

# Interest in Interests

Humble Unity Part 5  
Philippians 2:4 3-20-2016

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Summary: When we have disputes, we tend to focus on positions only, while ignoring the underlying interests. This passage calls us to keep our eye on the other person's interest throughout the discussion, and to adopt that interest as our own. That person's interests are actually Christ's interest. But if our interests are godly interests, we should not be too quick to throw them out either. So instead of trying to defeat the person, or accommodate them, or avoid the conflict, or compromise, we should collaborate in an effort to serve both interests. Even if a good solution cannot be found, the relationship stays intact because both sides feel loved when the other person adopts their interests. If the other person's interests are sinful, call them to repentance and remind them of godly interests that they have lost sight of, like Abigail did with David.

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**Philippians 2:1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

## Introduction

“Hey look, here they come again. Wow. I’m surprised they came back after how they got treated last time. But ... now it looks like there’s more of them ... a *lot* more. And look down there. Oh man, there are hundreds of them. And this time they have swords! Oh boy. Quick, go run and tell Abigail.”

“Tell her what?”

“Tell her that for the past six months, every time we were out in the fields, the only reason none of the master’s sheep got stolen was because of David and his men. They were like a wall around us. There were a bunch of times when some gang would come through, and they would have cleaned us out, but

David's men stepped in. And when they were dumb enough to try to fight David's men, they didn't last five minutes. And besides that, they were just really kind to us. They were always helping us out, taking care of us, lending us a hand when we needed help – they have been so good to us. So then last week David sent a few of them to meet with our master. All they did was ask for a little food. We owe them a whole lot more than that. But Nabal was his typical, proud, arrogant self. He belittled them, insulted them, and sent them away empty-handed. Go on. Go run and tell Abigail. Maybe she'll know what to do. And tell her it's not just a dozen men - there's like 400 of them, and they are armed."

So Abigail gets the news and goes out to meet David, and this is what David told her: "May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!" (1 Sam.25:22) He's not going to just kill Nabal. He's going to slaughter every servant, every hired hand, every son – every last male on that property. It's going to be a bloodbath.

That is what pride and arrogance will do for you. When you feel the need to stand up for your rights and your dignity, when you find yourself thinking, "I'm not backing down in this argument – I've got my pride," when you are tempted to stubbornly hold your ground in an argument just so the other person doesn't have the satisfaction of winning – remember this. Pride never pays off.

**Proverbs 15:25 The LORD tears down the proud man's house**

**Proverbs 16:5 The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.**

The higher I lift myself up, the farther I put myself from God's presence.

**Psalms 138:6 Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.**

When I reach out for God in a time of need, he will be nowhere to be found if I have clung to pride. And on that day when the storm hits and my life falls with a great crash because of my pride, God will not be there to help me. But on the other hand, God is near to the humble. Psalm 138:6 says he **looks upon the lowly**. Humility draws the gaze of Almighty God. Drawing His gaze means attracting His grace. The more you humble yourself, the more you attract grace from God.

**James 4:6 That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."**

We have been studying verse by verse through the book of Philippians and we come this morning to verse 4 of chapter 2. In verse 1 he gave us the motivation, reminding us of his affection and tenderness towards us. In verse 2 he gave us the mandate - be unified in the church, like-minded, having the same love, one in spirit and purpose. And then the means in verse 3. The way to achieve that kind of unity is not to just have everyone sign the same doctrinal statement or statement of philosophy of ministry. The only way for us to become one in heart and soul is to have good attitudes towards each other, and that will only happen when we have humility. And so in verse 3 he calls us to humility.

**Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.**

Just look at the person sitting next to you or in front of you right now, and think, *You are more significant than me*. You matter more than me. You are more important than I am. That is the attitude God commands us to have. When we're not having that attitude, we are sinning.

"Oh, here comes that guy. He's really going to waste my time."

Is that what I think? Or do I think, "Oh, here comes that guy. He's more important to me. His time is more important than my time"? Consider others more important than yourself. That's where we left off last week. And then, in verse 4, he expands that out a little further.

## **Look to the Interests of Others**

**4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

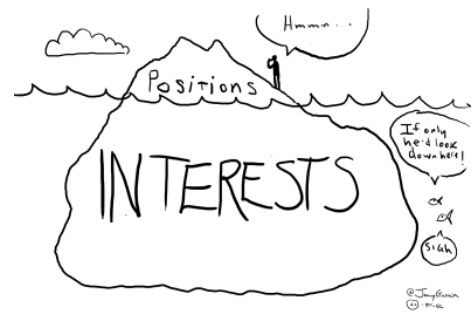
Think of the last time you got into an argument or conflict with someone. Maybe a fight with your spouse, or a conflict here at church, or someone at work or school, maybe you got into an argument with your brother or sister. In that argument, whose interests were you looking out for? Can you honestly say that you are looking out for their interests? Did you even stop to think about what their interests actually are?

