



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR JUNE 29, 2012

## BEYOND RECREATION

*But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. (Philippians 2:22, NIV)*

FOR SIX YEARS, I HAVE COACHED A LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL GOLF TEAM. Though it's not really my "job," it has definitely presented me with many different dynamics and challenges. Anyone who has ever done something like this soon learns that there's more to it than meets the eye!

When I begin the season and am handed a roster, I have to come to terms with one fundamental question: Who wants to play recreationally and who wants to play competitively? Frankly, I am looking for competitors.

The competitors are going to be the ones who carry the team. They will be the ones who put in the extra work after the team practice session is over. They will go the extra mile to improve and ultimately come forth victorious.

I see real similarities when I match up our Christian life against my high school golf team. So many Christians go about their Christian life recreationally. For them, life is all about the fun, and they certainly do not want to be left out of the party! But they are not ready to develop the skills and talents that could put them in "the winner's circle."

On the other hand, the focus of the competitor is something to behold. From a coach's perspective, I know that focus is absolutely essential for a player who will make the sacrifice and committed dedication that it takes to excel. Success also demands a high level of discipline.

Paul wrote to the Philippians about private agendas that interfere with accomplishing the priorities of "Team Jesus." He cited Timothy as a player who retained his focus. Of the others, he said, "They all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus." But Timothy displayed his "proven" worth to the team.

When it comes time to assess our own proven value, we are faced with these questions: How are we going to apply ourselves? Are we going to approach this life in Christ recreationally, or do we possess the attitude of a competitor?

## Shining examples

*Read Philippians 2:19-30.* What qualities in Timothy and Epaphroditus endeared Paul to them as men he could count on?

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In your own life and work settings, what are evidences that a person is dedicated to a cause or activity?

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What are evidences that a person is committed to the cause of Christ?

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## Traits of dedication

*Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-27.* Why did Paul remain dedicated to the cause of Christ? How does his perspective present both concerns and encouragement for you as you attempt to do the same?

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