

# Philippians

## A Personal Letter from Your Rabbi, the “Prisoner”

- I. Paul’s *Introduction* to the **Philippians** (1:1-11)
- II. Paul’s *Imprisonment* Perspective (1:12-26)

### III. Paul’s *Instructions* to the **Philippians** regarding **Personal Conduct** (1:27-2:30)

{Part 1}

- A. He *Appeals* for Unity in their **Ministry** of the **Gospel** (1:27-2:2)
- B. He *Admonishes* them to **Walk in Humility** towards  
**One Another** (2:3-11)

{Part 2}

- C. He *Affirms* the **Priority** of having a Godly  
Testimony to the **World** (2:12-18)

<sup>12</sup> So then, **my beloved**, just as you have always obeyed,  
not as in my **presence** only, but now **much more** in my **absence**,  
work out your **salvation** with *fear* and *trembling*;

<sup>13</sup> for it is **God** who is **at work in you**,  
both to **will** and to **work** for *His good pleasure*.

<sup>14</sup> **Do** all things **without grumbling** or *disputing*;

<sup>15</sup> so that you will prove yourselves to be **blameless** and **innocent**,  
**children of God above reproach** in the **midst** of a *crooked* and *perverse*  
**generation**, among whom you appear as lights in the **world**,

<sup>16</sup> **holding fast** the **word of life**, so that in the **day of Messiah**  
I will have reason to **glory** because I did **not run** in **vain** nor *toil* in **vain**.

<sup>17</sup> But even if I am being **poured out** as a **drink offering**  
upon the **sacrifice** and **service** of **your faith**,  
I **rejoice** and share **my joy** with you all.

<sup>18</sup> **You too**, I *urge you*, **rejoice** in the same way and share **your joy** with me.

- D. He *Announces* the **sending** of Timothy and  
Epaphroditus to **them** (2:19-30)

<sup>19</sup> But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be *encouraged* when I learn of your condition.

<sup>20</sup> For I have no one else of *kindred spirit* who will *genuinely be concerned* for your welfare.

<sup>21</sup> For they all seek after their own interests, *not* those of Messiah Jesus.

<sup>22</sup> But you know of his *proven worth*, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

<sup>23</sup> Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

<sup>24</sup> and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

<sup>25</sup> But I thought it *necessary* to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;

<sup>26</sup> because he was longing for you all and was *distressed* because you had heard that he was sick.

<sup>27</sup> For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had *mercy* on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would *not* have sorrow upon sorrow.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may *rejoice* and I may be less concerned about you.

<sup>29</sup> Receive him then in the Lord with *all joy*, and hold men like him in high regard;

<sup>30</sup> because he came close to death for the work of Messiah, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

## Message Summary

C. Paul Affirms the Priority of having a Godly Testimony to the World (2:12-18)

1. Exhorting them to work to “complete” the salvation work that God is doing *within* them by His power (2:12-13)
2. Exhorting them to maintain a godly testimony to the world (2:14-16)
  - a. A *testimony* that would benefit the children of God (2:14-15a)
    - 1) doing all things without murmuring and arguments (2:14)
    - 2) being blameless and innocent (2:15a)
    - 3) above reproach in the midst of perversity (2:15b)

- b. A *testimony* that **shines** and **holds forth** the **word of life** (2:15c-16a)
- c. A *testimony* that would give **Paul reason** to **glory** (2:16b)
- 3. **Exhorting them** to **rejoice**, even if **he** is “**offered up**” for their **faith** and **service** (2:17-18)

