

Philippians Illustrations 2

PHILIPPIANS ILLUSTRATIONS

OUR DAILY BREAD, F B MEYER, SPURGEON

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PHILIPPIANS 2

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

Reverse Your Views

Read: Romans 12:1-8

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. --Romans 12:2

A friend of mine likes to imitate the verbal mistakes of English minister William Archibald Spooner, who was famous for his unintentional reversal of word sounds. In Spooner's style, one fell swoop became "one swell foop" and a pouring rain became "a roaring pain."

My friend pulled out some Bible memory cards one day and announced that he was going to "reverse his views" instead of "review his verses." His spoonerized statement may have been closer to the truth of what can happen when we read and meditate on God's Word.

I wonder if I have yet grasped the incredible process described in Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." J. B. Phillips translates it, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within."

This is nothing short of a mental revolution--taking my normal human way of seeing life and giving me a point of view I could not have without God.

Scripture memory is a powerful discipline that puts God's living Word into our minds and gives Him the opportunity to change our thinking and reverse our views. --D C MacCasland

Action Suggestions

Memorize one of the following Bible passages

and ask God to change your thinking.

Repentance: Psalm 32;

Love: 1 Corinthians 13;

Christlikeness: Philippians 2:1-11

The Bible is meant not merely to inform but to transform.

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

A Circle Of Compassion

READ: 2 Corinthians 1:1-4; Philippians 2:1-4

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. —Romans 12:15

Following the death of our 17-year-old daughter in a car accident in June 2002, each member of our family handled the loss differently. For my wife, among the most helpful sources of comfort were visits from moms who had also lost a child in an accident.

Sue found strength in their stories, and she wanted them to tell her how God had been faithful in their lives, despite the deep sorrow that comes with losing a precious child.

Soon Sue became part of a circle of compassion, a small group of moms who could weep, pray, and seek God's help together. That cadre of grieving moms formed a bond of empathy and hope that provided encouragement in the face of her daily sorrow.

Each person grieves uniquely, yet we all need to share our hearts, our burdens, our questions, and our sadness with someone else. That's why it's vital that we find others with whom to discuss our pain and sorrow.

In our relationship with Christ, we find encouragement, consolation, love, fellowship, affection, and mercy (Philippians 2:1). God comforts us so that we can comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:4). So let's "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). Then others will find a circle of compassion too. —Dave Branon

A heartfelt tear can show our love

As words can never do;

It says, "I want to share your pain—

My heart goes out to you." —D. De Haan

We must learn to weep before we can dry another's tears.

PHILIPPIANS 2:2

Long lines of cars were filling up the huge parking lot of a church where I was attending a conference. As I parked, I noticed the word Love on a lightpost in one section. In another area, I saw the word Faithfulness. The next day I pulled into a different lot at the same church and saw Patience on another sign. Like numbers in a mall parking lot, these words help people find their cars.

No doubt these signs served another purpose. After each session, some people were in a hurry to get home—even cutting others off to get out of the lot. Patience wore thin and tempers flared. How appropriate those signs are! I thought. It's amazing how quickly the love we have for our brothers and sisters in Christ can disappear in a parking lot!

The testing of our faith may come through heavy burdens, but it's just as likely to occur in a checkout line, on the expressway, or in a parking lot. —D. C. Egner

THE CLEAR SIGN OF YOUR FAITH IS NOT WHAT YOU SAY BUT WHAT YOU DO.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

NOTHING DONE THROUGH SELFISH AMBITION

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit (Philippians 2:3).

The aquatic creature called the blowfish has no particular value to the one who catches it—except that it may help to develop the angler's patience because it often seizes bait intended for better fish. The blowfish is unattractive; it has a large mouth and a wrinkled body that looks like worn-out leather. When you turn it over and tickle it, the flabby fish puffs up until it is swollen like a globe.

People can be like that. A little flattery, a little tickling of their vanity and they swell up, giving the semblance of greatness. Pride inflates them, and they puff up like the blowfish. But there's nothing substantial about them; they are all air.

This condition takes other forms with more serious consequences. For example, the Christians to whom Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 5 were tolerating immorality. Instead of being grieved over sin in their midst, they were actually "puffed up" (1 Cor. 5:2). Here was a sure sign of carnality and immaturity—they were proud when they should have been mourning. God desires that we be "built up" in Christ—never "puffed up" with pride.

The continual attitude of God's children should be the one Paul recommended to the Philippians. He said, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Phil. 2:3). If we take this seriously, we won't have the characteristics of the puffed-up blowfish. —P.R.V.

The smaller we become, the more room God has to work.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

Running For Others

READ: Philippians 2:1-11

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but ... let each esteem others better than himself. —PHILIPPIANS 2:3

Tom Knapp never won a race during his entire high school track career. Tom was a "pusher." It was his task to set the pace for his fellow team members, who would then beat him to the finish line. When he ran a successful race, he was enabling a fellow teammate to win. Even though Tom never had enough reserve energy for the final sprint to victory, the coach considered him a valuable member of the team.

In a similar way, the New Testament tells us to run our race of faith with the success of others in mind. "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4). Our example of such living is Jesus Christ, who left the glory of heaven to share our humanity and die on the cross so that we can have eternal life (vv.5-8).

If the encouragement of our example helps another person to flourish and be successful, we should rejoice. When the eternal prizes are awarded for faithful service to God, a lot of "pushers" will be wearing blue ribbons. Until then, let's keep running so that others can win. —David C. McCasland

Oh, to see the needs of others

More important than our own,

Following our Lord's example

When He left His heavenly throne. —Sper

You can't lose when you help others win

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

EACH year a small number of baseball superstars think they aren't being properly appreciated by their teams' owners. They are dissatisfied with their salaries even though they make more money in one year than most of us do in a lifetime. Their discontent is based on comparison. Each player considers him-self the best at his position and therefore thinks he should receive the largest salary.

Before the advent of multimillion dollar sports contracts, C. S. Lewis made this insightful, almost prophetic, comment: "We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking, there would be nothing to be proud about."

Pride afflicts all of us, not just the rich and famous. It is pride that causes us to feel hurt when someone snubs us, ignores us, or takes credit for something we did. Pride is behind the envy we feel toward people who are more successful than we are.

Christ's solution for pride is the only cure: consider others better than ourselves.—H V Lugt

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

GAIN BY GIVING

"The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself."-- Proverbs 11:25

A visitor to a lighthouse said to the keeper, "Aren't you afraid to live here with the storms and high winds constantly lashing the walls?"

