

Savoring God's Word

A Meditation about Paul & Timothy relating so well in ministry

Philippians 2:19-23; 2 Timothy 1:3-7

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This meditation exercise on Philippians 2:19-23 and 2 Timothy 1:3-7 is especially for those who are interested in building relationships in ministry. If you wish to have a group meditate on the passage together, the instructions for the group leader are in italics. If you wish to use it alone, ignore those instructions. This meditation roughly follows the pattern of *lectio divina*, but also includes elements from the Ignatian style of Scripture meditation. For more information about how to meditate on Scripture, see [Savoring God's Word](#) or the recording [Meditating on Scripture](#) (scroll to bottom of page).

WARMING UP (5-10 minutes)

After you center yourself by breathing deeply and relaxing your muscles, use the following question to help focus your thoughts for meditation on today's passage. If thoughts interrupt, set them aside, or write them down if you need to do so. **Think of someone you know and consider what you'd like to say to them if knew they were dying tomorrow.**

Close your eyes and take a few minutes to quietly consider the people in your life and what they mean to you. If after a few minutes nothing comes to you, simply enjoy being quiet with God.

Group leader: After group members have had a chance to greet each other, read the centering instructions above. Then present the above "quiet question" and let them reflect quietly for a few minutes. Repeat the question and ask them to share their thoughts in a sentence or two. Anyone who wishes to pass may do so.

READING the PASSAGE (15-20 minutes)

Read silently the passage printed below, noting the explanations in the right column.

Group leader: Ask a group member to read the passage below aloud. Suggest that other group members might want to close their eyes and listen.

PHILIPPIANS 2:19-23; 2 TIMOTHY 1:3-7

PARTNERS

(Paul writing about Timothy)

Philippians 2:19-23

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in *your welfare*. 21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because

ITALICIZED WORDS & PHRASES

PAUL an apostle-missionary who traveled extensively.

TIMOTHY a younger man, a missionary and pastor Paul had trained.

YOUR WELFARE the growth of the

as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to *send him* as soon as I see how things go with me.

FRIENDS
(Paul writing to Timothy)
2 Timothy 1:3-7

3 I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4 Recalling *your tears*, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in *your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice* and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Philippians.

SEND HIM Paul was in prison in Rome and Timothy would take the news of Paul's trial or verdict to Philippi.

YOUR TEARS Timothy had cried, probably when they parted company as Paul was arrested and taken to Rome.

YOUR GRANDMOTHER LOIS AND IN YOUR MOTHER EUNICE Although Timothy's father was a Greek, his mother and grandmother were Jews and became Christians, possibly through Paul's ministry in their home city, Lystra (Acts 16:1).

If you haven't read the notes in the right column, read them silently now. Take a minute to consider the following questions.

Group leader: After the passage is read, ask group members to read silently the explanations in the right column and then to jot down answers to the questions below. After a few minutes, have them choose one question and share their answer to that question in a sentence or two. Or they may pass, if they wish. Explain that this is not a time for discussion, but for reporting responses to the questions.

BONDED IN PURPOSE

1. Side-by-side relationships are ones in which people don't continually evaluate each other, but move forward together toward a common purpose. Paul and Timothy had a relationship like that. They were both focused on the work of the gospel. As they traveled together, they must have laughed and cried many times, forging a strong relationship. When have you made a friend based on mutual purpose?

If that friendship was different from other friendships, how was it different?

OTHERS-CENTERED LOVE

2. Which of these others-centered characteristics of love have you experienced?

- Willingness to part with someone dear for the sake of the gospel.
- Admiration for someone based on love for God, not personal qualities.
- Not being written off even though you have flaws, such as timidity.

Paul (an intense person, no doubt) didn't discount Timothy for his timidity but encouraged him. Paul valued Timothy because he, apparently unlike others who were preoccupied with their own needs only, cared about advancing the gospel.

3. Read the list below of ways that Paul encouraged Timothy (2 Timothy 1:3-7).

- Thanking God for his friend.
- Praying constantly praying for his friend.

