

Proven Character of a Son
Philippians 2:19-30

Good morning.

Happy Father's Day.

Chip Ingram wrote a devotional titled, "*Becoming the Priest they need*".

"What comes to mind when you think of a priest? An elaborate robe or a black and white collar? A holy demeanor?

An austere lifestyle? The image makes most people think of a special calling in a religious career-something that applies to a very small percentage of the population.

If you're like most men, you think, that's not me. But it is you.

That's your calling-not the robe or collar, or church responsibilities, but the dedicated life as someone who stands between God and human beings to facilitate that relationship.

You are the head priest of your family!"

Please open your Bibles to ***Philippians 2***, as we continue in our verse-by-verse study of Paul's Epistle to the Church at Philippi.

Last week the Apostle Paul encouraged believers to live as lights in a dark world and Paul explained how he was being used as an offering to the Lord.

Paul spoke about ***complaining and disputing***.

Complaining or grumbling means an utterance made in a low tone of voice or behind-the-scenes talk.

If the Lord is in charge, the worst part about ***complaining*** as a Christian is we are ultimately ***complaining*** against the **Lord**.

When Christians ***complain*** we are saying, that we either do not trust Jesus to supply for our needs **or** we want our will to be done, instead of His will to be done.

Then Paul gave a perfect rationale for not ***complaining*** or disputing ...that we ***may become blameless and harmless Children of God without fault.***

This world is in a state of decay, and it is also in darkness but God's remedy for this dark world is for His **children** to shine!

The miraculous thing is the same Jesus Who said, "***I am the light of the world***", also told us "***We are the light of the world***"

Then Paul said he was a Drink Offering to the Lord.

Remember, the ***Book of Philippians*** is known as the **book of joy**, not based on circumstances, but despite the circumstances, our joy is based on the relationship we have with the King.

Today, the portion of this letter commends Timothy, as a son with proven character.

I. Like-minded Timothy.

Read ***Philippians 2:19-21***

This section starts with the words, “***But I trust in the Lord***” showing Paul’s complete reliance on the Lord even after he made a decision regarding ministry.

James 4:13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";

James 4:14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

James 4:15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." NKJV

Paul was a prisoner during this time, and he realized that he did not have control of anything. When we get to a place where we realize we do not have control we will gain the **peace** of God.

When we started this study, Paul began the letter of ***Philippians*** with the words, “***Paul and Timothy***”.

Here, the Apostle Paul explains how Timothy was a faithful son during all the trials and attacks Paul had faced.

When Paul ended his first missionary journey about 5 years before the events of ***Acts 16***, he met Timothy in Lystra.

Timothy was the son of a Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek. Timothy’s name means “*one who honors God.*”

This young man would become very important in Paul’s life.

1 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith.

Paul became a mentor to Timothy and Timothy became a mighty person for Christ.

Paul knew that he would be encouraged when he heard of the affairs of the Philippian Christians, unlike the correction he had to give to the Church of Corinth.

Notice Paul said he wanted to send Timothy because he was the only one in his life that was like-minded.

When we began ***Philippians 2***, we discussed like-minded believers at length and said, the secret to maintaining peace within the body happens by having a single-minded focus.

Paul said Timothy had a like-mindedness, to care for these believers just like he would. Timothy had a pastor's heart for these believers.

Matthew Henry said, "*It is the duty of ministers to care for the state of their people and be concerned for their welfare.*"

Notice, ***Philippians 2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. NKJV***

The dictionary definition of self-seeking is *having concern for one's own welfare and interests before those of others; self-serving.*

Earlier Paul said in *Philippians 2:3*, ***Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.***

Philippians 2:4 ***Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. NKJV***

Those who are self-seeking are not concerned for others, but Timothy wanted to serve the Lord and was concerned for the Lord's people.

II. Proven Character.

Re-read *Philippians 2:22*

The word *character* in the original language means proof of genuineness and **trustworthiness**.

Chuck Larson said, *“Paul is talking about the Character of Timothy as he describes him, “But you know Timothy’s proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.”*

Timothy was a teammate who proved himself so Paul could count on him. His “Character” had been proven.

