

Do not merely look out for your own personal interests

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Phil. 2:4 NASB)

The key word in Philippians 2 is “others.” The Lord Jesus lived for others. Paul lived for others. Timothy lived for others. Epaphroditus lived for others. We too should live for others.

We are told to do this not only because it is right but also because it is for our own good. If it is sometimes costly to live for others, it is more costly not to do so.

Our society is filled with people who live only for their own personal interests. Rather than keeping busy in serving others, they sit at home brooding. They think about every minor ache and pain and soon become confirmed hypochondriacs. In their loneliness they complain that no one takes an interest in them and soon they wallow in self-pity. The more time they have to think about themselves, the more depressed they become. Life becomes one great introspective horror of darkness. Soon they go off to the doctor and gulp enormous quantities of pills—pills that can never cure self-centeredness. Then they frequent the psychiatrist’s couch to somehow find relief for their boredom and weariness with life.

The best therapy for people like that is a life of service for others. There are shut-ins to be visited. There are senior citizens who need a friend. There are hospitals that welcome volunteer help. There are people who could be cheered by a letter or a card. There are missionaries who welcome news from home (and perhaps they could use a little greenery to brighten up the scenery). There are souls to be saved and Christians to be taught. In short there is no excuse for anyone to be bored. There is enough to do to fill one’s life with productive activity. And in the very process of living for others, we widen our circle of friends, make our own lives more interesting, and find fulfilment and satisfaction. P.M. Derham said, “A heart that is full of compassion for others is less likely to be absorbed in its own sorrows and poisoned by its own self pity.”

Others, yes, Lord, others, Let this my motto be. Help me to live for others That I may live like Thee.

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