#### D. **Paul Announces** the **Sending** of **Timothy** and **Epaphroditus** (2:19-30)

- 1. **Explaining** his **purposes** for **sending Timothy** (2:19-24)
  - a. **His** desire for **personal encouragement** (2:19)
  - b. **His** spiritual **kinship** with **Timothy** (2:20-21)
  - c. **His** **confidence** because of the “**proven worth**” of **Timothy** (2:22)
  - h. **His** **hope** to follow **Timothy** with his own **personal visit** (2:23-24)
- 2. **Expressing** his **reasons** for **returning Epaphroditus** to them (2:25-30)
  - a. **Epaphroditus’** **impressive service** (2:25)
  - b. **Epaphroditus’** **severe sickness** and subsequent **distress** (2:26-27)
  - c. **Paul’s concern** for the **Philippians** (2:28)
  - d. **Paul’s** **urging** that **Epaphroditus** be **received** with *joy* and **honor** (2:29-30)

## Personal Application

### **Timothy and Epaphroditus → Rabbi Paul’s Faithful Servants**

{ Observations/Principles }

- 1. **Rabbi Paul** declared that he would be **sending Timothy** to visit the **Philippians**. **He** would **send Timothy** because he was a “**kindred spirit**,” and **like Paul**, **he also** would **genuinely care** for the **well-being** of the **Philippians**. (2:19-20)  
**Principle** → In **choosing people** to **lead** and **serve** the **people of God**, it is a **priority** to **send** out those who have a **genuine concern** for the “**sheep**.”
- 2. According to **Rabbi Paul**, he **chose Timothy** because he knew that **he** would **not** be **seeking** after **his own interests**, but only **those** of **Messiah Jesus**. (2:21)  
**Principle** → Those who are **committed** to **serving the Lord** must **not** do so for ***selfish* interests**, but should **serve** the **interests** and **purposes** of the **Messiah**.

3. Paul declared that Timothy had “proven worth,” and had a testimony of dedicated service in the ministry of the gospel. (2:22)

**Principle**→ When a **ministry** calls and **man** or **woman** to accomplish an important **work of service** or **leadership function**, it should be **someone** who has a *proven* “**track record**” of faithful service in the **cause** of the **gospel**.

4. Tonight we read that Paul deemed it *necessary* to **send back Epaphroditus**, who was **sent to Paul** earlier as a **messenger** and **minister** to **his needs**. (2:25)

Paul described Epaphroditus as “*my brother* and *fellow worker* and *fellow soldier*.” He had **high regard** for Epaphroditus, who became a **dear brother** and dedicated servant, who **greatly supported Paul** in his **imprisonment**. (2:25)

**Principle**→ The **most important resource** in the **work** of the **ministry** are the people who serve faithfully and sacrificially. A **ministry** is rarely a “**one man show**.” It is comprised of **individual dedicated believers** that **work** as a team in a **co-laborship with God** to accomplish **His purposes** (2:13). In a different letter, Paul wrote that it was “**work of service**” of *each believer* that caused the **growth** of the **ministry** (Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16).

5. While **serving** the needs of Paul, Epaphroditus became **sick**, almost to the point of **death**. Paul was very concerned about his brother, and was **grateful to God** for His **mercy** when Epaphroditus eventually **recovered**. Had Epaphroditus died, Paul shared that he would have experienced, “**sorrow upon sorrow**.” (2:27)

**Principle**→ Frankly, I’m not sure there is a principle here, other than simply realizing that **we all need** to have **brothers** and **sisters** who support and encourage us, and with whom we can *trust personally*.

“A **friend loves** at **all times**, and a **brother** is born for **adversity**.” (Prov. 17:17)

6. Finally, we read tonight how that Paul exhorted the **Philippians** to receive Epaphroditus with all **joy**, and to “hold men like him in high regard (2:29).” Paul’s **reason** for this **high praise** was because Epaphroditus came “close to **death**” for the **work of Messiah**, and **risked his life** to accomplish the **mission** that they (the **Philippians**) had **sent him** to do on **their behalf**. (2:30)

**Principle**→ We should honor faithful servants, and hold them in high regard for their **sacrifice** and **service** for the **ministry** of the **gospel**. The **true servant** of **God** will remain *humble* even while being lauded, for he or she **knows** that it is

“**God** who is **at work** in you,  
both to will and to work for **His good pleasure** (2:13).”