

Philippians

Lesson #9, Chapter 2:19-30

Have you prepared your heart for the study of God's Word? Have you asked for the Lord's help and insight? Have you confessed your sins and thanked the Lord for making His Word accessible to you?

1. Paul ended the previous section referring to his death in service for Christ (Philippians 2:17). Though he longs to depart and be with Christ, he believes the Lord still has vital ministry for him to do (Philippians 1:18-26). Until Paul can be among the Philippians in person, what does he desire to do and why? See Philippians 2:19.
2. What things were happening in the Philippian church that concerned Paul about their spiritual health? We've already discussed some of these reasons, so it should be familiar to you. Scan through the book and see what you can find.
3. Why did Paul trust Timothy to go and check on the Philippians? See Philippians 2:20-22.
4. What do you learn about the bond between Paul and Timothy? See 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:20, 22; 1 Timothy 1:2, 18; 2 Timothy 3:10-11.
5. When will Timothy come to be with the Philippians according to verses 23-24?
6. In verse 23 Paul says he's waiting to see how things go for him. What is he waiting to discover? See Philippians 1:19-20, 21-26.

- a. What does he think is going to happen? See Philippians 2:24.

7. In Philippians 1:19-26 and here in 2:23-24, we see Paul submitting his plans to the Lord's good and perfect will. Paul had many ministry plans (Romans 15:28-29; Philemon 22), but he had learned to hold them loosely. What did he know, understand, and apply in his life? See Proverbs 16:1, 9; 19:21; 21:1; Psalm 37:23; Isaiah 46:10; Matthew 6:9-10; Luke 22:42.

8. Like Paul, we can know and understand these truths, yet find it challenging to give up our cherished plans in the face of God's different ones for us. Besides the truths above in question #7, what are some other truths that help you *willingly submit* to God's plans for your life? Here are some to get you started: Luke 9:23; 17:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:21; 3:7-8; James 4:13-17. Any others?

9. While Paul waits to see what God's plans are for his life, what does Paul put into the works? See Philippians 2:25. Why? See Philippians 2:25-26.

10. What do we learn about Epaphroditus and the kind of man he was from verses 25-28 and Philippians 4:18?

11. Paul makes a distinction between being a *fellow worker* and a *fellow soldier*. Look up the following verses to piece together what might have been in Paul's mind when he used those descriptive terms. For *fellow worker* see Romans 16:3, 9, 21; Philippians 4:3; Philemon 1, 24. For *fellow soldier* see 1 Timothy 1:18; 2 Timothy 2:3-4; 4:7; Philemon 2.

12. The Philippians are to *receive* Epaphroditus in verse 29. What implications does the word *receive* carry with it, and what heart response does it require of the Philippians?

13. How does Paul want the Philippians to respond to Epaphroditus when he arrives among them? See the first part of Philippians 2:29. See also Matthew 10:40-41; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Colossians 4:10.

14. Paul gives further instruction in the second half of Philippians 2:29. What's the next way they are to receive Epaphroditus?

15. The following texts address how a church can show high regard for the men who minister to them. Summarize what you learn from Luke 10:7; Acts 28:10; 1 Cor. 9:5-14; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6. For a principle found in the Old Testament, see 2 Chronicles 31:4.

16. Often churches don't consider how to bless and encourage those who minister the Word of God to them. Think for a moment how *you* obey the command to *receive in the Lord with joy* and *regard highly* those who faithfully serve you by preaching and teaching God's Word.
 - a. First, consider *your own response* to those whom God has placed in your life for your spiritual growth. In what way have *you received* your preachers and teachers *in the Lord* and *with joy*? How do *you* obey the command to *regard* your preachers and teachers *highly*?

- b. How does your church do in obeying this command for your preachers and teachers? Often church members *assume* the church is “taking care of the pastors,” but never find out for sure. What can you do as a church member to ensure that your church is ministering to your pastors and teachers as the Lord commands?
17. Paul explains why he wants the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus. What do you learn from Philippians 2:30? See also 1 Corinthians 16:15-18; note the progression from Philippians 4:10 to verse 18; Philemon 13.
18. Epaphroditus’ stellar character continues to shine as he steps in to serve Paul, even at risk to his own life. The clue for how he was able to live so sacrificially can be found in Philippians 2:30. What do you find? See also Acts 20:24.
19. This section of Philippians spotlights the godly example of Timothy and Epaphroditus, whose examples we are to emulate. See Philippians 3:17; 4:9; Hebrews 13:7. What traits from these men would you like to follow in your own life?

Oh how desirable, how profitable to the Christian life
Is a spirit of holy watchfulness
And godly jealousy over myself.
When my soul is afraid of nothing
Except grieving and offending Thee, the blessed God,
My Father and Friend,
Whom I then love and long to please,
Rather than be happy in myself!
Knowing, as I do, that this is the pious temper,
Worthy of the highest ambition, and closest pursuit
Of intelligent creatures and holy Christians,
May my joy derive from glorifying and delighting Thee.

The Valley of Vision, “Devotion,” page 130.