

LESSON FOUR

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

Philippians 2:19-30

Paul concludes this chapter by telling them he hopes to send Timothy to them shortly so that he can bring him back a report on how they are doing. We can sense Paul's great concern for the church at Philippi and how much he longs to find out how things are going for them. Paul can't go himself, he needs his fellow companions to be his hands and feet.

Prayerfully read through verses 19 through 30.

1. What reason does Paul give in verse 19 for why he's anxious to receive a report back from Timothy on how the church is doing? (See the second half of verse 19).

a. Do you have someone in particular in your life that you have invested in spiritually and perhaps are still involved in nurturing their growth in the Lord? Read the following verses and share how they encourage you concerning the spiritual investment you've made in the lives of others. Acts 18:25-28; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 6:10.

b. What does Paul call Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:2?

c. As you look at Timothy and the “fruit of Paul’s labor” in Timothy’s life, what thoughts come to your mind? Do you have any “spiritual children?”

2. Look at verse 20 of Philippians chapter 2. How does Paul describe Timothy in this verse?

3. Paul calls Timothy a man of “proven character” in verse 22. What words come to your mind when describing someone of good character? What traits do you feel that person has to be described in such a way? Make a list.

a. Look over your list and write out the definition for a few of the character traits you selected. Share them with the group.

4. Read through Psalm 15 and make a list of the character traits David describes here.

5. Look at the following verses and share what they say about someone who has a “proven character.”

Proverbs 22:1 –

Isaiah 33:15-16 –

Proverbs 16:17 –

Proverbs 12:22 –

Proverbs 10:9 –

a. Is there one of these verses that really spoke to you? Share your thoughts.

6. As was mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, Paul is in prison and he can't go to the church in Philippi himself. He needs to send a "representative" to go for him. He commends two men to the church who he is sending in his place. We've been looking at Timothy and the commendations Paul has given him. Now read through verses 25-30 as Paul turns his attention to Epaphroditus. In verse 25 Paul describes Epaphroditus in four ways. What four things does he say of him in this verse?

7. Epaphroditus is a member of the church of Philippi and was sent by the church to minister to Paul and to bring some much needed supplies they had put together for him. He has the same heart for the Philippians as Paul does. As you look at verses 26 and 27 what do you find out about his situation with Paul in Rome?

8. In verse 28 Paul tells the church that he is "eagerly" sending Epaphroditus back home, knowing that they will rejoice when they see him. In doing so he exhorts them to hold men like Epaphroditus in high esteem. What reason does he give that they should do so in verses 29 and 30?

a. Share how these verses add to Paul's commendation of Epaphroditus.

John 15:13 -

Romans 12:10 -

1 Corinthians 16:15 -

Philemon 7 -

Hebrews 6:10 -

9. Just as Paul needed Timothy and Epaphroditus to be his hands and feet, we too are called to be **Christ's "representatives."** What does Paul call himself in 2 Corinthians 5:20?

10. Look up the following words and write down the definitions:

Ambassador -

Representative -

11. An "**ambassador**" comes with a "**message**" from the one they are representing. They are not coming to present their own agenda, but the agenda of the one who sent them. Look back at verse 20 of chapter two and write down the reason Paul had entrusted Timothy to represent him to the church in Philippi.

12. What is the **opposite** of this description that Paul addresses in verse 21?

13. Share the insights you receive from the following Scriptures on what it means to be an **ambassador/representative** of Christ.

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 -

Titus 2:7-8, 10 -

1 Peter 2:9 -

1 John 3:2-3 -

1 John 4:17 -

a. Which of these has spoken to your heart in a personal way? Share.

14. As we conclude chapter 2 of Philippians, what has been most meaningful and your greatest take-away in this lesson?