



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Philippians Lesson 9: Philippians 2:19-30

There is so much packed into this tiny letter and by this week, I'm sure you can see how incredibly important it is. One of the most difficult attributes to develop in our Christian walk is true godly humility. Paul has already given us two examples of people who embody this characteristic (himself and Jesus) and in this lesson we will see two more.

Read Philippians 2:19-24

Who does Paul hope to send to the Philippian church?

How does Paul describe Timothy in Philippians 2:20?

How does Paul describe those in contrast to Timothy in verse 21?

Our third example of an unselfish, humble attitude is Timothy. Paul describes him as a "kindred spirit." The Greek word here (ISOPSYCHE) is from the same root as "one mind" (MIAPSYCHE) in 1:27 and

"same mind" (SYMPSYCHE) in 2:2. The idea being that Timothy is one who is striving for this united mindset, focused on the same goals as Paul and Christ. Because of this mindset Timothy is genuinely concerned for the Philippian brethren and will truly look out for their best interest.

Another important quality Paul points out in Timothy is his sincerity. The word "genuinely" in verse 20 is literally sincerely. Timothy earnestly loves these people and cares deeply for their souls. There is no pretense, no ulterior motives. He just cares about them and their eternal destination.

Generally speaking, as a church, we love to serve others. We love projects that meet people's needs. We love to give to help causes that impact people. The question we need to ask ourselves is how often are we 100% genuine and sincere in those efforts. I hope and pray it can be said about all of us on a regular basis; however, many times, the truth is that we do have hidden motives (sometimes without even realizing it). In previous lessons we have talked about some of those questions to confront ourselves with to make sure we have the right motivations. Would this be service I would render even if no one knew? If one of my needs goes unmet to I instantly grow bitter because "I did XYZ to help them"?



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The phrase “virtue signaling” has become a popular one in our culture for a reason. It refers to people who take up a virtuous cause simply for the recognition they can receive from their peers either on social media or in person. This is a hard one to balance. Social media can be a fantastic tool to reach out, encourage, and keep in touch with loved ones; however, it can be a catalyst for this praise-seeking behavior that is so prevalent in our society. Another important question to ask when engaging in service to others is: Would this action feel as worthwhile to me if I didn’t post about it on social media?

Have you ever seen people engage in serving others for the wrong reason?

Have you ever engaged in service to others for the wrong reason?

Have you ever overemphasized something good you have done on social media to get extra attention?

How can this attitude harm the work of the church?

What are some practical ways that we can make sure we maintain a sincere mindset that looks out for the wellbeing of others without ulterior motives?

Because of these attributes Paul had the utmost confidence in Timothy, trusting that sending Timothy was almost as good as being there himself. Could the same be said of us? I hope that is what we are striving for as we continue throughout this study!

Read Philippians 2:25-28

Who is the next example of selfless behavior that we see in Paul’s letter to the Philippians?

How does Paul describe Epaphroditus in verse 25?

What happened to Epaphroditus?

What was Epaphroditus distressed about according to verse 26?



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It is clear that Paul holds Epaphroditus in high regard. This man was sent by the Philippian church to work side-by-side with Paul and help him in his ministry and serve him while in prison. Paul considers him a “fellow soldier” and a “fellow worker.” This indicates that Epaphroditus also had this same mind focused on the goal of Christ that Paul has been referencing throughout the letter.

It is incredibly interesting that when Epaphroditus became gravely ill, he wasn’t concerned for himself. Notice that he was distressed because the Philippians had heard he was sick; he did not want to be the cause of their worry. Talk about a humble attitude! He had left everything to pour himself out in service to the Lord and was so sick he almost died, yet, he didn’t have a “woe is me” attitude. He didn’t use his circumstances as an excuse to be self-serving. Even in this situation, Epaphroditus displayed the humble attitude of a godly servant that Paul has been describing this whole letter.

Read Philippians 2:29-30

How does Paul say to receive Epaphroditus when he comes?

What qualities does “men like this” refer to?

How should “men like this” be received?

According to verse 30 why should he be received in this way?

Not only is Epaphroditus a great example of the humble attitude we should all have as Christians, Paul takes this chance to highlight the fact that we should be showing respect toward people with this mindset. The word “high regard” (ENTIMOS) literally means one who is honored, precious, and valuable. Paul isn’t wanting them to throw a parade in Epaphroditus’s honor, he is encouraging them to treat him as the precious treasure that he is.

We live in a world that honors very different characteristics. Often, those that are lifted up and treated as valuable are the exact opposite of the person Paul describes in this letter. The world honors those who walk over people to become successful, attain wealth, and climb the corporate ladder. Paul reminds us that the qualities we should value in people are very different.



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There are many different people in scripture who were wealthy or handsome, but those were not the qualities God viewed as precious. Abraham might have been extremely wealthy with a beautiful wife, but the reason he is recorded in the Hebrews “Hall of Faith” is because he was willing to put his wants and desires beneath those of God and seek after God’s will first.

Who are some Biblical examples of people who share this same attitude Paul would say is worthy of honor?

Who are some people from your own congregation that have this humble attitude?

How specifically have you seen them display this attitude?

What are some ways that you can work on emulating their behavior?

Choose one of these people. How can you show them that they are treasured this week?

While we know that God values the sincere heart, we often overlook some of God’s most sincere servants. Many times, it is because they are doing their work quietly, behind the scenes, without the desire for attention. One of the best ways to work on developing this humble mindset in yourself is to recognize it in others. Training your brain to focus on those qualities that God holds in high regard will go a long way when trying to grow and mature as a Christian. This week, keep your eyes peeled for all of those people who might otherwise slip your notice. Spend time in prayer thanking God for these amazing servants and pray that He will help you develop a servant heart.