

Stand Firm, Dear Friends
Christ-centered Leaders
Philippians 2:19-30

Follow the Leader

Proverbs 13:20 *Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*

1 Corinthians 15:33 *Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."*

We are hard-wired to imitate. The question is not whether we imitate, but *whom or what are we imitating?*

1 Corinthians 11:1 *Be imitators of me, even as I follow Christ.*

Philippians 3:17 *Join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.*

Philippians 2:19-30 *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.*

THREE QUALITIES OF A LEADER WORTH FOLLOWING

1. **Follow the leader who has a genuine interest in the wellbeing of others. 2:19-21**

v. 20 - Literally, "I have no one who is of **equal soul** (who is **like-minded**)."

v. 21 - *For they all seek their own interests, not those of **Jesus Christ**.*

2:3-4 *Consider others more significant than yourselves. (That is)) look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others*

The Example of Christ - **vv. 5-8**

Note: v. 22 *But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.*

2. **Follow the leader who has a proven character in hardship. 2:22-24**

Timothy was Paul's spiritual son. He was an apprentice to Paul in the gospel.

Timothy was timid by nature. (1 Timothy 1:6-7).

Ordinary people, even those prone to fear, can be good citizens of God's kingdom and live gospel-worthy lives.

Philippians 2:25-30 *I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.*

3. **Follow the leader who has the capacity to feel empathy and compassion for others. 2:25-30**

v. 26 Epaphroditus had been *longing* for the Philippians—same word as Paul's *longing* for the Philippians in 1:8. Paul likens Epaphroditus to himself, and thus ties his longing to the same Source—the affection of Christ.

Epaphroditus was *distressed*—the same word as Jesus' *distress* in **Matthew 26:37-38**—“*distressed and sorrowful unto death*”

v. 27 Epaphroditus was ill, *unto death*—the same exact phrase used of Jesus in **Matthew 26:38** and **Philippians 2:8**, who was sorrowful *unto death* and obedient *unto death*.

Epaphroditus had the mind of Christ and the great paradox of **2:12-13** was happening in his life.

v. 25 Epaphroditus' resume: *my brother* = my kin; *fellow-worker* = my colleague; fellow-soldier = my battle-tested comrade in spiritual warfare; *your messenger* (apostle); *your minister* (work of a priest)

A prophetic word to pastors...

A prophetic word to volunteers...