"Oh, we have to be more concerned about those out on the sea," the man replied. "We think only of having our lamps burning brightly and keeping the reflectors clear so that those in greater danger may be saved."

We too are to be more concerned about others than we are about ourselves (Phil. 2:3-4). Generosity and selflessness produce an abundant life of joy and rich reward. According to the Scriptures, if we give freely to others, we will receive abundant blessing.

Proverbs 11 teaches that a person who gives to others will gain even more (vv. 24-25). Verse 25

paints a word picture to make the point. It states that "he who waters will also be watered himself."

The 19th-century preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "Let me consider the poor, and the Lord will also recompense me. Let me water His garden, and He will make a well-irrigated garden of my soul."

As we focus our attention on giving refreshing help to the needy, we will be refreshed by the Lord. -- Henry G. Bosch

Service is working and giving,

And not regretting the cost;

It's knowing and understanding

That no good deed will be lost.

When it comes to helping others, some people stop at nothing.

PHILIPPIANS 2:4

Love Speaks Loudest

Read: Philippians 2:1-11

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. --Philippians 2:4

Missionary Doug Nichols was a patient in a tuberculosis ward in India in 1967. Patients and staff saw him as a rich American taking up space in their hospital. Their hostility was evident as they refused the gospel tracts he offered them.

One morning at 2 o'clock, a very sick Indian man struggled to get out of bed to go to the bathroom, but he was too weak to make it. Soon the stench from his bed filled the room. Other patients yelled at him. Nurses showed their anger for having to clean up the mess. One slapped him.

The next night the old man tried again to get up, but again fell backward. He began to cry. Doug, weak himself, went over, picked him up, and carried him to the bathroom and back to his bed.

What a change came over that hospital ward! One patient gave Doug a steaming cup of Indian tea, motioning that he wanted a tract. Nurses, interns, and doctors asked for booklets or gospels of John. And several eventually received Christ.

What changed their attitude? Doug had exemplified the Savior, who "made Himself of no reputation" but took "the form of a bondservant" and "humbled Himself" (Phil. 2:7-8).

We are called to do the same. Sometimes loving is unpleasant, but that's when it speaks the loudest. --D J De Haan

Add to your believing, deeds that prove it true--

Knowing Christ as Savior, make Him Master too;

Follow in His footsteps, go where He has trod,

In the world's great trouble, risk yourself for God. --Leech

Love without action is not love.

PHILIPPIANS 2:4

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PHILIPPIANS 2:5

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."—Phil 2:5.

FAITH IS not simply an intellectual experience of a statement of fact, but it is our personal trust and confidence in Him of whom the fact is true. We are not saved merely because we believe that Jesus Christ died for us on the Cross, but because we trust in Him who died. It is the personal touch between Christ and ourselves that causes His life to pass into our nature, making us sound and healthy, as well as secure and safe.

What does the Cross mean to you and me? Does it not mean that there our Lord gave Himself absolutely to the Father's will. Never in any way did He make Himself the origin and fountain of His action, but was ever the empty channel through which God poured Himself. "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It seemed as if He went down lower and lower, on rung after rung of the ladder until He reached Hades, giving up everything only to follow the Will of God; but out of the lowest depths God raised Him to the Eternal Throne.

In each one of us there is strong self-will. You say, "I am resolved to be a good man or woman, to live a noble life, to give up bad habits--I will" But it can never be accomplished in that way. It is only when we are willing to see ourselves, our own energy, our good self as well as our bad self brought to an end on the Cross of Jesus, that we shall be able to enter into and live His eternal life.

At this moment I would summon you to stand beneath the Cross and to see there One who entirely yielded up His own will. More than that, I want you to see your self-life nailed there, and turn from it to God in adoration, saying that you are prepared to be weak and helpless so far as your own energies are concerned, that He may put forth in your life the mighty energy of that power which raised Christ from the dead. It is only when we are weak that we are really strong; it is only when we surrender ourselves to the power of the Cross, so that we realize that we have been crucified with Christ, that we are able to share in His eternal victory over the devil and the power of evil.

PRAYER - O God, Thou hast revealed Thyself to us in Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We love Him, because He endured the Cross, and despised the shame in order to save us. May we follow Him by the way of the Cross, bearing His reproach, sharing His griefs, obedient even unto death, that we may also live and reign with Him here, and more perfectly at last. AMEN.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5

WHAT is "the Christmas spirit"? Is it jovial family festivity, the sound of familiar carols in a busy shopping mall, the flow of cheery greeting cards that keep us in touch with old friends, a tree covered with twinkling lights peeking out of a pile of brightly wrapped packages, or the general good feeling we get at this season of the year? These are what most people think of when they hear the expression "Christmas spirit." But for Christians much more is involved.

J. I. Packer defines the Christmas spirit in his book Knowing God. He writes, "We talk glibly of the Christmas spirit, rarely meaning

more by this than sentimental jollity on a family basis... It ought to mean the reproducing in human lives of the temper of Him who for our sakes became poor, ... the spirit of those who, like their Master, live their whole lives on the principle of making themselves poor—spending and being spent—to enrich their fellowmen, giving time, trouble, care, and concern to do good to others—and not just their own friends—in whatever way there seems need."

In Philippians 2 we read that the Son of God laid aside His divine glory and became your servant and mine by being made in human likeness and dying on the cross for our sins. Following His example means letting the mind of Christ be in us and humbly serving others. That's the true spirit of Christmas!—D J De Haan

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8

A former missionary told the story of two rugged, powerful mountain goats who met on a narrow pathway joining two mountain ridges. On one side was a chasm 1,000 feet deep; on the other, a steep cliff rising straight up. So narrow was the trail that there was no room to turn around, and the goats could not back up without falling. What would they do? Finally, instead of fighting for the right to pass, one of the goats knelt down and made himself as flat as possible. The other goat then walked over him, and they both proceeded safely.

In a sense, this is what Jesus Christ did for us when He left heaven's glory and came to this earth to die for our sins. He saw us trapped between our sin and God's righteousness with no way to help ourselves. He humbled Himself by giving up His right to use His divine power. He came in the likeness of men and took the form of a servant (Phil. 2:5-8). Then, by dying for sinful mankind, He let us "walk over Him" so that we could experience forgiveness and receive eternal life. —D C Egner

CHRIST EMPTIED HIMSELF. BEHOLD OUR PATTERN! ST. AMBROSE

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

God's Paradoxes

Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. --Matthew 16:25

The Bible tells us there is a wisdom that is foolish and a foolishness that is wise (1 Cor. 1:20-25). There is a gain that is loss and a loss that is gain (Phil. 3:7-9). And there is an exalted way that leads downward and a humble way that leads to exaltation (Phil. 2:5-11).

