

“Unity And A Right Mind”

Philippians 4:1-9

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Teaching Aim: To realize Jesus prayed for “unity” within the Church in His High Priestly prayer so that the world would see that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. To explore the importance of prayer 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 (Phil. 4:1-5)

1. Every regenerate (or born-again) Christian has dual citizenship; the country they live in and Heaven itself (See **Phil. 3:20**). How should our heavenly citizenship affect the way we live our life on earth today? According to **Phil. 3:21**, what will happen to the true believer on Resurrection Day? Who did Paul say was his joy and crown (**vs. 1**)? Why? Have you ever led anyone to Christ? What did Paul encourage the Philippian believers to do in **verse 1**? Why?
2. Which two prominent ladies in the church at Philippi were in conflict with each other (**vs. 2**)? Although Paul didn’t take sides or even state the issue behind the conflict, we can find a hint as to what it was in **Phil. 2:1-4**. What may have been at the heart of this conflict? Why are conflicts in the church so divisive? What did Paul mean when he told Euodia and Syntyche to “*be of the same mind in the Lord?*” Does being of “*the same mind*” mean that Christians should agree on everything? What about false doctrine?
3. Who do you think Paul was referring to as he writes, “*true companion*” (Gk – *syzygos*) in **verse 3**? With *Syzygos* also being a common name, is it possible Paul was referring to one of the elders in the church at Philippi? Is it possible *Syzygos* could have been a reference to Paul’s companion (yokefellow) Epaphroditus, the very person who is believed to have delivered this letter to the church at Philippi? Which scenario do you think fits best in the context? Why?

4. 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**)
5. Which Old Testament prophet spoke of “*the Book of Life*” and how do his comments relate to the final judgment and resurrection? (See **Dan. 12:1-2; Rev. 20:12**) Daniel spoke of “*a double resurrection*.” What did he mean by this theologically? (See Commentaries) What did Jesus promise to every faithful believer in **Rev. 3:5**? (See **John 10:27-30**)
6. One of the most amazing things about Paul was his ability to “*rejoice*” in all circumstances. In the Book of Philippians, Paul was under house arrest in Rome facing the possibility of execution. After addressing the conflict in Philippi and the need for resolution, what did Paul say was a better attitude (**vs. 4**)? What, if any, significance is there in Paul telling the church to “*rejoice*” twice in **verse 4**? Why can Christians rejoice today, even in the most difficult circumstances of life? (See **Jam. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7**)
7. The word “*gentleness*” can also be interpreted “*graciousness*” (**vs. 5**). Why is gentleness especially important when dealing with conflict? What happens when Christians are not gentle with one another? Why should the fact that “*the Lord is at hand*” be an incentive for every Christian to be gentle and have a right attitude (**vs. 5**)? When Paul said, “*the Lord is at hand*,” did he mean that Jesus was in their midst, or was he referring to the Second Coming of Christ? (See **Phil. 3:20-21**)

Part II: Right thinking rather than anxiety (Phil. 4:6-7)

1. Have you ever had to battle anxiety in your life (**vs. 6**)? If so, how did it affect you? According to **verse 6**, what is the Biblical response to anxiety? What did Charles Spurgeon mean when he said we are to live in “*an atmosphere of prayer*?” What does the word “*supplication*” mean? (See Dictionary) What did Paul mean when he referred to “*a spirit of thanksgiving*?” Why is it important for every 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 in your life? What was it like? What was your crisis and how did God work in that situation?

3. Name an Old Testament character whose right thinking led to right praying and "*the peace of God*" in the worst of situations? (See **Dan. 6:1-23**) Discuss some characteristics of Daniel's prayer life that you admire. (See **Dan. 6:7-10; 9:1-19**) What gave Daniel peace in the lion's den? What are some areas in your life that you are struggling with today? 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 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? Why does pornography destroy lives and lead to a variety of problems including sexual abuse and child molestation? What is the cure for wrong thinking? (See **Rom. 12:2**)

2. Satan is the father of lies (See **John 8:44**) and his strategy has been to have us question God since the beginning of time (See **Gen. 3:1**). What are some ways that you've seen Satan use lies to cause disharmony and break relationships in the church? Depression is also a big tool of Satan. What kind of mindset do you find yourself in when you are fighting depression? Are you focused on your own problems or are you focused on helping others? Why is it bad for us to be consumed with our own circumstances? What are some practical steps you can take to overcome depression?

3. In contrast to Satan's desire for us to have wrong thinking, Paul gives us a lesson in right thinking. List eight qualities that Paul encourages every Christian to focus on (**vs. 8**). How can meditating on these qualities positively affect your thought life and your Christian walk?

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 should we respond to others who always seem to have a negative attitude? How have you seen negative attitudes affect other people? How have you seen positive attitudes affect other people? Which attitude do you normally have?

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**) Would you feel comfortable encouraging others to imitate you in your Christian walk? What can the believer expect to receive if he or she lives their life imitating Christ (vs. 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**) If you find yourself struggling today for peace, we encourage you to contact a trusted Christian friend and ask for prayer.

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna to live by!*

- The goal of every Christian should be to strive for unity within the Church.
- Unity among Christians does not mean agreeing on everything, especially not false doctrine.
- The desire of every person should be to have his or her name written in the Book of Life.
- "*The Book of Life*" is that heavenly book which contains the names of those who inherit eternal life.
- Paul instructs Christians to rejoice always, be gentle to all, to pray consistently and be anxious for nothing. (See **Phil. 4:4-6**)
- Anxiety is not of God; it is a lack of trust in God's faithfulness to meet our need in a particular circumstance.
- "*Right thinking*" is essential for "*right living*" and a healthy Christian life.