That means it’s been tried, tested, and passed with flying colors.

He had been through the wars with Paul and had come out stronger. His integrity had been firmly established and proven.

A proven character only comes through tribulations, trials, and suffering.”

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 5:2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

Romans 5:4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Romans 5:5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. NKJV

Scripture makes it clear that the Lord is interested in taking us into a deep relationship with Him as He wants to live in and through us and to bring us to a place of spiritual maturity.

Spiritual maturity and proven character go hand in hand, but spiritual maturity is impossible in our lives, without the Lord transforming our character, through the renewing of our minds.

Timothy was Paul's assistant and traveled with him to many places where Paul preached the Gospel.

Timothy was a true son of the faith to Paul as he served Paul as a good son would serve his father.

These men had great respect as well as tenderness and kindness towards each other.

The world teaches us to be great during competition and celebrate our greatness with social media posts, and conversations, letting everyone know of our achievements.

C.S. Lewis said, *“A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”*

The Apostle Paul knew pride and selfishness were not the characteristics of God, but a true follower of Jesus was to clothe themselves in humility.

Jesus had every right to have a “look at me” mentality, to go after status, power, and authority but instead, He came as a slave submitting Himself to the will of the Father.

Paul stated that Timothy had proven character and having a proven character starts with a humble heart.

The nature of the flesh is self-promotion, but the spirit-filled person proves they have proven character through humility.

1 Peter 5:5 "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, NKJV

Danny Huerta said, *“I believe the one characteristic that is foundational to the development of all other healthy, relational, and developmental traits in the life of a loving child is humility.*

Teaching our kids how to be humble in our world is critical to positive child development.

Imagine a world where humility is admired and intentionally cultivated, where kids grow out of a foundation of humility rather than pride, control, and power.

Parents, teaching our children to be humble rather than self-serving is very important.

Ephesians 6:4 you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. NKJV

Part of ***the training and admonition of the Lord*** for our children is to teach them to have a proven character shown in part through our example and humility.

Timothy showed his proven character by standing firm with Paul through trials, missions, and service.

Paul realized how rare this kind of heart was when he observed Timothy so, he said Timothy served as a son with his father.

Paul was filled with joy over the character and concern Timothy demonstrated. As a parent, there is no greater joy than to witness our children having proven character.

Ultimately Timothy not only showed his proven character through humility he also showed proven character by the way he **served** his spiritual father Paul while spreading the Gospel.

III. Hoping to visit.

Read *Philippians 2:23-25*

After telling the Philippians how much he thought of his son in the faith, Paul communicates how he wants to send Timothy immediately to them.

But Paul seems to add a P.S. to the message, “*As soon as I see how it goes with me.*” So Paul wanted to send Timothy.

Wiersbe said, “*Paul himself wanted to go to Philippi, but had had to send Timothy in his place. But what an honor!*

“*Timothy was not only Paul’s son and Paul’s servant, but he became Paul’s substitute.*” (Warren Wiersbe)

His name is held in high regard by Christians today, something that young Timothy never dreamed of when he was busy serving Christ.”

Paul was not sure, if he would be released and when he could send Timothy so, he sent Epaphroditus in his stead.

Who was E-paphro-ditus?

Epaphroditus is the one who delivered the original letter from Paul to the church in Philippi. Paul was under house arrest in Rome, and the church in Philippi wanted to send him a gift.

The Philippians put together some supplies and money to send to Paul as a gift. The member of the Philippian church who brought the gift to Paul was E-paphro-ditus.

How do you want to be remembered by those who are close to you?

How do you want to be remembered by your children? By your parents, by your friends?

Notice how Paul refers to E-paphro-ditus, “***My brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier.***”

Like Timothy, Epaphroditus was a man Paul valued as a **partner** in the work of the Gospel ministry.

Paul also said to the Church, “***Your messenger and the one who ministered to my need***” referring to the gift the Church sent to Paul.

Philippians 4:18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. NKJV

Wiersbe said, “*Like Timothy, Epaphroditus was concerned about others. To begin with, he was concerned about Paul.*

When he heard in Philippi that Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he volunteered to make that long, dangerous trip to Rome to stand at Paul’s side and assist him.