Statements like these seem to be contradictions, but they are actually paradoxes. A paradox is a statement that contains two truths, which at first glance seem to be incompatible.

A psychiatrist once unknowingly referred to one of God's paradoxes, remarking, "The greatest secret of mental health comes down to us in the words, 'Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will save it.'" He added, "I forget who said that, but it is a great truth."

Who said that? Our Lord Jesus Christ! He gave us that principle in Matthew 16:25. And the apostle Paul lived it out as he endured countless hardships for the benefit of others (2 Cor. 4:8-12). Yet Paul knew that even as his physical body was dying, his spirit was being renewed (v.16).

You cannot find your richest personal fulfillment until you sacrifice your time, strength, and resources to God's will. "Lose your life" for Christ. Start really living! --V C Grounds

Take up thy cross and follow on,

Nor think till death to lay it down,

For only he who bears the cross

May hope to wear the glorious crown. --Everest

Christ showed His love by dying for us; we show our love by living for Him.

PHILIPPIANS 2:7

JOHN 13:15

In washing the disciples' feet, Jesus shocked His followers.

This was not the beginning of the first valet school; Jesus was not some water-basin wonder. With a towel around His waist, Jesus

washed soiled feet, but He was more interested in dirty people than dusty toes.

The disciples had been vying for leadership positions, and Jesus played chief foot-washer to clean their hearts rather than their feet. Jesus acted as a servant to combat the hotshot attitudes of the disciples. He hoped they would recall and imitate His humility.

In coming to this earth, Jesus became part of a long-running play, but He was not acting. He took the servant part for some thirty-three years to show people how to live (Phil. 2:7). Those who follow Him lead by example. They never make a grand entrance; they come in through the service door. —D J De Haan

GETTING OUR OWN WAY SERVES ONLY TO GET IN THE WAY OF SERVICE.

PHILIPPIANS 2:9

The Way To Praise Him

READ: Luke 19:28-38

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! —Luke 19:38

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem a few days before His death focused attention on Him as Lord. When Jesus sent His disciples to get the colt He was to ride, He instructed them to tell its owners, "The Lord has need of it" (Luke 19:31). And when the crowds shouted their praise, they quoted Psalm 118:26, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 19:38).

Jesus is Lord. His name is "above every name" (Philippians 2:9). As part of His title, the word Lord refers to His sovereignty. He is the King, and every believer in Him is a member of His kingdom.

We acknowledge Jesus as Lord of our lives by bowing to His authority as King. This means that we live in obedience to Him. We can't be like the man who claimed to be a Christian and yet chose to use illegal drugs and live in an immoral relationship. When his minister confronted him, he glibly replied, "Don't worry, pastor. It's okay. I'm just a bad Christian."

It's not okay. Not at all! Not for a person who claims to be a follower of Christ (Luke 6:43-49).

Today, make sure you are honoring Him with your deeds as well as with your words. Then you can join with others in proclaiming, "Jesus is Lord!" —David C. Egner

Take me as I am, Lord,

And make me all Your own;

Make my heart Your palace

And Your royal throne. —Pope

If you adore Christ as Savior, you can't ignore Christ as Lord

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

The Name

READ: Philippians 2:5-11

You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. —Matthew 1:21

If you were to select some of the most influential figures in the whole sweep of the ages, men and women who have affected millions of lives, what names would be on your list? I think one name that would appear on all our lists, without exception, would be the name of Jesus.

Reynolds Price, writing about "Jesus of Nazareth" in Time magazine (December 1999), declared that "a serious argument can be made that no one else's life has proved remotely as powerful and enduring as that of Jesus." So when this Man, born in an obscure village two millennia ago, declared, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12) and "My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:33), He was making predictions that history has verified.

Jesus has undeniably been the world's most influential Person, but has He impacted your life personally? Do you put Him in the same class as other influential figures, or has He transformed your life? Unlike all other notable people who eventually died, Jesus is still miraculously alive.

Is Jesus your Savior and constant companion? If He isn't, He can be. Call on His name in faith and invite Him into your life. Then the name of Jesus will become to you the most precious of names. —Vernon C Grounds

No other name can save me,

No other name beside,

But Jesus Christ the risen Lord,

The One they crucified. —Brandt

What you decide about Jesus will determine your destiny

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Sent Down

READ: PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. —1 Peter 5:6

A sportswriter described former major league baseball player and manager Don Baylor as a person who always remembered how it felt to be "sent down" to the minor leagues. When one of his players had to be demoted, he would always meet with him to explain the decision. A team owner said of Baylor, "He has been through a lot of life lessons he can share with the players." It makes a big difference when the manager knows how a player feels.

It's always humbling to be reduced in rank, privilege, or responsibility. But these things may come as part of God's training in our lives. The apostle Peter wrote, "'God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:5-6).

The apostle Paul described Jesus as our example of humble submission to God. He was sent down from heaven to become a man—a "bondservant" who was obedient to the point of dying on the cross for our sins (Philippians 2:6-8).

Humility and submission to God are not signs of weakness but evidence of Christlike power and character. We can receive courage and strength from Jesus Himself, who knows how it feels to be "sent down." —David C. McCasland

Teach me to do the humble task

The very best I can,

And not to look for greater calls,

Which may oppose Thy plan. —Bernheisel

The mighty Architect of the universe became the humble Carpenter of Nazareth

PHILIPPIANS 2:8

The Agony Of The Cross

READ: Isaiah 53

[Jesus] humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. —Philippians 2:8

As Christians, we understand the spiritual significance of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary, but it's easy to forget about the tremendous agony He endured there. The worst aspect was separation from the Father, but the physical suffering was also horrible beyond comprehension.

In his book *Dare To Believe*, Dan Baumann shares some thoughts that can deepen our gratitude for what the Savior did for us. He wrote, "We have perhaps unwisely and sometimes unconsciously glamorized the cross. Jewelry and steeples alike are often ornamental and attractive but carry nothing of the real story of crucifixion. It was the most painful method of public death in the first century. The victim was placed on a wooden cross. Nails ... were driven into the hands and feet of the victim, and then the cross was lifted and jarred into the ground, tearing the flesh of the crucified and racking his body with excruciating pain. Historians remind us that even the soldiers could not get used to the horrible sight, and often took strong drink to numb their senses."

