

“Two of a Kind” (Philippians 2:19–30)

I have been accused of being a sexist who is insensitive to the needs of women. At least one woman has sat in my office and complained that I use too many sports illustrations and have a hankering for referring to “manly men.” As I told this woman, “I am truly sorry you feel that way. I always strive to be sensitive to women and to balance my preaching with plenty of feminine illustrations and applications. However, if you are looking for me to change, I can assure you that I will not. The reason is simple: I believe that manly men are essential for building healthy churches.”

Now the phrase “manly men” may raise some questions (and some eyebrows) so I need to briefly explain myself. When I speak of manly men, I am not referring to men who like to hunt, fish, barbeque, work on cars, sport chest hair, and watch football. I am not talking about men who wear boxers instead of briefs. Okay, let me retract that. From what I’ve heard many manly men wear “whitey tighties.” Seriously, I define manly men as men who have a passion for Christ and His church. Such spiritual studs can come in any size, shape, and style; however, they all love the Lord and are serious about building God’s kingdom.

Today you’ll learn about two men who epitomize manliness. Their names are Timothy and Epaphroditus. I’m sure they won’t mind if we call them Tim and Pappy for short. The apostle Paul honors the lives of these two men in Philippians 2:19–30. I must tell you, this is unusual. Paul customarily refers to people by name at the end of his letters. He does so here because these two men serve as models of his argument.¹ Tim and Pappy are living examples of men who have exhibited humility and unity, and who work out their salvation (2:12) based on service to the Lord and to others (2:1–4).² Throughout this passage, there is an echo that serves as a resounding gong: *Manly men make the ministry*.³ This truth will be apparent as we examine the lives of Tim and Pappy. Two defining principles emanate from their lives.

1. Manly men are selfless servants (2:19–24). A truly manly man is a man whose submissive mind is seen in his servant’s attitude. In 2:19 Paul writes, **“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.”** Paul’s use of “hope” (*elpizo*) here is more than a wish—it is a “confident expectation.” The use of the phrase “in the Lord Jesus” is not akin to our contemporary glib comment, “Lord willing.” Instead, it shows that Paul doesn’t make decisions based simply on common sense or on what he thinks is best, but he submits everything to the Lord and His will.⁴ This ought to be true for every manly man as well. Masculine ministry is achieved as manly men submit themselves to the manliest man who has ever lived—the God-man—the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is confident that Jesus will permit him to send Timothy to the Philippian church. He even says that he expects to be encouraged by their condition. The verb “encouraged” (*eupsucho*) is used only here in the NT. In Paul’s day, this word appeared on ancient Greek gravestones and in letters of condolence. The word carries the idea of “may it be well with your soul.”⁵ Paul believes the best about this church. What an example he is. Do you expect to find encouragement and comfort from what God is doing in and through your church? Or do you find it easy to be cynical, critical, and pessimistic? As a manly man, you have a responsibility to lead your family in optimism. If you are single, you also have a responsibility in the church to set an example of confident hope and expectation for your church family. Today, what are you believing God for in your church? What do you expect Him to do? How are you trusting God and stepping out in faith? *Manly men make the ministry*.

In 2:20–21, Paul provides two reasons (“for”) that he is sending Tim to the Philippians: **“For I have no one⁶ else of kindred spirit⁷ who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.”** Paul indicates that Tim is a one of a kind. Apart from Paul there is no one else who cares for the Philippians like Tim.⁸ There is some question as to whom the “all”⁹ refers to. Most likely Paul is contrasting Tim’s selfless servanthood with all people in general.¹⁰ Regardless, Tim was deeply loved by the church and he also was genuinely concerned about the church.¹¹

