

PROVEN WORTHY

SEEKING THE INTERESTS OF JESUS CHRIST AND NOT OUR OWN ...



1. The true servant of Jesus is proved worthy relative to his commitment to and focus on the interests of Jesus Christ and his gospel, 2:19-22.

- (Philippians 2:19–22 ESV) I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. 20 **For I have no one like him**, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 **For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.** 22 **But you know Timothy's proven worth**, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.

A. Paul had no one as uniquely qualified and of proven worth like Timothy.

No one like ... ἰσόψυχος [isopsuchos] – like souled; equal in soul; having the same character, affections, and especially mindset as another.

To be like-souled means sharing a deep, kindred connection; thinking alike, holding similar core values having the same spiritual or emotional blueprint.

B. Timothy's proven worth was very evident among the people as he was someone who was tested, tried and true, dependable, genuine and approved.

Proven worth ... δόκιμος [dokimos] – approved, pleasing, acceptable; tested character; evidence, proof that something is genuine; of value, worthy.

C. Paul knew that Timothy would be genuinely concerned for their welfare because Timothy would above all seek the interests of Jesus Christ.

We obey Scripture in seeking the interests of others by first seeking the interests of Christ.

- (Philippians 2:3–4 ESV) **Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit**, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 **Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

D. Some seek their own interests while seemingly being genuinely concerned for the welfare of the people.

- (Philippians 1:17a ESV) **The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition.**

E. Our Watershed Decision: Do we seek the interests of Jesus Christ or do we seek our own interests?

A watershed (figurative meaning) ... a major historical or personal moment, a turning point, that creates a clear dividing line and change of direction effecting how a person thinks and acts.

The person who is genuinely concerned for the eternal welfare of others must consistently put his own interests aside or he will falter and choose his own life over Jesus Christ and others when trouble comes.

- (Luke 9:23–24 ESV) And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, **let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.** 24 **For whoever would save his life will lose it**, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

F. We are only able to seek the interests of Jesus Christ with our minds set firmly on the things above.

- (Colossians 3:1–3 ESV) If then you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.** 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

G. Example: It would seem that Peter was seeking the interests of Jesus but he was in fact helping Satan because his mind was not set on the things of God.

- (Matthew 16:21–23 ESV) From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 **And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him**, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” 23 **But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”**

2. Uncovering the reality of whose approval we are actually intent on seeking (God's or other people's) is a true watershed moment of discovery.

This gives us great clarity in determining if we are, in fact, proving worthy in serving Jesus or instead we find that we are merely pretending to serve Jesus and others while in reality only serving ourselves.

- (Galatians 1:10 ESV) **For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man?** If I were still **trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.**
- (1 Thessalonians 2:4 ESV) But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, **so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.**

Excursus: Other texts that show why Paul was so confident that Timothy was like-souled to him ...

I. Timothy had traveled to various cities and observed Paul's commitment to oversee the churches.

- (Acts 16:1–2, 4 ESV) Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. ... 4 As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem.

II. Timothy could remind people specifically from firsthand experience of the ways of Paul.

- (1 Corinthians 4:15–17 ESV) For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me. 17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

III. Timothy did the work of the Lord as Paul did.

- (1 Corinthians 16:10 ESV) When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am.

IV. Timothy had a firm, resolute commitment to God's faithfulness in his word as Paul did.

- (2 Corinthians 1:18–19 ESV) As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes.

V. Timothy was able to establish and exhort people in their faith.

- (1 Thessalonians 3:2 ESV) And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith.

VI. Timothy was a trustworthy, well-informed messenger of necessary news.

- (1 Thessalonians 3:6–8 ESV) But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— 7 for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. 8 For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord.

VII. Timothy was Paul's child in the faith.

- (1 Timothy 1:2 ESV) To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

VIII. Timothy was entrusted with waging the good warfare by holding faith with a good conscience.

- (1 Timothy 1:18–19a ESV) This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 holding faith and a good conscience.

IX. Timothy was entrusted to guard the truth of God.

- (1 Timothy 6:20–21 ESV) O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called "knowledge," 21 for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you.

X. Timothy's service and character were a result of his obedient, faithful endurance in the interests of Jesus.

- (2 Corinthians 2:9 ESV) For this is why I wrote, that I might test you [δοκιμή - dokime] and know whether you are obedient in everything.
- (Romans 5:3–5 ESV) Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character [δοκιμή - dokime], and character [δοκιμή - dokime] produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

–END EXCURSUS–

3. The true servant of Jesus has been proved worthy as a messenger and one who ministers to the heart needs of his brothers and fellow workers and fellow soldiers in Christ, 2:23-28.

- (Philippians 2:23–28 ESV) I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, 24 and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also. 25 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, 26 for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. 27 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. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious.

4. These true servants of Jesus who have proved worthy should be honored and received in the Lord with all joy, 2:29-30.

- (Philippians 2:29–30 ESV) So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, 30 for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.
- A. Being received with joy and honor is what is appropriate for those workers who are proven worthy.
- B. But that is often not the case as Scripture reveals that the people of God have for centuries rejected and killed the messengers of God.
- (Matthew 23:37 ESV) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!
 - (John 5:39–40 ESV) You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

C. Jesus promises such an exultant blessing for those who maintain his interests above all else ... that we should leap for joy when hated, excluded, reviled and had our names dragged through the mud because of him.

- (Luke 6:22–23 ESV) Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

CONCLUSION: It matters ...

- I. There is a heaven versus hell divide between those who have faith and are proved worthy and those who only pretend and are subject to judgment.
- II. Those who seek first the interests of Jesus Christ are proved worthy as they press on in faithful service no matter the cost.
 - (Philippians 3:14–15 ESV) I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.
- III. Those who look out for their own interests primarily will be satisfied with less than God offers.
- IV. Those who have this attitude may one day find themselves outside the kingdom of God.