

Unity And A Right Mind

Philippians 4:2-9

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Teaching Aim: To understand the need for unity within the local church. To explore the important place prayer holds in dealing with the anxieties of life. To understand “right thinking” is essential for “right living” and a healthy Christian life.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Division within the church at Philippi and Paul’s call for unity in the light of eternity. (Phil. 4:2-5)

1. Which two prominent ladies in the church of Philippi were in conflict with each other (**vs. 2**)? Although Paul doesn’t take sides or even state the issue behind the conflict, he may give us a hint as to what it was in **Phil. 2:1-4**. According to those four verses, what was likely at the heart of the problem? What does it mean for Christians to “be of the same mind in the Lord”? Does being of the same mind mean all Christians necessarily have to agree on every point? Explain.
2. Who do you think Paul is referring to as “true companion” (Gk – *syzygos*) in **verse 3**? Could Paul be referring to any believer in the church who might be willing to help bring reconciliation between the two ladies (**vs. 3**)? With *Syzygos* also being a common name, is it possible Paul was referring to one of the elders in the church at Philippi? Could *Syzygos* be a reference to Paul’s companion (yokefellow) Epaphroditus, the very person who carried this letter to the church? Which scenario do you think fits best? Why?
3. What can we learn about Euodia and Syntyche from **verse 3**? What is “the Book of Life” and why should every person desire to have their name written in it? (**See Mal. 3:16-17; Luke 10:20; Rev. 3:5; 17:8; 20:12; 21:27**)
4. Which Old Testament prophet spoke of “the Book of Life” and how do his comments relate to final judgment and resurrection? (**See Dan. 12:1-2; Rev. 20:12**) What does Jesus promise to every faithful believer according to **Rev. 3:5**? (**See John 10:27-30**)

5. A central theme of Paul in this book is the need to “rejoice”, made all the more powerful by the fact that Paul was under house arrest and possibly headed towards execution. How could Paul tell the Church at Philippi (*not once, but twice*) to “rejoice” when there was disunity within the church body (**vs. 4**)? Why can we as Christians rejoice even in the most difficult of times? (**See Jam. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7**)

6. The word “gentleness” can also be interpreted “graciousness” (**vs. 5**). Why is gentleness especially important when there is conflict within the local church? What happens when Christians are not gentle with each other? Why would the fact that “the Lord is at hand” be an incentive for Christians to get along? What does Paul mean by this statement (**vs. 5**)? Do you think Paul means the Lord is in their midst, or is he referring to the Second Coming of Christ? (**See Phil. 3:20-21**)

Part II: Right thinking in response to anxiety and troubled times (Phil. 4:6-7)

1. How do bouts of anxiety affect your every day life (**vs. 6**)? According to verse 6, what is the proper response to anxiety? What is the difference between being in an atmosphere of prayer, making supplication and having a spirit of thanksgiving? Why is it important for the Christian to live in a spirit of thanksgiving? (**See Rom. 8:28**)

2. According to **verse 7**, what is the result of right thinking and right praying? Have you ever experienced the peace of God during a crisis? What were the circumstances and how did that peace affect you?

3. Name an Old Testament character whose right thinking led to right praying and “the peace of God” even in the worst of circumstances? (**See Dan. 6:1-23**) Discuss some characteristics of Daniel’s prayer life. (**See Dan. 6:7-10; 9:1-19**) How could Daniel have peace under such life threatening circumstances? Are there areas in your prayer life that you are struggling with today? What are they? What are some steps you can take to improve your prayer life?

Part III: Right thinking leads to right living and a more effective testimony for Christ. (Phil. 4:8-9)

1. Is there any truth to the saying, *“What goes in is what comes out?”* How can watching certain movies, television shows and listening to some kinds of music negatively affect your thinking? How does pornography destroy lives and lead to a variety of problems including sexual abuse and child molestation? What is the cure to a wrong mind?
2. Satan is the father of lies (**See John 8:44**) and his strategy has been to have us question God since the very beginning of time (**See Gen. 3:1**). How can Satan use lies to cause disharmony and breaks in relationships? Depression is a big tool of Satan, what kind of a mind set do we have when we are fighting depression? Are we focused inward on ourselves or are we focused outward to help others? Why is it bad to be totally consumed with our own situation? What are some practical things you can do to help overcome depression?
3. In contrast to Satan’s method of wrong thinking, Paul gives us a lesson in right thinking. List eight qualities Paul says Christians should focus their thinking on (vs. 8). How can meditating on these qualities positively affect your thought life?
4. Not only are we to be Christ-like in our actions, but we are to be Christ-like in our thoughts. How can daily meditation on God’s Word lead to right thinking, right praying and a healthy Christian life? How do people respond to others who always have a negative attitude? How do people respond to others who are encouraging and have a positive attitude? Is there a difference? Why?
5. What is Paul specifically commanding the Philippians to do in the first half of **verse 9**? (**See 1 Cor. 4:15-16; 11:1**) If the believer follows Paul’s example as he follows Christ, what will the end result be according to **verse 9b**? Are you experiencing the peace of God today? If not,

why not? (See Rom. 5:1; 16:20; Eph. 2:14-18; 1 Thess. 5:23-24) Contact a trusted Christian friend if you need someone to pray with you.

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna to live by!*

- * The goal of every Christian should be to strive toward unity within the church.
- * “The Book of Life” is that book which contains the names of those who will inherit eternal life, every person should desire to have his or her name written in that book.
- * Christians can rejoice in all things because God is at work in their lives and in the end we win! God is taking us from weakness and conforming us to the image of Christ.
- * Anxiety can be overcome by right thinking and right praying, trusting God to help you.
- * As Christians, we should focus on the positive qualities and not listen to the lies of the enemy.