Excellent Examples

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Date: 05 March 2025

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[0:00] So I want to introduce our study this evening by way of a question. Is there anybody here that can do something new with just the instructions, like no other help, just the instructions?

! Okay, okay, we got a few people. How many would do much better if they've got the instructions and then they've got an example with them, right? Most hands probably go up.
But, you know, it can be difficult if you get just one or the other, but if you've got instructions and an example, it's a lot easier to get the end result.
You show me what the end is supposed to look like, and I'll try to get there. I'll give you an example. So if you've ever been in choir before, if your director tells you to sing an A, then a B, and then a C, it's a lot harder than if they just demonstrated for you.
If they just sang it for you. I was playing football in high school. I remember this. And I remember the first time my linebacker coach told me, Kashawn, cover the flats. And I just looked at him and I was like, what are those?
[1:05] I have no idea what that is. And I would actually understand what that was the second that I watched another linebacker go cover the flats, right? Then everything clicked. Examples are helpful in pretty much every area of our lives.

And that includes our Christian walk. As a matter of fact, the Lord gives us many examples to imitate both in the Bible and currently. Now, not all of these people have the biggest platform or are talked about the most.
But the way they follow Jesus through the hills and valleys of life is worth looking at and imitating. Now, they may not even be making claims like Paul does in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 1, where he says, imitate me as I imitate Christ.
But their love for Jesus is hard not to notice and chase after. Now, in our text today, Paul is going to give us two men right in the middle of his letter to the Philippians that are excellent examples of a faithful Christian.
In just a few short verses, Paul will summarize the lives of these men as exceptional followers of Jesus worthy of our attention. So, let's dive in.
[2:19] Before I read our text, I want to give just a little bit of background. It's a little bit difficult to drop in right in the middle of a letter. So, when we look at the book of Philippians, Paul, the apostle Paul, is the author of this letter.

Now, he wrote to the church at Philippi. And this church began actually in Acts 16 with the conversion of three different people. And this particular church, this group of Christians, had grown to be a special group of people for Paul.
Paul wrote this letter from prison. And needless to say, as he's in prison, his conditions weren't that great. But he wanted to encourage them with this letter so bad that it's no trouble for him to sacrifice in this way.
It says in Philippians chapter 3, verse 1, Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble for me and is safe for you. This church had a special place in Paul's heart.
And I want to look, just turn your page over to chapter 1, and we'll see that just a little bit. In Philippians chapter 1, Paul starts off in verse 3. He says, Zoom into verse 7 with me.
[3:48] These were a special group of Christians to Paul.

Now, as we drop right into the middle of chapter 2, I want to point out that there's a small sort of formula that Paul gives in just this chapter alone.
Right? In verses 1 through 12, we see Paul give a command, and then he gives an example to follow. Right? If you look at verse 3 and 4, he says this.

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He says, Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Verse 3. And then he goes on to give an example in Jesus.
And I want to point out that that's exactly what Paul does later on in the chapter in the text that we're looking at. Right? Verse 14 and following in chapter 2. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent.
[4:58] Children of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked ingeneration, among whom you shine as lights in the world. Holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ, I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me.
Paul says not to grumble or fight. He says to shine as lights in the world and hold fast to God's word. Doing that, the church will make him proud.
And then Paul goes on to talk about two men who are doing just that. So let's look at one of them in Timothy. Verse 19 of chapter 2 and following. I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.
For I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth.
[6:07] How as a son with a father, he has served with me in the gospel. I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me. And I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

So this raises the question, if you've never heard of Timothy before, who is Timothy? Thankfully, Timothy is a character in the Bible that we know a good bit about. He was the son of a Greek man. He was converted at a young age after hearing the gospel faithfully from his mother and grandmother. Paul found him on one of his missionary journeys, and he sort of took him under his wing.
They developed a sort of discipleship relationship, and Timothy got a front row seat into the life and ministry of Paul. Timothy not only got to hear Paul's theology and his teaching, but he got to see a faithful Christian lived out in Paul's life.
And this relationship soon turned into a father-son bond that we'll talk about here shortly. Timothy and Paul ended up parting ways at various times because Paul needed him to serve in other churches.
[7:15] And Timothy was a gifted minister and pastor, and he was faithful to do whatever Paul needed. And what we know about him the most, especially as we're going through 2 Timothy and Sunday school, what we know about him the most is that he was the pastor at the church at Ephesus for quite some time.

