

A MODEL SACRIFICIAL SERVANT:

EPAPHRODITUS

Philippians 2:25-30; 4:18



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- Would Epaphroditus make your list of Biblical heroes?
- He is mentioned in only two passages as a supporting character, not a headliner—Philip 2:25-30; 4:18.
- What makes this man worthy of our consideration?
(hold such men in esteem - Phili 2:29)

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➤ The context:

- *The letter to the Lord's church in Philippi is often referred to as Paul's letter of joy ...*
- *Real, genuine joy can ONLY be found in real, genuine sacrificial service in God's cause ...*

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➤ The context:

➤ *Epaphroditus is a living & powerful example of the type of humble, sacrificial service previously addressed -*

- ✧ *Paul — 1:10-26;*
- ✧ *The Philippians, — 1:27-2:4, 12-18;*
- ✧ *Jesus — 2:5-11;*
- ✧ *Timothy — 2:19-24*

PHILIPPIANS 2:25-30 (NKJV)

²⁵ Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; ²⁶ since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.

PHILIPPIANS 2:25-30 (NKJV)

²⁷ For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful.

PHILIPPIANS 2:25-30 (NKJV)

²⁹ Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; ³⁰ because 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 4:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

A MODEL SACRIFICIAL SERVANT:

EPAPHRODITUS

ABOUT THE MAN



- His name means ‘lovely’ - ‘comely’ or ‘charming’. -

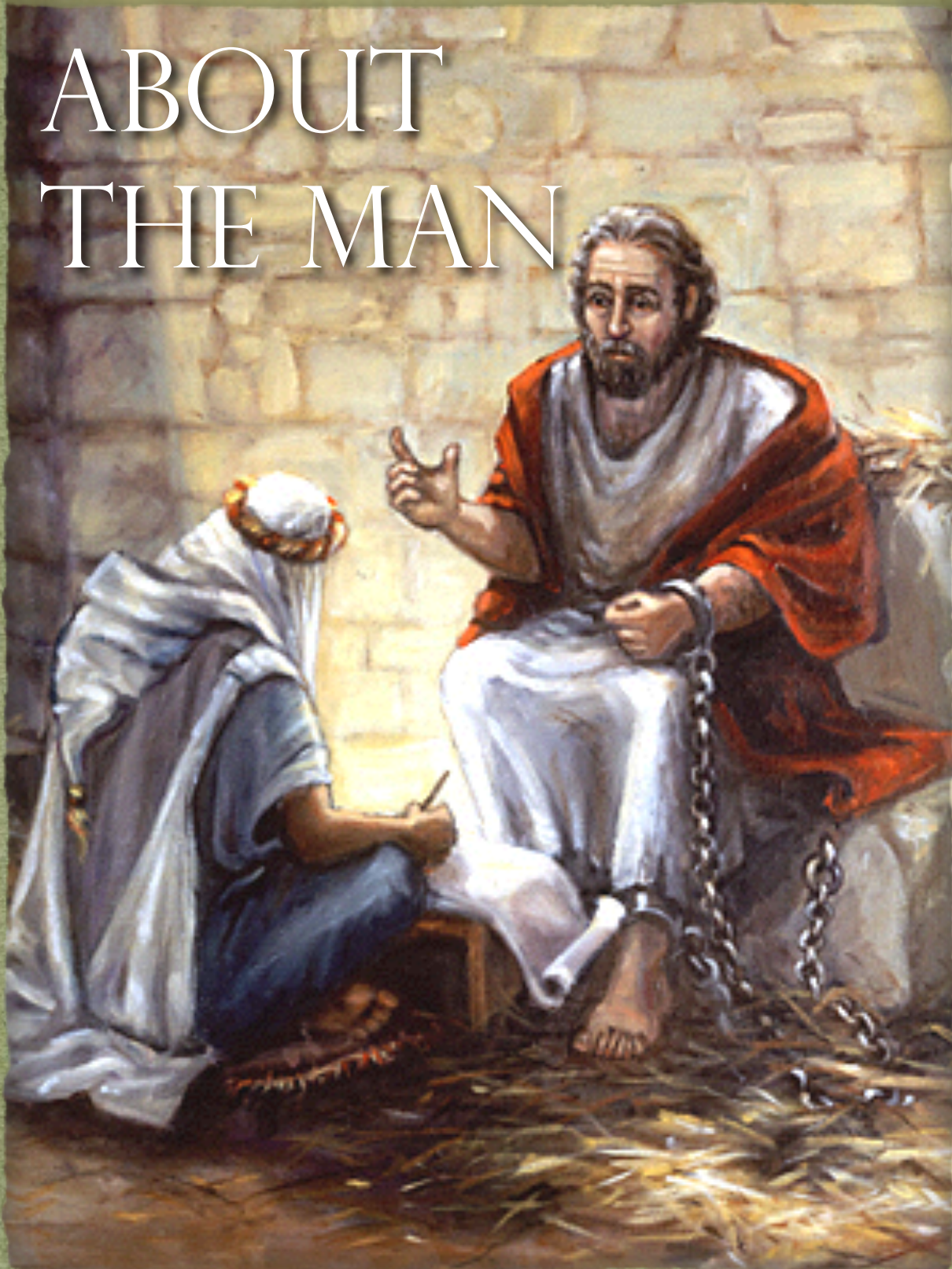
Epaphroditus (Ἐπαφροδίτον [*Epaphroditon*]). Common name, though only in Philippians in N.T., contracted into Epaphras, though not the same man as Epaphras in Col. 1:7.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Php 2:25). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