Most of us, when we get into an argument, have very little understanding of what the other person's interests are because the whole time they're making their point, our mind is racing trying to think of how we are going to counter what they are saying. I see the other person's interests as a threat to my interests. If I acknowledge your interests as valid, I lose ground in this whole argument. So what do I do? I do everything I can to minimize the validity of your interests and maximize my interests, so that I can win.

But as we saw last week, that's not really winning – it's losing. We are a body, so what hurts someone else, hurts you. And what benefits someone else benefits you. So if we get into a conflict, I need to figure out what your interests are and try to serve those interests – and I need to do that, not just to be nice to you, but for my own sake.

## Interests and Positions

Usually when there is a conflict, most of us only think about the other person's *position*, rather than interests. I have my position on the issue, you have a different position, and we just debate about which position is better. And that's as far as it goes. When we do that, we are missing something very important. The reason I hold my position is because of some underlying interests that I have. And the reason you hold your position is because of some underlying interests that you have. And our focus shouldn't be just on the positions, but rather on the interests - the reasons behind the position.



A family is on a road trip, and mom and dad start getting into an argument. His position is that he wants to drive straight through and make it home tonight. Her position is that they should stop at a hotel halfway through. When she presents her arguments, he shoots them down, so he can get his way. When he presents his arguments, she ignores them, because she is trying to make the strongest case possible for her side. Neither side wants to acknowledge the strengths of the other person's arguments, because that would weaken their position. What is going to happen in that situation? Somebody is going to win, and somebody is going to lose. Maybe the guy realizes that if she doesn't get her way, she's going to be in a bad mood the rest of the trip, so he gives in. So she wins, he loses, and they stay in a hotel.

Or, maybe it goes the other way. He gets his way, and drives straight through with a defeated wife. Either way, both the husband and the wife have disobeyed Philippians 2:4.

**Philippians 2:4** Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

## Looking

That word **look** is significant because that is not the word that Paul normally uses. Normally he prefers the word *seek*. For example, in Philippians 2:21.

**Philippians 2:21** For everyone seeks his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 10:24** Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

**1 Corinthians 13:5** [Love] ... does not seek its own interest

So Paul's typical way of speaking is to say that we should seek other people's interests. Seeking is an active thing – you are actively trying to bring about the other person's interests – to make them happen.

And we are commanded to do that repeatedly in Scripture. But before you can be successful doing that, you have to understand what those interests are. So in our verse here he tells us to **look** to their interests. That word **look** means to keep your eyes fixed on something with special interest. The whole time you are going back and forth with the person, you are keeping your eye on their interests. You find out as soon as you can what their underlying interests are – why they hold the position they hold, and what it is they desire. And then the whole time you’re talking, you don’t let those interests slip from your sight.

So in the example I gave, the husband needs to have a very clear understanding of exactly what the wife’s interests are. Her position is that she wants to stop and make it a two-day trip. But what are her interests in holding that position? So he asks her, and he finds out that her underlying interest is that the vacation will actually be fun for the family and not miserable. And then she tries to discover his interests, and finds out that he is trying to keep expenses down as part of his effort to keep the family solvent. Is either one of those a sinful interest? No. Trying to be a good steward and trying to make it a nice vacation for the family are both perfectly good interests. So how can both the husband and the wife obey Philippians 2:4? The entire time they are having this discussion, he has to keep looking to her interests. Those interests are now his objective. If that is a strong desire in her heart, and it’s not a sinful thing, then it should be a strong desire in his heart. And he can talk all he wants in this discussion about the various positions, but the whole time he’s talking he must keep his eye on her interests and not lose sight of them.

So, think for a second about some specific time when someone in your family has hurt you. Or someone in this church has slighted you, and you were hurt or offended. Why did they do it? Probably because they were focused on serving their own interests. So what are those interests? If your answer is, “I don’t know,” then that’s no good, because that means you don’t have your eye on their interests enough to even ask. If you do know what interest they are serving, are you also serving that interest? That is what this passage requires of you. Probably the reason you are offended is that they failed to serve your interests. But getting them to serve your interests is not your responsibility. Your responsibility is to keep your eye on their interests.

## Christ’s Interests

And if you want to know how important this is, look again at 2:20. Paul is explaining why Timothy is the only person he can send to Philippi.