- Stating how he longed to see this friend.
- Reviewing his friend's interesting spiritual history.
- Encouraging his friend to use the gift God gave him.
- Pointing his friend toward goals (power, love & self-discipline).

Which of these would you most like to see from a friend or relative?

Which of these would you most like to give to a friend or relative?

BETTER THAN HALLMARK

4. Underline within this passage a "phrase of the week" or a "one-liner" that describes something about the kind of relationship you'd like to have with someone.

PICTURING the PASSAGE (10-15 minutes)

Before reading the passage again, consider this cue.

CHARACTER CUE: PAUL'S CIRCUMSTANCES

The apostle Paul wrote Philippians from a house where he was kept under close guard at all times and probably chained to a soldier. He wrote 2 Timothy from a cold prison cell with only his writing materials and a visitor or two. (He may not have had access to a toilet and some prisoners were not given food. They depended on outsiders to bring the food.) The latter occurred not long before he was executed by the emperor Nero, and he seemed to know this was his last chance to say to his friend and partner what he needed to say. He also passed on his responsibilities to this "dear son" (2 Tim. 1:2) and successor, who had spent 20 years as his associate.

CHARACTER CUE: TIMOTHY: READING PAUL'S LETTER

Imagine Timothy reading Paul's letters. Timothy was free, and able to do the work he learned at Paul's side. Perhaps Timothy read these letters over and over, cherishing them and trying to remember the things they did together and what it had been like to be Paul's apprentice. Paul seems to have filled the father role in Timothy's life, yet Paul treated him respectfully as a close friend and partner.

Armed now with this cue, read the passage aloud and close your eyes, picturing Paul and Timothy in each of their settings.

Group leader: Have group members read this cue silently. Then have a group member read the passage aloud while the others picture the passage.

SOAKING in the PASSAGE (5-15 minutes)

Reflect now on how this Scripture passage touches your life today. Read the passage aloud again and ponder the following question for several minutes: **What word or phrase or scene or image emerges from the passage and stays with you?** If you begin to latch on to something that is most evident, step back a minute and wait to see if anything else emerges.

After several minutes, write below about the images or words that resonate with you from the passage.

Word or phrase: _____

Scene or image: I hear . . . or, I see . . . _____

Group leader: Have a different group member read the passage aloud and then state the question printed in bold. Have the group sit quietly together and then fill in one of the blanks above. After a few minutes, ask group members to read what they've written. Remind them that they may pass if they wish.

PONDERING the INVITATION (5-15 minutes)

Perhaps God is offering you an invitation in this passage to do or be something in the next few days. What might that be? Sit quietly for a few minutes, pondering this question: **What do I sense this passage is calling me to do or be right now? In what relationship is God nudging me to move out and risk?** If nothing comes, that's fine. Simply sit in the quiet and enjoy God's presence.

Group leader: Read the above instructions aloud and after a few minutes, repeat the question printed in bold. Ask group members to respond by saying, I SENSE THIS PASSAGE CALLING ME TO: and then completing that statement with a short phrase. Anyone who wishes to pass may do so.

PRAISING (5-10 minutes)

Take a few minutes to respond to God about all of this. **How do you feel about what you sensed (or didn't sense)? What is it you most want to say to God at this time?**

Group leader: After allowing a few minutes for private prayer, ask group members to pray for the person on their left. Anyone wishing to pray silently may do so, saying, "I'm praying silently." When they're finished, they can say, "Amen."

DAILY LECTIO:

If you wish, use the above format to meditate on God's word between group meetings. You may wish to focus on today's passage everyday this week or use the following passages:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:6-12 (nurturing relationships we have with fellow workers)
- Philippians 1:3-8 (appreciation of others)
- Philippians 1:9-11 (a prayer for others)
- Ephesians 1:15-21 (a prayer for others)
- Ephesians 3:13-21 (a prayer for others)
- Colossians 1:9-12 (a prayer for others)

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