The adverb “genuinely” (*gneos*) occurs only here in the New Testament.¹² However, a related adjective *gnesios* occurs four times.¹³ It can refer to children born in wedlock (i.e., they are legitimate and “genuine” children).¹⁴ Interestingly, Paul uses this term elsewhere to refer to Timothy and Titus as “true” sons in the faith.¹⁵ Though the stress in Phil 2:20 is on the idea of sincerity, the root idea of “legitimate children” should not be overlooked. Thus, Timothy is genuinely interested in the Philippians *because* he is a genuine son of Paul.¹⁶ The word “concerned” (*merimnao*) is often used of negative worry and anxiety,¹⁷ yet here, it is used of genuine concern for the spiritual well-being of the church. Can you say that you are genuinely concerned about your church? How does this concern manifest itself? It’s been observed that believers live either in Phil 1:21 or in Phil 2:21. Those who embrace the truth of 1:21 (“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”) share Paul’s desire to find true profit in seeking the profit of others (see 1 Cor 10:33).¹⁸ *Manly men make the ministry.*

Paul, again, continues to rave about his boy, Tim. In 2:22 he states, **“But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.”** Timothy has demonstrated his worthiness as a servant of Christ and of Paul for more than ten years.¹⁹ He had served as the apostle’s fellow worker and as his protégé. The phrase “proven worth” (*dokime*)²⁰ refers to a testing of one’s character.²¹ This word group is used of assaying ore to see if it is of mixed alloy or pure metal. This is like “gold refined in the fire,” tested, purified, proved. This description of Timothy is fitting since his name in Greek means “he honors God.” Tim is living up to his name. He does not cave under pressure. Instead, he proves himself over time. It has been said that people are like teabags...you never know how strong they are until you drop them in hot water. Timothy’s consistency is evidenced over time as he has worked with Paul like a son with his father, serving together to see the good news of Christ go out and touch lives.

The word “served” deserves special notice. There are several Greek words that refer to serving. But the word “served” in 2:22 is remarkable. It is the Greek verb *douleuo*, which refers to living out your life as a slave.²² When we use the phrase, “slaving away,” we use it in a negative sense of menial and undesirable labor. But Paul means it as a humble privilege. To serve the Lord Jesus Christ as His willing slave is a high honor. Is it an honor for you or a chore? A lot has to do with the quality of your love for Christ. If you are just doing church work, that can get old. But if you are slaving away in all that you do for the Lord, there is blessing in this life and the life to come.

Before we leave 2:22 it is important to recognize that “proven worth” doesn’t happen overnight. Too many people want instant spirituality and overnight maturity. God doesn’t work that way. Producing Christian character takes time and effort. Here’s a simple equation: T + D = G. T = Time, D = Discipline and G = Growth. This formula works in every area of life, whether it is weight lifting, piano playing, Scripture memory, or learning to speak Spanish. Nothing worthwhile can be conquered in one evening. You can’t blitz your way to spiritual leadership. You’ve got to do what Timothy did—put yourself under a good leader and then pay the price over time.²³ Are you a flash in the pan? Are you a one-hit wonder? If so, recalibrate your spiritual life and commit for long haul service.

Paul closes this first section in 2:23–24 by saying, **“Therefore I hope to send him²⁴ immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.”** Paul longs to send Timothy and even make the trip to Philippi himself. He misses his brothers and sisters. It’s been said, “If absence makes the heart grow fonder, some people must really love the church.” However, Paul couldn’t be at church; he was in prison. Men, what is your excuse? One of the greatest gifts you can give your spouse and children is to take them to church. I can’t emphasize this enough. If you want to be a manly man, you must—I repeat, MUST—show spiritual leadership in your home by packing your Bible and your family and take them to church. Remember, you are the spiritual thermostat in the home. Most wives and children will never rise above the man in their lives. Your spiritual involvement in the lives of your family members is critical.

