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## I Hope to Send Timothy Soon 2: 19-24

I hope to send Timothy soon DIG: If you had to give a character reference to Timothy, what would you say? How does he model 2:1-4? What of the Philippians problems (1:17, 2:3, 3:2, and 4:3) would he be suited to deal with? Why did Paul say that no one compared with Timothy? What does Paul say about his plans to visit the church at Phillipi? How were the Philippians already familiar with Timothy?

**REFLECTION:** Who are some models of humility and service you can look up to today? How do they challenge you to grow? Who are you encouraging about the way God is using them in your life? Do you have a genuine concern for the spiritual well-being of others? If not, why not? Who have you discipled? Who are you currently discipling? How many spiritual children do you have?

**Paul didn't have to convince the Philippians about Timothy, because they knew his proven worth.**



After **Messiah** (**to see link click [Au](#) - To Model the Messiah**), **Timothy** was the second model of a spiritual servant. That's why **Paul** wanted to **send him (2:20)**. **Paul** probably met **Timothy** on **his first missionary journey** (see **[Acts Bm](#) - [Paul's First Missionary Journey](#)**), where **he** was saved as a young man (**First**

**Corinthians 4:17**). Apparently **Timothy's** mother and grandmother had been saved first (**Second Timothy 1:5**). He was **the son of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father**, but **Paul** always considered **the young man his own dearly beloved son in the faith** (**Second Timothy 1:2**). When **Paul** returned to **Derbe** and **Lystra** while on **his second missionary journey** (see **Acts Bu - Paul's Second Missionary Journey**), the apostle enlisted young **Timothy** as one of his fellow laborers (**Acts 16:1-4**). In one sense, **Timothy** replaced **John Mark**, whom **Paul** had refused to take along on **the journey** because **Mark had deserted the apostle in Pamphylia, not accompanying them in the work of evangelism** (see **Acts Bv - Disagreement between Paul and Barnabas**).<sup>101</sup>

**But I hope in the Lord Yeshua to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by knowing how you are doing (2:19a CJB)**. The “**but**” at the beginning of this verse signals a transition to a new section of the letter (see **Bb - The Examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus**). In it, **Paul** focuses on his plans for the immediate future. Because **he** remains a prisoner, he states: **I hope in the Lord Yeshua to send Timothy to you soon**. Even in this seemingly mundane matter, **Paul** has **Messiah** as **his** focus; **his hope is in the Lord Yeshua**. At this point in **his** life, **Paul** knows full well that it is **the Lord Yeshua** who controls his every step, and reserves the right to change **his** plans. Indeed, it was just such a change of plans that led **Paul** to **Philippi** in the first place (see **Acts Bx - Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia**). However, **Paul** could not send **Timothy** until the status of **his** own legal proceedings were resolved (**2:23**). Once that became clear, **the apostle** hoped to send **Timothy** and would soon follow **him** on to **Philippi (2:24)**.

The purpose for sending **Timothy** soon is stated in the following clause: **so that I too may be cheered by knowing how you are doing (2:19b CJB)**. Even in the midst of **his** own difficult circumstances, **Paul** remained focused on the welfare of **the Philippians**. In **his** letters **he** repeatedly mentioned **concern** for the various churches **he** had founded (**2 Corinthians 11:28; Galatians 4:11-20; First Thessalonians 3:10**), and now that he was under house arrest, he needed even more than ever to rely on others to handle the various challenges facing those churches. **Paul** expected to be greatly encouraged when **Timothy** reported back to **him**.

For us today, **Paul** provides a helpful reminder of submitting even the most mundane aspects of our planning to **the Lord**. This means more than simply adding “**Lord willing**” to our conversations. It entails action that is preceded by prayer and a

willingness to change course when **ADONAI** redirect us. This verse also speaks to the value of encouragement. The apostle had spoken of the possibility of **laboring in vain (2:16)**, and as **he** sat under house arrest in Rome **his** thoughts naturally turned to the fledgling churches scattered throughout the Mediterranean area. **He** knew the good it would do to hear how **the Philippians** were **doing**. The same is true for us today. Few things encourage us more than hearing about the fruit of our spiritual gifts. In **Paul's** day it was far more difficult to receive up-to-date information. Given the distance, by the time **Timothy** would return from **Philippi**, circumstances in the church could have completely changed. But there is no excuse in today's world, with the possibility of instant communication, for not taking the time to encourage fellow believers about the way **ADONAI** is using them in our lives.<sup>102</sup>

Because **Paul** wanted **the Philippians** to accept **Timothy** without hesitation, **he** gave them a brief profile of that dedicated **servant of Yeshua Messiah** in **verses 20 to 24**. **The apostle** highlighted **seven personal characteristics** for **the Philippians** to emulate.