With a fresh awareness of our Savior's physical agony, let's thank Him anew for His sacrifice at Calvary. He loved us so much that

He was willing to die for us—even the painful death of the cross.—Richard De Haan

Was it for crimes that I have done

He groaned upon the tree?

Amazing pity! Grace unknown!

And love beyond degree! —Watts

We can never sacrifice enough for the One who sacrificed His all for us.

PHILIPPIANS 2:8

SPURGEON - MORNING AND EVENING

Jesus is the great teacher of lowliness of heart. We need daily to learn of him. See the Master taking a towel and washing his disciples' feet! Follower of Christ, wilt thou not humble thyself? See him as the Servant of servants, and surely thou canst not be proud! Is not this sentence the compendium of his biography, "He humbled himself"? Was he not on earth always stripping off first one robe of honour and then another, till, naked, he was fastened to the cross, and there did he not empty out his inmost self, pouring out his life-blood, giving up for all of us, till they laid him penniless in a borrowed grave? How low was our dear Redeemer brought! How then can we be proud? Stand at the foot of the cross, and count the purple drops by which you have been cleansed; see the thorn-crown; mark his scourged shoulders, still gushing with encrimsoned rills; see hands and feet given up to the rough iron, and his whole self to mockery and scorn; see the bitterness, and the pangs, and the throes of inward grief, showing themselves in his outward frame; hear the thrilling shriek, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And if you do not lie prostrate on the ground before that cross, you have never seen it: if you are not humbled in the presence of Jesus, you do not know him. You were so lost that nothing could save you but the sacrifice of God's only begotten. Think of that, and as Jesus stooped for you, bow yourself in lowliness at his feet. A sense of Christ's amazing love to us has a greater tendency to humble us than even a consciousness of our own guilt. May the Lord bring us in contemplation to Calvary, then our position will no longer be that of the pompous man of pride, but we shall take the humble place of one who loves much because much has been forgiven him. Pride cannot live beneath the cross. Let us sit there and learn our lesson, and then rise and carry it into practice.

PHILIPPIANS 2:8

On July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 astronauts landed on the moon. It was an unprecedented human achievement. Millions remember the words of Neil Armstrong:

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

President Nixon declared

"All humanity is one in their pride."

Two thousand years earlier, the Creator of the moon made a giant leap of a vastly different kind. He descended from heaven to earth (Phil. 2:5-8). God the Son, (John 1:1, JOHN 1:14), stepped down from heaven to become fully human, while remaining fully God. It was an amazing "leap," which showed us God's heart of love. He became one of us to die on the cross for our sins.

A leap into space may unite mankind in the pride of achievement, but it pales in comparison with what God accomplished when Jesus came from heaven to earth. —D J De Haan

CHRIST WAS BORN HERE BELOW THAT WE MIGHT BE BORN FROM ABOVE.

PHILIPPIANS 2:8-9

STOOPING TO RISE

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

"Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him."-- Phil2:8-9.

WE WAKE up from the unconsciousness of infancy to find ourselves in a world of revolt, and learn that so far as the memory of man reaches back into the past, this convict has been recognized as existing between man and himself, man and his fellow, man and God. Is there no help? Will not God some day bring peace and good will into these troubled scenes? Yes, indeed! This paragraph tells us that the time will come when every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Christ is Lord, and that God will be glorified.

And this is being effected by Christ through means that we did not expect.

When our Lord stooped to live visibly amongst men, He refused to avail Himself of the homage due to His original nature. He had been in the form of God, but was content to veil His glory, to assume the form of a servant, to be made in the likeness of men. In the cradle of Bethlehem, in the home of Nazareth, in the voluntary limitations of His earthly ministry, in His obedience to the death of the cross, there was the hiding of His power. He refused to use the attributes of His intrinsic Deity, that He might manifest the Love of God, that He might bear away the guilt of the world, and work out and bring in an eternal righteousness. Therefore He is exalted and bears evermore the name of Jesus---the Saviour of the world.

The Apostle says, let this same mind be in you; think these-thoughts; follow in the steps of Jesus. We must show a holy emulation as to who shall stoop the lowest, and follow the master the closest. The most urgent Matter for each of us to consider is not whether we are orthodox in our creed (though that is not unimportant), but whether at any cost we have the mind which was in Christ, whether at any cost to ourselves we are manifesting the love of God to those around us.

PRAYER

Our Heavenly Father, Give us the patience, the tender pity, the humility of Jesus our Lord; who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor. Make us obedient even to the death of the cross. Help us not to save ourselves, that we may save others. AMEN.

PHILIPPIANS 2:9

The Way To Praise Him

READ: Luke 19:28-38

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! —Luke 19:38

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem a few days before His death focused attention on Christ as Lord. When Jesus sent His disciples to get the colt He was to ride, He instructed them to tell its owners, "The Lord has need of it" (Luke 19:31). And when the crowds shouted their praise, they quoted Psalm 118:26, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 19:38).

Jesus is Lord. His is "the name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9). The word Lord refers to His sovereignty. He is the King, and every believer in Him is a member of His kingdom.

We make Jesus the Lord of our lives by bowing to His authority as King. This means we live in obedience to Him. Don't be like the man who claimed to be a Christian but chose to live in sin. When his minister confronted him, he glibly replied, "Don't worry, pastor. It's okay. I'm just a bad Christian."

It's not okay. Not at all! Not for a member of Christ's kingdom (Luke 6:43-49).

On this Palm Sunday, make sure you're honoring Him—David C. Egner

Worthy is God of our worship,

Worthy is He of our praise;

Magnify Him with thanksgiving—

Gladly our voices we raise. —Anon.

To follow Christ is to take Him as your Savior and your Lord

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-10

Door Of Humility

READ: Philippians 2:5-11

God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. —Philippians 2:9-10

Over the centuries, the entrance to Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity has twice been made smaller. The purpose in the last case was to keep marauders from entering the basilica on horseback. It's now referred to as the "Door of Humility," because visitors must bend down to enter.

As we age, bending our knees becomes more and more difficult and painful. In the physical realm, some people courageously undergo knee replacement surgery. To avoid years of increasingly painful joint damage, they endure several weeks of agony.

Like physical knees, spiritual knees can grow stiff over time. Years of stubborn pride and selfishness make us inflexible, and it becomes increasingly difficult and painful for us to humble ourselves. Seduced by false feelings of importance when others submit to us, we never learn that true importance comes from submitting ourselves to God and to others (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5).

