

Soldiers in the Faith

July 22, 2012

PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

Vol. 2 Num. 29

Core Competency:

Faithfulness- I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Never let loyalty and faithfulness leave you. Tie them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will find favor and high regard in the sight of God and man. (Proverbs 3:3-4)

Using This Study

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

② DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

③ LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFE GROUP.

Introduction

Jackie Robinson was the first African-American to play major league baseball in the modern era. While crossing the color line, he faced heckling crowds in every stadium. Once, while playing at his home stadium in Brooklyn, he committed an error. His own fans began to ridicule him. He stood at second base, humiliated, while the fans jeered.

Then shortstop "Pee Wee" Reese walked over to his side. He put his arm around Jackie and then turned to face the crowd. The fans grew quiet. In those critical moments, his teammate and friend quietly stood by him when it would have been easy to look the other way. Robinson later said that arm around his shoulder saved his career.

I'm sure that Paul, in Philippians 2:19-30, did not set out to teach us about friendship. However, as Paul describes both the actions and attitudes of Timothy and Epaphroditus, it teaches us nonetheless. It is as if Paul says, "If you want to see what humility and Christ-like servant-hood looks like, then check out Timothy and Epaphroditus, my faithful friends."

Through their example, we see that true Christian friends give of themselves in ways that can be costly. They don't expect repayment. Instead, they look to God to provide what is needed in resources and time. In addition, true friends stand with you in the tough times. They are willing to share your joys as well as your difficulties. Friends make deposits into each other's lives and allow God to bring the return.

This Week

This week ask God to help you to be a faithful friend. As you invest in the life of others, God will use you to be his loving arms of support, comfort, and kindness. Perhaps you are not sure how you could possibly be that kind of committed friend. Don't spend time worrying about your lack of resources. Instead, by faith, ask God to give you enough to take the first step. You are serving the God of the universe. It is His delight to give you everything that you will need, at just the right time, to reach out to a friend in need.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage:

Philippians 2:19-30

19 Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon so that I also may be encouraged when I hear news about you.

20 For I have no one else like-minded who will genuinely care about your interests;

21 all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

22 But you know his proven character, because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son with a father.

23 Therefore, I hope to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.

24 I am convinced in the Lord that I myself will also come quickly.

25 But I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus —my brother, coworker, and fellow

soldier, as well as your messenger and minister to my need —

26 since he has been longing for all of you and was distressed because you heard that he was sick.

27 Indeed, he was so sick that he nearly died. However, God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have one grief on top of another.

28 For this reason, I am very eager to send him so that you may rejoice when you see him again and I may be less anxious.

29 Therefore, welcome him in the Lord with all joy and hold men like him in honor,

30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up what was lacking in your ministry to me.

② DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the following questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

1. What do you think Paul meant by “like-minded” in verse 20? Use Philippians 2:2 to help you.
2. Paul mentions Timothy and Epaphroditus in this passage. In so doing, we get a picture of loyal companionship, friendship, and servant-hood.
 - a) Discuss the truths, from each passage below, and how they relate to this week’s text. What are the unifying qualities that we should notice, if any?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Proverbs 17:17

John 15:12-15

- b) What are some barriers to fostering this type of God-centered relationship or friendship with another believer in your life?
3. Restate verse 21 in your own words. What might be a remedy or remedies, in your life, for this problem? (See Philippians 2:4-5 and Ephesians 5:2, 10 if you would like help.)
 4. Read this weeks' core competency based on Proverbs 3:3-4.
 - a) How do these verses relate to this week's passage?
 - b) How could you, in practical terms, write love and faithfulness on the tablet of your heart or tie it around your neck?
 - c) What can happen if the favor and a good name in the sight of man become more important than favor and a good name in the sight of God? How should the believer guard against this?
 5. Verse 25 calls Epaphroditus a "fellow soldier" and "co-worker."
 - a) How is the church body (and individuals within the church) affected when only part of the body shares the work or service required for running a truly healthy church?
 - b) How might God be prompting you to labor alongside another brother or sister in service to God at CLBC?

Sermon Notes:

③ LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP.

- Using 2:19-30, list two or three qualities that should characterize those to whom honor is due in the Body of Christ.
- Give examples of how these qualities could or, should be expressed or seen in our church or your LifeGroup.
- Discuss the dynamics that hinder or encourage such expressions.
- Pray together for your group and CLBC.

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away God's Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away God's money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