



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Philippians 23 Role Model of Leaders/Servants – Timothy

**Philippians 2:19-24**, *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. <sup>20</sup> For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. <sup>21</sup> For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. <sup>22</sup> But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. <sup>23</sup> Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. <sup>24</sup> But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.*

The single greatest tool of spiritual leadership is the power of an exemplary life.

We tend to be creatures led more by pattern than principle. We are much better at following a pattern and a model than we are trying to live out a concept or a principle.

The example shows us what principle can't.  
Principles tell us our duty. That's all they can do!

Example assures us that that duty is possible because somebody is living it out.

If there were no one that you could look to as the model of spiritual virtue, then you might think it's impossible.

When you read the Scripture and when you endeavour to be obedient to all the precepts of the Word of God and you look at your own life and your own weakness and your own sin and your own failure, you might conclude this is impossible, I can't do it.

Principle can only tell us our duty; it can't help us do it.

But modelling and example can show us that such a duty is possible, it can be done. We need other than Jesus Christ because although Christ is the perfect mode.

So, we need somebody who puts flesh on principles, who puts life into precepts that we can pattern our life after.

Precisely that is what Apostle Paul's purpose in this text.

In Chapter 2 Paul had taken 16 verses of precept. **Philippians 2:1-16.**

He laid out the principles of,

- how we are to live,
- humbly,
- without dispute,
- without complaining,
- working out our salvation with fear and trembling.

And be like Christ!

These are very high goals. Never grumbling, never disputing, always with a healthy fear of God, always working out that inward salvation. Duties of perfect principles.

As we know the duties and principles are limited.

Now Apostle Paul saying to us that, let me show you model/example.

Paul gives us three models of spiritual service.

Three models of how to live the Christian life.

Three models of how to serve God.

1. Paul,
2. Timothy and
3. Epaphroditus.

Though they are distinct, they are in some sense all one because they all illustrate the same thing. They all illustrate selfless, humble, spiritual service.

**V 19,** *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.*

Paul would have loved to go to Philippi himself because the church loved him, and he loved them.

**Philippians 1:3-4,** *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,*

**Philippians 1:8,** *For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.*

**Philippians 2:24,** *But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.*

**Philippians 4:1,** *Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.*

While he was a prisoner at Rome, and he needed to be there, not just for the sake of fellowship but also for the sake of their spiritual progress. They had some real needs.

**Philippians 1:27,** *Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,*

We would note is that there was a bit of discord among those people in Philippi. We don't know the extent of it but there was some disharmony there and there was need for greater unity.

This is the reasons he insisted that they should have oneness in mind and spirit. To have such oneness they need to be humble. Chapter 2:1-5,

Paul calling for humility that brings unity. Paul was calling for loving each other the same.

**Philippians 4:2-3**, *I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.<sup>3</sup> And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*

He wants somebody to get two difficult, fighting women together to bring accord where there is discord.

So, Paul desired to be with the Philippians not only for the sake of affection but for the sake of spiritual progress in the matter of unity.

Another thing on Paul's mind and that is that the Philippian church was being attacked by some theological opposition.

**Philippians 1:28-30**, *and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. <sup>29</sup> For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, <sup>30</sup> having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.*

They have been called to suffer. They are being attacked. Obviously under this attack he was concerned that they have an adequate and appropriate response to that. So that was another reason that he would have desired to be with them.

**Philippians 3:2**, *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!*

**Philippians 3:18**, *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*

So, there were some humanistic, materialistic, false teaching people who were attacking the church. Paul was greatly concerned that the church was in confusion.

Paul wanted to be them for affection's sake.

Paul wanted to be with them for spiritual progress sake.

Paul wanted to deal with the issue of unity internally.

Paul wanted to deal with the issue of doctrine.

Now because he had such a strong desire to help the Philippians out of love, and because at the time he was a prisoner, he had no recourse other than to send someone else.

Obviously, Timothy then is going to carry Paul's mission.

Timothy, will carry Paul's

- Affection,
- Message,
- Effort,
- Doctrinal Clarity,
- Bringing unity and
- Strengthen them against the opposition.

For these reasons Apostle Paul wanted Timothy to go.

"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy."

That little phrase "in the Lord Jesus" simply means consistent with His will, His purpose, His person, His plan, and in accord with His will.

The goal of the believer is to fill out the will of God, to do what God wants him to do. You live in constant submission to the will of God.

## **Who is Timothy?**

He was a native either of Derbe or Lystra, two little towns in the area we know as Galatia.