As we celebrate Jesus' birth, it's good to remember the Door of Humility, for it reminds us that we all need new knees—knees that will bend. Humbly is the only way to enter the presence of God.

What better way to honor the One who bent so low to be with us. —Julie Ackerman Link

Christ's humble birth should help us see

What life in Him can bring;

It's not acclaim that we should seek

But service for our King. -Branon

The road to victory is paved with humble submission to God

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-10

GOD has a way of turning the tables on evil. The French philosopher Voltaire predicted that Christianity would be swept from existence within one hundred years. Yet just fifty years after he died in 1779, the German Bible Society had occupied Voltaire's house and was using his printing press to produce stacks of Bibles.

During World War II, Adolf Hitler erected a massive stone structure in Monte Carlo. It was to be a radio station from which to broadcast Nazi propaganda into North Africa. Today, from that very building, Trans World Radio beams the Gospel of Christ's redeeming love all across Europe and into Russia and Africa.

Could these ironies of history be just a hint of the last word Christ will have at the end of this age? The apostle Paul wrote of a day when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11).

When evil prospers and falsehood seems to triumph over truth, we need not be discouraged. When we are treated unjustly, we need not despair. The ironies of history and Paul's words in Philippians 2:1-11 assure us that the God we serve will have the final word. The righteous will one day be vindicated.—D J De Haan

Lord, give me the wisdom to see my circumstances from Your perspective. When all I see around me is evil, remind me that it is because I am not focusing on You.

PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11

It's All For Him

READ: Colossians 1:13-20

All things were created through Him and for Him. —Colossians 1:16

It's a little phrase of just two words at the end of Colossians 1:16—"for Him." Yet that little phrase gives God's own interpretation of history. In those two words He affirms that Jesus is the final and complete explanation of everything.

All that has happened and ever will happen is moving through time toward that climactic hour when every tongue will confess the lordship of Jesus Christ. Every knee, whether in grateful adoration or under compulsion, will then bow to Him (Philippians 2:10-11).

British historian H.A.L. Fisher apparently did not share that view. He sadly confessed, "Men wiser and more learned than I have discovered in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave ... nothing but the play of the contingent and the unforeseeable."

What about you? Are you overwhelmed by what seems to be the aimless sequence of events? If so, look once more at Jesus—His life, death, resurrection, and promised return. Your troubled heart will be filled with hope and confidence as you realize that there's meaning and purpose for everything in the world—when you live "for Him." —Vernon C Grounds

One life to live for Christ my Lord,

One life to do my part,
One life in which to give my all
With fervency of heart. —Brandt

Christ showed His love by dying for us; we show our love by living for Him.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12

A Long Obedience

READ: Philippians 2:1-13

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. —PHILIPPIANS 2:12

Every January, health club memberships dramatically increase and exercise rooms become crowded with what some people call "the New Year's resolution crowd." Fitness regulars know that by March many of the newcomers will be gone. "They don't see results as quickly as they think they will," says one club director. "People don't realize it takes a lot of work and perseverance to get in shape."

It's a phenomenon we experience in the spiritual realm as well. Author Eugene Peterson notes that in a culture that loves speed and efficiency, "it is not difficult ... to get a person interested in the message of the gospel; it is terrifically difficult to sustain the interest." To follow Christ faithfully, Peterson says, requires "a long obedience in the same direction."

Paul urged the Philippians to adopt the same mindset as Christ, whose obedience to the Father was wholehearted and complete (2:8). He encouraged them to keep on obeying the Lord and to "work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling" (2:12).

As new believers, we may have good intentions when we take our first steps of faith. Then, as we grow in Christ, God's power enables us to keep walking joyfully with Him along the long road of obedience. —David C. McCasland

The Lord God is faithful, and always will be,

He'll never give up on you or on me;

So let us continue to serve Him each day,

Faithful to follow His will and His way. —Fitzhugh

Faith in Christ is not just a single step but a life of walking with Him.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

Spiritual Reupholstering

READ: Ephesians 4:17-24

Put on the new man which was created according to God. —Ephesians 4:24

When we moved into our home 5 years ago, we discovered that the former owner had left us six dining room chairs. They were covered with fabric of beautiful African art—tasteful zebra stripes. We appreciated the unexpected gifts and used them frequently when entertaining guests.

When we recently moved again, those chairs needed a makeover to match our new decor. So I called an upholsterer and asked, "Shouldn't we just put the new material over the existing fabric?" He responded, "No, you'll ruin the shape of the chair if you just put new material over the old."

The work of God in our lives is similar. He's not interested in merely changing our spiritual appearance. Instead, He intends to replace our character with what is called "the new man," made in the image of Christ (Ephesians 4:24). The flesh has a tendency to perform religious activity, but this is not the work of the Holy Spirit. He will completely transform us on the inside.

But the process is a partnership (Philippians 2:12-13). As we daily lay aside our old behaviors and replace them with godly ones, the God of grace works in us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

God wants to reupholster us. —Dennis Fisher

Dear Lord, You've given new life to me—

A great and full salvation;

And may the life that others see

Display the transformation. —Hess

When you receive Christ, God's work in you has just begun.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

How To Fail Successfully

READ: 1 John 1:5-2:2

If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. —1 John 2:1

Inventor Charles Kettering has suggested that we must learn to fail intelligently. He said, "Once you've failed, analyze the problem and find out why, because each failure is one more step leading up to the cathedral of success. The only time you don't want to fail is the last time you try."

Kettering gave these suggestions for turning failure into success: (1) Honestly face defeat; never fake success. (2) Exploit the failure; don't waste it. Learn all you can from it. (3) Never use failure as an excuse for not trying again.

Kettering's practical wisdom holds a deeper meaning for the Christian. The Holy Spirit is constantly working in us to accomplish "His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13), so we know that failure is never final. We can't reclaim lost time. And we can't always make things right, although we should try. Some consequences of our sins can never be reversed. But we can make a new start, because Jesus died to pay the penalty for all our sins and is our "Advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:1).

Knowing how to benefit from failure is the key to continued growth in grace. According to 1 John 1:9, we need to confess our sins—it's the first step in turning our failure into success. —Dennis J. De Haan

Onward and upward your course plan today,

Seeking new heights as you walk Jesus' way;

Heed not past failures, but strive for the prize,

Aiming for goals fit for His holy eyes. —Brandt

Failure is never final for those who begin again with God.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

As Hitler was mounting his attack against England during World War II, Winston Churchill was asked to speak to a group of discouraged Londoners. He uttered an eight-word encouragement:

"Never give up! Never, never, never give up!"

