

# Philippians

## CHAPTER 2:25-30

### Lesson 9

Philippians 2 not only provides us with the perfect example set by Jesus Christ, but also the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus. In lesson 8 we read of Paul's desire to send Timothy to the believers in Philippi. However, it appears that it was more expedient to send Epaphroditus first. This paragraph division describes Paul's motive for sending Epaphroditus. Although Epaphroditus was personally going to deliver this letter, Paul still felt that it was necessary to include an explanation and express his support for Epaphroditus. Therefore, it will be beneficial for us to read and study. May his example inspire us to serve and love the flock of Jesus.

#### **Observation: Read Philippians 2:25-30**

1. Philippians is a very personal letter from Paul. His loving care and concern for the recipients can be detected throughout the letter. If you have not already done so, mark each use of the personal pronouns *you* and *your* in Philippians 2:25-30.
  - a. Describe your general impression of this paragraph division.
  
2. List the main points of this paragraph division.

## Read Philippians 2:25

1. *Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you* (NLT). Paul used three phrases to describe Epaphroditus. Next to each phrase, list the traits you would expect of someone who would be described with these words.

*my brother:*

*my fellow worker:*

*fellow soldier:*

2. Paul was a Hebrew; Timothy was part Jew and part Gentile. As far as we know, Epaphroditus was a full Gentile. He was a member and very possibly the pastor of the church in Philippi. Philippians 2:25 describes him as a *messenger*. What does Philippians 4:18 add to confirm this?
3. In addition to the attributes already mentioned in questions 1 and 2, how is Epaphroditus described?
  - a. Paul was not simply referring to physical needs. In what other areas do you think Epaphroditus ministered to Paul?
    - 1.) Christians are not only in prisons held by iron bars, many are confined to their homes. Some seem to be stuck in their circumstances. How does the example of the Philippian church and their *messenger*, Epaphroditus, speak to you about *ministering to the needs* of others?
4. Think of a time when someone came to you and *ministered to* your needs. What was most meaningful to you about their visit?

## Philippians 2:26,27

1. Although Paul highly valued Epaphroditus, he *considered it necessary to send* him to the Philippians. According to Philippians 2:26, what reason did Paul give for this?
2. The words *longing* and *distressed*, as used in verse 26, express an intensity of feelings. Record from the following verses similar expressions of emotion towards fellow believers:  
2 Samuel 13:39

## Philippians 1:8

- 1.) Share the value that Christian fellowship has had in your life.
3. Epaphroditus *was sick almost unto death*. According to Philippians 2:27, why was he healed?
  - a. What instruction does James 5:14 give to anyone who is *sick*?
4. It was not his sickness that *distressed* Epaphroditus. What was his concern?
  - a. Epaphroditus was more concerned about the Philippian believers than he was for himself. This is an attribute of a good shepherd. Jesus is The Good Shepherd. Record what He says about Himself in John 10:11-12.

Challenge: Look up other verses containing the word *shepherd* and describe what a good *shepherd* is like.

## Read Philippians 2:28-29

1. Although Epaphroditus was of great value to Paul, he *sent him the more eagerly*. He lived his exhortation in Philippians 2:4, *Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others*. According to Philippians 2:28, why did Paul send Epaphroditus so eagerly?

a. What do the following Scriptures say about preferring others?

1 Corinthians 10:24

James 2:8

b. Why do you think this is such an important Biblical principle?

2. Read Philippians 2:29 and write it in your own words.

a. The New Living Testament translates the last part of verse 29 as, *be sure to honor people like him*. James 2:8,9 remind us that, *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin*. In a practical sense, how can we honor those in authority over us, yet not show partiality?

## Read Philippians 2:30

1. Philippians 2:30 provides us with further insight into the heart of Epaphroditus. What did you discover about him?

a. Epaphroditus did not regard his life. Other translations render this as *he risked his life*. Record from 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 this perspective.

1.) Describe this attitude using your own words.

2. According to the last part of Philippians 2:30, what *work of Christ* was Epaphroditus willing to risk his life for?

a. Epaphroditus supplied the Philippians' *lack of service* toward Paul in that he came to Paul and brought to him supplies which the Philippians were not able to bring themselves. Doing the work of God often involves risks. Rarely must we count the cost of risking our lives for Christ. What are some of the risks we, as Christians, take today to do *the work of Christ*?

1.) Why is it worth it all to *risk* for Christ?

## Review Philippians 2:25-30

1. After studying Epaphroditus, what do you admire about his character?
2. What has this passage taught you about preferring others?
3. As Paul wrote in Philippians 2:25, Epaphroditus was their *messenger*. He not only brought to Paul material things, but he brought to him news about these precious ones whom Paul loved as a father. How has Philippians 2:25-30 impacted you regarding the loving concern these men had for their fellow believers?
4. How has this lesson personally spoken to you about your role in the church?

*“...If any of you wants to be My follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow Me.”*  
- Matthew 16:24 NLT