

Calendar:

Group 6 - Jerry Deschler's group will be meeting after morning services on November 1st at the Doty's home.

The Central Place of Attitude

If your attitude is not right, I don't think you can fix anything else! Everything else in your life depends upon attitude: Your participation in worship; Your responsibility to your spouse and children; Dealing with people; Handling temptation; Enduring suffering; Being properly related to other Christians. If your attitude is not right, you cannot effectively handle, or deal with or fix anything else. It is as Solomon wrote in Prov. 4:23, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."

If we will develop good focus and clarity about attitude, that will put us in position to properly approach every other aspect of practical life. Just look at the words and phrases packed into this little paragraph: love, affection, mercy, and joy and then, consolation in Christ; comfort of love; lowliness of mind. Further, observe what is forbidden: selfish ambition and conceit.

This is about attitude, and this attitude of unselfish humility is essential in order to please God, follow Christ, have personal peace of mind, and to live in harmony with others.

We cannot be united with each other until we are first united with Christ. Our relationship with God through Christ is the basis of our good relation-

ship with each other. And when we address the subject of unity, we need to be sure we work from the right place, and the right place is in Christ. If I'm living in Him, and you are living in the same place, we will be able to be united in attitude.

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself."

Earlier in Philippians, reference is made to preachers who may deliver the right message but their motives are wrong. Back in 1:16, there is the reference to preaching Christ from selfish ambition. Teaching from this text I recently said: For a man to think about elevating himself above another is never a right thought! I said -- For a preacher to worry about why some other preacher has more attention, or more praise or acclaim?

There is never a time when that kind of thinking is justified.



The church of Christ

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Service Times

Sunday Morning Assembly
9:30 AM
Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM
Classes for all ages.
Private classes arranged at your convenience.

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Now, here in Phil. 2:3, we are back to that and it is exceedingly important for every one of us to get this. "Selfish ambition or conceit" just has no good place in our attitude.

Never a time...

Never a place...

Never a circumstance...

No occasion ever, when we should be driven by selfish ambition or conceit.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit...."

"Nothing!" Just forget it! These immature, selfish attitudes can never be justified.

And I think we all realize, where there is selfish ambition and conceit, people don't get along and the Lord's work is not done. Isn't that right? You show me a group of people where there are power plays . . . battles for personal prestige . . . rivalry . . . desire for recognition -- it is ugly; there is discord, division, and tension people can see and feel. Selfish ambition kills churches, dishonors the cause, makes people sick, and offends God.

So let's make up our mind, we will have no part in it! I need to make a specific choice. You need to make a specific choice that you will not have a parade in your own honor and that you will not exalt yourself and look down on others. You will not praise yourself, boast, or act in any conceited way. We need to learn what good attitudes are in keeping with the gospel of Christ, then evaluate ourselves, review that teaching, and determine personally: we will do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

See more about this in Jas. 3:13-18; Eph. 4:1-3; 1 Cor. 3:1-3 and Matt. 18:1-5.

"...in humility, consider others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3b).

Now let's be honest, sometimes we come to a passage in the Bible like this, and our first thought may be, "That doesn't really mean that! That has to be an exaggeration. There must be some interpretation, figure of speech, literary form, something!" Honestly, sometimes we seem

to want to unload the Word, taking the power away.

While there is such a thing as hyperbole, I'm convinced -- in this context -- looking now at the last phrase in verse 3 in Philippians 2, we need to let this stand, and be challenged by it: "...consider others better than yourselves."

If we try to take something off of this or minimize it through some sophisticated explanation, I think we're going to wind up putting ourselves above

others, and arranging ourselves above others will take us away from everything this passage says about genuine humility.

Add verse 4 for further explanation: "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Our selfishness may not be well concealed. We talk about ourselves . . . We get upset when people don't pay attention to us . . . We expect people to treat us in a certain way, and we are almost defensive before we meet people -- wondering if they will give us the attention we believe we need. We may have our greatest interests directed to what people can do for us, rather than what we can do for them.

Self-centered preoccupation is just not very graceful.

Our good brother, Walton Weaver, helps us with this in his commentary: "But Paul says the Christian must esteem others better than themselves, not merely view them as equals. This is to be done, not because it is the natural thing to do, but because as Christians we are commanded to do it. Jesus in his example showed it is the proper thing to do, and he taught that it is the mark of true greatness ... It was for this reason that the apostles commanded it. True unity among brethren is impossible without humility on the part of each Christian" (p. #77, Truth Commentaries, Philippians, by Walton Weaver.).

By Warren E. Berkley

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