

Philippians 2:19-21

by St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom emphasizes the importance of caring for one another in the faith through the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus.

Scripture: Matthew 10:9, Luke 14:33, Luke 22:35, Acts 12:8, Romans 13:14, 1 Corinthians 6:13, Philippians 2:19, Philippians 2:25, 1 Timothy 6:6, 2 Timothy 4:13

Topics: "Selfless Service", "Christian Stewardship"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the importance of sending faithful messengers like Timothy and Epaphroditus to care for the spiritual well-being of others, emphasizing the selfless dedication and sacrificial service they exemplify. He highlights the need for genuine care for fellow believers, contrasting it with selfish pursuits, urging the congregation to seek the things of Jesus Christ above personal comfort and safety. Chrysostom encourages rejoicing in the midst of trials and sickness, showing how Epaphroditus' near-death experience led to God's mercy and the Apostle Paul's relief. He challenges the listeners to receive faithful messengers with joy and honor, recognizing their sacrifices and service for the work of Christ.

Transcript

But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.

He had said, have fallen out unto the progress of the Gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard. Philippians 1:12-13 Again, Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith. Philippians 2:17 By these words he strengthened them. Perchance they might suspect that his former words were spoken just to comfort them. What then? I send Timothy unto you, says he; for they desired to hear all things that concerned him. And wherefore said he not, that you may know my state, but, that I may know yours? Because Epaphroditus would have reported his state before the arrival of Timothy. Wherefore further on he says, But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother Philippians 2:25; but I wish to learn of your affairs. For it is likely that he had remained long time with Paul through his bodily weakness. So that he says, I wish to know your state. See then how he refers everything to Christ, even the mission of Timothy, saying, I hope in the Lord Jesus, that is, I am confident that God will facilitate this for me, that I too may be of good courage, when I know your

state. As I refreshed you when you heard the very things of me which you had prayed for, that the Gospel had advanced, that its enemies were put to shame, that the means by which they thought to injure, rather made me rejoice; thus too do I wish to learn of your affairs, that I too may be of good courage when I know your state. Here he shows that they ought to rejoice for his bonds, and to be conformed to them, for they begot in him great pleasure; for the words, that I too may be of good comfort, imply, just as you are.

Oh, what longing had he toward Macedonia! He testifies the same to the Thessalonians, as when he says, But we, brethren, being bereaved of you for a short season, etc. 1 Thessalonians 2:17 And here he says, I hope to send Timothy that I may know your state, which is a proof of excessive care: for when he could not himself be with them, he sent his disciples, as he could not endure to remain, even for a little time, in ignorance of their state. For he did not learn all things by revelation of the Spirit, and for this we can see some reason; for if the disciples had believed that it were so, they would have lost all sense of shame, but now from expectation of concealment, they were more easily corrected. In a high degree did he call their attention by saying, that I too may be of good comfort, and rendered them more zealous, so that, when Timothy came he might not find any other state of things, and report it to him. He seems to have acted in like sort in his own person, when he delayed his coming to the Corinthians, that they might repent; wherefore he wrote, to spare you I forbore to come to Corinth. 2 Corinthians 1:23 For his love was manifested not simply in reporting his own state, but in his desire to learn of theirs; for this is the part of a soul which has a care of others, which takes thought for them, which is always wrestling for them.

At the same time too, he honors them by sending Timothy. What do you say? Do you send Timothy? And wherefore? Because I have no one likeminded; that is, none of those whose care is like mine, none who will care truly for you. Philippians 2:20 Had he then no one of those who were with him? No one likeminded, that is, who has yearnings and takes thought for you as I do. No one would lightly choose, he means, to make so long a journey for this purpose. Timothy is the one with me who loves you. For I might have sent others, but there was none like him. This then is that likemindedness, to love the disciples as the master loves them. Who, says he, will truly care for you, that is, as a father. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ Philippians 2:21, their own comfort, their own safety. This too he writes to Timothy. But why does he lament such things as these? To teach us his hearers not to fall in like sort, to teach his hearers not to seek for remission from toil; for he who seeks remission from toil, seeks not the things that are Christ's, but his own. We ought to be prepared against every toil, against every distress.