His mother was a Jew by the name of Eunice, his grandmother, Lois. His father was a Greek, so he had a Jewish mother and a Greek father and thus he was able to meet those two sorts of colliding cultures, Judaism and Hellenistic Greek culture.

Obviously, he had not been circumcised. He had to be circumcised, but he had not been circumcised and therefore to that its indication that probably he was educated in Greek culture and Greek circles formally. So informally he was educated by his mother and his grandmother from whom he learned the doctrines of salvation, as Paul tells us in his epistle to him.

From his father and the culture of the Greeks, he learned that world and that perspective. So, he was eminently qualified to go with Paul into the Greek world to bear the message of Jesus Christ.

We don't know when he was converted to Christianity. By the time Paul met him in Acts 16 he had already become a Christian and was such a proven young man.

Paul speaks of him as his son in the Lord, and his son in the faith!

Paul also speaks of him as his brother, his co-worker, his fellow servant and fellow slave.

Timothy was with Paul in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, Ephesus, and now in Rome in the prison while this letter is been written.

Timothy was associated with Paul in the writing of some of his epistles.

- 1 and 2 Thessalonians,
- 2 Corinthians,
- Colossians, and
- Philippians.

When Paul wrote to the Romans, Timothy was there as well.

Timothy was of great use to Paul because he was so willing to do anything Paul ever wanted him to do.

- Paul could send him somewhere, he would go.
- Paul could take him with him, he would go.
- Paul could leave him somewhere, he would stay.

Always faithful to fulfil that which God had given him to do. A message in the hands of Timothy would be as safe as it was in the hands of Paul because Timothy was truly his protege.

The Philippians knew him, too, because he had been Philippi from the very beginning. He was taken up by Paul in Acts 16.

Later in the sixteenth chapter the church at Philippi was founded, Timothy was surely there at the very founding of the church.

So, the Philippians knew Timothy as long as they had known Paul. Certainly, next to Timothy he must have been their second favourite. Paul was very anxious to send him because of his concern.

*"shortly."* Quickly.

How quickly?

*Philippians 2:23, Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.*

The only thing that was restraining Paul now was the fact that he had some personal matters to which Timothy must give his attention.

Now Paul was a prisoner, but he could preach and teach concerning the things of Christ without being hindered. That's why so many people in Caesar's household were being saved, as the end of the epistle indicates.

There must have been many duties to bring people to him, to assemble them, to follow up the people who came to name the name of Jesus Christ. Timothy, and Epaphroditus, would have been very busy.

**V 19, *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.***

Timothy could see them, find out all the good about them and report it back so Paul could rejoice. The assumption here is that all was well. He has a very positive outlook. So that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. That's a very, very positive approach.

The main object of Timothy's mission was to go to assist them in this matter of unity, to assist them in the matter of facing persecution and false doctrine, helping them with those things. Then to return to Paul to bring him great gladness of heart when he reported back the condition of this congregation.

Since Timothy is going to the Philippians, he wants them to accept them.

Paul gives us a profile of Timothy and it is an example, and it is a model for us to follow.

We can see seven features that Timothy models in the matter of spiritual living.

**V20, *For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.***

He is a unique young man. He lived a sacrificial life for the sake of Paul, for the sake of Christ and there are six things Paul notes that mark him out as a model of spiritual virtue.

## 1. One Soul

Timothy is one with me in mind, one with me in thought, one with me in feeling, one with me in spirit.

In other words, Paul is saying that,

- Timothy thinks like I think.
- He acts like I act.
- He reacts like I react.
  
- Timothy operates like Paul.
- He learned to think like Paul.
- He learned to perceive like Paul.
- He learned to evaluate like Paul.

**V 20, For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.**

No one.

In Rome there had been a church established, there were a number of saints there, there were obviously even some preachers there.

There were other brothers, and there were other saints from Caesar's household and from other places, but he says when it comes down to someone whose heart beats like mine, I have no one else.

That's a great reminder of the fact that you may spend a lifetime in ministry and when you come down to the end find that you have been indeed rich if you have produced one who is like you.

Even Paul found that those who were unusually faithful and those who were unusually able and those who were unusually gifted were very few.

Only Timothy.

Paul is not necessarily slurring Luke, Aristarchus, and others.

**1 Corinthians** is a corrective letter, probably the most detailed corrective letter in the whole New Testament. The Corinthian church was a mess. They were engaging in every kind of deviation from proper godly living. Paul is so concerned about them, so burdened about them.

