

Notes: Dr. Gutzke talks about us when we first get saved. He says at salvation the human nature stays the same; our change is spiritual. That is the part of us that is a new creation. He writes "Whatever a man's natural desires were before he accepted Christ, he would still have those natural desires afterward. Every human being has his own ego, his own self, his own interest. Accepting Christ does not change that." However God has placed us into his body which is the church. As God uses us and works through others we begin to change. The problem is sometimes we don't allow God to change us. Many folks put their natural desires ahead of God until tragedy strikes. Paul was trying to prepare the folks in the Philippian church to live in a hostile world.

I. Believers sharing blessings from God should unite us. Philippians 2:1 *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

a) Consolation in Christ means to be encouraged by His presence and works in our lives.. We all got saved by hearing the Bible convicted by the Holy Spirit and deciding to accept Jesus as our Savior. The Holy Spirit within works in each of us as we seek to learn about God by reading the Bible and attending church. Reading the Bible coming to revivals, bringing your children to Sunday School whether they want to or not gives you the opportunity to be in God's presence.

b) God's love in us and through us should unite us. *comfort of love 1 John 4:7; Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* Comfort of love is comfort which comes from knowing we are loved by God and the joy we get as we love and receive love from the brethren. When someone is called by God to sacrifice part of their lives to work for God this means we work to support them. There are enough challenges with doubt without the nay sayers in the church. We forget that a church is a unique family. When you don't come you are missed and it is very discouraging to folks who do come. Some folks get mad at churches when people don't call and tell them they are missed. It works a lot better when everybody comes and contributes the gifts God has given you. Ehen you don't come it feels like you don't care.

c) Bowles and mercies refer the work of the Holy Spirit causing us to have compassion for the brethren. This means we come along side of anyone who is hurting in a non-judgmental way. **Romans 14:18-19** *For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.* If we live according the commands in the Bible we will live a life acceptable to God and will not drive people away with our hypocrisy. In verse 19 we see the word edify; that means encourage; promote harmony. This is not saying ignore sin it is helping someone grow in areas where they have no experience.

d). God teaches us the importance of being likeminded. Since we have the same love we should have a singleness of purpose. That would be to lift up the name of Jesus, help each other grow in the knowledge of the Lord and to reach out to the lost.

II. Putting others ahead of ourselves is the accomplished by humility. (3-4) *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* We need to be working together to reach the community for Christ and to help us grow in the Lord personally. Many times people

make decisions based on the flesh. They do not pray or are afraid to step out in faith. Remember if we can accomplish everything in our own strength we will never step out in faith causing us to miss blessings God may have for us.

III. Accept you are a sinner and that you really do need God. James 4:10 **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.** We need God to deal with people, with our own sin, to resist the devil but most of all we need God to show us how to live out the faith that is given to us by His grace. The highest place to be living is in His peace in His presence. James does give us a path in James 4:

1. Submit yourself to God. (7a) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Dr. Wiresbe writes: **Unconditional surrender is the only way to complete victory. If there is any area of the life kept back from God, there will always be battles.** This is great theology but hard to do. Unconditional surrender means God calls the shots all the time. Here's the crux of the problem for the modern church; the reason you don't come to church is because you don't think you need to. **Matthew 11:28-30** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. There are a series of choices involved; first I must choose to come; then I must take the yoke of Christ. Problem is in this country we have many other choices. How can we tell if we are making too many wrong choices? Ask the question is my soul at rest or is my life filled with stress and anxiety. Remember Jesus says take the yoke and learn of me. Learning involves a choosing to study the Bible.

2. Resist the devil.(7b) Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. When you have been saved for a while we will be able to recognize our triggers to sin. The devil wants us to not think about what we are doing. **Ephesians 5:14-16** Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. ¹⁵ See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, ¹⁶ Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. It is hard to resist when you are asleep. The devil does not want us seeking the will of God. We forget we are in a spiritual war until something bad happens.

3. Draw nigh to God. (8a) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. That is really a promise. Prayer, fasting, reading the Bible, listening to sermons, studying and memorizing the Bible will all bring you closer to the Lord.

4. Maintain Fellowship with God. (8b) Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Our goal for this life is **Phil. 4:9** the God of peace shall be with you activating **Phil. 4:7** And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus There is only one way to get clean after we are saved **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The word is repentance

IV. Share your sorrow and your joys with each other. One of the best ways to experience the reality of Jesus is to tell others look what the Lord has done in me by His grace.