Ver. 22. You know the proof of him, that as a child serves a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the Gospel.

And that I speak not at random, you yourselves, he says, know, that as a child serves a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the Gospel. He presents then Timothy to them, and with reason, that he might enjoy much honor from them. This too he does when he writes to the Corinthians, and he says, Let no man therefore despise him, for he works the work of the Lord as I also do. 1 Corinthians 16:10 This he said not as caring for him, but for those who receive him, that they might receive a great reward.

Ver. 23. Him therefore, he says, I hope to send immediately, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me, that is, when I see where I stand, and what end my affairs will have.

Ver. 24. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come to you shortly.

I am not therefore sending him, as though I myself would not come, but that I may be of good courage when I know your state, that even in the mean time I may not be ignorant of it. But I trust in the Lord, says

he. See how he makes all things depend on God, and speaks nothing of his own mind. That is, God willing.

Ver. 25. But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and fellow-worker, and fellow-soldier.

And him too he sends with the same praises as Timothy, for he commended him on these two points; first, in that he loved them, when he says, who will care truly for you; and secondly, in that he had approved himself in the Gospel. And for the same reason, and in the same terms, he praises this man also: and how? By calling him a brother, and a fellow-worker, and not stopping at this point, but also fellow-soldier, he showed how he shared in his dangers, and testifies of him the same things which he testifies of himself. For fellow-soldier is more than fellow-worker; for perchance he gave aid in quiet matters, yet not so in wars and dangers; but in saying fellow-soldier, he showed this too.

Ver. 25. To send to you your messenger, and minister to my needs; that is, I give you your own, since I send to you him that is your own, or, perhaps, that is your Teacher. Again he adds many things concerning his love, in saying,

Ver. 26, 27. Since he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick near unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.

Here he aims at a farther point, making it manifest, that Epaphroditus too was well aware, how he was beloved of them. And this is no light thing toward loving. You know how he was sick, he says; and he grieved that on his recovery he did not see you, and free you from the grief you had by reason of his sickness. Here too he gives another reason for sending so late to them, not from any remissness, but he kept Timothy because he had no one else, (for, as he had written, he had no one likeminded,) and Epaphroditus because of his sickness. He then shows that this was a long sickness, and had consumed much time, by adding, for he was sick near unto death. You see how anxious Paul is to cut off from his disciples all occasion of slighting or contempt, and every suspicion that his not coming was because he despised them. For nothing will have such power to draw a disciple toward one, as the persuasion that his superior cares for him, and that he is full of heaviness on his account, for this is the part of exceeding love. Because you have heard, he says, that he was sick; for he was sick near unto death. And that I am not making an excuse, hear what follows. But God had mercy on him. What do you say, O heretic? Here it is written, that God's mercy retained and brought back again him who was on the point of departure. And yet if the world is evil, it is no mercy to leave a man in the evil. Our answer to the heretic is easy, but what shall we say to the Christian? For he perchance will question, and say, if to depart and to be with Christ is far better, how says he that he has obtained mercy? I would ask why the same Apostle says, that it is more needful to abide with you? For as it was needful for him, so too for this man, who would hereafter depart to God with more exceeding riches, and greater boldness. Hereafter that would take place, even if it did not now, but the winning souls is at an end for those who have once departed there. In many places too, Paul speaks according to the common habits of his hearers, and not every where in accordance with his own heavenly wisdom: for he had to speak to men of the world who still feared death. Then he shows how he esteemed Epaphroditus, and thence he gets for him respect, by saying, that his preservation was so useful to himself, that the mercy which had been shown to Epaphroditus reached him also. Moreover, without this the present life is a good; were it not so, why does Paul rank with punishment untimely deaths? As when he says, For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and not a few sleep 1

Corinthians 11:30; for the future life is not (merely) better than an evil state, since (then) it were not good, but better than a good state.

Lest I should have, he says, sorrow upon sorrow; sorrow from his death in addition to that which sprung from his sickness. By this he shows how much he prized Epaphroditus.