**1. Timothy's** spiritual character was similar to that of **Paul's**. **The apostle** said of **his** young disciple: **I have no one who compares with him** (Greek: *isopsuchos*, meaning *a kindred spirit* or *like-minded*). Even though **he** had been instructed in the scriptures from childhood by **his** mother and grandmother, **Timothy's** greatest spiritual growth began when **he** started traveling and ministering with **Paul**. Except for **the Lord Yeshua Messiah Himself**, there has never been a spiritual mentor on par with **Paul**. **Timothy** had the unique and enviable privilege of being **the apostle's** protégé (**2:20a NASB**). The goal of true discipleship is reproduction; when a person is fully discipled, **Yeshua** said, **they** will **be like their teacher (Matthew 10:25)**. Over time, **Timothy** came to think like **Paul**, relate to believers and unbelievers like **Paul**, evaluate ideas and situations like **Paul**, trust in **the Lord** like **Paul**, and pray like **Paul**. **They** had similar qualities of the soul, similar passions, similar objectives, and similar zeal. So until **Paul** could return to **Philippi**, **Timothy** was by far **his** best substitute.

**2. Timothy** also had the virtue of being sympathetic. With the utmost confidence, **Paul** could assure **the Philippians** that **Timothy** would **genuinely be concerned for care for [their] welfare (2:20b NASB)**. The verb **concerned for** (Greek: *merimnao*) expresses a strong feeling for something or someone, often to the point of being burdened. **Yeshua** used the verb to speak of needless **anxiety** and **worry (Matthew 6:25-28 and 10:19; Luke 10:41)**. And later in **Philippians**, it is related

to **anxious (4:6)**. But here, **Paul** uses it in a positive sense to describe **Timothy's** great **concern** for the **welfare of the Philippian** church. Like **his Lord, Paul** had a constant **concern for all the churches** he had founded (**Second Corinthians 11:28**), and was confident that **Timothy** shared that **concern**. **They** were both true shepherds.<sup>103</sup>

Genuine **concern** for the spiritual health of fellow believers is a tangible demonstration of **Messiah**-like behavior. By describing **Timothy** in this way, **Paul** is presenting **him** as an example of the kind of **concern** for others that motivated **Messiah** to take on human flesh to ransom us from our sin nature (see **Av - Obedient to Death**). **Timothy** is an example of the mindset that thinks more highly of others and looks out for their **concerns** (see **Au - To Model the Messiah**). As such, **Timothy** is a sharp contrast to his critics who preached **Messiah** out of selfish ambition (see **Ap - Paul's Critics**).<sup>104</sup>

**3. The apostle** characterized **Timothy** as being single-minded, stated here indirectly by **contrasting him with the self-centered, loveless attitude of the leaders of the church in Rome**. It must have grieved **Paul** to have to say of **them** that **they all seek after their own interests, not those of Yeshua Messiah (2:21 NASB)**. Although the Gospel was being preached, it was sometimes proclaimed out of **envy, strife, and selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives (1:15a and 17)**. It seems that those who preached out of **good will and love (1:15b-16)** were either gone or silent. In **Paul's** absence, many preachers had become worldly and self-centered. **They** were not apostate or heretical, but obviously had left their **first love** for **Messiah** (see the commentary on **Revelation Az - The Church at Ephesus**). Unlike **Timothy**, **they** were no longer single-minded, but had become **double-minded**, and therefore, **unstable in all their ways (James 1:8)**. The few faithful men with **Paul** in Rome, such as **Luke** and **Aristarchus (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24)**, were evidently not available to travel to **Philippi**. **The apostle** was down to **his** last reliable coworker and **Paul** needed **his** help a while longer; faithful **Timothy** was the lone single-minded exception in Rome (**2:13**).<sup>105</sup> By **his** genuine **concern** for **the Philippians**, **Timothy** was a living example of **Yeshua Messiah Himself**.

