

## Spiritual Unity Pt 3

### Philippians 2:1-5

**2** Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, <sup>2</sup> fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. <sup>3</sup> *Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

### Introduction

In a recent survey of 1,000 American church attenders, people were asked, “Why does the church exist?” 89% of the respondents said that the church’s purpose was “to take care of my family’s and my spiritual needs.” Only 11% said the purpose of the church is “to win the world for Jesus Christ.”

To say that American Christians are afflicted with unbiblically self-centered perspectives regarding the church and their proper role in it would be a severe understatement. Many Christians view the church no differently than how they view stores. If you like a store, go there. If you don’t like another store, leave and go somewhere else. If you previously liked a store but today don’t like it anymore because of whatever reason, consider never going back. There are at least a couple problems with this kind of perspective though: 1) The church isn’t a store, and 2) Christians aren’t supposed to be consumers of churches.

Stores exist for you, but the church doesn’t. The church exists for Christ. True, Christ wants to do something with you and for you, but fundamentally, the church exists so that you can serve Christ, not the other way around. Let’s not be so naively selfish as to think that the church exists for us. **Christ** is to be at the center of the church, not you or me.

It's understandable if those who reject Christ have a consumeristic attitude towards the church. But those who call Christ Lord and Savior should not dare be like that.

**Galatians 2:20** ESV / I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

**Luke 9:23** ESV / 84 helpful votes

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

**Galatians 5:24** ESV / 76 helpful votes

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

**Mark 8:35** ESV / 67 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

**John 12:24** ESV / Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

**Matthew 10:38** ESV / And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

**Romans 12:1** ESV / I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

**Luke 14:26** ESV / "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

**Ephesians 4:20-24** ESV / But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

**Romans 6:3** ESV / Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

**Colossians 3:3** ESV / For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

**Philippians 1:21** ESV / 7 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

**Galatians 6:11-14** ESV / But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

**Matthew 6:1-34** ESV / "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

**Dying to Self Poem: Simply beautifully put!**

**When you are forgotten, neglected, or purposely set at naught, and you don't sting or hurt with the oversight, but your heart is happy being counted worthy to suffer for Christ;**

- *That is dying to self.*

When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinion ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart or even defend yourself, but take it all in patient, loving silence;

- *That is dying to self.*

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, any annoyance; when you can stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility, and endure it as Jesus did;

- *That is dying to self.*

When you are content with any food, and offering, any raiment, any climate, any society, any solitude, any interruption by the will of God;

- *That is dying to self.*

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation or record your own good works or itch after commendation, when you can truly love to be unknown;

- *That is dying to self.*

When you can see your brother prosper and have his needs met, and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy, nor question God, while your own needs are far greater and you are in desperate circumstances;

- *That is dying to self.*

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself and can humbly

submit, inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart;

- *That is dying to self.*

Review:

There are five of them, five practical principles given here. They are inter-related and inter-connected but we can sort of pull out five points, three of them are negative and two of them are positive. There are some things to exclude and some to include. Obedience always has a negative and a positive side..

## OUTLINE

I. NO SELFISHNESS

II. NO GLORY

III. NO PRIDE

IV. NO SINGULARITY

V. NO SELF-CENTEREDNESS

I. NO SELFISHNESS

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition*

**Definition:** (the seeking of followers and adherents by means of gifts, the seeking of followers, hence) ambition, rivalry, self-seeking; a feud, faction.

**2052** *eritheía* (from *eritheuō*, "work for hire") – properly, work done *merely for hire* (as a *mercenary*), referring therefore to *carnal ambition* (*selfish rivalry*).