**1 Corinthians 4:16-17**, *Therefore I urge you, imitate me. <sup>17</sup> For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.*

Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying that he was said so concerned about them, so he is sending Timothy.

If you are so upset and burdened, why didn't you go?

Because Timothy is my beloved son in the faith who will remind you of all my ways. Timothy was a reproduction of the Apostle Paul.

This is the goal of discipleship!

When a man is fully discipled, Jesus said he will be like his teacher.

It's rare to find someone who has all the elements that you would want to reproduce.

Now do you understand why when Paul comes to the end of his life, the last book he writes is 2 Timothy?

The last epistle he writes to Timothy is to keep Timothy on track because Paul knows he is going to leave the world and he says I am ready to be offered, I finished my course, I have kept the faith.

The one thing he wants so desperately is continuity in his ministry and so for the sake of continuity he pleads with Timothy to stay on track because Timothy is his clone, his carbon copy.

All of us must come along under the Pauline model. Timothy is a classic illustration of what all of us are to be.

Personally, as for me, no man has influenced me like the Apostle Paul.

We all need the model of Jesus but that's a model of sinless perfection. We need the model of Paul who is a model of a victorious believer with a sin principle in operation.

Timothy was set apart uniquely as an effective believer because he was so like the apostolic model.

Paul provides the greatest model for all of us. Timothy then by bearing that same model becomes to us a model as well.

## **2. Kind-hearted**

**V20**, *For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.*

Concerned for your welfare genuinely not hypocritically. Timothy has the disposition of a true shepherd. He cares about you.

**John 10:11**, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.*

Timothy had a compassion for the church.  
Paul had the greatest burden for the Church.

**2 Corinthians 11:28**, *besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.*

This has reflected the heart of Timothy as well.

**2 Corinthians 1:1**, *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:*

Timothy along with Paul as he penned that certainly reflected the same compassion and care for the church that Paul did. He was certainly deeply burdened for the church.

This is the reason Paul left him in the Ephesian church to assess the situation and to solve the situation. Timothy had a passion for the church. He had a sympathy for the things that needed to be done.

### **3. Single-minded.**

He was also single-minded.

**V 21**, *For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus*

For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

He has left a trail of evangelized individuals, there are many believers around him, there are believers in Rome in Caesar's household and beyond Rome.

### **All the believers in Rome?**

They seek after their own interests. The idea is Timothy is consumed with the interests of Christ Jesus. This is a man who is single-minded.

We would be thinking that with Paul as their spiritual father that he was responsible for bringing the gospel to all of them, now that Paul is in prison, they would all be consumed with the interests of Christ.

Was there even a man so consumed with his mission as Paul?

**V20**, *"I have no one like me,"*

**V21**, *"they all seek after their own interests."*

How sad!

In Rome they were preaching Christ, but they were double minded in that they were preaching Christ and wanting to exalt themselves.

I think about the fact that when he came to the end of his life he said about Demas.

**2 Timothy 4:10**, *for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.*

**2 Timothy 4:16**, *At my first defence no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.*

**2 Timothy 1:15**, *This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

The very people from whom Paul expected help in his trials and in the hard times of his life were bailing out when the pressure was on.

They are all lack of genuine interest.

It was a part of Paul's life, it's a part of my life, it's a part of the life of anyone who ministers and it's tragic and it's disappointing.

Timothy seeks the things of Christ. He lives with that single-minded devotion.

It's not that people won't serve Christ and the church at all. They will. It's just that they're not single-minded.

"Just do one thing! one thing well in your life and you'll be way ahead of most people."

A man can destroy his life in three ways.

- a) Give in to his lazy slothful nature and do nothing.
- b) Give yourself to a wrong goal. Nail down that goal, find that goal, identify that goal and go for that goal all your life only to find out at the end, wrong goal. A lot of people have poured out tears and bitter regret over that kind of thing.
- c) Get into church dabble/splash in a whole bunch of things and never do anything. This is where most people fall. Dabbling and not focused on one thing.

#### **What made Timothy so special in ministry?**

Timothy was he was utterly single-minded.

While everybody else had a lot of interests, he had only interest in the things of Christ Jesus.

#### **4. Proven**

**V 22,** *But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.*

Timothy's integrity was well established. He has passed the test. He was proven. Not by a test but by testings and trials.

Previous ministry on a number of occasions had provided evidence of Timothy's spiritual character and maturity.

The church started back in Acts 16.

In Acts 19 and 20 we see them interacting with Philippians congregation.

They knew him by personal experience the proven worth of this man. He was known to you from the start.