It is a simple, but profound contrast. Being genuinely concerned about others is easy when it causes no personal inconvenience. But the true test is when genuine **concern** means sacrificing one's own interests for the sake of others. Such genuine **concern** for others is at the same time; generally, a **concern** for the things of

**Yeshua Messiah.** We must not miss the theological connection here. When we, as believers, show genuine **concern** for fellow members of the body of **Messiah**, we are in fact, seeking the interests of **Yeshua Messiah**. **The Master Himself** says as much in **Matthew 25:35-40**.<sup>106</sup>

**4. Paul** didn't have to convince **the Philippians** about **Timothy** because **they knew his proven worth** (Greek: *dokimen*, which has the basic meaning of *proof after testing*). Used by a person, *dokimen* describes proven character or tested value. **(2:22a Greek).** **Paul** used the verb form numerous times when he encouraged believers to **prove** (Greek: *dokimizein*) **what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2)**, and to **examine** (Greek: *dokimazeto*) **themselves (First Corinthians 11:28; cf. Second Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 6:4).** **Timothy** had been tested many times in **his** service to **the Lord**. When agitators from **Thessalonica** forced **Paul** to leave **Berea**, **Timothy** and **Silas** were entrusted to remain in **the city** to carry on the work there **(Acts 17:14)**. Similarly, **after Paul had passed through Macedonia and Achaia . . . the apostle sent Timothy and Erastus, who had ministered to him, into Macedonia (Acts 19:21-22)**. A short time later, **Timothy** accompanied **Paul** and others when **they** returned to **Macedonia (Acts 20:3-4)**, of which **Philippi** was a key city. As a result, the church at **Philippi** was well acquainted with **Timothy** and had actually benefited from **his** faithful service for many years.

**5.** Like **Paul**, whom **Timothy served with**, the young man was submissive to **Messiah**. The word **served** (Greek: *douleuo*) is one of the most common verbs used in the B'rit Chadashah for service to **the Lord (Acts 20:19; Romans 12:11 and 14:18; Colossians 3:24)**, and is related to the word **servant** (Greek: *doulos*). It is important to note that **Paul** is not speaking of **Timothy's** personal service to **him**, although that was considerable. **He** makes it clear that this particular **service** was not to **him**, but **with him**. **Paul** was clearly **his** senior and **Timothy** was the respectful junior. Yet the two men were **bond-servants of Yeshua Messiah (1:1a)**, doing **the Lord's work together (First Corinthians 16:10)**.<sup>107</sup>

**6. Paul** then summarized what **the Philippians** had already observed about **Timothy: he served with me like a child with his father (2:22b Greek)**. The parent-child imagery is common in **Paul's** letters to speak of **his** relationship with **his** converts **(First Corinthians 4:14; Galatians 4:19; First Thessalonians 2:7-12)**. But even noting such a fact, one cannot help but notice that **Paul** holds a special place for **Timothy**. In both of **his** personal letters to **Timothy**, **Paul** refers

to **him** as **his son** (**First Timothy 1:2** and **18**; **Second Timothy 1:2**). And **his** fondness for **Timothy** is evident in this section of **Philippians**.

By the time **Paul** wrote to **the Philippians**, **Timothy** had been a ministry partner and close friend for over a decade. **Timothy** had observed **Paul's** life and ministry closely (**Second Timothy 3:10**), and **Paul** had seen first-hand how **Timothy** had grown in **his** own devotion to **Messiah**. The imagery used here further suggests the notion of an apprenticeship. In the ancient world a son would work in the same trade as his father, learning side-by-side with him as he watched his dad apply his craft. Such was the case with **Timothy**; **he** had been an apprentice to **Paul**, working alongside **him to advance the Good News (2:22c Greek)**. Thus, for **Paul**, the “family business” was the advancement of **the Gospel**, and **Timothy** had proven to be a worthy son capable of active participation in **his** spiritual father's trade.

