

To Die is Gain

THE PATH TO JOY, A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

LESSON 4 (2:1-11)

To live as He lived, our life must bear resemblance to His. We cannot seek to be something while He sought to be nothing. We cannot retain our rights while He relinquished His. We cannot pursue prestige while He emptied Himself of privilege. We cannot search for significance while He sought servitude. We cannot reach for honor while He grasped humility. We cannot think of ourselves while He thought not of Himself.

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4.

1. The church at Philippi was threatened with disunity. According to Philippians 3:1-3 and 4:1-3, who and/or what were the possible sources? Which of these do you believe poses the greatest threat to the body?
2. What is the difference between unity and uniformity?ⁱ
3. Like-mindedness involves the will, affections, and conscience. What mindset should all Christians share? How are we free to differ?
4. Define selfish ambition.

Define conceit.

5. How are these characteristics exhibited in our adversary? Read Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19.

6. In what are selfish ambition and conceit rooted? Is this the cause of discord in the church? Why or why not? Read Galatians 5:26 and James 3:13-16, 4:1-10.

7. What is the difference between selfish ambition and striving for excellence?

8. Return to Philippians. How is unity achieved and maintained in the church? (vv.3-4) See also Romans 12:10, 16, Ephesians 5:21, and James 3:17-18.

9. In order to view others as better than oneself what must you understand about yourself?

NOW READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11.

10. According to Paul, for what reasons ought believers to act with love, unity and humility? (vv.1, 6-8)

11. In verse 6, Paul reinforces his exhortation by first referring to Christ's title, position, rank, or station. First, describe literally what it means to be robbed. Then explain how an individual is robbed of his status.

12. Verse 6 can be translated, Christ did not *"think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained"* (AMP), *"something to cling to"* (NLT), or *"something to be used to His own advantage"* (NIV).

How can the act of clinging to one's status, justified or unjustified, foster discord? Consider Psalm 75:6-7.

13. Why was Christ able to "let go"? (Refer back to vv. 3-4.)

14. Next, Paul refers to Christ's reputation. (v.7) Webster's Dictionary defines reputation as "the overall... character as seen or judged by people in general; recognition by other people of some character or ability; one's place in public esteem or regard". What is reputation based upon?

What conflict exists between the care and concern for one's reputation and true humility?

15. In what ways do the traits and characteristics, roles and responsibilities of a bondservant promote unity within the body of Christ?

16. Return to Philippians. How did Christ's mindset dictate His actions? (v.8) Think on Matthew 20:25-28.

17. How was Christ's act of taking on human flesh an act of humility? What can we learn about how we are to treat others from His example?

18. What limitations are often placed upon one's service to Christ, specifically within the church context?

Why do we seek to evade sacrifice? (Again, think back to Philippians 2:3-4.)

19. What was the Father's response to Jesus' humility and obedience? (vv.9-11)

20. In what areas are you most tempted to seek exaltation or acknowledgement? Why is this pursuit vain? Read Luke 14:11 and 1 Peter 5:6.

¹ Wiersbe, Warren. (2001) The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament, Volume 2. Cook Communications, Colorado Springs, CO. Philippians 2:1-11, p.73.