

J-CURVE

Lesson 7: The Emotional Life of the J-Curve

PHILIPPIANS 2:25-30

²⁵ I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, ²⁶ for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. ²⁹ So receive him in the Lord with all joy and honor such men, ³⁰ for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

Emotions of the J-Curve

(Epaphroditus) **distress**

(Paul) **sorrow**

(Paul) **anxiety**



joy *(Philippians)*

eagerness *(Paul)*

longing *(Epaphroditus)*

Good Anxiety

Paul has legitimate anxiety over a dear friend who is near death (Philippians 2:28). Likewise, Jesus is anxious as he faces death (Luke 12:50, John 12:27); when he sees his friends grieving over Lazarus' death (John 11:33); and when he faces Judas' betrayal (John 13:21). To be fully human in a fallen world means, that, at times, we will be anxious. To love means we will at times enter someone else's sadness. We don't do that from above. We become sad with them.

Bad Anxiety

In Luke 12:22, Jesus contrasts bad anxiety (“do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on”), with his own anxiety at his coming death (12:50). The first is a floating, bottomless anxiety that never feels secure; the second is a genuine human response to something very hard. To be fully human is to feel like Jesus feels.

GOOD ANXIETY



“I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious (Phil. 2:28).”

BAD ANXIETY



“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God (Phil. 4:6).”

PHILIPPIANS 2:25-30

25 I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, **26** for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. **27** Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. **28** I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. **29** So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, **30** for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