There will be times when you'll be discouraged in your Christian walk, but you must never, never, never give up. If nothing else, your struggle against sin will cause you to turn to God again and again and cling to Him in your desperation.

What's required is dogged endurance, keeping at the task of obedience through the ebbs and flows, ups and downs, victories and losses in life. It is trying again, while knowing that God is working in you to accomplish His purposes (Phil. 1:6; PHIL 2:13). It is persistently pursuing God's will for your life till you stand before Him and your work is done. —D. H. Roper

PERSEVERANCE CAN TIP THE SCALES FROM FAILURE TO SUCCESS.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

God ... works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

The great inventor Charles Kettering suggests that we learn to fail intelligently. He said, "Once you've failed, analyze the problem and find out why, because each failure is one more step leading up to the cathedral of success. The only time you don't want to fail is the last time you try." Here are three suggestions for turning failure into success:

(1) Honestly face defeat; never fake success.

(2) Exploit the failure; don't waste it. Learn all you can from it; every bitter experience can teach you something.

(3) Never use failure as an excuse for not trying again. We may not be able to reclaim the loss, undo the damage, or reverse the consequences, but we can make a new start.

God does not shield us from the consequences of our actions just because we are His children. But for us, failure is never final because the Holy Spirit is constantly working in us to accomplish His purposes. He may let us fail, but He urges us to view defeat as a steppingstone to maturity. God is working for our good in every situation, and we must act on that good in order to grow.

Knowing how to benefit from failure is the key to success—especially when we trust God to work in us, both to will and to do His good pleasure. —D J De Haan

Success is failure turned inside out.

PHILIPPIANS 2:14

During the years I was a medical doctor, I had a number of patients who seemed to enjoy complaining about their physical ills. I would examine them and not find a single thing wrong, yet all they did was whine and complain. Pains here, aches there, and as one expressed it, "I just feel no good all over." In my opinion, it was all imaginary. It seemed to me that if they would only start to count their blessings they would soon forget their troubles.

How different the case of the very old woman, penniless and weak, who was asked, "Auntie, how is your health?" "Oh, I have so much to be thankful for," she replied. "I have only two teeth left, but thank God, they are opposite each other!"

Before you begin another day, stop to count your blessings instead of dwelling on your troubles. —M R De Haan

INSTEAD OF COMPLAINING, COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS.

PHILIPPIANS 2:14-15

A Crooked Generation

READ: Philippians 2:12-16

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless ... in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. —PHILIPPIANS 2:14-15

You could call today's generation "crooked and perverse," just as Paul described his own generation in Philippians 2:15. Even Moses would have understood what Paul was talking about, for he said of Israel, "They have corrupted themselves; they are not His children, because of their blemish: a perverse and crooked generation" (Deuteronomy 32:5).

Crookedness refers to the means by which people accomplish their objectives—doing whatever it takes to get what they want. Shortcuts to success are applauded. Some even boast about how they circumvent the law.

Perversion refers to the way people distort the truth. For example, I heard about three teenagers who wanted to end their stay in a youth hostel long before their expected departure. They angrily insisted that the manager return their nonrefundable deposit. When he finally gave in and the three teens were on their way out, they exclaimed to the hostel's other guests that they had been forced to leave.

We may sometimes get hurt by the crooked behavior and distorted thinking of people. But we are called to be "blameless and harmless" and to "shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

Let's show the world a different way of living. —Albert Lee

We are called with a holy calling

The light of the world to be,

To lift up the lamp of the Savior

That others His light may see. —Anon.

The straight and narrow way is God's way for a crooked generation.

PHILIPPIANS 2:14-15

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PHILIPPIANS 2:15

When Benjamin Franklin decided to interest the people of Philadelphia in street lighting, he hung a beautiful lantern on the end of a long bracket attached to the front of his house," wrote Cole D. Robinson in World Horizons.

"He kept the glass brightly polished and carefully lit the wick each evening at the approach of dusk. Anyone walking on the dark street could see this light from a long way off and came under its warm glow."

What was the result?

"It wasn't long before Franklin's neighbors began placing lamps outside their homes," Cole continued. "Soon the entire city realized the value of street lighting and followed his example with enthusiasm."

If we live according to the clear light of God's Word, God will dispel the darkness and others will be attracted to the Light. —H. G. Bosch

LET'S NOT ONLY FOLLOW GOOD EXAMPLES, LET'S BE GOOD EXAMPLES.

PHILIPPIANS 2:15

Most people have a bad habit or two. Some habits are just irritating, such as talking too much or too fast. Others are much more serious.

Consider, for example, the bad habit developed by the people of ancient Israel. They had just been delivered from slavery ([Ex 14:30](#)), and they ought to have been thankful. Instead, they started to complain to Moses and Aaron, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt!" ([16:3](#)). We read in [Ex 17](#) that their complaining escalated into a quarrel. In reality, their complaint was with God, but they picked a fight with Moses because he was the leader. They said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" (v.3). The people even began questioning if God was really with them (v.7). Yet He always met their needs. If we're honest, we would have to admit that we sometimes complain when God isn't coming through for us the way we want. We accuse Him of being absent or disinterested. But when our heart is concerned with God's purposes rather than our own, we will be patient and trust Him to provide all that we need. Then we won't develop the bad

habit of complaining. —Albert Lee

Those Christians who with thankful hearts

Praise God throughout the day

Won't tend to grumble and complain

When things don't go their way. —Branon

To conquer the habit of complaining, count your blessings.

PHILIPPIANS 2:15

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What was the result? "It wasn't long before Franklin's neighbors began placing lamps outside their homes," Cole continued. "Soon the entire city realized the value of street lighting and followed his example with enthusiasm."

The same power of example works for the Christian, and Paul's words in Philippians 2 apply to every believer. The world is affected by what we say and do when we set a good example.