A MODEL SACRIFICIAL SERVANT:

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ABOUT THE MAN



➤ His name means ‘lovely’ -
‘comely’ or ‘charming’. -

Ēpaphrōditōs, *ep-af-rod'-ee-*
tos; from *1909* (in the sense of
devoted to) and Ἀφροδίτη
Aphrōditē (*Venus*);
Epaphroditus, a Chr.:—
Epaphroditus. comp. 1889.

Strong, J. (2009). *A Concise Dictionary
of the Words in the Greek Testament and
The Hebrew Bible* (Vol. 1, p. 30).
Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

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ABOUT THE MAN

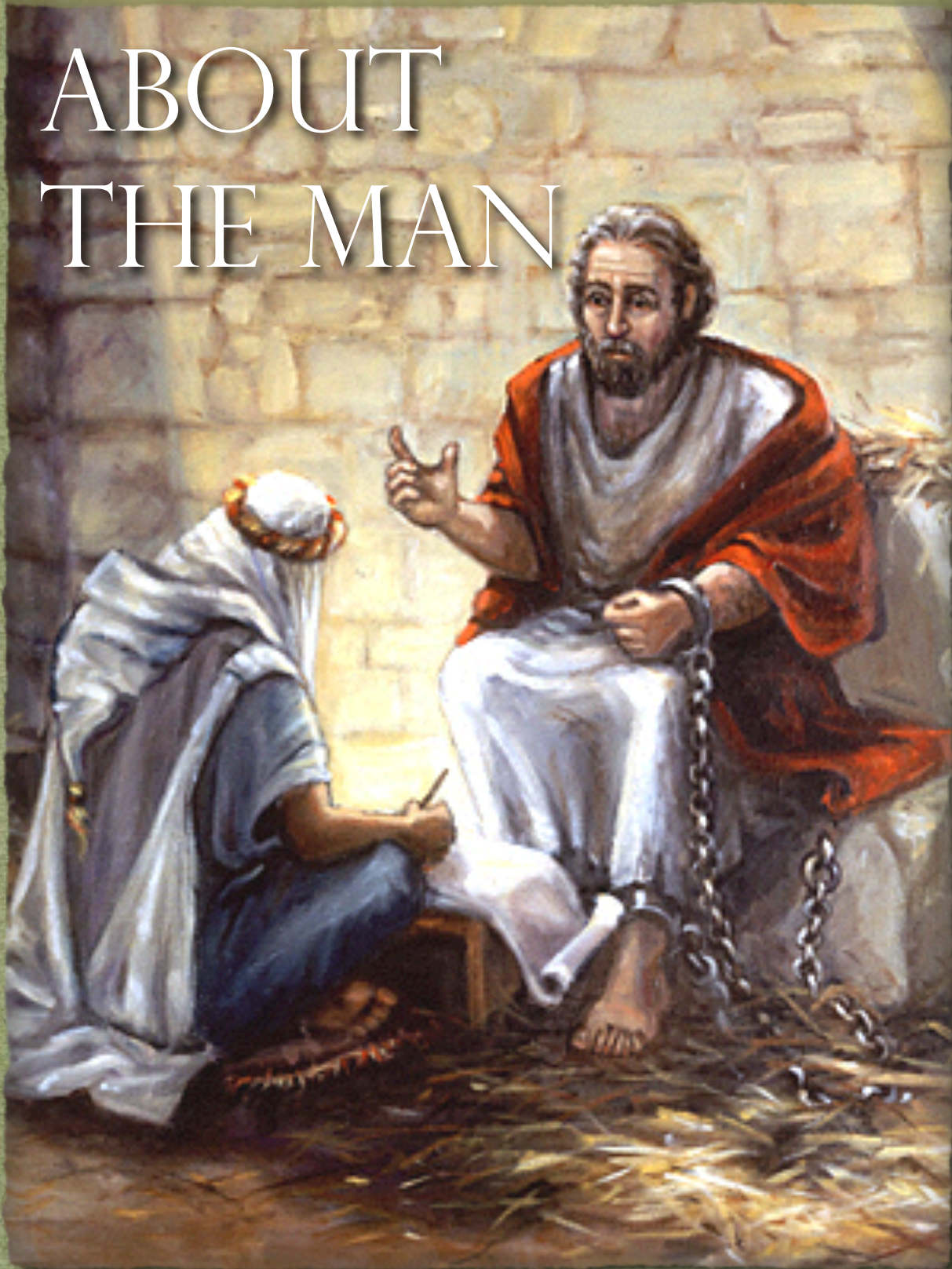


- More than likely had a pagan background.
- He was a faithful member of Lord's church in Philippi (*established on 2nd preaching journey* - cf. Act 16; Phil 2:25)
 - *They supported Paul financially — (Phil. 4:15)*
 - *Paul held them up as examples to others churches — (2 Cor. 8)*
 - *Epaphroditus carried the most recent gift 600 miles — (4:10, 18)*

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ABOUT THE MAN



- He was trustworthy - (*The Philippian church trusted him with their financial gift for Paul - 4:18*)
- He was dearly loved - (*by Paul & the church in Philippi — 2:26,27*)
- He was a hard worker - (*ministered to Paul's needs, almost worked himself to death for the Lord — 2:25,30*)
- He was brave & devoted - (*he risked his life for the cause of Christ in service to his brethren — 2:26,30*)

A MODEL SACRIFICIAL SERVANT:

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WAS PAUL'S
BROTHER.



Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ ...Epaphroditus, **my brother**,
fellow worker, and fellow
soldier, but your messenger
and the one who ministered
to my need;

- Brother (ἀδελφον [adelphon],
“a brotherly relation,”
 - *Same Father (1 John 3:1)*
 - *Same birth (Jn 3:3-5; Gal. 3:26-27)*
 - *Members of same family (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15)*
 - *Wear the same name (Acts 11:26)*
 - *Promised same inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3-4)*
- MY brother - *Indicates a special & personal affectionate bond - (2:27)*

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and the one who ministered
to my need;

- What if we SAW one another
as OUR brothers / sisters?
- We would put away malice or
bitterness & treat one another
with kindness, compassion &
forgiveness (Eph 4:31-32).
- We would put others before
ourselves (Phili 2:3-4).
- We would BE a friend who
“*loves at all times and a brother is
born for adversity*” – Prov 17:17 --
