

Weekly Devotional

April 28, 2008

Spiritual Osmosis

"But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." (Phil 2:22).

My old home church, Friendship Baptist Church of Saluda, North Carolina, is built on a concrete-block basement. Like other older block structures, the basement has had a notorious record for leaking. When I was a boy, on some Sundays our class would have to merge with another class because of water seepage. I went off to school and learned a big word for this process—osmosis. Of course, it's still water seeping through the blocks to me.

In a previous verse in this chapter, Paul wrote, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (2:13). Certainly, God personally works His salvation in us, His life in us, and His nature in us. Yet He uses various forms of "Spiritual Osmosis" in the Christian experience to make us what He wants us to be. None of us doubt the beneficial influence of loving parents, a good church-life, or certain people associated with us.

In this text and the phrases that surround it, we are made aware of the osmosis process that involves the Christ-like people in our lives. When the Apostle Paul mentioned Timothy, he spoke as a parent who was well pleased with his child's development. What God had done and was doing in the old man of God seemed to be working in the young preacher. This record keeps before us the advantages of being around the right people.

The spirit of others can influence our spirits! What Paul said about the attitude of Timothy was very commendable. "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state" (Phil. 2:20). Yet this spirit of concern was developed in Timothy as he witnessed the genuine concern of the great Apostle. By being around those of "an excellent spirit" (Dan. 6:3), deficient qualities are realized and proficient qualities are encouraged.

The service of others can influence our service! It is true, as Paul explained, that the majority of people, even in Christian circles, are out to please themselves. "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (2:21). But Timothy, a blessed rare example, who "as a son with the father," "served" with Paul "in the gospel" (2:22), reminds us that the sacrificial service of one can greatly affect our own service for Christ.

The sincerity of others can influence our sincerity! When Paul spoke of the "proof" of Timothy, he portrayed him as "a specimen of tried worth." A vessel without cracks or breaks, the young preacher not only passed Paul's study, but, most of all, He passed God's scrutiny. The genuine teacher was used of God to exhort a genuine student. May the Lord use the helpful attributes of others to make us true vessels of honor.