Ancient Greek uses **2052** /*eritheía* ("mercenary self-seeking") of acting for one's *own gain*, regardless of the discord (strife) it causes. **2052** / *eritheía* ("selfish ambition") places self-interest ahead of what *the Lord* declares right, or what is good for others.

erithion. Now that word means selfish ambition...selfish ambition. It refers in some uses to strife because that's tied in. As soon as you become selfish you are literally at war with everybody else. It can be used to refer to a party spirit, factions, rivalry, partisonship, that's the idea. It's the kind of self-seeking that leads to quarreling, hassling, haggling, fighting, arguing, contending. And by the way, it is listed in **Galatians 5:20** as a work of the flesh. It is not a work of the Spirit, it is a work of the flesh. Aristotle used it, I think, in a very appropriate way. It fits right in to where we are in America now. He used it as the word to describe the self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means. It is that ugly self-promotion that pushes oneself up in the eyes of people by stepping on the neck of someone else...which is basically the format for all political campaigning, as you well know. You win by destroying someone else and you fulfill your selfish ambition.

It is egotism. Egotism that is intent on advancing itself, egotism driven by personal desire which is always destructive and disruptive.

this is the protect my turf mentality, Mine is the best and the only way. Dont disrupt me or try to move me.<sup>o</sup>

**I Cor 1: 10** Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. <sup>11</sup> For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household*, that there are contentions among you. <sup>12</sup> Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

II NO GLORY

or conceit,

**Cognate: 2754** *kenodoksía* – "a state of pride which is without basis or justification – 'empty pride, cheap pride, vain pride' " (*L & N*, 1, 88.221), used only in Phil 2:3. See 2755 (*kenodoksos*).

secondly he adds to it, and there's really a lot of overlap in the two, but he says, "Do nothing from selfishness," and then says in the Greek text, "Nor according to vain glory," kenodoxia, according to empty conceit is a good way to translate that

### III. NO PRIDE

**5012** *tapeinophrosýnē* (a noun, derived from 5011 /*tapeinós*, "low, humble" and 5424 /*phrḗn*, "moderation as regulated by inner perspective") – properly, *low; humility, "lowliness"* of human pride (self-government); that *quality* of mindset of "having a humble opinion of oneself, i.e. a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness – i.e. lowliness of mind" (J. Thayer).

In Scripture, 5012 /*tapeinophrosýnē* ("lowliness, humility") is an inside-out virtue produced by comparing ourselves *to the Lord* (rather than to others). This brings behavior into alignment with this inner revelation to keep one from being *self-exalting* (self-determining, self-inflated). For the believer, 5012 /*tapeinophrosýnē* ("humility") means living in *complete dependence on the Lord*, i.e. with no reliance on *self* (the flesh).

. The adjective form, tapeinos, was often used to describe the mentality of a slave, to convey the idea of being base, shabby, scummy, unfit, low, common, valueless, useless. So it wasn't a virtue. It was a term of derision. Humility was never seen in the pre-New Testament pagan world as a virtue, it was always seen as something ugly, never to be sought, certainly never to be admired.



In the Old Testament, God did hail the virtue of humility. If you read the Old Testament, you find that he chose the insignificant and the humble for His work. You read that He saved the lowly and He saved the meek and He saved the humble and He heard the prayers of the downcast. And He gave grace to the lowly. So it was there all the time in the Old Testament, but paganism never picked it up. And in paganism, to be humble to be humble was to be base, common, useless, valueless, worthless. And all of a sudden, when you come to the New Testament it gets turned into a virtue. And he defines it. Humility of mind here is regarding one another as more important than yourself, that's it, very simple. “

Better

**5242** *hyperéxō* (from [5228](#) /*hypér*, "beyond, above" and 2192/*exō*, "have") – properly, "have beyond, i.e. be superior, excel, surpass" (A-S); to exercise prominence (superiority).

More important" could be translated superior, superior.

You say, "How can I do that? How can I think of others superior to myself?" I mean, we don't do that very often. In fact we usually think of others as less than ourselves. We gloat, don't we, over talking about other people's failures? How can you consider, from hegeomai, how can you consider others superior to yourself? I mean, honestly, how can you do that? How can you deal with that issue? Let me give you a suggestion.

Do you know the heart of any other person? Do you know what's in the other person's heart? Do you? No. Do you think you do? Sometimes. You may be right, you may not. I mean, a wife may say to her husband, "Ha, I know what you're thinking." She may be right, she may not. If she's not it's very frustrating for him, if she's right it's even more frustrating. But basically we don't know what's in somebody's heart. The only sin that I know in another person is what I can see or hear. That's all I'm going to know. So I can't really know what's in their heart. I can't know what sin

torments them. I can't know what grace is abound within them. But there is one heart that I do know, mine. And I know my own heart so very well that I know the sin of my own heart.

Now think about it this way. You know more sin about your own heart than you do about anybody else's, right? So if we're talking from the level of first-hand information, who is the worst sinner you have ever met? Who is it? Come on, be honest. You. I'm talking first-hand information. Who's got the most corrupt mind you know of? If you're honest you're going to say me because you don't know what's in somebody else's heart. Now what I'm saying to you, dear friend, is you've got enough personal information to put yourself in a position where you can consider others superior to you. Did you get that? That's a pretty practical way to view it. Every man knows his own heart first. And every man who knows his own heart and every woman who knows her own heart knows what is there. And you have enough information to give yourself a low estimate of what you really are. So do I. So it shouldn't be any major issue for me to look at someone else as superior to myself. We can assume people are superior to us spiritually if all we can see is what's on the outside.

I can assume that about all of you, I mean, I see you, you're all dressed up nice, you've got your Bible under your arm, you're here in church. That's all I know. And I look at my own heart, I know more than I wish I knew. What makes Paul say the things that he says? You look at Paul and you say, "Oh, Paul, I mean you're the greatest Christian that ever lived." This is what he said, "I'm the least of all the Apostles who am not fit to be called an Apostle." You say, "Is that false humility?" No, that's because the person he knows best is whom? Paul.

Now why does he say this? First Timothy, I: 15 "It's a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am chief, foremost,"

past tense...present tense. Now how in the world can Paul say he's the worst sinner in the world? From personal information, he is. That's right. And from all that you know personally, so are you, so am I. Now that perspective ought to help us to look at others with a different view.

I love the story of Dr. Alexander White of Edinburgh. A man came to see him to report on a meeting that was held in Edinburgh. A certain preacher came into the city to preach and it was his habit of preaching to attack the other preachers. And this friend said to him, and I'm quoting from this biographer, this friend said, "Do you know what he said, Dr. White? Dr. White replied, say on. He said that Dr. Hood Wilson was not a converted man. Dr. White was indignant. He leaped from his chair, his face was dark with indignation, 'That rascal,' he said, 'That rascal. Dr. Wilson, not a converted man.' And he was outraged.

"The visitor amazed to see the man of God so flamingly indignant went on. 'That wasn't all he said, Dr. White. He said that you weren't a converted man either.'

White's pacing suddenly stopped. The flame in him subsided. Slowly returning to his chair, he put his face in his hands and remained a long minute in silence. And then looking up he said to his visitor in a voice of pleading, 'Leave me, friend, leave me. I must examine my heart.'"

Now there's a man of character. Problems of discord and problems of division and faction end when we hold others as more worthy of respect and honor and a right to be heard and followed than we do ourselves. And you shouldn't have any problem doing that because of the information you have about your own heart.

#### IV. NO SINGULARITY

, "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests."

**2233** *hēgéomai* (from **71** /*ágō*, "to lead") – properly, to lead the way (going before as a *chief*) – cognate with **2232** /*hēgemón* ("a governor or official who leads others").

**2233** /*hēgéomai* ("what goes before, in front") refers to *coming first in priority* such as: "the leading thought" in one's mind, i.e. to

esteem (regard highly); or a leading authority, providing leadership in a local church (see Heb 13:7,17,24).

[2233 /*hēgéomai* ("an official who *leads*") carries important responsibility and hence "casts a heavy vote" (influence) – and hence deserve cooperation by those who are led (Heb 13:7; passive, "to esteem/reckon heavily" the person or influence who is leading).] Oh, what can we say about this? We live in a society where that's all anybody cares about, their own personal interest. And no wonder, we're fed that. I picked up a book of poems this week. I don't even know why I picked it up, maybe the Lord wanted me to share these with you. Couldn't believe what I read, this is contemporary poetry. "Give up thinking of others. If you want to think of others, think of your own self in them. Give up looking at others. If you want to look at others, look at your own self in them. Look at your own self and become immersed in your own ecstasy."

