



2016: Week 42

Sunday, October 16th 2016

"People of Proven Worth"

Philippians 2:22

"²² But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father" (NASB).

On Sunday John continued our study in the **Book of Philippians**. In this section of our study, we encounter Paul's mentioning of two men: Timothy and Epaphroditus. Paul's appreciation for these two men is centered upon their faithfulness to Christ. Paul identified Timothy as a man of "proven worth" (2:22) and Epaphroditus as a man to be "held in high regard" (2:29). What makes a Christian a person of "proven worth" and one who is to be held in "high regard"? Let's find out as we study **Philippians 2:19-30**.

1. READ Philippians 2:19-24

- In 2:20-21 Paul says Timothy is of "kindred spirit." Why?

- What might a legitimate act of service look like when... a) undertaken with an attitude of "seeking after [one's] own interests"; and also b) undertaken while seeking the "(interests) of Christ Jesus"?

- In regards to the bullet point above, a legitimate act of service might actually appear on the outside to be identical within either of the proposed situations: a) when done for one's own interests, or b) when done for Christ's interests. Sometimes it may be obvious that someone is serving for the wrong reasons, but other times it might not be. The critical issue is not how another person serves, but how we serve. We must *examine our own hearts* when serving for the Lord. Rather than focusing on another person's heart, we have quite a bit of work to do making sure our own hearts are in the right place. In regards to our own hearts, let's make sure our motives are right— not serving to get recognition from others or serving out of obligation or anger, but rather serving joyfully as for the Lord. In **1 Corinthians 3:10** Paul tells believers to "be careful" how they serve, and in **Colossians 3:23**, he reminds believers that whenever they serve, they should do so "heartily, as for the Lord rather than men."

2. READ Philippians 2:25-30

- How does Paul describe Epaphroditus in 2:25?

"my _____" "fellow _____" "fellow _____" "your _____" " your _____"

Why do you think Paul used these five terms to describe Epaphroditus?

- Apparently Epaphroditus "risked his life" and "came close to death for the work of Christ" (2:30).
What would motivate a person to risk his own life for the sake of serving Christ?

Is it possible for you to possess the same attitude as Epaphroditus in your service for Christ?

How can you serve Christ this week at school or work, in your home, in our church?

How can you make sure you are serving for the right reasons?

FAMILY PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, for the faithful service and testimony long ago of our brothers, Timothy and Epaphroditus. Help us to serve You for the right reasons and for Your interests rather than ours. Help us to serve You faithfully, as men, women, boys, and girls of *proven worth*. Help us to genuinely encourage one another and hold your faithful servants today in high regard. May we spur one another on in good deeds, so that You receive great glory.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.