Now, I know full well that this is the biblical ideal, and as we know: There's the ideal, and then there's the real deal. So if your dad is an unbeliever or a spiritual sloth don't lose heart. Timothy's father was a Greek, who evidently was an unbeliever, and his mother Eunice was a Jewish convert to Christianity. Timothy was raised in the Lord by his mom and his godly grandmother Lois (2 Tim 1:3–5) and he turned out to be a phenomenal pastor and a manly man. I have often seen God in His grace do this in the lives of men. He doesn't even need a godly mom and grandma to work on His behalf. He sovereignly calls men to Himself and makes sure that they grow spiritually. A perfect example of this is Epaphroditus who was not fortunate enough to be raised in a godly home environment. The name Epaphroditus means "belonging to Aphrodite," the pagan goddess of love.²⁵ No Christian parent would name a child that. But somewhere along the way Epaphroditus met Jesus Christ, and even though his name remained the same, his allegiance was forever changed, and so was his character. Men, God certainly doesn't need you, but He wants to use you. What a difference you can make in the lives of your spouse and children. Even if you're not married or don't have children, you can invest well in up and coming Timothy's. Dayle Crockett and Neil Shaw are two amazing examples of this type of ministry. Dayle and Neil don't have children of their own but they invest in children and teens. Dayle is on youth staff and also teaches our middle school boys' Sunday School class. Neil was on youth staff and now serves with Youth for Christ. These guys are ministry animals, who do this on top of very demanding workweeks. Dayle teaches middle school in Rochester. Neil commutes from Tumwater to Tacoma and works at Merit Construction. Dayle and Neil are manly men, and *manly men make the ministry*. If you're not a manly man, will you decide today to strive after biblical manhood?

[Manly men are selfless servants who put others first. The second defining principle is...]

2. Manly men are courageous servants (2:25–30). While Timothy is a marvelous example of service, Epaphroditus is a superb model of suffering.²⁶ Pappy is a man whose name appears only twice in the New Testament (2:25; 4:18).²⁷ Timothy, on the other hand, is named twenty-four times in the New Testament. Moreover, Tim is a pastor while Pappy fits more into the mold of a deacon. Yet, note that Paul gives Pappy prominence in this passage and actually devotes more words to his commendation than to Timothy's.²⁸ In 2:25, Paul lays out Pappy's riveting résumé: **"But I thought it necessary²⁹ to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need."** Let's take a closer look at Pappy's five titles.

- **Brother** (*adelphos*). The term "brother" connotes warm personal intimacy and friendship. Paul and Pappy are tight because they are united as brothers in the same spiritual family. I've always felt that using the term "brother" is a bit cheesy. I have some Southern Baptist friends who call me "brother" all the time. It makes me want to say, "Oh, brother!" But my attitude changed this past year. I've been fortunate enough to begin a relationship with Dr. Bruce Winter, one of the greatest Pauline scholars in the world. Surprisingly though, Bruce always signs his e-mails, "Your brother, Bruce." When I first saw this I was awed. I couldn't believe it! It wasn't "Sincerely, Dr. Bruce W. Winter"; it was "Your brother, Bruce." Bruce and Keith are "brothers!" What a thought! Bruce is wise enough to recognize that the ground is level at the foot of the cross. His humility has reminded me once again that the best church leaders are those who understand that they too are brothers and sisters in Christ.
- **Fellow worker** (*sunergos*).³⁰ Pappy is a kingdom workhorse who does whatever is asked of him. Paul is in prison. There are no cities to take for Christ, no glorious mission to the heathen. Just the everyday chores of going grocery shopping, helping with cooking, finding people that Paul needs to talk to and bringing them to his house, and possibly helping him by transcribing letters. But Paul doesn't trivialize his time in prison. He doesn't see it as wasted. Instead, he recognizes that Pappy has made a valuable contribution to the mission. He is a fellow worker in the great work of the gospel. Even though he was a behind-the-scenes type of servant, the two were equal coworkers—one in work and dignity.³¹ Godly men are bound to one another by kingdom work.

