

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS – LESSON 7
PHILIPPIANS 2:17-30
WEEK OF OCTOBER 28 – NOVEMBER 1

SINGLE MINDED, SACRIFICIAL, SELFLESS SERVANTS OF THE SAVIOR

The theme of **Philippians 2** is practical living of the Christian life. In verses one through five, *Paul instructs us to be humble and obedient, living selflessly, devoted to one another, living in unity with one another.* In **Philippians 2:6-11**, *Paul provides us with the supreme example of humility, obedience and service to God; the Lord Jesus Christ.* Paul then tells the Philippians they are to live blamelessly as lights in the midst of a crooked and depraved generation shining like stars and holding out (proclaiming) the word of life. In the passage before us this week, **Philippians 2:17-30**, Paul presents three men as examples, who are practicing the first 16 verses of chapter 2 by modeling selfless, sacrificial and obedient lives.

1. Read **Philippians 2:17-18**.
 - a. How does Paul describe his life and ministry in service to the Lord?

 - b. What is the cause of Paul's rejoicing and gladness?

"Unfortunately, many believers experience joy in much the same way the world does. When circumstances are favorable, they are happy but when circumstances are unfavorable, they're sad and sometimes resentful. The only things that bring them joy are those that promote their own self-interest and welfare. But when believers seek to do the Father's will and please Him, they view sacrifice for Him with joy. The reason so many believers know little about Paul's kind of joy is that they know little about his kind of sacrifice." [MacArthur New Testament commentary Philippians](#), John MacArthur, page 193.

Paul next presents Timothy as a model of sacrificial, obedient service to Christ in **Philippians 2:19-24**. We will study more about Timothy when we begin our study of I Timothy later this year.

2. What were Paul's plans for Timothy that he related to the Philippians in **verse 19**?

3. How did Paul describe Timothy in **verses 20-23**?

4. How does Paul express his close relationship with Timothy in these verses?

5. Read **Philippians 2:4** and explain Paul's willingness to send Timothy away from Rome for the benefit and welfare of the Philippians (**vs 20**).

Epaphroditus provides the third example of a Christian who sacrifices himself and his own interests for the benefit of others. He was sent by the Philippian church to carry a financial gift to Paul to provide support (**Phil. 4:18**) and to remain there with him to provide practical service to Paul during his imprisonment.

“Of all the men Paul honors in his epistle to the Philippians, it is the layman named Epaphroditus who gets the most attention. Here is a man who is almost unknown to us. Yet Paul selects him as deserving highest honor because of his self-effacing service to another Christian.” *An Expository Commentary Philippians*, James Montgomery Boyce, page 157.

“His (Epaphroditus) level of sacrificial service to the Lord is especially instructive and encouraging for the believer, for whom the examples of great preachers and pastors such as Paul and Timothy may seem beyond reach. *He exemplifies the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of Christ that involves no public acclaim, no prominence, no high office, no great talents or gifts. He was not a noted preacher, teacher or leader, therefore his example seems to be more relevant and attainable.*” *MacArthur New Testament Commentary Philippians*, John MacArthur, page 202.

6. What are the four titles Paul gives to Epaphroditus in **verse 25**? Elaborate on the significance of each of the titles.

7. What reasons did Paul give in **verses 26-30** for sending Epaphroditus back to the Philippian church?

8. From **vs. 30**, how did Epaphroditus exhibit selfless, sacrificial service for the work of Christ?

9. Timothy and Epaphroditus were both in Rome to help and support Paul. From **vs. 28**, why was Paul willing to send them back to the Philippian church? What does that tell us about Paul's humility and his willingness to sacrifice his own interest for the interest and love for others, all out of devotion and love for Christ?

10. How do the examples of these three men encourage you and challenge you in your service to Christ?

11. What actions will you take in response to the examples of their lives and ministry?