Profiles in Faithfulness

Philippians 2:19-30

Pastor Ron Prosise
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Shepherd's Community Church

Timothy: The Kindred Spirit (2:19-24)

(Acts 14:6-40; 16:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:16-17; 11:1; Philippians 1:17; 2:2-5; 4:6)

Epaphroditus: The Risk Taker (2:25-30)

(Philippians 1:27; 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:2; Galatians 1:1; Matthew 26:38; Philippians 1:21; 2:3-4; 1 Samuel 2:30)

A Man After God's Own Heart

You may be familiar with the saying that "every journey of thousand miles begins with a first step." Well, my first step toward growing in godliness and discovering my spiritual gifts was service. As I've already shared with you, when I finally got serious about being a Christian and became actively involved in my local church, I didn't have a clue what it meant to be a leader (and at that point in time, it didn't matter!). I was just happy to be back in the center of God's will, back at church, back with God's people, and back in God's Word. I was thrilled at the prospect of serving in any capacity in my church, so I made myself available for any and every opportunity to serve.

While serving, I was also growing spiritually. I attended church regularly, I sought out godly men to disciple me, I attended Bible training seminars, and I read my Bible and studied it diligently. I didn't understand much about spiritual gifts, ministry, or leadership. I just wanted to be faithful in what little I did understand. It was in the process of faithfully *serving* in my church that God gave me the privilege of *serving as a leader* in my church.

Like me, you might not be able to do much in the beginning. And, like me, you might not be quite sure what your spiritual gifts are. (In fact, you may sometimes wonder if God forgot to give a spiritual gift to you!) But God *has* gifted you, and you can begin making use of that giftedness by...

~ serving faithfully where you are (1 Corinthians 4:2),
~ continuing to grow spiritually (2 Peter 3:18),
~ accepting greater challenges of service as God blesses you,
~ aspiring to leadership (1 Timothy 3:1), and
~ desiring to be godly (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9).

The journey is yours. You can choose to take the "high road"—the road of challenge and discipline and growth...or you can choose to take the "low road"—the road of nonchalance and ease and selfishness and mediocrity. But I guarantee you that choosing to journey on the high road of eagerly aspiring to godliness and leadership will bring far greater results and blessing to you and your family. Taking the high road does not promise that you will become a leader. But that's OK, for you will still have grown and matured and excelled simply because you aimed high. And, my friend, taking that road will mark you as a man after God's own heart.

If you feel uncertain about whether you can handle the journey, remember, as we learned earlier, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a first step. And a journey continues at only one step at a time - that is, at a pace that is realistic and manageable. All that's necessary is that we make sure we're headed in the right direction...and we can be sure that God will give us the stamina and strength for every step along the way.

Jim George, *A Man After God's Own Heart,* 173-5