bearing one another’s burdens
(Galatians 6:2).

A MODEL SACRIFICIAL SERVANT:

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WAS PAUL'S
FELLOW
WORKER.




Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)
25 ...Epaphroditus, my brother,
fellow worker, and fellow
soldier, but your messenger
and the one who ministered
to my need;

- The word translated by “fellow worker” is “*sunergos*,” which refers to the exponential amount of work we accomplish working together — Eccl 4:9-12
- *Term Paul often used - (4:3; 2 Cor 8:23; 1 Thes 3:2; Phile 1,24; etc)*
- *Epaphroditus was not a pew-warmer, not a mere attender - he was a HARD worker - (2:12, 30)*
- *Epaphroditus was a ‘TEAM player’ - he worked WITH Paul - (cf 2:1-3; 14-16)*

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Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)
25 ...Epaphroditus, my brother,
fellow worker, and fellow
soldier, but your messenger
and the one who ministered
to my need;

- Christians are to be workers (Phili 2:12; 1 Cor. 15:58)
- We are to be FELLOW WORKERS! -
 - Every part (*person*) important! - *Rom 12:1-16; 1 Cor 12:12-13:13*)
 - Those who truly receive God's word will be "*equipped ... for the work of the ministry ... to the effective working by which every part does its share to the edifying of itself in love.*" — (*Eph 4:12-16*)

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- Christians are to be workers (Phili 2:12; 1 Cor. 15:58)
- We are to be FELLOW WORKERS! -
 - Consider the importance of the following passages in relation to our ability to “*work together.*” — Phili 2:1-4, 12-16; Eph 4:1-6; 1 Cor 1:10; 13:1-13; Col 3:12-16; Heb 10:23-25; Jam 3:13-18 ...
- What could we accomplish if we gave the same diligence & united effort many did in NT?

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WAS PAUL'S
FELLOW
SOLDIER.




Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)
25 ...Epaphroditus, my brother,
fellow worker, and fellow
soldier, but your messenger
and the one who ministered
to my need;

- “Metaphorically of one who endures hardship in the cause of Christ, 2 Tim. 2:3 ... Phil. 2:25 and Philem. 2 of fellowship in Christian service,” — *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
- This description takes us to yet an even higher level. Not only was Epaphroditus a fellow worker, he was a fellow soldier — he worked in the face of enemy fire with Paul. - (cf. Neh 4:17,18)
- A term of honor - Epaphroditus was a soldier worthy of honor!