Ver. 28. I have sent him therefore the more diligently. What means more diligently? It is, without procrastination, without delay, with much speed, having bidden him lay all aside, and to go to you, that he might be freed from heaviness; for we rejoice not on hearing of the health of those we love, so much as when we see them, and chiefly so when this happens contrary to hope, as it was in the case of Epaphroditus.

I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that when you see him again, you may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. How less sorrowful? Because if you rejoice, I too rejoice, and he too joys at a pleasure of such sort, and I shall be less sorrowful. He said not sorrowless, but less sorrowful, to show that his soul never was free from sorrow: for he who said, Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I burn not? 2 Corinthians 11:29, when could such an one be free from sorrow? That is, this despondency I now cast off.

Ver. 29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy.

In the Lord either means spiritually and with much zeal, or rather in the Lord means God willing. Receive him in a manner worthy of saints, as saints should be received with all joy.

All this he does for their sakes, not for that of his messengers, for greater gain has the doer than the receiver of a good deed. And such hold in honor, that is, receive him in a manner worthy of saints.

Ver. 30. Because for the work of Christ he came near unto death, hazarding his life, to supply that which was lacking in your service towards me.

This man had been publicly sent by the city of the Philippians, who had come as minister to Paul, and perchance bringing him some contribution, for toward the end of the Epistle he shows that he also brought him money, when he says, Having received of Epaphroditus the things that came from you. Philippians 4:18

It is probable then, that on his arrival at the city of Rome, he found Paul in great and urgent peril, so that those who were accustomed to resort to him were unable safely to do so, but were themselves in peril by their very attendance; which is wont to happen chiefly in very great dangers, and the exceeding wrath of kings, (for when any one has offended the king, and is cast into prison, and is strictly guarded, then even his servants are debarred from access, which probably then befell Paul,) and that Epaphroditus, being of a noble nature, despised all danger, that he might go in unto him, and minister unto him, and do everything which need required. He therefore sets forth two facts, by which he gains for him their respect; the one, that he was in jeopardy well near unto death, he says, for my sake; the other, that in so suffering he was representing their city, so that the recompense for that his peril would be accounted to those who sent him, as if the city had sent him as their ambassador, so that a kind reception of him and approval of what he had done may rather be called a participation in the things that he had dared. And he said not, for my sake, but obtains the more credit for his words, by saying, because for the work of God, since he acted not for my sake, but for God's sake he was near unto death. What then? Though by the providence of God he

died not, yet he himself regarded not his life, and gave himself up to any suffering that might befall him, so as not to remit his attendance on me. And if he gave himself up to death to attend on Paul, much more would he have endured this for the Gospel's sake. Or rather, this also had been for the Gospel's sake, even to have died for Paul. For we may bind about our brows the crown of martyrdom, not only by refusing to sacrifice, but such causes as these also make death martyrdom, and if I may say something startling, these latter do so far more than the former. For he who dares to face death for the lesser cause, will much rather for the greater. Let us therefore, when we see the Saints in danger, regard not our life, for it is impossible without daring ever to perform any noble act, but need is that he who takes thought beforehand for his safety here, should fall from that which is to come.

To supply, he says, your lack of service toward me. What is this? The city was not present, but by sending him, it fulfilled through him all service toward me. He therefore supplied your lack of service, so that for this reason too he deserves to enjoy much honor, since, what ye all should have done, this has he performed on your behalf. Here he shows that there is also a foregoing service rendered by those in safety to those in danger, for so he speaks of the lack, and the lack of service. Do you see the spirit of the Apostle? These words spring not from arrogance, but from his great care towards them; for he calls the matter a service and a lack, that they may not be puffed up, but be moderate, nor think that they have rendered some great thing, but rather be humble-minded.