The imagery of this verse highlights the importance of discipleship and training in ministry and the life of a believer. **Yeshua Himself** modeled this sort of ministry with the twelve apostles. Although we cannot imitate everything **Messiah** did in ministry, those involved in ministry should be actively identifying those whom they can train. But such training goes well beyond the mechanics of ministry. What **Paul** models for us here is the sharing of **his** life with **Timothy**. Because of that shared life, **Paul** not only knew **Timothy's** ministry skills, but **his** proven character as well. Such mentoring/discipleship is sadly all too rare in the congregations of **God** (see my website [jaymack.net](http://jaymack.net), go to English, then see **Discipleship** at the lower left of the other books). It requires hard work and dedication. And perhaps even more frightening, it requires honesty and openness on the part of the person doing the mentoring/discipleship. Those who disciple others must be honest about their own struggles and challenges if they are to truly equip someone else **to advance the Good News**.<sup>108</sup>

**7.** Having finished **his** description of **Timothy**, **Paul** now returns to **his** plans, with **verse 23** focusing on **Timothy** and **verse 24** focusing on **himself**. **Timothy** was so highly qualified for ministry, **Paul** could affirm without hesitation: **Therefore, I hope to send [Timothy] soon**. Qualifying **soon**, the apostle explained that first **he** wanted to **see how things will go with me (2:23 Greek)**. As noted in the discussion in **2:21**, **Paul** needed **Timothy's** help a while longer in Rome. The context makes it clear that **Timothy** was willing to do what **Paul** asked of **him**. **He** had no agenda of **his** own. For **him**, being available to **the Lord** essentially meant being serviceable to **ADONAI's apostle**. **His** staying or leaving was entirely **Paul's**

decision, not **his** own. It must have been challenging for this intelligent, energetic, talented, and gifted **young man** to be constantly serving relationships with family, friends, and fellow workers. For most people, especially those with **his** capabilities, it would be all but unthinkable to be at someone else's beck-and-call. But **Timothy** was just that sort of willing, dependable, and joyful **servant** of **Paul** in **their** mutual service of **Yeshua Messiah**. **He** was ready to spend and be spent as seemed best to **his** beloved **friend** and **apostle**.

Then **Paul** added: **I am confident in the Lord that before long I myself will come too (2:24 CJB)**. **He** did not minimize the value **he** could be to the church at **Philippi** by ministering to **them** in person. Whether or not **he** did, however, it is clear that **he** had the utmost confidence in **Timothy**. Now it wasn't that **Timothy** didn't have any human frailties. Despite **his** divine calling and spiritual gifts (**First Timothy 4:14**), **he** apparently lacked self-confidence because of **his** **youthfulness (First Timothy 4:12)**. **He** was tempted by **youthful** passions. In **his** second letter to **him**, the **apostle** warned: **If anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (Second Timothy 2:21-22)**. Apparently, **Timothy** was then at a low point in **his** personal life and ministry. **He** had victories and defeats, satisfaction and disappointment, happiness and sadness. But **he** listened to **Paul's** counsel: **Continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them . . . Preach the word: be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction . . . Be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry (Second Timothy 3:14 and 4:2 and 5)**.<sup>109</sup>

This inclusion of **2:24** into **his** letter has the effect of encompassing all of **Paul's** plans within the sphere of **ADONAI's** will and not merely **the apostle's** own desires. Even if **Paul** was waiting for the outcome of **his** trial, once the verdict came in **he** could choose to send **Timothy** to **Philippi** while **he** remained behind to tie up any final matters before departing to **Philippi himself**. In any case **Paul** gives the impression that **he** anticipates an acquittal that would allow **him** to leave Rome for **Philippi** in the not-too-distant future.<sup>110</sup>

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for being so wonderful and wise, caring so much for me! Sometimes I get frustrated to have my plans cancelled or changed, but when I focus on **Your** almighty power and steadfast love, I can relax and trust that*

**You** have my life in **Your** hands, and **all things** (even my **trials** will eventually) **work together for my good (Romans 8:28). These trials are so that the true metal of your faith (far more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire) may come to light in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Messiah Yeshua (First Peter 1:7). Paul** did not complain when **his** plans got rearranged when **he** was under house arrest. Neither should I complain when my plans get changed or rearranged. Thank you for preparing **Timothy** for **Paul** to send to **the Philippians. You** have prepared **Timothy** beforehand so that **he** would be like **Paul's** right hand – like a true son in the faith. Nothing is too difficult for **You. You** plan ahead for circumstances that seem changed or altered to me, but they turn out to be just what is needed to bring glory to your name. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen.