

Philippians 4:10-20

10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at lengthyou have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.

11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to becontent.

12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty andhunger, abundance andneed.

13 I can do all thingsthrough him who strengthens me.

14 Yet it was kind of youto share my trouble.

15 And you Philippians yourselves know thatin the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia,no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.

16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.

17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seekthe fruit that increases to your credit.

18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied,having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent,a fragrant offering,a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

19 And my Godwill supply every need of yoursaccording to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

20 Toour God and Father beglory forever and ever. Amen.

Observations about Partnership Development

**How Does Paul View Himself in Relationship to God and His Partners?**

1. Paul shares openly about realities of personal challenges. How do we know that his comments are not being dismissive or power of positive thinking? In other words, where does Paul find hope and encouragement in the midst of challenges?
2. How do we know that Paul is not simply practicing “sanctified complaining” in order to elicit pity or justification of need for the gift he received?
3. How does Paul posture himself to demonstrate his dependence upon the Lord for resources and gratitude for the gift? In former passages he mentioned he could have “demanded/challenged” based on his position and here he seems to be saying—it doesn’t matter if you give? If he is not “needy” or “demanding” what would you perceive his reason for accepting the gift would be—what do you think his audience perceived?

**What was Paul’s View of God in relation to his partners and the mission?**

1. While Paul sensed the urgency of the opportunity and resources required, how is he able to reconcile God as willing and capable to provide with timing of the gift?
2. While most of us mentally assent to the fact that God is willing and able to supply the needed resources, how do we and Paul reconcile God’s provision and timing of receiving those resources?
3. If we don’t have control over the “who”, the “what” or the “when” of the distribution of resources, what does this passage tell us about our role in partnership development?

**What was Paul’s view of the Ministry in relationship to God and his partners?**

1. When Paul uses the word sacrifice as it relates to financial giving what is he communicating about the ministry?
2. What can we deduce from the passage when Paul thanks them for their revived concern? How were they practically able to put that concern to action?

**What was Paul’s view of his Partners in relationship to the ministry and God?**

1. How did Paul lead his partners from awareness of the opportunity to involvement around impact? He certainly was not satisfied with the reason for a gift being “need” based?
2. What was Paul’s focus and desire for his partners?
3. Paul uses phrases such as shared concern—Biblical Receiving and Giving? What is Paul seeking to communicate about their involvement in the work?
4. What is Paul trying to communicate when he says “no church entered into giving and receiving except you? We can assume he wasn’t trying to stroke their ego or bash other churches? Why did Paul use this comment? How do you think his partners would have received that?

**Interpretation:**

* What general principles is Paul communicating about financial partnership that complements the Bible’s teaching on financial giving?
* How does Paul’s communication with the Philippian church demonstrate his view of partnership development as ministry?

**Application:**

* What difference will this make in how I engage people around partnership.
* What are some doubts and concerns other people (potential partners) have about Partnership Development?
* What doubts and concerns do you have as it relates to Partnership Development?
* How has your perspective or vision changed about partnership development after studying this passage?