And there he experienced the hills and valleys of ministry, and he persevered. Paul also wrote him a couple of personal letters to sort of encourage him to press on in the face of difficulty of being a pastor.
And he was actually a recipient of one of Paul's last letters that he would write in his life. He was Paul's protege, and he was Paul's successor in the faith. So let's zoom into what Paul says about him here.
He wants to send Timothy soon. Paul really wants to send Timothy quickly to the Philippians. And one reason why is that Timothy's faithful. He knew that if he assigned something to Timothy, Timothy was going to get it done.
And as I've taken several laps through this text and was studying it to preach, my mind went back to a story with me and my dad when I was growing up.
[8:28] So my dad was a hardworking man. He still is. And he took us various times to do a lot of manual labor. And I remember when I was about you guys' age, when I was getting to be a younger teenager and all that stuff, typically at that time you start doing some of the more hard chores.

You go from doing the dishes to mowing the lawn, picking up sticks outside, stuff like that. And I remember the first time that my dad told me, son, I want you to go mow the lawn. Right.
And I'm like, all right, got it. I don't remember if I'd ever seen him mow the lawn, but I looked at the mower, got it started, and I got working. And my dad never asked me to mow the lawn after that. Right. It was, it ended up being so atrocious that my dad didn't, we didn't even have a conversation about it. He was literally just like, I'm going to do it myself. And then my mom kind of came

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alongside me and was like, yeah, son, he doesn't like the way you mow.
And I was like, all right. Okay. So contrast that with Timothy, Paul knew that if he assigned something to Timothy, Timothy was going to get it done faithfully. Right. Paul knows that if he sends Timothy, Timothy is going to get there and encourage the Philippians, and he's going to bring back good news from them.
[9:33] So then in verse 20, Paul says something pretty interesting. He says, for I have no one like him. That's an interesting statement. Let's think about that for a sec.

Now, I don't believe that Paul was taking a shot at anyone else. I don't think that he's saying that Timothy is the only faithful Christian around him. I believe that Paul is trying to get at just how well Timothy is doing.
Um, what is Timothy excelling in? You ask? Well, as Paul goes on, he's genuinely concerned for the Philippians welfare as a pastor and a fellow Christian.
He wants another group of Christians to be well, and he wants them to finish their race strong. And notice this, Timothy's attitude leads to action.
His love for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ will lead him to sacrifice for them in any way that he can make note of that. And this isn't just a half-hearted, I'll pray for you, but he's willing to serve whatever they need so that they can love Jesus more.
[10:38] He's going to try and serve whatever need that they have in order to help them to follow Jesus. Paul goes on in verse 21, and he says, for they all seek their own interests.

And that raises a question of who is Paul talking about? Well, um, before in chapter one, Paul talks about these people who are preaching the gospel out of selfish ambition and conceit, right?
And he says that they are bringing, they're preaching the true gospel, but they're preaching it in a way so as to bring Paul down and raise themselves up higher. There's great jealousy in these men.
And Paul says at the end of that, even though Paul's in prison and he can't really do anything to engage with that, right? He says, it's okay. As long as the gospel is being proclaimed, I rejoice.
And that's where he goes on to say, for to live is Christ, to die is gain, right? So, um, it's possible that these are the people he's talking about, but it looks like in contrast to Timothy, regardless, there are lots of people who are more out there for themselves.
[11:43] And that's not what God calls us to do. Being out for oneself and only one's own interests is what unbelievers do. People are primarily served through sacrifice.

And if you decide not to help somebody every time it costs you, you probably won't help many people at all. And if you look closely though, you can see that Timothy's affections are ordered correctly.
He's concerned with other Christians because he's seeking Jesus Christ. Love for Jesus comes first. Also, the two can't be separated.
If you truly love God, you will love his people. Paul goes on in verse 22, talk about Timothy's proven worth. Timothy had a reputation for just being a faithful Christian.
Paul acknowledges that this worth has been proven, right? This wasn't a one-time thing. He didn't just write one book, speak at one conference or, or preach one sermon.
[12:48] This kind of reputation takes time to build. And then Paul goes on in that verse to talk about this sort of father-son relationship that him and Timothy shared. And this makes me think of two qualities that you could probably see in this.