### Poems of the day

Here's one. "There is nothing but you. Nothing different from you. Nothing to attain other than you. Nothing that can be taken from you. That is all you need to understand. There is nothing to know other than you."

Here was my favorite. "Meditate on yourself. Worship yourself. Kneel to yourself. Understand yourself. God dwells within you as you."

That's where our world is, our society. Boy, does that pour gas on the fire of fallen pride. And Paul says, "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests." The opposite. You need to be responsible for the conditions and matters of your own life, but don't merely be concerned with that. The idea here of that verb **"look out for" is to regard as your aim or your goal.** Don't regard as your aim or goal or purpose in life to take care of only your own personal enterprises. How can we communicate how desperately important it is for us to get passionately involved in the causes of others? That's why we have conflict, even in the church, because we only own our own little piece of the pie. We don't see the big picture. We don't even care about someone else's enterprise. Oh, and this fleshes out in such pitiable

minutiae in the church. You need to give attention to your own personal interests. And the idea here, I believe, has to do with legitimate interest, ministry interests, things that would honor the Lord, things that are part of our responsibility as Christians. But don't merely do that. But also for the interests of others. The word "interest" by the way is things, very generic. And there's a whole lot, page after page of discussion in commentaries about what the "things" means. And if the Lord had been as generic as He has been here in inspiring Paul, we can assume that He wanted our understanding to be a bit generic, too. So it leads me to say that he isn't trying to be specific, he is just saying while you're busy attending to the matters which are on your own heart and are your own responsibility, be equally concerned about the same matters in the lives of those around you. That's the idea.

You want to encompass their interests, and their enterprises, and their needs, and their tasks, and their goals, and their gifts, and their spiritual character, and their ministries, and their qualities, and their strength, and their significance to the Lord and to the body, should be equally important to you as your own. Boy, this is a high standard, isn't it? You know, our fallenness has a difficult time in literally giving all of its energy, all of our energy to a cause and pouring our soul into that cause and being equally concerned about everybody else's cause. That's not easy but that's a high standard. I mean, I look at the Christian community and it is tragic to see all of the conflict and competition, really tragic, just unbelievable.

High standard. Eliminate selfishness, that's that personal ambition that ties you into your little piece of turf. Eliminate empty conceit, that's the driving passion to see your name exalted and your person lifted up. The corrective for that is the third principle, look at others as superior to yourself and that will allow you to give to them more attention than you give yourself...more trust, more confidence and to think more highly of them. And then the fourth principle in verse 4, again a negative one, "Don't merely look out for your own personal interests." Don't get caught in that particular trap where your life is consumed with your own things.

## V. NO SELF CENTEREDNESS

**σκοπέω, σκόπω**; (**σκοπός**, which see); from Homer down; **to look at, observe, contemplate. to mark**: absolutely, followed by **μή** with the indicative (see **μή**, III. 2), **Luke 11:35**; **τινα**, to fix one's eyes upon, direct one's attention to, anyone: **Romans 16:17**; **Philippians 3:17**; **σεαυτόν**, followed by **μή** with the subjunctive **to look to, take heed to thyself, lest** etc. **Galatians 6:1** (see **μή**, II. 1 b.); **τί**, to look at, i. e. care for, have regard to, a thing: **2 Corinthians 4:18**; **Philippians 2:4** (2 Macc. 4:5).

(Compare: **ἐπισκόπω, κατασκοπέω**.) [SYNONYMS: **σκοπεῖν** is more pointed than **βλέπειν**; often equivalent to **to scrutinize, observe**. When the physical sense recedes, equivalent to **to fix one's (mind's) eye on, direct one's attention to**, a thing in order to get it, or owing to interest in it, or a duty toward it. Hence, often equivalent to **aim at, care for**,

but also be concerned with the interests of others who have every right to your concern and your prayers. As I said, this is a tremendously high standard. And we would expect it. Would we expect anything less? If we can live out these things, we can eliminate competition and we can eliminate collisions in the church and in the body of Christ.