

Crossword Puzzle

2-6

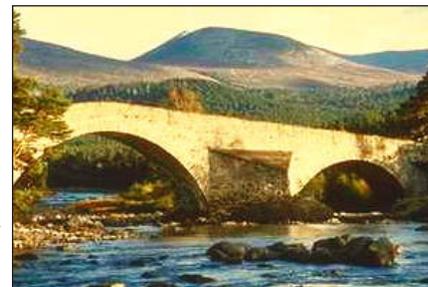
The Character of God's People

- Lesson Eight -

Ardent - Stirred to Action Seen in the Life of Epaphroditus

I. Overview.

Last week's lesson was on having the character trait "affectionate". This week we will look at what it means to be ardent. These two traits are related to one another. Whereas being affectionate is to be full of love and care for others, being ardent goes even further. To be ardent means that our love and care for others has stirred us to take action.



Epaphroditus was stirred to take action by his love for the saints.

In this lesson we will look at the apostle Paul's young helper Epaphroditus. Not only did he care for Paul and for the believers in Phillipi very much, he did whatever he could to take care of them and to minister his love to them. He even risked his own life to serve others. He was striving with his entire being to make sure that the apostle Paul was taken care of and that the church in Phillipi participated in God's work.

II. Memory Verse.

"I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker... and your apostle and minister to my need."

(Phil. 2:25)

Across

Down



Parents Initials:

III. Lesson.

Epaphroditus was a young helper of the apostle Paul. Paul had nearly given his life to establish the church in Phillipi. He had been beaten severely and thrown into an inner prison. In the beginning the church in Phillipi was able to care for Paul in a good way. But later it was more difficult. That is when Epaphroditus was stirred by his love for Paul, and for the church in Phillipi, to do something to help. This demonstrated his excellent character trait of being ardent.



Epaphroditus helped the Phillipian believer's love for Paul to "blossom anew".

Epaphroditus Ministers to Paul

The church in Phillipi took care of Paul's need not only when he was in Phillipi, but also after he left. They sent him supplies of things that he needed. In this way the believers in Phillipi directly participated in God's work and move.

Later a time came when the church in Phillipi did not have the opportunity to send things to Paul and he became in want. No other church was caring for Paul's needs so that the ministry could continue. This situation stirred Epaphroditus into action. He cared very much for Paul and for God's move. He also loved and cared for the believers in Phillipi very much. He was not going to just sit back and do nothing.

Epaphroditus Goes to Phillipi

Epaphroditus was ardent. He was stirred to go to Phillipi and give them the way to continue to minister to Paul and participate again in God's work. The believers there did not have the way, probably not even knowing where Paul was. Epaphroditus went to Phillipi and told them all about what Paul was

doing and where he was. The church rejoiced to see him and hear about Paul. They sent Epaphroditus back to Paul with a rich material supply to take care of his needs. This probably happened several times.

Paul called Epaphroditus "your apostle" because he was one who was sent from Paul to the Phillipians. He also called him "your minister to my need" because he allowed the Phillipians to show their love and care for the apostle Paul, even when he was in prison. Because of Epaphroditus being ardent, God's work was able to continue and the church in Phillipi was able to participate. It is easy to see how God made use of such a

--- Questions for Discussion ---

1. What does it mean to be ardent?

2. Why did Epaphroditus go to Phillipi and return to the apostle Paul?

3. How did the church in Phillipi participate in God's move?

4. Who established the church in Phillipi?"?