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fellow worker, and fellow
soldier, but your messenger
and the one who ministered
to my need;

- Many Christians work until they find out folks in the world don't like what we are saying & doing. (Mat 13:20,21; 2 Tim 3:12)
- We are to be workers and soldiers — fighting the good fight, keeping the faith in the presence of opposition (cf. I Timothy 1:18; 6:12).
- We need to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:14-18) and step into the battle.

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Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)
25 ...Epaphroditus, my brother,
fellow worker, and fellow
soldier, but your messenger
and the one who ministered
to my need;

➤ We MUST

- *Contend for the faith - Jude 3,4; —*
- *Refuse to compromise “The Faith!”*
— 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Gal 2:5; 5:11,12
- *Mark those causing division,
identifying false teachers — Rom
16:17; Mat 18:17; 2 Thes 3:14*
- Sadly, some are good @ fighting,
each other - *Jam 4:1-4*
- Instead, we need to submit to
the Lord's teaching & be fellow
soldiers fighting against our
common enemy - Galatians 5:15

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BUT YOUR
MESSENGER



Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ ...Epaphroditus, my brother,
fellow worker, and fellow
soldier, **but your messenger**
and the one who ministered
to my need;

- From the Greek word for “apostle” i.e., “One sent on a mission, appointed to bear a message — a general term used to describe:
 - *Barnabas (Acts 14:14);*
 - *Timothy & Silas (1 Thess. 2:6);*
 - *Titus & brethren (2 Cor. 8:23);*
 - *Andronicus & Junia (Rm. 16:7)*
- Christ (Heb. 3:1) – One sent with authority
- The apostles of Christ - those chosen & sent by Him - Acts 2

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BUT YOUR
MESSENGER



Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)

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to my need;

- The trust the brethren in Philippi had in Epaphroditus is seen in that they chose him to bear their gift to Paul & minister to him — 4:18; cf. Prov 13:17; 26:6;
- If we want to be like Epaphroditus we need to be people who can be trusted — in order to be trusted in big things, we must be trustworthy in small things - Luke 16:10-12; Mat 25:21,23

A MODEL SACRIFICIAL SERVANT:

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BUT YOUR
MINISTER



Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ ...Epaphroditus, my brother,
fellow worker, and fellow
soldier, but your messenger
and **the one who ministered**
to my need;

- Minister doesn't mean preacher.
- The word translated here is not the commonly used term for minister (*diakonos*) but "*leitourgos*"
- Minister - *leitourgos* (λειτουργός, 3011) — denoted among the Greeks, firstly, "*one who discharged a public office at his own expense,*" then, in general, "*a public servant, minister. ... ministering to Paul's needs on behalf of the church at Philippi,. 2:25; representative service is in view;*" - *Vine's ...*

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BUT YOUR
MINISTER



Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ ...Epaphroditus, my brother,
fellow worker, and fellow
soldier, but your messenger
and **the one who ministered
to my need;**

- Epaphroditus was not merely a servant — He was a sacrificing servant - 2:3-5; Mt. 20:26-28)
- Are we sacrificing servants? Our worship and service to God called “sacrifices” - Heb 13:15,16
- Is it a sacrifice if it doesn’t cost us anything? - 1 Chron 21:24
- Let us NOT just count the things we are willing to “give up” to minister to others - let us ask ourselves what are we NOT willing to give up to minister to others - 2:30; Luke 9:23-26, 57-62

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PHILIPPIANS 2:29-30 (NKJV)

²⁹ Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; ³⁰ because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

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- Yes, we need elders preachers, & deacons - we need bible class teachers, song leaders, those who lead prayer, serve the Lord's supper, make announcements ...
- We also need those who serve behind the scenes - who prepare the Lord's supper, clean the building, upkeep on building, take care of the grounds, lock the building, record lessons, burn cd's, keep website updated, help & minister to the sick, ...

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- What we need is to emulate Epaphroditus - then all the things needed will be taken care of!
- *He was trustworthy - 4:18*
- *He loved others & was dearly loved - 2:26,27*
- *He was a hard worker — 2:25,30*
- *He was brave, devoted — 2:26,30*
- *He was a dear brother - 2:25*
- *He was a fellow worker - 2:25*
- *He was a fellow soldier - 2:25*

What an exemplary lifestyle for every believer to follow.

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➤ *Real, genuine joy can ONLY be found in real, genuine sacrificial service in God's cause ...*

- First must obey the gospel — Heb 5:8,9; Mk 16:16
- Growing in faith, diligently serving the Lord — 2 Pet 1:5-10
- Eternal joy awaits — (Rom 8:18; 1 Cor 15:58)

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PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20 (NKJV)

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20 (NKJV)

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. ¹⁵ Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. ¹⁸ Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.