

# Effortchurch

*When coming to this study we ask that you pray first. Take the time to ask God to speak through his scripture. If you don't get to all of the questions but have spent time with God your task is accomplished.*

*Then before reading the questions read the word. You can use some of the notations below to track your reactions and thoughts as you go:*

**Inspire:** write a (!) beside what stands out positively so far and write a note about why

**Inquire:** write a (?) beside what doesn't make sense. Ask why it's there. OR by what raises a question for you.

**Irk:** write a (#!?) beside what rubs you the wrong way or creates dissonance.

**Require:** write a ( ) beside something that demands change within you

**Underline or highlight phrases that stick out.**

**After you're done going through the passage. Take a few moments to review your notes.**

**Write one sentence off the cuff. Based on your first impression, what are you thinking? How may God be speaking?**

**Let these prompts below continue to guide your dialogue with God and lead you into deeper reflection on His word.**

## **PHILIPPIANS- EXAMPLES IN FOLLOWING JESUS.**

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**Philippians 2:19-30** (We have a travel itinerary in the middle of this letter. These are found in other letters from Paul, but usually at the end of a letter. So Paul is doing more than telling the Philippians about travel plans. After the last section on imitating Christ's humility and shining like stars among dark places, Paul is giving us examples of men who are shining).

### **Philippians 2:19-30**

- What is the connection between looking after the interests of others (2:4) and looking after the interests of Jesus the Messiah (2:21)?

NT Wright states that “It is interesting that Paul doesn’t say ‘Timothy is a wonderful teacher’ or even ‘Timothy is a very devout and holy man,’ but ‘Timothy will genuinely care about you.’ The definition Paul seems to be adopting for a good pastor—and the implication that he himself was like this—has more to do with sheer unselfish love than any other traits about the person.<sup>1</sup>

- Who are the people in your life who model Jesus?
- What about them remind you of Jesus? Specific actions? Their attitude? Knowledge of scripture? How do they model Christlikeness?
- Who are the people in your life to whom you model Jesus?
- In what ways would they say you model Christlikeness?
- In what ways would you say you need to grow?
- If you cannot think of any, who are people with whom you could show what it looks like to follow Jesus?
- Does faithful Christian living always look extraordinary? Why or why not?
- What is one step you can make this week in more faithfully following Jesus this week?

The beauty of this passage is that it isn’t Timothy and Epaphroditus’ deep theological knowledge or memorization of scripture. It isn’t that they stood in front of thousands to proclaim the gospel. The beauty is in their sincere faith and deep love of others overflowing from their love of Jesus.

- How do you cultivate a servant’s heart of selflessness rather than selfishness?
- Epaphroditus had carried the Philippians’ gift to Paul. What then happened which caused anxiety for everyone involved (2:25-27)?
- How is Paul reinforcing his point (about caring deeply for people) by displaying his vulnerability in care for Epaphroditus and how do you respond to the idea that Paul would have been stricken with sorrow if Epaphroditus had died?

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, N. T., Dale Larsen, and Sandy Larsen. *Philippians: 8 Studies for Individuals and Groups*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect, 2009.

- We've talked a couple of times about coconspirators, and partners in ministry. Paul had this in Timothy and Epaphroditus. Do you have friends like this? Are you a friend like this?
- What are some practical ways you can 'honor' servants of the gospel like Timothy and Epaphroditus that you've encountered in your faith walk?

**Pray:**

Thank God for partnerships in the gospel. Thank him specifically for the people with whom you serve and have served in even the simplest and seemingly insignificant ways. Ask God to show you someone you should bring alongside with you, or whom you should come alongside, to work in partnership.