

Making An Impact

Philippians 2:25-30

My dear Christian brother and sister, though in your own eyes you don't think you are much in God's Kingdom, you can still make a real impact for Christ, and I want to show you how.

In **Philippians 2:25-30** the Holy Spirit gives us a wonderful example how we can make a real impact for Christ from an ancient brother named Epaphroditus.

Because Paul was chained 24-7 to two guards, he could not do what was necessary to take care of his basic needs (wash clothes, cook, treat his injuries, get supplies etc.) so the church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus to deliver their financial gift and to stay a while to help Paul out.

In these six verses we find that Epaphroditus made a real impact for Christ by relating, empathy, submitting and sacrificing. By learning to do the same we too can make a real impact for Christ on those who are in our lives. Let's study these out:

IMPACT BY RELATING

25, But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier; who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.

To make a real impact for Christ we must learn to relate as a Christian with our brothers and sisters. Notice the three ways that Paul personally described Epaphroditus relating with him.

- He related to Paul as a brother in the Lord by loving him, encouraging him and supporting him.
- He related to Paul as a fellow worker by giving him a hand in certain ministry tasks to lighten some of Paul's load.
- He related to Paul as a fellow soldier by standing and contending with Paul in prayer against the enemy's attacks.

We will have a real impact for Christ when we learn to relate to our brothers and sisters by being a brother/sister to them, fellow worker with them and fellow soldier with them.

IMPACT BY EMPATHY

26-27, For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

We can make a real impact for Christ by having empathy. In Epaphroditus' day news traveled extremely slow. Once the church at Philippi along with his own family heard that he was sick, they spent months not knowing if he was alive or not.

The thought of his family and church suffering with fear and heartbreak over him was more than he could hardly stand. Notice the empathy he had for them; how he longed for them and was distressed because he knew what they were going through.

It would be easy for us to think that having such empathy was a distraction from Epaphroditus' task at hand to serve Paul. But God used it as an indicator to help him know that his temporary assignment with Paul was finishing up.

In every assignment we need to give place to empathy for others. We will have a real impact for Christ when we learn to allow our empathy to be one of the things that guides us.

IMPACT BY SUBMITTING

28, Therefore, I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.

We can make a real impact for Christ when we learn to submit. Epaphroditus could have insisted that he stayed and carried on, but instead he submitted to what Paul felt was necessary in this situation.

Paul's concern was that by keeping him there in Rome it would put too great of an emotional burden on the church at Philippi, on Epaphroditus and on his family.

But in the scheme of things all that happened to Epaphroditus and his submission to Paul to go home turned out to be a great blessing, for this was one of the things that prompted Paul to write this letter to the Philippians and it was Epaphroditus who delivered it.

Even we are blessed because Epaphroditus was willing to submit; just think how many times the Lord has used this powerful letter to speak to us. We can make a real impact for Christ when we learn to submit as well.

IMPACT BY SACRIFICING

29-30, Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

We can make a real impact for Christ when we sacrifice. Notice this term "risking his life", Church history tells us that what Epaphroditus did in his self sacrifice inspired many generations of Christian missionaries after him to do the same.

These missionaries called themselves the "riskers" and sacrificed their lives by going to places that were filled with dangerous infectious diseases and plagues to serve those who were dying so they can help them come to Christ.

Epaphroditus had no idea of the impact for Christ that his sacrifice would have on the generations of Jesus followers who came after him. We also can make a real impact for Christ when we learn to give of ourselves sacrificially for Christ sake.

Conclusion: Like Epaphroditus, we can make a real impact on others for Christ as we relate to them, through our empathy, in our submission and by sacrificing ourselves for them.