Some of us are the only Christian in the place where we work. Others stand alone as believers in our homes or classrooms. If we live according to the clear light of God's Word, God will dispel the darkness, the Savior will be pleased, and others will be attracted to the light.—H G Bosch

PHILIPPIANS 2:15

SPURGEON - MORNING AND EVENING

We use lights to make manifest. A Christian man should so shine in his life, that a person could not live with him a week without knowing the gospel. His conversation should be such that all who are about him should clearly perceive whose he is, and whom he serves; and should see the image of Jesus reflected in his daily actions. Lights are intended for guidance. We are to help those around us who are in the dark. We are to hold forth to them the Word of life. We are to point sinners to the Saviour, and the weary to a divine resting-place. Men sometimes read their Bibles, and fail to understand them; we should be ready, like Philip, to instruct the inquirer in the meaning of God's Word, the way of salvation, and the life of godliness. Lights are also used for warning. On our rocks and shoals a light-house is sure to be erected. Christian men should know that there are many false lights shown everywhere in the world, and therefore the right light is needed. The wreckers of Satan are always abroad, tempting the ungodly to sin under the name of pleasure; they hoist the wrong light, be it ours to put up the true light upon every dangerous rock, to point out every sin, and tell what it leads to, that so we may be clear of the blood of all men, shining as lights in the world. Lights also have a very cheering influence, and so have Christians. A Christian ought to be a comforter, with kind words on his lips, and sympathy in his heart; he should carry sunshine wherever he goes, and diffuse happiness around him.

Gracious Spirit dwell with me;

I myself would gracious be,

And with words that help and heal

Would thy life in mine reveal,

And with actions bold and meek

Would for Christ my Saviour speak.

PHILIPPIANS 2:15

Finding Our Way Home

READ: Philippians 2:1-4,12-16

... you shine as lights in the world. —PHILIPPIANS 2:15

Author Anne Lamott tells about a 7-year-old girl who got lost in a big city. The girl frantically ran up and down several streets, looking for a familiar landmark. A policeman saw the girl, realized something was wrong, and offered to help. So she got in the car and he slowly drove through nearby neighborhoods. Suddenly the girl pointed to a church and asked the policeman to let her out. She assured him, "This is my church, and I can always find my way home from here."

Many people think the church is an archaic institution, no longer relevant in our modern world. Yet I am convinced that a church that faithfully teaches the Bible and proclaims the good news of salvation through Christ provides exactly what we all need to "find our way home."

When our churches are fulfilling their God-given function, believers humbly serve and care for one another, encouraging each other to follow Christ's example (Philippians 2:1-11). Those groups of believers, by their words and lives, also point a lost world to Jesus. They serve "as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life" (vv.15-16).

A church that teaches the truth about Christ is not only relevant but desperately needed in our world. It can help people of all ages to find their way home. —Vernon C Grounds

Christ builds His church and makes it strong

By using you and me;

And if we all will do our part,

The world His love will see. —Sper

A church helps the lost to find their way home when its light shines brightly.

PHILIPPIANS 2:15

China's Wall

Read: Psalm 33:8-22

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. --Proverbs 14:34

The words of Proverbs 14:34 could be chiseled on the tombstone of many civilizations: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." We think we can build a nation on the gross national product or defend it with armaments, but God says that countries are built on the character of their people.

The people of ancient China sought security from the barbaric hordes that swept down from the north, so they erected the Great Wall of China. The massive wall stretched for 1,500 miles. It was 12 to 40 feet wide and 20 to 50 feet high. The wall was too high for the enemy to scale, too thick to tear down, and too long to go around.

Yet during the first 100 years of the wall's existence, China was invaded three times. How was the security breached? The enemies simply bribed a gatekeeper and then marched easily through a gate. The fatal flaw in China's defense lay in spending its wealth to build a wall but paying much less to build the character of the gatekeepers.

A bigger defense system won't ultimately protect our nation. But we can contribute to her security by being "blameless and harmless, ... without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:15). --H W Robinson

Protection of a nation's land

Does not come from its mighty hand;

Security is just a fraud

Unless the people trust in God. --Sper

A nation is only as strong as the character of its citizens.

PHILIPPIANS 2:15-16

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

SHINING LIGHTS

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,

among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."—Phil 2:15-16 (R.V.).

THE SPIRIT of man, says the wise man, is the candle of the Lord (Pro20:27). By nature we are like so many unlit lamps and candles. As the wick is adapted for the flame, but stands dark and cold until it is ignited, so we are unable to shed forth any light until our nature is kindled from the Eternal Nature of Him who "is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all." Has the candle of your life been lit by contact with Christ, the Sun of Righteousness?

Our Lord says: "Let your light shine before men." He shows how absurd it is to light a lamp, and then obscure its rays by placing it under a bushel. The purpose of ignition is frustrated if the light is covered. Ah! how many of us place bushels on the light of our testimony for God--the bushel of uncharitable speech! Of ill-temper! Of a discontented and querulous spirit! These as well as more conspicuous failings will prevent us from shining forth as light in a dark world. It is not for us to ignite the flame or supply the oil. All we have to do is to keep our lamps clean and bright, to guard against anything that may obstruct the out-shining of the Love and Life of God through the soul. If we are careful to see that anything which might hinder the effect of our testimony and mar our influence is put away, Christ will see to it that our light shall effect the full measure of His purpose.

In contrast to the bushel is the stand or candlestick. The Master of the House may place you in a very small dark corner, and on a very humble stand, but some day, as He passes by, you shall light His footsteps as He goes forth to seek and save that which is lost. What is your stand?--your place in society, your position in the home, your situation in some business house, factory, or school--wherever it be, it doesn't Matter, so long as your light is shining forth, steady and clear, warning and directing men and women in the path of life.

PRAYER - O Christ, may the fire of Thy Divine Love burn up our bushels; help us to shine forth as lights in this dark world. AMEN

PHILIPPIANS 2:19

ENCOURAGERS

Read: Acts 27:21-36

I long to see you ... that I may be encouraged together with you. . --Romans 1:11-12

Discouragement is a problem for many Christians. While they may not be distressed about health, family, or work, they're discouraged about their spiritual service. They compare themselves to others who are gifted with musical talents or the ability to teach the Bible. They see people who are able to give generously and pray with evident effectiveness, but they think they can't do these things. As a result, they feel they are useless to God. They need to realize, however, that every Christian is qualified to carry on at least one helpful ministry--the ministry of encouragement.

Renowned preacher Robert Dale was walking one day in Birmingham, England, where he was pastoring the great Carr's Lane Church. He was under a dark cloud of gloom when a woman came up to him and exclaimed, "God bless you, Dr. Dale. If you could only know how you have made me feel hundreds of times!" Then off she hurried. Dale later testified, "The mist broke, the sunlight came, and I breathed the free air of the mountains of God."