- **Fellow soldier** (*sustratiotes*).³² It is never enough to be just a worker in the ministry; one must also learn to be a warrior.³³ Paul has no illusions about his situation. He is not comfortable in some church that seems to fit like an old shoe. He is a soldier in Christ's army. He is at war and doesn't hesitate to remind the troops of their status too.³⁴ He and Pappy fought shoulder-to-shoulder in Rome. Perhaps Paul has in mind the trademark imperial soldiers' battle ethic of standing side-by-side, dug in with shields locked solid, swords drawn. Young Pappy is a battle-tested warrior; he is no weekend warrior.³⁵ Every manly man must recognize the spiritual battle that he is in. Satan will make a quick meal out of a brother and a fellow worker, but he is less capable of devouring a fellow soldier. Fight the fight 24–7 and God will grant you perseverance.
- **Messenger** (*apostolos*). Pappy is a messenger of the church of Philippi sent on a mission to help Paul. In Paul's day prisoners were not cared for by the state, but their "necessities" for life (especially food) had to be supplied by friends or relatives. This is no small thing that they had done. Pappy and the church have helped sustain Paul in prison.³⁶ It is worth noting that the Greek word for "messenger" is *apostolos*, however, this doesn't mean that Epaphroditus is an official apostle (cf. 2 Cor 8:23). The word was commonly used of messengers without extraordinary status. Paul is merely esteeming Pappy and paying him some serious homage.
- **Minister** (*leitourgos*). Paul calls Pappy a "minister." We derive our English word "liturgy" from this Greek term. It is used primarily in the Greek Old Testament (LXX) to refer to the various duties of the Levites, including the actual service at the altar.³⁷ Pappy's whole life is worship.³⁸ Here's the picture: Pappy is a layman, whom we would never have heard of, were it not for Paul's brief reference here. He never served in a public capacity. He did not shepherd a flock. He did not take the gospel to an unreached area. He did not receive special revelation. He didn't even write anything. All he did was deliver a bag of money to Paul and then look after him. Yet he is called "brother...fellow worker...fellow soldier...messenger...and minister." We must understand that to serve in some unnoticed, unrecognized place in the body of Christ is as much the work of Christ as is public ministry.³⁹

These descriptions about Pappy raise an important question: Have you told the Lord, "I'm willing to do whatever you might call me to do, and I'm willing to go anywhere You want me to go"? I remember as a teenager being hesitant to do that, because I was afraid He might say, "Go to Africa as a missionary," and I didn't want to do that! But now I pray that I am willing to go wherever the Lord may call me to go, whether that is to Africa or to a church in Arkansas. Can you say the same thing? Are you deeply concerned about the spiritual well-being of other believers? Will you count the cost and serve the body of Christ whenever and wherever God calls. *Manly men make the ministry.*

Paul includes an amazing fact about Pappy in 2:26–27. He sends Pappy to the Philippians "**because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 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.**" Apparently, after traveling 800 miles (six plus weeks) from Philippi to Rome, Pappy fell ill with a serious disease and nearly died. In those days something called "Roman Fever" took many lives. If you've ever traveled abroad, especially to a third-world country, you know that you have to take extreme medical precautions. Remember, Pappy faced all the dangers of travel without the benefits of modern medicine. As a result, the disease he contracted nearly took his life. When the Philippians heard about it, they were worried and sent a message to Rome. The remarkable thing about Pappy is that he is more concerned that the Philippians are worried about him than he is about his own condition. He is "longing"⁴⁰ for these believers and is even distressed over their concern. The word "distressed" (*ademotheo*) is the same term used to describe Jesus' agony in Gethsemane (Matt 26:37; Mark 14:33). Epaphroditus was distressed because they thought he was sick.⁴¹ This is truly amazing! Pappy was more concerned about their emotional welfare than his own physical condition. Today, often believers aren't even touched by the illnesses of others, much less being distressed in the same as Epaphroditus. We see a tremendous heart for people here!

Paul closes this section in 2:28–30 by informing the Philippians that Pappy is heading home and they need to honor him for his service. Paul writes: **“Therefore I have sent him [Pappy] all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you. Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.”** Paul commands the Philippians to receive Pappy in the Lord with all joy and to hold men like him in high regard (2:29).⁴² Again, Epaphroditus is not a pastor; he is the equivalent to what we call a layman (even though I dislike the term). He is most likely a lot like you. Paul wants the church to honor the men who are working hard in the trenches who don’t receive a lot of glory and praise like some pastors.

