

## I. Introduction

From the beginning of this chapter, Paul has given a high bar for Christians to reach for. Turn back to Philippians 2:1-4. “Be one in spirit and purpose” (verse 2). As we have seen, spiritual unity is of utmost importance for Christians and the church. But the only way for unity in the church and for success in serving God is to have a submissive mind towards God. After giving the formula for spiritual unity, Paul then gave a description of a submissive mind as seen in the actions of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He began by writing in verse 5, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.” Then after describing Jesus’ humility, submission, and obedience, Paul turned to his own experiences to demonstrate a submissive mind and the joy that accompanies it. In Philippians 2:17 he wrote, “But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.” Paul finished by challenging all of his readers to follow his own example and finish strong; he wrote in verse 18, “So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.”

Paul and the Holy Spirit knew that after all of this, some people were going to say things like, “It’s impossible for ordinary people to follow such examples as Jesus Christ and Paul. Jesus was the Son of God; Paul was a chosen Apostle who was exceptional in so many ways.” So, with this in mind, Paul introduced two ordinary people who were not “super” apostles or spectacular miracle workers. Paul wanted everyone to know that the submissive mind isn’t possible just for the chosen few, for the special ones; a submissive mind, and the unity that follows, is a necessity for Christian joy and is an achievable goal for all believers, basically he was saying, “You can do it.” Paul gave two examples of “ordinary people.”

## II. Examples to Follow

**A. Example #1: Timothy** First, there was Timothy. Paul probably met Timothy when he came to Timothy’s hometown of Lystra on his first missionary journey recorded in Acts 14. It was probably during

this visit that Timothy was saved. But there was more, turn to 2 Timothy 1:3-5. Both Timothy's mother and grandmother were believers, and they had instructed Timothy in the Scriptures, the Old Testament. Later, when Paul returned to Derbe and Lystra on his second missionary journey [Acts 16:1-4](#) records that, at the suggestion of the church leadership there, Paul made Timothy as part of his mission team. By the time Paul wrote the Letter to the Philippians, Timothy had been his almost constant companion for about ten years. Paul considered the young man, Timothy, to be his own "dearly beloved son" in the faith ([2 Timothy 1:2](#)).

Looking at Timothy's experience, it's obvious that a submissive mind is not something that suddenly, automatically appears in the life of the believer. Timothy had to develop and cultivate the "*mind of Christ*." He didn't become part of the "team" as soon as he was saved. He needed training in the Scriptures from those around him. And he needed some on-the-job training which he got as he served in Lystra and then as he worked with Paul. Through all of that, he became the kind of servant that Paul could trust, and God could bless. Paul gave some characteristics of this young man with a submissive mind.

**1. He had a servant's mind.** Having allowed himself to be filled with the Holy Spirit and God's love, Timothy developed an agape love for people and was concerned about their needs; Paul wrote, "**I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.**" Timothy wasn't interested in "*winning friends and influencing people*;" he was genuinely interested in the physical and spiritual welfare of others. Paul was concerned about the church at Philippi and wanted to send someone to express his concern and get the facts. But, from those that were available at that time, there was no one to send from the believers in Rome; Paul wrote, "**For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.**"

Having the same attitude as Christ Jesus, Timothy "humbled himself" as he cared for others and was concerned about their needs—he had a servant's mind. Sadly, many of the believers in Rome were so caught up in themselves and their own internal struggles, that they had no time for the important work of the Lord. Disunity in the church takes time and energy and concern away from the things that matter most. Timothy wasn't interested in supporting one side or another. Having the same attitude as Christ Jesus, Timothy cared

for others and was concerned about their needs. This was a genuine concern—a natural concern. This concern, this submissive mind came over time; it came because of the second characteristic:

**2. He had a servant's training.** Paul didn't enlist Timothy as part of his team the same day he was saved. Paul left Timothy in Lystra to become part of the church fellowship there. It was in that fellowship that Timothy grew in spiritual matters, as well as being taught by his mother and grandmother. Through it all, he learned how to serve the Lord. When Paul returned to that area after a few years, [Acts 16:3](#) says that “the brothers, i.e. the Christians, at Lystra spoke well of” Timothy.

After allowing Timothy to get some basic training, at the right time, Paul called Timothy who was still a rather young man, to work with him on his missionary tours. During the times of travel and ministry, Paul continued Timothy's education in the Scriptures and modeled a submissive mind. Paul gave personal instruction along with on-the-job experience. [Turn to 2 Timothy 3:10-17.](#) Experience without teaching can lead to discouragement; teaching without experience can lead to spiritual deadness. It takes both to grow. Timothy had a servant's training.

**3. Finally, he had a servant's reward.** Having spent years with Paul, Timothy knew the meaning of the “sacrifice and service” that Paul wrote about in [Philippians 2:17](#). Timothy had proved himself and, just as He did for Paul, God rewarded Timothy for his faithfulness. To begin with, Timothy had the joy of helping others. Obviously, there were hardships and difficulties—traveling itself was a hardship, but there were also victories and blessings. Because Timothy had the joy of a submissive mind and he had been “a good and faithful servant . . . faithful with a few things,” ([Matthew 25:21](#)), God rewarded him with many things. Timothy had the joy of serving with the great Apostle Paul; he is mentioned at least 24 times in Paul's letters. He was also sent as Paul's representative—as a troubleshooter—to help troubled churches and the issues that were affecting them. Paul wanted to go to Philippi, but, since he was tied up—actually, chained up, he sent Timothy instead. Timothy wasn't only Paul's spiritual son and Paul's servant, but he became Paul's substitute. But the greatest reward God gave to Timothy was to choose him to be Paul's replacement as one of the leaders of the church when Paul was called home to heaven ([2 Timothy 4:1-11](#)).

