

Becoming Christ Like

The purpose for our lives is to become like Jesus Christ.

Christians are in relationship to Christ and to one another.

Paul wrote to the Philippian believers:

- 1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,
- 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.
- 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;
- 4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
- 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
(Phil. 2:1-5)

Things in common: Since these things are true...

1. Encouragement from belonging to Christ.
2. Comfort from His love
3. Fellowship together in the Spirit
4. Tender and compassionate hearts

Positive and practical responses:

1. Being like-minded
2. Having the same love
3. Being one in spirit and purpose

These ingredients provide great potential for unity among Christians.

Knowing these things should help us get along.

It's one thing to know these things but quite another to practice them.

I. Overcoming the attitudes that prevent our fellowship

Several negatives are listed in the Philippian text:

selfishness, empty conceit, self-seeking.

THE HOLMAN COMMENTARY SAYS,

Paul gives negatives to avoid. Unity in love means **selfish ambition** and **vain conceit** have no place in the Christian life. Such characteristics rise from pride, not from love. Instead, humility is to characterize the Christian. We are not to exalt ourselves above others.¹

The disciples experienced their own version of this conflict when the mother of James and John came to see Jesus one.

- 20** Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him.
21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She *said to Him, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left. (Matt. 20:20-21)

In essence they were claiming in their request that of all the great people of God who had ever lived, they deserved to have the two highest places of honor beside the King of heaven.

The other disciples were guilty of the same proud and selfish ambitions.

- 24** And hearing *this*, the ten became indignant with the two brothers.
25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them.
26 "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,
27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;
28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."² (Matt. 20:24-28)

¹ Anders, M. (1999). *Galatians-Colossians* (Vol. 8, p. 224). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

² *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*. (1995). (Mt 20:20-28). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

The world has its own form of greatness where the leader dominates his subordinates.

They *exercise authority* – Literal rendering: “to play the tyrant.”

Luke’s records another similar argument that took place among the disciples just before they celebrated the Last Supper,

- 24** And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.
- 25** And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’
- 26** “But *it is* not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.
- 27** “For who is greater, the one who reclines *at the table* or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines *at the table*? But I am among you as the one who serves. (Luke 22:24-27)

After this Jesus dressed as a house servant and washed the disciples’ feet as an example of how they should treat each other.

LESSON OF TRUE GREATNESS: SERVING.

The greatest leader is a servant leader.

A SERVANT’S HEART,

“Getting excited to make someone else successful.”

The world’s way of greatness is like a pyramid. The prestige and power of the great person is built on the many subordinate persons beneath him. But in the kingdom, the pyramid is inverted.

The commentator R. C. H. Lenski has observed, God’s “great men are not sitting on top of lesser men, but bearing lesser men on their backs.”

Servant – diakonos – referred to a person who did menial labor, such as house cleaning or serving tables. It described the lowest level of hired help, who needed little training or skill.

Christ elevated this to a level of great significance, using it to describe His most faithful and favored disciples.

- Reflects a selfless and humble life that He honors
- Best exemplified Himself.

Paul described himself as a steward.

- 1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
- 2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.
- 3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by *any* human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.
- 4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.
- 5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men's* hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. (1 Cor. 4:1-5)

Only the opinion of the One he served mattered – not theirs, not his, only the Lord's.

It's not about me, or what others think, only Jesus.

Slave – doulos – purchased property

The position and work of a slave were much lower and demeaning even than those of a servant. He did not belong to himself and was the personal property of his master.

and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave

(Matt. 24:27)

Jesus connected slavery with greatness in God's kingdom.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
(Phil. 2:5)

This Scripture tells us to have Christ's attitude of humility.

Tozer said that 'Humility is as scarce as an albino robin.'

What is humility?

HUMILITY ISN'T THINKING POORLY OF YOURSELF OR THINKING OF YOURSELF LESS,
IT'S NOT THINKING OF YOURSELF AT ALL.

II. The attitude of Christ as our example.

Paul illustrates humility with Christ.

- 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
- 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
- 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
(Phil. 2:6-8)

He left the kingdom of heaven where he existed as God, co-equal with the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He gave up all his rights and prerogatives as God when he became a man.

He *emptied Himself -kenosis*

The Holman New Testament Commentary says,

2:7. Jesus **made himself nothing** or "emptied himself."

Scholars refer to this important statement as *kenosis*, from the Greek word. By becoming a man, Jesus did not lay aside his deity.

Charles C. Ryrie sheds light on this event: “CHRIST DIDN’T BECOME ANY LESS GOD, BUT HE CHOSE NOT TO USE SOME OF HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES. THIS INVOLVED A VEILING OF HIS PREINCARNATE GLORY (JOHN 17:5) AND THE VOLUNTARY NONUSE OF SOME OF HIS DIVINE PREROGATIVES DURING THE TIME HE WAS ON EARTH (MATT. 24:36). FOR GOD TO BECOME A MAN WAS HUMBLING ENOUGH, BUT HE WAS WILLING TO GO EVEN FURTHER. CHRIST COULD HAVE COME TO EARTH IN HIS TRUE POSITION AS KING OF THE UNIVERSE. INSTEAD, HE TOOK THE ROLE OF A SERVANT. THE CREATOR CHOSE TO SERVE HIS CREATURES.”³

When Jesus humbled Himself he left the glories of heaven, riches beyond our understanding. What did it mean for Christ to ‘empty’ Himself?

“He used His equality with God as *an opportunity*,

not for self-exaltation, but for self-abasement, or *emptying Himself*.”⁴

Jesus was a willing slave.

The idea of *taking the form of a bond-servant* is the total contrast of His eternal existence.

Jesus stated His purpose,

“...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,
and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matt. 20:28)

ransom - Lutron – purchase price for a slave – the amount required to buy his freedom.

We were lost in sin – slaves to sin, Satan and death.

Jesus ransom paid for our release.

Jesus gave his life as our substitute – His life in exchange for our.

³ Anders, M. (1999). *Galatians-Colossians* (Vol. 8, p. 225). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁴ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 363). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Paul wrote,

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor,
that you through His poverty might become rich.” (2 Cor. 8:9)

Then he added, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

- 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
- 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
- 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:9-11

Now He is exalted above every other name.

The servant is now the Master – The Lord Jesus Christ.

Every knee will bow before Him.

Every tongue will confess Him as Lord.

“Become nothing if you would become something.”

In His rules of success, you must stoop to rise, go down to get up,
and shrink to grow.

John the Baptist said, “He must increase and I must decrease.”