For we owe the saints a debt, and are not doing them a favor. For as supplies are due by those who are in peace and not engaged in war to such as stand in the army and fight (for these stand on their behalf), thus too is it here. For if Paul had not taught, who would have cast him into prison? Wherefore we ought to minister to the Saints. For is it not absurd to contribute to an earthly king, when engaged in war, all that he wants, as clothing and food, not according to his need alone, but abundantly, while to the King of Heaven, when engaged in war, and contending against far more bitter foes (for it is written, our wrestling is not against flesh and blood) Ephesians 6:12, we will not supply urgent necessity? What folly is this! What ingratitude! What base love of gain! But, as it seems, the fear of man has greater force with us than hell, and the future torments. For this cause, in truth, all things are turned upside down; for political affairs are daily accomplished with much earnestness, and one must not be left behind, while of spiritual things there is no account taken at all; but the things which are demanded of us of necessity, and with compulsion, as though we were slaves, and against our wills, are laid down by us with much readiness, while such as are asked from willing minds, and as if from free men, are again deficient. I speak not against all, but against those who are behindhand with these supplies. For might not God have made these contributions compulsory? Yet He would not, for He has more care of you than of those whom you support. Wherefore He would not that you should contribute of necessity, since there is no recompense. And yet many of those who stand here are lower minded than the Jews. Consider how great things the Jews gave, tithes, first-fruits, tithes again, and again other tithes, and besides this thirteenth, and the shekel, and no one said, how much they devour; for the more they receive, the greater is the reward. They say not, They receive much, they are gluttons; which words I hear now from some. They for their part, while they are building houses, and buying estates, still think they have nothing; but if any priest is clothed in dress more bright than usual, and enjoys more than what is necessary for his sustenance, or has an attendant, that he may not be forced himself to act unbecomingly, they set the matter down for riches. And in truth we are rich even at this rate, and they admit it against their will; for we, though we have but little, are rich, while they, though they get everything about them, are poor.

How far shall our folly extend? Does it not suffice to our punishment that we do no good deed, but must we add to it the punishment of evil speaking? For if what he has were your gifts, you lose your reward by upbraiding him for what you gave. In a word, if you gave it, why do you upbraid him? You have already borne witness to his poverty, by saying that what he has are your gifts. Why then do you upbraid? You should not have given, did you intend so to do. But do you speak thus, when another gives?

It is then more grievous, in that when you yourself hast not given, you upbraid for another man's good deeds. How great reward do you think those who are thus spoken of will receive? It is for God's sake they thus suffer. How and wherefore? Had they so willed, they might have taken up a trader's life, even though they received it not from their ancestors. For I hear many speaking thus at random, when we say that a certain man is poor. Had he willed, they say, he might have been rich, and then tauntingly add, His father, his grandfather, and I know not who was so; but now see what a robe he wears!

But what? Tell me, ought he to go about naked? You then start nice questionings on these points, but see lest you thus speakest against yourself. Listen to that exhortation of Christ, which says, Judge not that you be not judged. Matthew 7:1 He might, it is true, if he had willed, have led a trader's or a merchant's life, and would surely not have lacked. But he would not. What then, says one, is he here profited? Tell me, what is he profited? Does he wear silken robes? Does he proudly clear his way through the forum with a troop of followers?

Is he borne along on horseback? Does he build houses, having where to dwell? If he act so, I too accuse him, and spare him not, but declare that he is unworthy of the priesthood. For how can he exhort others not to spend their time on these superfluities, who cannot advise himself? But if he has sufficient for support, is he therefore doing wrong? Would you have him lead a vagabond life, and beg? Would you, his disciple, not also be put to shame? But if your father in the flesh did this, you would think shame of the thing.

If your spiritual father be compelled so to do, will you not veil your head, and even think you are sinking into the earth? It is written, A father's dishonor is a reproach to the children. Sirach 3:11 But what? Should he perish with famine? This were not like a pious man; for God wills it not. But what do they straightway philosophize? It is written, say they, Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, neither two coats, nor yet staves Matthew 10:9-10, while these men have three or four garments, and beds well spread.

I am forced now to heave a bitter sigh, and, but that it had been indecorous, I had wept too! How so? Because we are such curious searchers into the motes of others, while we feel not the beams in our own eyes. Tell me, why do you not say this to yourself? The answer is, Because the command is laid only on our Teachers. When then Paul says, having food and covering we shall be therewith content 1 Timothy 6:8, says he this only to Teachers? By no means, but to all men; and this is clear, if we will begin farther back.