The first is that the way Timothy ministered was probably pretty similar to Paul. And because he was trained by him. No doubt when even the Philippians saw Timothy ministering, they probably thought of Paul.
They're probably like, man, he looks like Paul. And the second is that while they work or while the work they did was similar, Timothy submitted to everything that Paul said.
Notice how confident Paul is in Timothy here. He wouldn't say he plans to send Timothy somewhere if he didn't have expectations that Timothy would be willing to follow. As a matter of fact, Timothy went a lot of places that Paul sent him and stayed as long as Paul needed.
To Timothy, serving God was the most important thing in his life, not his personal preferences.
Then Paul ends the section on Timothy in verses 23 and 24, saying that he wants to send Timothy to Philippi to help them out.
[14:03] But he needs to know how things will go with him first. Paul says also that if all goes well, he'll tag along. But Paul was still in prison, probably didn't know exactly how this trial was going to

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pan out.

So he's waiting until he sees a little bit more stuff and then he'll send Timothy. And a side note, Paul is confident that sending Timothy will be plenty for them.
That's how reliable and effective Timothy is. Then we see another character in verses 25 to 30. And I'll start in verse 25 and following. Paul says, I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier and your messenger and minister to my need.
For he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed, he was ill near to death. But God had mercy on him and not only on him, but on me also. Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again and that I may be less anxious. So receive him in the Lord with all joy and honor such men.
[15:17] Verse 30, For he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me. So let's talk about Epaphroditus.

There's not as much written about Epaphroditus as Timothy, but there's enough for us to get a clear picture of who he was and what kind of Christian he was. He was a faithful member of the church at Philippi.
As a matter of fact, they sent him to minister to Paul. And not only to minister to Paul, but they also had a gift that they wanted to send to Paul that he carried with them.
So starting in verse 25, I want to zoom in on the first three words that Paul uses to describe him. He starts off by saying, My brother.
And you guys know that our New Testament was not originally written in English. It was written in Greek. So if you want to know the exact meaning of the words, it's helpful to go back to the Greek and find out what word was actually used.
[16:21] Right. And the Greek definition of this word for brother says this. A fellow believer united to one another or united to another by the bond of affection.

I love that definition. Now, most of us in this room have siblings. And whether you get along with them or not all the time, you have a special love for them, probably. Even if you're the older sibling and pick on them, nobody else is allowed to do that.
Only you. There's a sort of protective instinct that kind of kicks in because you love them dearly. And as Christians, we understand that we are the family of God.
And some bonds between Christians are closer than that of blood. Proverbs 18.24 says that there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
And we use terms to refer to each other as Christians, like brother and sister, to acknowledge that. And that's absolutely true. But in the way that Paul says this, I think there's a little bit more.
[17:25] Notice that Paul says, my brother. Now, he's writing to a group of Christians. And arguably, these Christians probably knew Epaphroditus a little bit better than Paul did.

So, why wouldn't Paul say, our brother? Well, I think that Paul is using these first three titles to describe the sort of personal relationship that he had built with Epaphroditus over their time together.
And he uses the last two, messenger and minister, to verify to them that Epaphroditus did the job that he was sent for. Now, Paul didn't just see Epaphroditus as some staff member on his team, but they became close throughout their time in ministry together.
The relationship between brothers is a beautiful one. With the relationship between brothers, there's sacrifice. There's advice given, fellowship, there's laughter, and sometimes even tears shared.
All of these things serve to deepen the bond between them. This man that was sent to serve Paul's practical needs had become a deep friend throughout that time.
[18:36] So, Paul says, my brother. Then he uses another word, fellow worker. The Greek definition of this word is a companion in work.

Now, Paul's word choice here says something about him as well. He says, my fellow worker. He didn't just see himself as above other Christians that he was working alongside.
He wasn't a boss that just pointed to the right way, but he was doing the same work. Though he was an apostle, Paul calling Epaphroditus a fellow worker brought Paul down, and it brought Epaphroditus up.

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Paul is saying that this man the Philippians sent him was a hard worker. Like Timothy, Epaphroditus wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty, and he was willing to do whatever Paul needed.
He wasn't known as the guy that was always standing around waiting for someone to tell him what to do. He just got it done. Now, when you think about Epaphroditus, there isn't a formal office that he held in the church at Philippi, but some scholars describe the way that Epaphroditus behaved as having the qualities of a deacon.
[19:47] He loved God, and he loved God's people, and he just wanted to serve them. And I'm sure that during Epaphroditus' ministry with Paul, there were some things that they did that were more enjoyable than others.

