

Week #5 - Rejoicing in Fellow Servants

Philippians 2:19-30

Weekly Study Guide:

Day 1	Read and Copy	Read and copy Philippians 2:19-30 in your own handwriting.
Day 2	Observe and Ponder	<p>Re-read the Philippians passage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a note in your margins of what the passage tells us about God.• Write down in the margins everything that you know about Timothy and Epaphroditus.• Use a cross-reference from the center column of your Bible or a resource like blueletterbible.org to look up at least one other place in Scripture where Timothy and Epaphroditus were mentioned. <p>Re-read the Philippians passage and write a one-sentence summary of the passage at the bottom of your handwritten page.</p>
Day 3	Practice and Pray	<p>Take time to answer the discussion questions that are provided to prepare for your group time on Thursday.</p> <p>In your prayer time, consider starting with one thing to praise our God for that you learned about Him in this chapter.</p>

For Discussion:

1. Community Builder: This week, we are meeting two of Paul's dear friends and partners in the gospel, who were a great encouragement to him. Who is someone in your life who has partnered with you and/or encouraged you in your faith?
2. Paul speaks very highly of Timothy, who he desires to send to the Philippians. What are the characteristics Paul uses to describe Timothy that are different from others? In what ways does this description convict or encourage you about your own relationships?
3. Although Timothy was not able to come to Philippi yet, Epaphroditus came with Paul's letter and encouragement. What is one thing that stood out to you about Epaphroditus' love for Jesus? His love for the Philippians?

4. What are some fruits of godly fellowship as seen in the friendship of Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus?

5. Think about your friendships. How would you describe the relationships around you? Given the descriptions of the fruit of Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus' friendship, what is one area where you could grow in being a better friend to others?

6. Paul rejoices in these friendships and partnerships with Timothy and Epaphroditus. Thus, he mentions how he was spared sorrow when God showed mercy and spared Epaphroditus' life. Joy and sorrow often go hand in hand. What does Paul's reference to sorrow and to the example of his life in the context of following Jesus tell us about joyful living?

7. What we are witnessing in this passage between Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and the Philippian church is not unique to them but is characteristic of the whole church — the body of Christ. The body of Christ functions in an active, not passive way, in regards to one another. Read the following verses and underline the verb phrase in each passage that indicates how we are to function in the body of Christ.

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! ~Psalms 133:1

*For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, **5** so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; **7** if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; **8** the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. ~Romans 12:1-8*

*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." ~John 15:12-13*

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ~Galatians 6:2

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. ~Ephesians 4:32

I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. ~Romans 15:14

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, **25** not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. ~Hebrews 10:24-25*

*Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. **9** Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. **10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: **11** whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ~1 Peter 4:8-1*

Put it into Practice:

8. Looking back at what you underlined in question #7, how do these characteristics build a strong community that glorifies God? What aspects of Christian community have you experienced and enjoyed the most? What aspect do you want to help cultivate more of in our UFC community? What might that look like for you?

9. As we learn to rejoice in our fellow saints as Paul did, I encourage you to take 5-10 minutes and write a card of encouragement to a fellow saint/friend in your life — maybe the person you mentioned in question #1. Thank them for their encouragement. Thank them for their partnership in the gospel. Thank them for their friendship.

10. Taking time to look back over Philippians 2:19-30, make note of what you learned about the character of God this week. Given the truth you know about His character, what is one way that truth will change the way that you live this week? If you are comfortable, share this with your group to encourage one another and to help hold one another accountable to living in that way this week.

Prayer:

One of the gifts that we have that we can give one another is to hold each other up in prayer. Record ways that you can be praying for your sisters this week, and then pray for them this week.