But Paul’s high commendation of Epaphroditus does not come simply because of what he did, great as this may have been. It comes also because of why he did it. His was a self-renouncing motivation. He chose against himself for someone else: “He was sick to the point of death.” Paul wants Pappy to receive honor because he “came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life.” The phrase “risking his life” (*paraboleuomai*, 2:30) is a verb that means “to expose oneself to danger, to risk.”⁴³ Thus, from this word alone it is clear that Pappy is no coward but a courageous manly man willing to take enormous risks, ready to play with very high stakes in order to come to the aid of a person in need.⁴⁴ In effect, Epaphroditus is like Christ. Paul makes this very clear in the Greek because the phrase that tells us that Epaphroditus “nearly died” (2:30) is exactly the same as the phrase in 2:8, which describes Christ’s coming “to the point of death.” Epaphroditus’ near death for Paul echoes Christ’s real death for us. This young man had the mind of Christ.⁴⁵ *Manly men make the ministry.*

The story is told of two inseparable friends who enlisted together, trained together, shipped out together, and fought in the trenches together during World War I. During an attack, one of the duo was critically wounded in a field filled with barbed wire obstacles and, because of that, was unable to crawl back to his foxhole. The entire area was under enemy fire and it was suicidal to try to reach him. Nevertheless, undaunted, his friend decided to give it a go. Before he could get out of his own trench, his sergeant yanked him back and told him, “You’re mad! It’s far too late. You can’t do him any good and you’ll only end up getting yourself killed.” A few minutes later the officer turned his back, and instantly his mate went after his friend. Shortly afterwards, he staggered back, mortally wounded, with his friend now dead in his arms. The sergeant was both angry and deeply moved. “What a waste,” he blurted out. “He’s dead, and you’re dying. It just wasn’t worth it.” With almost his last breath, the dying soldier retorted: “Oh yes it was, for when I got to him, the only thing he said was, “I knew you would come, Jim.” The lesson is that Jim was there for his friend whatever the cost.⁴⁶

Like Jim, will you be there for at least one other man? Undoubtedly, you can make a difference in at least one man’s life. But I am confident that you can be used by God to transform the culture of your church and touch people all over the world. All that is required is depending upon the Lord Jesus to use you to be His change agent. Will you step up today and become a manly man? If you are already a manly man, will you ask God to take you to the next level of masculine ministry? Your church needs you. They are counting on you. Be a manly man!

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Scripture References

Philippians 2:19–30

Matthew 6:25–34; 16:24–27

Matthew 20:20–28

Luke 12:22–31

1 Corinthians 7:32–35

1 Corinthians 12:14–26

2 Timothy 2:3–4

Study Questions

1. Do I intentionally seek to find encouragement from the health and overall condition of my church (2:19)? Or in my busyness are there countless other personal responsibilities and interests that are a greater priority? When the church is not healthy and unified, does this really bother me? What practices demonstrate that I genuinely care about the condition of my church (and the national and international church)?
2. What kind of church leader am I (2:20)? Am I deeply concerned about the spiritual well-being of other believers? Do I pursue the interests of others or am I caught up in myself (2:21)? In what specific areas has Jesus dealt with me that have helped me to become genuinely selfless and focused on the concerns of others? How has He refined me? In what areas does He still need to work?
3. In my church or daily occupation, whom am I presently serving (2:22)? Practically speaking, what does this look like? Do others consider me a servant? Would they say I am a man or woman of “proven worth?” How can I seek to serve those in my life this week?
4. Who would call me a brother, a fellow worker, and a fellow soldier (2:25)? Can other Christians honestly use these descriptions about me? Why or why not? Who would I describe with these terms in my life? How has this individual helped me grow spiritually? Do I regularly express my deep love, respect, and appreciation for this person? If not, will I do so today?
5. Paul says that Epaphroditus risked his life for the work of Christ and the gospel (2:30). Nothing should speak more clearly into our complacent, nonchalant attitudes in America. Here is a man who almost gave his life for another brother. How have I sought to sacrifice for another brother or sister in the work of the gospel? How have I risked my own neck or reputation to share the good news with others?