But he was willing to do both joyfully, though, because he wanted to serve God's people. Could that be said about you? When doing ministry, do you find yourself grumbling at things?
Or are you excited to joyfully serve people? That's how Epaphroditus behaved. So Paul says, my brother, fellow worker. Then he says, fellow soldier.
And this is an interesting word. It's actually a compound word, literally, fellow soldier. Just one word. And the definition of this word I also really love. It says, an associate in labor and conflicts for the cause of Christ.
If you're taking notes, I'll repeat that again. This word for fellow soldier says, an associate in labor and conflicts for the cause of Christ.
[20:53] This is another word Paul uses to describe the sort of bond that he shares with Epaphroditus. And this is another unique kind of relationship. Now, I'm not ranking these relationships in any particular order.

And I don't think Paul is doing that either. I think he's just describing the sort of relationship he had with Epaphroditus. Now, throughout my life, I've heard different soldiers describe what it's like on the battlefield when you're fighting for your life.
And most of them is one common thread is how they describe their squad mates. There's they're always super close. And it's interesting. Two of the most different people that you could ever think of become the closest friends in battle.
There's just something about fighting a war with somebody that unites the two of you together. And back to the definition I gave, Paul and Epaphroditus shared in the work of the gospel.
But they also shared in the sufferings and the conflicts. They saw the highs and the lows together. And I don't think that I'm going beyond the text to assume that they both probably helped each other in those tough times and conflicts.
[22:05] That's what fellow soldiers do. So Paul uses these three words to describe just this immensely close relationship he has with Epaphroditus. And then he goes on to say, your messenger and minister to my need.

This is the reason why Epaphroditus was sent to Paul in the first place. He was supposed to give Paul an update on the church. Messenger, right? And let him know how they were doing.
And then minister, we know that learning about them brought joy and encouragement to Paul while he was working elsewhere. And we'll get to this shortly. But Paul was about 700 miles away from Philippi, right?
And the church wanted to do more for them. But there's only so much you can do from 700 miles away. So they sent to Epaphroditus. And his job was basically do whatever Paul needs.
They valued Paul and his ministry because, once again, Paul planted the church. And they wanted to do anything they could to help Paul do more. And Paul calls Epaphroditus, your messenger and minister, to tell them that he did everything that he was supposed to faithfully.
[23:18] And he exceeded expectations. And then Paul goes on. Verses 26 and 27. Paul tells us more about what happens with Epaphroditus. He's been longing to return to them because they heard that he got sick.

Apparently, sometime during Epaphroditus' ministry with Paul, he fell sick with something. And this almost killed him. And Paul gives us even more info.
Epaphroditus was also a bit stressed that the Philippians would be worried about him. And this probably didn't help his condition, right? Stress just kind of makes things worse.
And he ended up ultimately recovering. And he likely wanted to go back to Philippi. And Paul wanted to calm their worries. So it's a win-win. And Paul also adds that in sparing Epaphroditus, I'll read it for a sec.

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He says, Indeed, he was ill, near to death, but God had mercy on him. And not only on him, but on me also. Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. So Paul says that in sparing Epaphroditus, God's mercy was not just on Epaphroditus, but on Paul as well.
[24:29] We understand that when believers die, they go to be with the Lord. And we rejoice in that. But there's a real pain that comes in their absence. Losing Epaphroditus would have been hard on the Philippians, but on Paul as well.

Because they were close. Now, there's one more thing about the man's character here that can be easy to miss. Do you notice that while this man is on his potential deathbed, Epaphroditus' main concern wasn't for his own life.
But it was for the Philippians' worry. Just them being worried was more of a concern for him than even dying. Now, this is about the most selfless attitude you can imagine.
He's presumably about to die. And the main thing that upsets him is the stress, his situation, that once again is out of his control. The stress of the situation that puts on his friends.
Now, I don't know what all people back then could have called Epaphroditus, but they couldn't have called him selfish. And then Paul ends in 28 through 30, talking about how he's sending him back.
[25:37] Paul sends Epaphroditus back to Philippi so both he and the Philippians can relax. Can you imagine how you'd feel knowing that a friend of yours is about to die hundreds of miles away from you?