For what does he say? Godliness with contentment is great gain 1 Timothy 6:6; for we brought nothing into this world, it is certain that neither can we carry anything out 1 Timothy 6:7; he then straightway adds, And having food and covering, we shall be therewith content; but they that desire to be rich, fall into a temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts. 1 Timothy 6:8-9 You see that this is spoken to all; and how is it when he says again, Make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof Romans 13:14, is not this said absolutely to all?

And what when he says, Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall bring to nought both it and them 1 Corinthians 6:13; or what when he says, But she that gives herself to pleasure, is dead while she lives 1 Timothy 5:6, speaking of a widow. Is then the widow a Teacher? Has not he said himself, But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man? 1 Timothy 2:12 But if a widow, in old age, (and age has need of great attendance,) and a woman's nature too, (for the woman's sex, being weak, has need of more refreshment,) if then, where there is both the age and the nature, he suffers her not to live in luxury, but even says that she is dead, (for he did not simply forbid a life of luxury, but said, she who gives herself to luxury is dead while she lives,) and thus has cut her off, (for she that is dead is cut off,) what indulgence then will any man have, who does those things, for which a woman and an aged one too is punished?

Yet no one gives a thought to these things, no one searches them out. And this I have been compelled to say, not from any wish to free the priests from these charges, but to spare you. They indeed suffer no harm at your hands, even if it is with cause and justice that they are thus charged of being greedy of gain; for, whether you speak, or whether you forbear, they must there give an account to the Judge, so that your words hurt them not at all; but if your words are false besides, they for their part gain by these false accusations, while you hurt yourselves by these means. But it is not so with you; for be the things true, which you bring against them, or be they false, you speak ill of them to your hurt. And how so? If they be true, in that you judge your Teachers, and subvert order, you do it to your hurt. For if we must not judge a brother, much less a Teacher. But if they be false, the punishment and retribution is intolerable; for of every idle word you shall give account. Matthew 12:36 For your sake then I thus act and labor.

But as I said, no one searches out these things, no one busies himself about these things, no one communes with himself on any of these things. Would ye that I should add still more? Whosoever forsakes not all that he has, says the Christ, is not worthy of Me. Luke 14:33; Matthew 10:37 What when he says, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 19:23; Mark 10:24 What when he says again, Woe unto you that are rich, for you have received your consolation? Luke 6:24 No one searches this out, no one bears it in mind, no one reasons with himself, but all sit as severe inquisitors on other men's cases. Yet this is to make themselves sharers in the charges. But listen, that for your own sake I may free the priests from the charges, which you say lie against them, for the persuasion that they transgress the law of God, inclines you not a little towards evil. Come then, let us examine this matter. Christ said, Provide neither gold nor silver, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor girdle, nor yet staves. Matthew 10:9-10 What then? Tell me, did Peter transgress this command? Surely he did so, in having a girdle and a garment, and shoes, for listen to the words of the Angel, Gird yourself, and bind on your sandals. Acts 12:8 And yet he had no such great need of sandals, for at that season a man may go even unshod; their great use is in the winter, and yet he had them. What shall we say of Paul, when he writes thus to Timothy, Do your diligence to come before winter? 2 Timothy 4:21 He gives him orders too and says, The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus bring when you come, and the books, especially the parchments. 2 Timothy 4:13 See he speaks of a cloak, and no one can say that he had not another which he wore; for if he did not wear one at all, it were superfluous to order this one to be brought, and if he could not be without one to wear, it is clear he had a second.

What shall we say of his remaining two whole years in his own hired dwelling? Acts 28:30 Did then this chosen vessel disobey Christ? This man who said, Yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me Galatians 2:20, concerning whom Christ testified, saying, He is a chosen vessel unto Me? Acts 9:15 I ought to leave this difficulty with you, without supplying any solution to the question. I ought to exact of you

this penalty for your negligence in the Scriptures, for this is the origin of all such difficulties. For we know not the Scriptures, we are not trained in the law of God, and so we become sharp inquirers into the faults of others, while we take no account of our own. I ought then to have exacted from you this penalty. But what shall I do? Fathers freely give to their sons many things beyond what is fitting: when their fatherly compassion is kindled, on seeing their child with downcast look, and wasted with grief, they themselves also feel sharper pangs than he, and rest not until they have removed the ground of his dejection.