Notes

¹ For a great read see David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Nashville: Nelson 2005).

² One of the primary thrusts of Phil 2:1–30 is, “Will you be a ‘Philippians 2:4 kind of person?’” In other words, will you “not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others?”

³ Swift writes, “In this epistle every single reference Paul makes to another person is made in connection with that person’s *koinonia*, his partnership in the gospel.” Robert C. Swift, “The Theme and Structure of Philippians,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141:563 (July–Sept 1984): 246.

⁴ For more on submitting your will to Christ, see 1 Cor 4:19 and Jas 4:13–17.

⁵ Peter T. O’Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*. New International Greek Testament Commentary series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 317–18; Jerry L. Sumney, *Philippians: A Greek Student’s Intermediate Reader* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 60.

⁶ The expression “no one” (*ouden*) is emphatic in the Greek text and stresses the quality of Timothy in the eyes of Paul; there simply isn’t anyone on the same level as this man.

⁷ The phrases “kindred spirit” (NASB) or “like him” (NET, ESV, NIV, NRSV) are translations of *isopsuchos* (lit. “equal-souled”). The term is rare and means to be in complete agreement with someone in the context of a personal relationship. A similar compound *sumpsuchos* (“like-minded”) is used in Phil 2:2.

⁸ See O’Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 317–18. Some argue that the comparison is with the members of the Roman church; however, this does not seem to be Paul’s intent. It is more likely that Paul is comparing Timothy with himself.

⁹ “All” (*pas*) is not a reference to other co-workers who are not quite like Timothy. Fee writes, “Given what we know of Paul elsewhere and the high regard with which he holds those who travel with him, and that in 4:21 he sends greetings from ‘the brothers who are with me,’ it does not seem possible that he should here slander them with this kind of barrage.” Paul is likely referring to people like those mentioned in 1:15 and 17 who preach Christ but for their own ends. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 267. A good example of the kind of mixed priorities Paul is referring to can be seen in Demas (cf. 2 Tim 4:10).

¹⁰ See Bob Deffinbaugh, “A Few Good Men” (Phil 2:19–30) in *To Live Is Christ: A Study of the Book of Philippians*: www.bible.org and Greg Herrick, “Timothy and Epaphroditus—Two Examples of Humility and Unity” (Phil 2:19–30) in *Philippians: The Unconquerable Gospel*: www.bible.org. Sumney, *Philippians*, 60–61 correctly notes, “This strong statement seems to condemn all others with whom Paul is associated because they seek their own good. However, its rhetorical function in this immediate context is more to commend Timothy than to condemn others.”

¹¹ When Paul came to Philippi for the first time, it was Timothy’s first missionary journey with the apostle (see Acts 16:1–3). In the years that followed, Timothy would visit the Philippians on several occasions and would become well known to them (see Acts 18:5; 19:22; 20:1–4).

¹² BDAG s.v. *gneios*.

¹³ 2 Cor 8:8; Phil 4:3; 1 Tim 1:2; and Titus 1:4.

¹⁴ BDAG s.v. *gnesios*.

¹⁵ 1 Tim 1:2 and Titus 1:4.

¹⁶ Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*. Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Ralph P. Martin, vol. 43 (Waco: Word, 1983), 111.

¹⁷ See BDAG s.v. *merimnao* 1: “to be apprehensive, *have anxiety, be anxious, be (unduly) concerned*, Phil 4:6; Matt 6:25, 28, 31, 34a; 10:19, 41; Luke 12:11, 22.

¹⁸ Ken Boa, “Philippians 2:19–24”: www.kenboa.org/text_resources/teaching_letters/kens_teaching_letter/2192.

¹⁹ See George W. Murray, “Paul’s Corporate Witness in Philippians,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155:619 (July–Sept 1998): 316–26.