He carried the church's love gift with him, protecting it with his own life."

Like last week, "***ministered***", has the idea of a priestly service.

(Remember we said) A priest has a two-fold ministry: to represent God to the people through serving and good works and to represent the people before God through **prayer**.

When E-paphro-ditus brought the gift from the Philippians to Paul, it was a priestly sacrifice.

IV. A costly service.

Read *Philippians 2:26-30*

E-paphro-ditus had a proven character, just like Timothy.

Notice Paul said, "***Because you had heard that he was sick***".

After arriving in Rome, Epaphroditus became very ill; he almost died. The illness was so bad that it delayed his return to Philippi so, they became very concerned about him.

But E-paphro-ditus was not burdened for himself, he was concerned with the Christians back at his home church in Philippi because they were worried about him.

Paul and E-paphro-ditus were concerned because the Philippians had heard he was sick, so they rushed to send him home.

Seeing E-paphro-ditus would give the Philippian Church peace of mind that their brother was in good health.

Paul not only sent E-paphro-ditus with this letter because he was well known to the Philippians, he also wanted the Church to see how the Lord had healed E-paphro-ditus.

E-paphro-ditus was also a little homesick and wanted to see his fellow church members.

Notice Paul said, “*Not regarding his life*”.

The willingness to put the work of the Gospel above his own personal safety and desires showed the proven **character** of Epaphroditus.

What would you give for a life?

The Greek words, “*not regarding his life*” means to risk everything on the roll-of-the-dice, similar to a gambler.

For the sake of the Gospel and Jesus Christ, E-paphro-ditus was willing to gamble everything, including his very life.

In the days of the Early Church, there were men and women who called themselves **gamblers**, which was taken from this same Greek word used in *not regarding his life*.

The gamblers of the early church would visit prisoners and the sick, especially those with dangerous and infectious diseases.

If a certain plague infected an area, non-believers would throw the dead into the streets and flee the area.

The gamblers would come in, bury the dead, and help the sick as they risked their lives to show the love of Jesus.

V. Practical Application.

I want my children to have proven character, but this character is a learned thing, not a natural characteristic of a person.

I started with the statement from Chip Ingram, *“What comes to mind when you think of a priest? An elaborate robe or a black and white collar? A holy demeanor?”*

If you’re like most men, you think, that’s not me. But it is you.

That’s your calling-not the robe or collar, or church responsibilities, but the dedicated life as someone who stands between God and human beings to facilitate that relationship.

You are the head priest of your family!”

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6:6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

Deuteronomy 6:7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Deuteronomy 6:8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

Deuteronomy 6:9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. NKJV

It is our responsibility to show our children a godly example in order to prepare them to live a life pleasing to the Lord.

1. We should teach our children how to have a **personal** relationship with the Lord.

God has no grandchildren, so each child has to receive Jesus for themselves. Our children need to see authentic Christianity lived out in front of them.

Don't be afraid to let your Children see you have flaws but be sure they know that forgiveness and growth come from Jesus.

2. We should protect our children from ungodly **influence**.

Jesus said in *John 10:10*, ***“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” NKJV***

We are naïve if we are unaware of what our kids are into.

If your child is listening to lyrics about glorifying a bunch of ungodly things, soon they will want to do those ungodly things. Parents, it is our job to protect our children.

If you are afraid your child will be mad at you that's okay, you are not their friend you are their guardian and example of Christ.

3. We are to **establish** our children in church.

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. NKJV

Hebrews 10:25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some. NKJV

- We gather together because of what we **receive**.

The New Testament uses the phrase “***one another***” over 50 times with statements like; ***Love one another, serve one another, admonish one another, greet one another.***

- We gather together because of what we **have** to offer.

We establish our children in church by demonstrating its importance by attending church ourselves. And by doing this...

4. We are to teach our children that God has a **purpose** for us.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. NKJV

We were all created for a purpose and the Lord has gifted each Christian with specific gifts. As we operate in our Spiritual gifts, we encourage our children to walk in theirs as well.

5. We are to **teach** our children about prayer and the Bible.

Deuteronomy 6:7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Our children learn proven character by our example and humility.