**B. Example #2: Epaphroditus** Paul then gave another example of an ordinary man with a submissive mind, Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus was a member of the Philippian church. He risked his health and life to carry their missionary offering to Paul in Rome. He had the heart of a servant, going willingly to Rome to help Paul in any way he could for as long as he was needed. Paul gave three characteristics of this Christian from Philippi.

**1. He was a well-rounded Christian.** Paul called him “**my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier.**” Balance is important in the Christian life. Some people so emphasize fellowship, i.e., being a brother, that they forget to spread the Gospel. Others are so busy defending the “faith of the gospel” as a “fellow soldier,” that they neglect building fellowship with other believers. Epaphroditus didn’t fall into either of these traps. He was a well-rounded Christian.

**2. He was a burdened or concerned Christian.** Like Timothy, Epaphroditus was concerned about others. To begin with, he was concerned about Paul. When he heard in Philippi that Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he volunteered to make the long, dangerous trip to Rome; to stand at Paul’s side and assist him—“**to take care of his needs.**” He carried the church’s love gift with him, protecting it with his own life. Epaphroditus was not content simply to contribute to the offering; he gave himself to help carry that offering.

But this man was also burdened for his own home church. After arriving in Rome, he became very ill. In fact, Paul wrote, that he “**almost died.**” Somehow the church had learned of this illness, and Epaphroditus was distressed over their concern for him—he “**is distressed because you heard he was ill.**” Epaphroditus was not burdened about himself; he was burdened over the people in Philippi because they were worried about him. He didn’t look only to his own interests, “**but also to the interests of others**” (**Philippians 2:4**). Like Timothy, he knew the meaning of “**sacrifice and service**” which are two marks of the submissive mind.

**3. He was a Christian of blessing.** Epaphroditus was a blessing to Paul. He supported Paul in his prison experience and did not allow even his own sickness to hinder his service. He and Paul must have had some good times together reminiscing about Philippi and serving God together again in Rome. He was a

blessing to his own church. Paul told the church to welcome him back “with great joy and honor” because of his sacrifice and service. After Jesus “emptied Himself” in coming to die on the cross, God exalted Him. Epaphroditus sacrificed himself with no thought of reward and Paul encouraged the church to hold him in honor to the glory of God. He is also a blessing to us today. He demonstrates that the joyful, Christian life is the life of sacrifice and service. He proves that the submissive mind really is possible for all Christians.

### III. Conclusion

The submissive mind is not the product of an hour’s worship service or a week’s seminar. The submissive mind will grow in each one of you, like Timothy and Epaphroditus and Paul and Jesus Christ, if you daily humble yourself and yield to God. The examples of Epaphroditus and Timothy encourage Christians to submit ourselves to the Lord, and one another in the Spirit of Christ. Reading [Phil. 2:3-4](#) (CEV) from a different translation: “**Don’t be jealous or proud, but be humble and consider others more important than yourselves. Care about them as much as you care about yourselves.**” This is an attainable goal for every Christian—you can do it!

Such a commitment should be the norm for all Christians, not just something for the “chosen few.” Jesus Christ is the pattern we all can follow; as Peter wrote in [1 Peter 2:21](#), “**To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.**” A submissive mind means losing one’s life in order to find it. Jesus challenged in [Luke 9:23-24](#), “**If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.**” As Jesus said so many times, a divided commitment to the Gospel is actually no commitment at all ([Matt. 6:24](#); [Luke 9:24](#); [14:26, 3-33](#); [16:13](#)). This is God’s challenge: “**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others**” ([Phil. 2:3-4](#)). Have the same “**attitude … as that of Christ Jesus,**” be humble, submissive, and obedient to God’s will, then when you stand before God you, like Paul, and Timothy, and Epaphroditus, will hear: “**Well done, good and faithful servant**” ([Matthew 25:21](#)).

## Communion Devotion – October 2025 -- Matthew 26:17-19, 26-30

The Lord's Table is a time to remember and celebrate what Jesus did for us. He did more than die for our sins; [Philippians 2:6-8](#) says, “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!” Jesus humbled Himself; He became a servant—i.e. He submitted Himself; He was obedient so that we could be redeemed—saved from an eternity in hell. [1 Corinthians 15:3-5](#) tells how Jesus “redeemed” us, i.e. how you could be saved from an eternity in hell, “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.” If you believe that Jesus died for your sins; if as [Romans 10:9](#) says, you have made Him your Lord and your Savior, then whether or not you are a member of TBC, we invite you to join us in this time of celebration and worship—a time for saying “Thank You” to God for His love and mercy and grace.

The Lord's Table is also a time for every Christian to take inventory of his or her life—

[1 Corinthians 11:28-29](#) says, “A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.” While the elements are being passed, look at your heart, look at your life. Living a Christian life—a sanctified life—a life not even dabbling in sin doesn’t come easy. The world is constantly trying to get you to be like the rest of the world in your thoughts, your words, and your actions. Traits like humility, submission, and obedience are not particularly respected in the world. Are your priorities those of your Lord and Savior or those of the world around you? Is your motive in life to bring glory to God? Are you sanctified; i.e., are you separate from the world or *are you painted with the same brush?* Can you say to God as Jesus did in [John 17:4](#), “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”? If, by God’s standards, your life isn’t what it should be, confess to God whatever is holding you back, ask Him for strength to do what you should be doing, and then come to the Table and worship our great Lord and Savior.