

Letters of Reference

Philippians 2:19-30

Introduction

I The Modeling of Timothy

- A. Paul's expressed purpose
 - 1. He hoped in the Lord to send Timothy - 1 Thess 3:2-3
 - 2. He wanted to be **cheered** by news about Philippi - 3 Jn 3
- B. Paul's assessment of Timothy's life
 - 1. He was **unique** in Paul's ministry - Phil 2:2; 2 Cor 8:16-17
 - a. He took a genuine **interest** in their welfare - Phil 2:3-4
 - 2. He was not like everyone else:
 - a. Who look out for their **own** interest - Jn 10:11-13
 - b. Who do not look to the interest of **Jesus** - Matt 6:33
 - 3. He had **proved** himself - 1 Tim 3:10
 - 4. He was like a son to Paul - 1 Tim 1:2; Prov 15:20
 - 1. He **served** with Paul in the gospel - 2 Cor 4:5
- C. Paul's desire for information
 - 1. He hoped to send Timothy - Phil 1:25-26
 - 2. He was **confident** that he would come to them

II The Modeling of Epaphroditus

- A. Paul's intention to send Epaphroditus - Phil 2:25; 4:18
- B. Paul's assessment of Epaphroditus
 - 1. He was a dear **brother** - Eph 6:21-22
 - 2. He was a fellow worker - 1 Cor 3:9
 - 3. He was a fellow **soldier** - 2 Tim 2:3-4
 - 4. He was a messenger from the Philippians - Jn 20:21
 - 5. He was a **servant** to Paul - Mark 10:45
- C. Paul's description of Epaphroditus' sacrifice
 - 1. He **longed** for the believers in Philippi - Phil 1:8; 4:1
 - 2. He was distressed that they had heard he was ill
 - 3. He was ill and almost **died**
 - 4. He was spared by God's mercy - Ps 41:1-3
 - a. Protecting Paul additional **sorrow** - Jn 16:22
- D. Paul's intention
 - 1. He was eager to send Epaphroditus back

- a. To **gladden** the hearts of the church - Prov 12:25
 - b. To lessen Paul's **anxiety** about the church
- E. Paul's instructions:
- 1. Welcome him in the Lord with great **joy** - Mt 10:40-41
 - 2. **Honor** men like him - 1 Tim 5:17
 - a. He almost died for the work of Christ
 - b. He **risked** his life in their place - Acts 15:25-26

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time this week to consider the following:

- 1. If you had to turn over your affairs or children to someone outside your family, who would you choose? Why?
- 2. What character qualities do you find most admirable about 1) Timothy? and 2) Epaphroditus? Which of these qualities are you strong in? Weak in? How would you like to grow?
- 3. What qualities/skills/gifts do you have that make you valuable to 1) Your family? 2) Your church? 3) Your work place?
- 4. If Paul were to write a letter of reference for you, what would he say about your faith? Your modeling Christ-likeness? Your faithfulness in marriage? Your parenting? Your diligence at work? Your love for others? Your commitment to sharing the gospel?
- 5. Consider writing letters of reference for members of your family, highlighting their successes, skills, talents and value as a member of your household. Then read them together.

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

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