conversion.
- ❼ **How** do we explain the **depth** and **degree** of transformation seen in Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus? To what do the Scriptures attribute it?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- ❽ Have you experienced a life-reorienting rebirth, as did Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus? Tell us about it.
- ❾ What's a concrete example of a personal interest or value which has been reshaped by the Scriptures?
- ❿ What's a current area in your life which the Holy Spirit is pressing you to change?
- ⓫ Outline the three factors involved in transformation found in Ephesians 4:22-24.
- ⓬ On which of the following "vignettes of life-change" do you most need to work in your life?
 - ☐ Ephesians 4:25 "truth-telling"?
 - ☐ Ephesians 4:26-27 "timely resolution of anger"?
 - ☐ Ephesians 4:28 "becoming a giver rather than a taker"?
 - ☐ Ephesians 4:29-30 "building others up with my words rather than tearing them down"?
 - ☐ Ephesians 4:31-32 "abandoning bitterness, embracing forgiveness"?

- ① Paul was made happy by...
 - others benefitting through his suffering (Colossians 1:24)
 - being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of others' faith (Philippians 2:17)
 - hearing that others are standing firm (v. 19 & 28)

- ② We may seek the interests of...
 - ourselves (v. 4a)
 - others (v. 4b)
 - Christ (v. 21)

- ③ God's ↔ fallen mankind's/Satan's

- ④
 - Both Paul and Timothy were "kindred spirits", seeking Christ's interests rather than their own (2:20-21)
 - Paul and Timothy served together in the furtherance of the gospel (2:22)
 - Paul and Epaphroditus ("E") were "brothers, fellow workers, fellow soldiers" (2:25)
 - E and Paul both suffered for the gospel (2:26-20; 2 Corinthians 6:4-10)

- ⑤ Timothy was young disciple living in the southern Galatia region who Paul met on his second missionary journey. Timothy's mother and grandmother were godly Jewish believers in Christ, but because his father was a pagan Gentile, he had not received Jewish circumcision. Paul selected him for his missionary team, and circumcised him so that Jews who they encountered in their travels would not reject Timothy. Timothy seems to have been of a timid personality.

- ⑥ Pre-conversion, Paul (Saul) was "of the false circumcision", proud of his own religious, human achievement as a means to gain acceptance before God, zealous as a persecutor of the church—a real nasty character!

- ⑦ Two things: [1] regeneration, being "born from above", gives one a new heart with a totally new orientation (toward God and his righteousness) rather than at enmity with God (Titus 3:3-7; John 3:3; Ezekiel 36:25-27), and [2] progressive sanctification through Spirit-empowered obedience to the Scriptures (Ephesians 4:17-32).

- ⑧ Be ready with your own story. Tell it with concrete details, not vague platitudes. But—let others go first.

- ⑨ Ditto. ⑩ Ditto.

- ⑪ 1—be renewed in the way you think (biblically, spiritually, not fleshly)—Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:1-2
2—take off ungodly, fleshly, worldly behaviors—Ephesians 4:22
3—put on godly, spiritual, heavenly behaviors—Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:1-14

- ⑫ Be ready with your own answer. Tell it with concrete details, not vague platitudes. But—let others go first.

Sermon Summary Text: Philippians 2:17-30

As we will see in the section we are studying today, Paul goes on in verses 17-30 to give three more examples of what it means to live a selfless, other-centered life. Paul's three examples of humility are:

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| I. Paul's example of humility | 2:17-18 |
| II. Timothy's example of humility | 2:19-24 |
| III. Epaphroditus' example of humility | 2:25-30 |

In verses 17-18, Paul affirms his own readiness to give his life for the sake of the gospel. And he doesn't do so grudgingly, but joyfully. Here we see that suffering and joy are not mutually exclusive (Hebrews 12:2). Paul is informing the Philippians that it is a privilege to pour out his life on their behalf. He is willing to die for them. In fact, it brings him great joy knowing that his suffering for the cause of Christ has led to their faith in Christ. "True joy comes from submitting to God's will." Paul wanted them to follow Jesus' example, and his own example, and submit to God's will—to be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ, when necessary.

Paul goes on to hold up another example of humble submission to God's will. It's found in his ministry partner Timothy, whom the Philippians knew quite well (v. 19). Paul cared deeply about the Philippian church, and he was eager to hear how they were doing. Paul needed someone he could trust and someone who was willing to travel a long distance under arduous conditions (vv.20-21). He holds up Timothy as someone worthy of modeling our life after. How do you think these words of praise from the Apostle Paul made Timothy feel? All of us need to hear words of encouragement from time to time. Paul's praise of Timothy was genuine, earned and effusive. If all Christians lived with humility and others' interests at heart, think about how it would change the perception of Christianity!

Timothy had become like a son to Paul (v.22). He emulated great qualities: Timothy had a servant's heart, a servant's focus, a servant's training and a proven track record. You get the impression that at the time of this writing Timothy was still needed by Paul, but he planned to send Timothy as soon as he possibly could (vv.23-24). In the meantime, Paul would send his friend Epaphroditus, who was a missionary on loan from Philippi. The Philippian church had sent him to Rome to assist Paul in ministry. Epaphroditus is also a great example of humble servanthood (v. 25). Apparently, while in Rome, Epaphroditus became very sick, and somehow the church at Philippi had heard about his sickness, but not about his recovery. Understandably, they were concerned (vv. 26-28). Everyone is concerned, and that's a good thing!
WHEN WE STOP CARING ABOUT OTHERS, WE STOP BEING EFFECTIVE.

We are still benefiting from the humble, selfless examples of Jesus, Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus. We should both honor and imitate such men (vv.29-30). We should hold humble, godly Christian servants in high regard. We should imitate their faith, their faithfulness, and their selfless service on our behalf. According to the values of his day, Epaphroditus could easily be viewed as a failure. Even though this sickness was beyond his control, in that culture, it could bring dishonor both to Epaphroditus and to the sending church. Paul could have used this occasion to shame the Philippians and Epaphroditus, but instead, he demonstrates God's grace. Paul sets the example for how the Philippians should receive Epaphroditus (vv.29-30).

In our churches, we need to celebrate those in our midst who humbly serve our Savior. We have a bunch of servants here at TCC! Jesus, of course, is the supreme example of a humble, sacrificial servant. He laid aside His divine prerogatives to love and serve those whom He knew would ultimately kill him. Over the years many Christians have taken on the mantle of a servant. Such people prove that the joyful life is a life of sacrifice and service. They encourage us to submit ourselves to the Lord, and to one another, in the Spirit of Christ. Let's put on Christ and allow the Spirit of God to reproduce "the mind of Christ" in us!

"Oh Fred,
thanks for signing us up for
TCC's 'Marriage Tune-Up'!"

You can be as happy
as Fred and Wilma!

Just
click
here:



Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

As good as Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus were, they simply were imitating Christ, the ultimate servant (1 Corinthians 11:1). Let's explore Jesus' example of servanthood:

Monday— Read John 1:1, 14 & 18 and Hebrews 1:1–3. Who, precisely, is Jesus?

Tuesday— Read Philippians 2:5–8. What distance did Jesus traverse in becoming a servant?

Wednesday— Read John 13:5-8a. Why did Peter find Jesus' servanthood stunning?

Thursday— Read Mark 10:45 and John 17:4–5. Do you find Jesus' servanthood stunning?

Friday— Read John 12:24–28. What will following Christ cost you?

Saturday— Read Ephesians 5:1–2. How will you imitate Christ today?

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]