

LESSON 9

Philippians 2:19-30



The Imitation Game

OPEN IT

1. What would you say is your greatest achievement?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Philippians 2:19-30

2. What are the names of the people Paul mentions in these verses?
3. Why is Paul confident to send Timothy to Philippi?
4. Why does Paul appreciate Epaphroditus so much?
5. How does Paul want the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus?

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: FAT CHRISTIANS!

Read Philippians 1:27

Faithful. Available. Teachable.

Sometimes we think that we look all the way back to Philippians 1:27, Paul encouraged the Christians in Philippi to live lives worthy of the gospel. Then he encouraged them to look at Jesus' example. Now he mentions these two guys as if to say, "Hey, look at these two guys. They're doing it! They're living selfless lives that are worthy of the gospel."

Too often we look at the radical faith of others and how God has used them to do extraordinary things for His kingdom and we admire it from a distance. But Paul is giving real life examples of people the Philippians would have known who were living it out. They were actually doing it! This lifestyle Paul is calling ALL the Christians to is doable. You can live a selfless life worthy of the gospel too! It isn't just something for adults, your leaders, or the pastors of the church. It's something that every single Christian can do. Are you?

6. Look through Philippians 2:19-30. What things about Timothy and Epaphroditus make them F.A.T. (see above) Christians?

7. FAT stands for Faithful–Available–Teachable. Which of these areas would you say is your strongest? Which is your weakest? What things should you do to grow in your weaker areas?

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: THE AWARD GOES TO...

Read Philippians 2:29-30

In 1936 the Heisman trophy was first introduced nationwide to honor the most valuable college football player in the country. Every year a new player is awarded this prestigious prize for his leadership and accomplishments on the football field.

Paul introduces the spiritual Heisman awards in this passage as he highlights the life and ministry of both Timothy and Epaphroditus. Both men have embodied the values that Paul has been talking about: selfless living, having the mind of Christ, etc. It's a really powerful thing when we recognize others and affirm them for living lives that are worthy of the gospel.

While some people may mock you for living out Christlike character on a daily basis, there are many people who will look at your faithfulness to Christ and to His Church and applaud you for it. Paul has encouraged the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus back with joy and to honor men like him because he put everything on the line for Jesus.

8. Who are a few people in your life that you look up to who are living out selfless lives worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ? How can you recognize and honor them for setting such great examples and pursuing godliness?

9. How can you go about living selflessly for the sake of Christ and others? What things stand in your way of living this kind of life?



This week, we have the privilege of focusing prayer support in a slightly different way. What do missionaries do when they reach an older age and are no longer serving in the same ways as they did previously? In our American culture, our identities are strongly connected to our careers— what we "do" seems to be a key in defining who we are. Missionaries have to grapple with this as well, when they transition "off the field," so to speak.

Following is a list of some VBC missionaries who served our Lord faithfully for many decades but are now transitioning into different forms of service. Some have formally retired, others are adjusting their ministry activities.

Phil and Arleen Blycker (Rio Grande Bible College, Texas)—Phil and Arleen used their musical talents to serve as "musicianaries" to Spanish speakers in Latin America. They compiled a well-loved Spanish hymnal and helped many missionaries by training them in the excellent use of music in their church planting ministries. They currently live in Oregon and continue giving music lessons, performing, and reaching out to the Spanish-speaking community.

Jessie Van Schepen (Ireland)—Jessie served as a church planting missionary in Ireland, specifically connecting with women for Bible study and discipleship. She persevered through a struggle with cancer and continued serving for many years afterward. She is now based in Indiana, making future plans—most likely to represent her sending agency (Crossworld) among churches and encouraging others to commit their lives to missionary service.

Jim Wood (Missionary TECH Team, Texas)—Jim was sent by Plano Bible Church (now VBC's Plano Campus) to use his technical and leadership skills with Missionary TECH Team. They provide technical services to countless missionaries and agencies—from engineering to computer systems to publishing. Even building airstrips in remote locations! Jim is retired in east Texas near his grandchildren. He has recently joined a large church in that area, looking forward to connecting and serving the Lord with joy.

Dwight and Phyllis Zimmerman (Cedine Bible Camp, Tennessee)—The Zimmermans were God's instruments in leading Cedine into effective ministry. The camp serves inner city youth, giving them the opportunity to hear and experience the gospel of grace. It also serves as a Christian conference facility. Dwight no longer serves as the leader of the ministry, but is involved in doing "behind the scenes" work to keep things running smoothly.

Prayer points:

- That these servants of God would not wonder "who am I now?" but would find joy and their identity in Christ
- That they would continue serving Christ with the same passion and gifting for the rest of their lives, no matter where God has placed them
- That new patterns of serving and connecting with a local church would nourish their souls
- That their deep life and ministry experiences would serve as sources of encouragement and inspiration to others—for the Lord of the Harvest to raise up even more workers!