Letter to Corinth, 2 Corinthians appears to have been written from Philippi. Paul and Timothy were together in the writing of that epistle.

The qualifications for elder.

The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy that this man who was an elder must not be a new convert lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

**1 Timothy 3:10**, *But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.*

Not proven in school but proven in service.

Not proven by a test but proven through testings.

He has been proven.

## 5. Submissive

**V22**, *But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.*

That he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father." Now just take this much of that.

Timothy served with me like a child serving his father.

The word "serve" is to slave.

Please note this, it doesn't say he served me. It doesn't say he served under me. It says he slaved with me.

Timothy is a fellow slave.

Paul doesn't see himself as the master and Timothy is the slave. He slaved alongside of me.

**2 Timothy 2:3**, *You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

Paul sees Timothy as an equal.

This shows the humility of Paul.

But from Timothy's viewpoint, his attitude was like a child serving his father.

- It isn't a master and a slave.
- It isn't a sergeant and a private relationship.

He slaved with me with the mentality of a son serving alongside his father so that whatever submission was there was a not a forced submission but an earned respect. Both were servants of God, both slaved side by side. But Timothy with the willing, loving, submission of a son who honours and respects and wants to learn from the father of his love.

The word for son here '*teknon*' which means little boy or child. He served alongside me as if he were a little boy and I was his spiritual father.

Timothy never competed with Paul. No more than a little boy competes with the father of his heart's affection. But he came alongside his father.

From his father's view they were serving together.  
From the boy's view he was lovingly and affectionately looking at his father whom he loved and honoured and learning from him with joy.

That's why Paul calls Timothy, "My true child in the faith."

Timothy was submissive. But not because he was forced to be, but because he so greatly esteemed his spiritual superior. This is a model of spiritual virtue. May God help us to have such a

heart toward those who are over us in the Lord, to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake.

Model spiritual living demands that you come alongside those who are the fathers, the spiritual fathers and look at them with love and esteem and respect and honour as a little fellow does the father of his love.

That alone could heal tremendous problems in the congregations of many churches.

## **6. Sacrifice**

**V 22**, *But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.*

We don't know what Timothy's plans were when he was picked up by Paul in Acts 16. He was there and a young man. No doubt he must have had some life direction.

The next thing he knew he was called by the Apostle Paul to come along with him.

There was the laying on the hands of the presbytery to set him apart in the ministry.

Timothy went with the Apostle Paul on one unending non-stop adventure.

And that unending, non-stop adventure ultimately landed in prison.

**Hebrews 13:23**, *Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.*

He was released.

Timothy died as a martyr according to the historical records in Ephesus 97A.D.

Timothy lived a totally sacrificial life.

Whatever his own agenda was,  
whatever his training was,  
whatever his plans were,  
he set them all aside and slaved alongside of me for the furtherance of the gospel.

He was consumed to sacrifice his life for the cause of evangelism.

As far as we know from the history Timothy,  
left his home,

- never fell in love,
- never married,
- never had a child,
- never owned a home,

- never owned any possession and
- always travelling for the sake of Gospel.

The sacrificial character of Paul had so impacted him that Timothy gave his life up for the furtherance of the gospel.

Timothy learned it from Paul. He was a willing learner and a marvellous disciple of Paul.

## **Conclusion:**

Timothy focus was on the advancement of the gospel in the hearts of the lost.

**V 23**, *Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.*

He's always useful.

Paul says go; he goes.

Paul says stay with me; he stays.

Paul says come with me; he comes.

That was his life, always useful, always available.

**V 24**, *But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.*

All this is subject to God's sovereignty.

Timothy was a model for us to follow.

Paul writes to Philippians and he just paints a picture of Timothy that sets him apart as this wonderful person, a real model for us.

But Timothy was human, and a sinner.

There are highs and lows. There are victories and defeats.

**2 Timothy 2:21-23**, *Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.* <sup>22</sup> *Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.* <sup>23</sup> *But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.*

This is the last letter Paul ever wrote at the end of this life and he writes it to Timothy.

First letter he said, "Be an example to the believers."

Second letter he says, "Follow righteousness, run away from unholiness."

Paul has to write the second epistle to strengthen him. Be strong in the Lord.

**2 Timothy 2:1**, You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

We see the standard of what he was in Philipians.

Paul holds him to and calls him back to that standard in 2

Paul is doing the same for us today.

You see the model of Timothy, hear the word of Paul to Timothy later and be sure that you become what you can be in the power of God's Spirit.