So be it at least here, be ye at least dejected at not receiving, that you may receive well. What then is it? They opposed not, far be it; but diligently followed the commands of Christ, for those commands were but for a season, and not enduring; and this I say not from conjecture, but from the divine Scriptures. And how? Luke relates that Christ said to His disciples, When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and girdle, and shoes, did you lack anything? And they said nothing.

But for the future provide them. Luke 22:35 But tell me, what could he do? Could he have but one coat? How then? If need was that this be washed, should he, because without it, stay at home? Should he without it go abroad in an unbecoming manner, when need called? Consider what a thing it would have been that Paul, who made the circuit of the world with such great success, should remain at home for want of raiment, and thus hinder his noble work. And what if violent cold had set in, or rain had drenched it, or perhaps frozen in, how could he dry his raiment?

Must he again remain without it? And what if cold had deprived his body of strength? Must he waste away with disease, and be unable to speak? For hear what he says to Timothy, to prove that they were not furnished with adamantine bodies, Use a little wine for your stomach's sake, and your frequent infirmities. 1 Timothy 5:23 And again, when he speaks of another, I counted it necessary to send to you your messenger, and minister to my needs. Philippians 2:25 For indeed he was sick, near unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also.

Philippians 2:27 So that they were subject to every sort of sickness. What then? Must they die? By no means. For what cause then did Christ at that time give them that command? To show His own power, and to prove that in after times He was able to do it, though He did it not. But wherefore did He not do it? They were much more admirable than the Israelites, whose shoes did not wax old, neither their garments, and that too while they were journeying through that desert where the glowing rays of the sun strike so hot, that they are capable of consuming even stones. cf.

Deuteronomy 29:5 Why then did he do this? For your sake. For since you would not remain in health, but be full of wounds, He gave you that which might serve for medicine. And this is hence manifest; could He not Himself have fed them? He that gave to you, who wast an enemy with Him, would He not much more have given to Paul? He who gave to the Israelites, those murmurers, those fornicators, those idolaters, would He not much more have given to Peter, who spent all for His sake?

He who suffered wicked men to possess anything, would He not much more have freely given to John, who for Him forsook even his father? Yet he would not: through your hands he feeds them, that you may be sanctified. And see the excess of His lovingkindness. He chose that His disciples should be in want, that you might be a little refreshed.

For if He had freed them from all want, they would have been much more admirable, far more glorious. But then that which is to you salvation would have been cut off. God willed not then that they should be admirable, that you might be saved, but that they should rather be lowered. He has suffered them to be

less accounted of, that you might be able to be saved. The Teacher who receives is not equally revered, but he who receives not is chiefly honored. But then in the latter case the disciple is not benefited, he is hindered of his fruit. Do you see the wisdom of God who thus loves man? For as He Himself sought not His own glory, nor had respect to Himself, but when He was in glory, chose to be dishonored for your sake, thus too is it in the case of your Teachers. When they might have been highly revered, He preferred that they should be subject to contempt for your sake, that you might be able to profit, that you might be able to be rich. For he is in want of the things of this life, that you may abound in things spiritual. If then He might have made them above all want, He showed that for your sake He suffers them to be in want. Knowing then these things, let us turn ourselves to well doing, not to accusations. Let us not be overcurious about the failings of others, but take account of our own; let us reckon up the excellences of other men, while we bear in mind our faults; and thus shall we be well pleasing to God. For he who looks at the faults of others, and at his own excellences, is injured in two ways; by the latter he is carried up to arrogance, through the former he falls into listlessness. For when he perceives that such an one has sinned, very easily will he sin himself; when he perceives that he has in anything excelled, very easily becomes he arrogant. He who consigns to oblivion his own excellences, and looks at his failings only, while he is a curious enquirer of the excellences, not the sins, of others, is profited in many ways. And how? When he sees that such an one has done excellently, he is raised to emulate the same; when he sees that he himself has sinned, he is rendered humble and modest. If we act thus, if we thus regulate ourselves, we shall be able to obtain the good things which are promised, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, etc.

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