The apostle Paul knew how important it was not only to be encouraged by others (Phil. 2:19) but to be an encourager (Acts 20:2; 27:35-36). That's a ministry all of us can be involved in. --V C Grounds

It may seem insignificant

To say a word or two,

But when it is encouragement,

What wonders it can do! --K. De Haan

Even if you have nothing else to give, you can always give encouragement.

PHILIPPIANS 2:20

A Great Coach

READ: Philippians 2:12-24

I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. —Philippians 2:20

Although Billy Connors was not a great athlete himself, many people consider him to be the best pitching coach in major league baseball today. New York Yankees manager Joe Torre said: "Sometimes the best players can't coach, because they were such

naturals ... whereas guys like Billy had to work at it, and pay attention to all the little things.”

Connors also knows and cares about the men he coaches. All of them have been to his home for a meal. His genuine concern opens their ears to what he has to say.

This account of a caring and competent coach made me think of Timothy in the New Testament. Though at times he seemed timid and fearful (2 Timothy 1:6-8), Paul considered him proven and dependable in guiding others. The apostle wrote, “I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you ... For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state” (Philippians 2:19-20).

Spiritual coaching is not just telling people how to accomplish great things for God. It begins with caring for them and earning the right to be heard. Then, with a keen eye and a kind word, we can encourage others in the way of faith.

Any Christian can become a great spiritual coach by the grace of God. —David C. McCasland

O Lord, You are faithful and always will be,

You never give up on working with me;

So as I am striving to serve You each day,

Help me show others Your will and Your way. —Fitzhugh

Genuine concern for others is the mark of a great spiritual coach.

PHILIPPIANS 2:20

A POLITICAL leader, summing up the brokenness of our time, talked about a "Humpty-Dumpty world." The intriguing phrase takes us back to a childhood nursery rhyme:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall;

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the king's horses and all the king's men

Couldn't put Humpty

Dumpty together again.

The message of that old rhyme is true of life. Human beings are broken and need to be put together again. The Creator of the universe cares about our situation and has taken steps to restore us to wholeness. He came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ, and He fashioned the church as His body so that "the members should have the same care for one another" (1 Corinthians 12:25). Timothy demonstrated that kind of care (Philippians 2:20).

Caring is as basic as giving money to help destitute Christians or looking after aged parents; as simple as being patient and kind or visiting widows and orphans in distress; as obvious as paying a just wage to employees, or as unspectacular as giving a cup of cool water to someone who is thirsty. That's how our Savior would have us care for people smashed in our Humpty-Dumpty world. Are we letting Him care through us? —H W Robinson

PHILIPPIANS 2:26

F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

He was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. - Php 2:26

Some have identified Epaphroditus here with Epaphras in the Epistle to the Colossians, Here he is represented as sorrowful, even to agony, because his friends had heard of his illness, and he would have wished that no one should be burdened on his account. But in the other epistle he is represented as always striving for the saints in prayer.

It is very beautiful to discover his unwillingness to have his sickness published. When we are in trouble it is best not to speak much of it, save to God. “Only inexperienced sufferers are voluble; those familiar with the secrets of anguish are silent.” Let us anoint the head, and wash the face, that we may not appear unto men to fast, but to the Father who is in secret; and our Father who seeth in secret will Himself reward openly. The Comforter will draw near, will whisper his own consolations, and amid much sorrow we shall be calm and strong.

But with Epaphras there was probably another thought. He knew that the Philippians were bearing a very heavy load of sorrow. It

was a hard and difficult fight for them, as for him. And with much generosity he was most unwilling that the news of his illness should add a feather-weight to their grief.

This eagerness to conceal pain, lest it should add sorrow to those who already have almost as much as they can bear, is very characteristic of noble souls. And we may quote here Robert Hall's words, on recovering from a keen paroxysm of anguish: "I have not complained, have I, sir? No, and I will not complain." How much of God's strength and comfort we miss in our incessant endeavor to secure the support which notoriety for pain and privation may bring from our fellows!

PHILIPPIANS 2:30

INTRODUCTIONS

READ: Philippians 2:19-30

For the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me. — PHILIPPIANS 2:30

I thought it was a misprint when the schedule at a Christian men's conference noted 2 1/2 hours for introductions. But the time was correct and it turned out to be the most meaningful part of the weekend for me.

Instead of giving our own names, jobs, and family information, each man introduced someone else. Some presented longtime friends, and others told about someone they had met only the night before. Every introduction was an affirmation, with special attention given to the uniqueness and value of each individual.

The apostle Paul was a great "introducer" who spoke highly of his colleagues in the faith and ministry. His letters are dotted with the names of men and women to whom and for whom he was deeply grateful. He affirmed Timothy as a person of proven character, who "as a son with his father" had served him in the gospel (Philippians 2:22). He also praised Epaphroditus, who almost died because of his unselfish devotion to Christ and his service to others (v.30).

In a world dominated by put-downs, let's resolve to master the art of building others up by what we say to them and about them. Such "introductions" can be one of the most important things we do each day. —David C. McCasland

Help me, Lord, to reassure and strengthen

Others by what I speak today;

I would always try to be affirming,

As I meet with friends along the way. —Hess

Our day's work isn't done until we build up someone

PHILIPPIANS 2:30

True Sacrifice

READ: Philippians 2:17-30

For the work of Christ [Epaphroditus] came close to death, not regarding his life. —PHILIPPIANS 2:30

Teenagers amaze me. So many of them love life with grand passion and face it with unrelenting optimism. Sometimes they demonstrate the Christian life in ways adults can only hope to emulate.

Such is the case with Carissa, a teen who loves soccer, basketball, friends, family, and Jesus. In 2000, her mother was diagnosed with cancer. Carissa was just 12 years old, but she began helping to care for her mom.

During the next few years, Carissa often fed her mom, dressed her, and helped her do anything she couldn't do for herself. "It was so hard to learn," she said. "Can you imagine, a mother and daughter literally changing roles? I truly learned to be a humble servant."

Sometimes, while her friends were out having fun, Carissa was helping her dad to take care of her mom. She continued to do so until the summer of 2004, when Carissa and her family said goodbye to Mom for the last time. As Carissa puts it, "God took her home and made her perfect."

Carissa reminds me of Epaphroditus, who sacrificially cared for Paul's needs (Philippians 2:25-30). What examples of caring, love, and compassion! Not all of us, of course, could set aside our lives to give as they did. But their sacrifice can teach us all about the

value of servanthood. —Dave Branon

True greatness does not come to those

Who strive for worldly fame;

It lies instead with those who choose

To serve in Jesus' name. —D. De Haan

When you do little things for others, you do big things for Jesus.