That person is so far away that you can't get to them or help in any way. You just have to wait. Wait. And that's what the Philippians felt with Epaphroditus. And Paul feels this on a spiritual level with the churches that he plants.
The Philippians weren't about to die or anything. But if something came up, Paul was too far away to interact. And on top of that, he was in prison. There wasn't much he could do. The most he could do was send a letter and Epaphroditus.
Now, Paul had been in ministry for a while. And in that time, you see all kinds of things. You see a person or a group of people show faith for a while and they fall away.
And that worry can stay on the mind for anybody. So hearing a good report from the Philippians could put Paul at ease, especially with him being in prison. Now, we know that at the beginning of the letter, Paul says that one of the reasons he's thankful for the Philippians is because they're pressing on.
[26:46] So they're encouraging him in the ministry. So. And Epaphroditus, when he goes back to Philippi, it may look like he's been shamefully discharged. He was in the battle and he got sick.

He got sent home. And it's possible some people would see him that way upon his return. But Paul actually tells them to do the exact opposite. They need to receive him with joy and honor him.
And why? It's because he nearly died to do the gospel work. The way that Paul describes this is beautiful. Epaphroditus almost died for the work of Christ.
His eyes the whole time, throughout this whole time, were on faithfully serving Jesus, even if it cost him his own life. His illness, in fact, was a direct result of him pouring himself out for Jesus.
May we be the same way. As a matter of fact, when I think about this, it reminds me of what Paul says before going to persecution in Jerusalem in Acts chapter 20, verse 24.
[27:54] He says this. Here we see two separate Christians that are like, if I lose my life, so be it.

Let the Lord be magnified. One commentator and theologian said it this way. It's better to burn out for Christ than to rust out. Now, Paul ends this section saying that Epaphroditus completed what was lacking in the Philippians service to him.
Now, once again, I don't think that Paul is taking a shot. He's not saying that the Philippians were failing in anything. But keep in mind again that Paul is over 700 miles away.
There's only so much you can do for someone that far away. The Philippians wanted to serve Paul more, so they sent a man to assist him, and he did his job. So we've looked at these two men, which raises the question, what do we do with these two men?
Now, I want to return back to a small structure that Paul has for chapter 2. Twice he gives a command and follows it with an example. At the beginning of the chapter, he says to be humble, and he talks about Jesus' humility.
[29:21] Now, let's look again at verses 14 and 15 for context in chapter 2. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation among whom you shine as lights in the world.

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Do all things without grumbling or disputing. Don't grumble or fight with each other. How do you do that? Look at these two men. Now, I want to take a few things these two men showed that hopefully we can apply today.
And the first one is a love for God. If you're taking notes, that's the first one. A love for God. Now, life functions correctly when things are in their proper order.
And life for the Christian must begin with a love for God. Jesus himself says that anyone who loves even their own family more than him is not worthy of him.
Now, it's not to say that you actually have to hate someone else to get this right. It means that in order to truly love everyone else, you have to love Jesus first.
[30:32] I'm going to give you a story about something that was really interesting to me. So my brother, as you know, is married to Joey's sister. And they're actually in their sixth year of marriage.

It's really good to see. And I love them both dearly. And there are two major things that I remember about my brother's wedding. The first is that it was incredibly hot and dry.
We're in like the middle of August, 105 heat index. And the church's AC went out, right? So we were literally just cooking in there. And all of us guys, we had suits on and all that stuff.
It was awful. The second thing that I remember the most about his wedding would be his vows. And as a matter of fact, they actually have both of their vows framed and put in their bedroom.
And it's really cool. So the way that my brother started his vows to his bride, he referred to her as Rachel, my second greatest love. Now, that sounds weird, doesn't it?
[31:32] To unbelievers, actually, and a lot of my family probably weren't, right? That sounds offensive, right? Isn't your wife supposed to be your first greatest love? And my brother wasn't making a practical statement.

He was making a theological statement. My brother understands that in order to truly love his wife the best that he can, he has to love Jesus first. And when we look at these two men, Timothy and Epaphroditus, these two men first experienced and they understood the love of God.
And in turn, they set out to love him for the rest of their lives. And it's their love for him that served as the motivation for all that they did, as Paul talks about. Now, do you love God this way?
Do you want to glorify him with everything you do? Or are you tempted to grumble and complain when things don't go your way? So, we see first, there's in these men a love for God.
Secondly, another thing that we see in these men is their service. Their service. One way our love for God is visible is through service.
[32:46] And that's exactly the way it was with these two men. Both Timothy and Epaphroditus loved God and they made it their aim to please him in everything that they did.