²⁰ B. Van Elderen, “Timothy” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 753.

²¹ BDAG s.v. *dokime* 2: “the experience of going through a test with special reference to the result, standing a test, character.”

²² BDAG s.v. *douleuo* 2: “to act or conduct oneself as one in total service to another, perform the duties of a slave, serve, obey.”

²³ Ray Pritchard, “Making God’s A-Team” (Phil 2:19–30): www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1998-11-22-Making-Gods-A-Team/.

²⁴ The pronoun *touton* (“him”) seems to be emphatic, coming first in the sentence. As Sumney, *Philippians*, 62 suggests, “Paul is emphasizing that it is the one who cares for them and who has been faithful to Paul and the gospel who is coming to them.”

²⁵ O’Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 329.

²⁶ Sam Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy: The Message of Philippians*. Truth for Today Commentary Series (Belfast, Ireland/Greenville, SC: Ambassador-Emerald International, 2004), 101.

²⁷ He is not the same as Epaphras who was mentioned in Col 1:7; 4:12; Phlm 23. Epaphras is called “one of you” in Col 4:12. However, Epaphras is an abbreviation of Epaphroditus.

²⁸ Deffinbaugh, “A Few Good Men.”

²⁹ *Anagkaios* (“necessary”) is a very strong Greek word (cf. Acts 1:24; 13:46; 2 Cor 9:5; Heb 8:3). It is placed first in the sentence for emphasis.

³⁰ The term *sunergon* (“fellow worker, coworker”) occurs thirteen times in the NT. It is always used by Paul except in 3 John 8.

³¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*. Preaching the Word (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 115.

³² The term *sustratiotes* (“fellow soldier”) is only used elsewhere in the NT in Phlm 2 where Paul refers to Archippus as “our fellow-soldier.”

³³ Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy*, 103.

³⁴ See 2 Tim 2:3–4: “Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.” The term “soldier” (*stratiotes*) is the same as “fellow-soldier” (*sustratiotes*) except that the former is without the *sun* prefix. Both terms, however, stress the hardships and battles fought in the cause of the gospel.

³⁵ Hughes, *Philippians*, 115.

³⁶ Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 276 notes that this present word about Epaphroditus anticipates the full acknowledgement in Phil 4:14–20.

³⁷ Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 251 n. 52 notes: “The word group appears rarely in Paul (three 3 or 5 times in this letter; . . . ; otherwise only in 2 Cor 9:12 and Rom 15:29, of the offering for the poor in Jerusalem), always metaphorically of Christian ‘service’ of some kind, and not restricted to ‘ministers.’”

³⁸ D.A. Carson, *Basics for Believers: An Exposition of Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 77.

³⁹ Hughes, *Philippians*, 115.

⁴⁰ Paul used the same term *epipothéo* (“long”) to describe his own personal longing for the Philippians (1:8).

⁴¹ A question that many ask is: Why does God heal some and not others? Why does He show mercy toward some and not all? I don’t know. God never tells us that. The prerogative of exercising mercy is always left to the prerogative of the merciful one. God has His reasons, and they are not irrational, of that we may be sure. But He never tells us. He simply expects us to trust His good intentions toward us. After all, He has given us many reasons to trust Him, hasn’t He?

⁴² See also 1 Thess 5:12–13: “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”

⁴³ BDAG s.v. *paraboleuomai*. The term *paraboleuomai* is only used here in the NT, but in extra biblical Greek the word was used of people who spoke up for their friends at the risk of their own safety and security. Sometimes it was used of a fighter who exposed himself to danger in the arena. Several hundred years later—during the time of Emperor Constantine (A.D. 252) there arose societies of Christian men and women who called themselves “The Parabolani,” meaning “the riskers” or “the gamblers.” They ministered to the sick, the imprisoned, and the outcasts. They saw to it that martyrs received honorable burial. History tells us that they were considered an odd group, eccentric and somewhat “on the edge.”

⁴⁴ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 120.

⁴⁵ Hughes, *Philippians*, 117.

⁴⁶ Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy*, 104.