



INGman 9

Focused Living Ministries

Who's Packin' Your Parachute?

Philippians 2:19-30

During the Vietnamese war Lt. Charles Plumb flew 75 combat missions when his jet was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile forcing him to parachute into enemy lands.

20 years after being released from an enemy prison a man approached him in a restaurant and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!" "How did you know?" asked Plumb. "O, I've kept track of you all these years because I was assigned to pack your parachute!" the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. He didn't sleep much that night thinking about the countless hours this lowly sailor had spent in the humid bowels of the ship hunched over a long wooden table, carefully weaving the shrouds, untangling the lines and folding the silks of his chute so that he could live. Now to every man who will listen to his story Plumb asks, "So who's packin' your parachute?" **Describe a time when you were 'shot down' but 'landed safely' because a friend or family member 'packed your parachute'. What character qualities and skills are needed for effective parachute packing? As a man (husband/father/friend) whose parachutes are you packing?**

(Phil 2:17-30) The Lord understood how often Paul and his buddies were going to get shot down in life so He taught them as INGmen how to not only pack each other's parachutes but countless others as well. Together they modeled what it meant to "*consider others more important than yourself*" (2:3) as they did "*all things without grumbling or complaining*" (2:13). List the parachute packing actions/attitudes of **Timothy**, **Epaphroditus** and **Paul**. Which intrigues you most? Why?

(2:20-21) Unfortunately our culture seems to endorse the philosophy "*get all you can, can all you get and then sit on the can!*" There is a growing mindset "*as long as my family is doing well, I really don't care that much about how others around me are doing. Let them solve their own problems.*" INGman think differently! Every day they make the hard choice between living out either **Philippians 1:21** or **2:20-21**. **Where do you see these two opposing philosophies being lived out in your family, community or church? What was their understanding of the old African proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together!"**

(2:19, 24, 28; Philemon 1) How did Paul's actions and attitude demonstrate that he "*considered others more important than himself*" (2:3) even as he sits in a dank Roman dungeon? What excuses do we often give for not helping others and putting them first?



TAG TEAM DISCUSSION (2:29-30)

Epaphroditus and his buddy, Onesiphorus (**II Tim 1:16-18**), "risked" (lit. '*next door to death*') their lives multiple times to pack the chutes of countless others.

We encourage you to do two things. First, do something concrete to thank an invisible and relentless parachute packer who routinely takes risks for the Lord, the Gospel message or others. Meet with,

text, write, phone, contact in order to honor this quiet servant for whom you have high regard yet is rarely seen. You may want to write a forgotten church leader persecuted in prison for their faith or send a care package to his family (See Voice of The Martyrs or Open Doors). Perhaps there's a humble business leader who has for decades invisibly served the poor, indigent or special needs who could use your encouragement to continue their packing. Men, this is not busy work, this is Kingdom work! And don't forget your wife, mother, father or sibling as they often receive the leftovers of our love. Second, how could you anonymously pack the parachute of someone else? Let your TAG Team know what you are doing and go for it!