They were eager to do whatever they needed so that they could share that love with others. Now, they didn't just sit in their philosopher's chair pondering the love of God until they died.
But this truth led them to action. God's people needed things and the gospel needed to be shared. So, they were busy men. If they saw something that needed to be done or Paul told them to do something, they did it.
Now, does your love for God lead to service? How busy are you with serving others? So, we see first a love for God in these men.
We see their service. And then finally, we see their attitude. Their attitude. It is possible to do the right thing in the wrong way sometimes.
[33:49] We can be doing the right thing in serving. But if our attitude stinks, it can make the work ineffective. If I'm asked to lead a Bible study and the whole time I'm complaining about what passage I was assigned and I was unwilling to do any more to meet the needs of the people, would the people feel very served?

They feel very special or that someone actually wanted to serve them? If Epaphroditus spent most of his time with Paul complaining that his feet hurt after that 700-mile journey, or if Timothy kept telling Paul how much he just really didn't like the Ephesians, we'd be all right to raise an eyebrow. Something is off here. When we love God, that should flow out into a love of serving others. But that service should flow out of an aim to show the love of Jesus, not just to be comfortable.
If my biggest goal is my own convenience, I'm probably not going to be very busy, and I won't be very effective in the gospel. You see, serving others won't always be convenient.
But we put all of that aside so the needs of Christians would be met and Christ would be magnified. You guys who are going on the passion trip in a couple of weeks should listen in.

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[35:03] My biggest advice I can give you guys before you go on this trip is to be flexible. Ministry will stretch you, and things will not always go your way or as you expect.

Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty. If you make the reason you're going on that trip to love others because you love God, it will be a lot easier for you to joyfully serve.
So, how is your attitude when you serve? Are you quick to complain when details change? Or is your main goal to show the love of Jesus? So, as we close, there are a couple of things I'd like us to consider.
The Lord has been faithful to make sure that we know our job as Christians. He's given us the Bible in order to show us what He demands. We're given lots of clear commands on how to please Him. And that would be enough. But He doesn't stop there. He also gives us many examples of Christians throughout the Bible who put those instructions into practice for us.
[36:08] Examples like Timothy and Epaphroditus show us what it's like for the rubber to meet the road in the Christian life. Now, God has given us instructions and lots of examples to see how it's done.

And those examples don't just stop after the Bible was finished. In the church, there are plenty of faithful Christians older than us that show us what it looks like to be faithful to Jesus today.
One theologian puts it this way. When talking about discipleship, much Christian character is as much caught as it is taught.
That is, it is picked up by constant association with mature Christians. Modeling. Modeling. It takes place all the time, whether we take it into account or not.
You would be surprised at how much you learn by simply watching another Christian live their life for Jesus. Remember that Timothy, Epaphroditus, and all others are imperfect men who are serving a perfect God.
[37:15] Even Paul said that we are to imitate the only the things of Him that are like Jesus. And this leads us to a final question before we pray.

Could the way that Paul describes these men in Philippians chapter 2 be said of you? Are you genuinely concerned for a Christian's welfare?
Are you a brother, sister, fellow worker, and soldier? If you profess to love Jesus, are you living a life worthy of someone else following?
Let me pray for us. Father, I thank you for this day. Lord, I thank you for your word. And Lord, I thank you for the instructions that you have given us in your word so that we may know how to follow you.
That, Lord, you have not left us in the dark as to how to please you, but you've given us clear instructions. And not only that, Lord, but you have given us faithful examples, both in your word and even in our lives today that are worthy of our following.
[38:17] Lord, I ask that you help us to consider those people and that you help us to reflect on our own lives to consider if we are living lives worthy of that reflection. And Lord, I ask that if there's anyone in here that does not know you, Lord, that you would grant them faith and repentance, Lord, that you would press on them the weight of their sin and that you would save them.

Lord, I ask that as our students go to small groups, that their discussions would be fruitful and helpful and centered on your word. And Lord, I ask that you would just be glorified and you would make us a little bit more like you at the end of this day.
And it's in Christ's name that I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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