**Philippians 2:20 I have no one else like him, who is worried about your interests. 21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.**

Notice the word **worried** in verse 20. Your Bible might say he is **genuinely concerned** or he has **genuine care**, but the word literally means *to worry* or *to have anxiety*. Paul is saying, “Timothy is the only one I have who actually has anxiety for your interests.” Timothy really understood verse 4. He kept his eye on the Philippians’ interests so much that he adopted them as his own interests – even to the point where he had anxiety over them. Timothy really, really wanted the Philippians’ interests to be served. And that made him the only one qualified to go minister to them.

But here is where it really gets interesting. Look at verse 21. Paul says, “I can’t send anyone else, because everyone else looks out for his own interests, rather than...” and you expect him to say rather than your interests. But in place of that, he says “rather than the interests of Christ.” So if you put verse 20 together with verse 21, you can see that looking out for the Philippians’ interests = looking out for the interests of Christ.

**Philippians 2:20 I have no one else like him, who is worried about your interests**

**21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not the interests of Jesus Christ.**

So is that couple is having that discussion, the husband looks into his wife’s eyes and thinks, “She wants the family to have a good time. That’s her interest, it’s not a sinful interest.

Therefore it is the very interest of the Lord Jesus Christ. I need to try to serve

that interest, because I am a servant of Christ.”

And she is commanded to do the same thing with his interests. She is not allowed to minimize the importance of trying to stay on budget. If that is his interest, then she needs to adopt that as her own interest as well, because it is the interest of Christ.

## Shared Interests

Do you see how unifying this is? If it's your interest, that means it's Christ's interest, because Christ loves you. And if it's Christ's interest, then it's my interest, because I love him. So now, instead of two people with opposing positions, what we have is a couple with two shared interests. So if it's not a sinful interest, then the command of Philippians 2:4 is to adopt that interest as your own and do what you can to serve that interest.

## Looking to Your Own Interests

But what about your own interests? Should they just go out the window? After our study last week in verse 3, you might think that the godliest, most loving thing to do would be to just sacrifice your own interests for the sake of the other person's interests. So the husband should just say, “Never mind about the budget. I will just give that interest up so that you can have what you want.” Or the wife says, “Never mind about the family having fun. I will give up what I want so that you can have what you want.”

It might come down to that – somebody having to just sacrifice their own interests for the other one. But that's not really what verse 4 says to do. Look what it says: Notice the words **only** and **also**.

**4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

He didn't say, “not to your own interests”; he said **not *only* to your own interests**. That has always bothered me. All my life, I have liked verse 3 a lot more than verse 4. Verse 3 seems like a really high, Christ-like, Sermon on the Mount-type ethic – consider others more important than yourself. Verse 4 always seemed to me to be a little bit lower ethic, because it leaves room for still serving your own interests. Everywhere else in the New Testament we are called to full-throttle self-sacrifice. Die to self and serve others. But here, Paul says both self and others.

Why is that? Is this a capitulation to the world's “look out for #1” ethic? That's popular these days. We are constantly hearing preachers say things like, “First you have to learn to love yourself before you can properly love others.” That sentence is one of the dumbest things people ever say in the church. I don't have to learn how to love myself – I've been an expert at loving myself since the day I was born. That's why I've always been so selfish. How many of you parents have had to take your three year old aside and say, “Listen, you have to learn how to start trying to get your own way”? Does anyone in the room remember ever teaching your child to say, “Mine!”? Did you have to train your little ones how to get upset when they don't get what they want? No, all of that comes naturally. Everyone already loves themselves. Even people who are destroying themselves – they are doing it because of some desire they have. We do not need to learn to love ourselves more. We all love ourselves way too much already.

So no, verse 4 is not a concession to the self-love movement. It's not Paul trying to leave a little bit of room for self-esteem. It is, however, an acknowledgment that very often your interests are good interests. They might be God-given interests that he wants you to pursue. The husband has a responsibility before God to provide for his family and to keep his family solvent financially. He is not at liberty to just throw that out the window. And if the whole point of going on vacation is to have a good time together as a family or to get rest, then for the wife to have that as an interest is a good thing. She shouldn't just throw that out the window as her first option when there's a disagreement.

Suppose you and I get into an argument about some ministry here at Agape. And your underlying interest for your position is you want more people to have a deeper understanding of Scripture, and my underlying interest for my position is I want more souls to be saved. Neither one of us should be quick to sacrifice those interests. Or what if you have a conflict with your spouse over discipline of the kids? You

want it harder and she wants it softer. And your underlying interest for your position is that you want your kids to be self-controlled and obedient. And your wife's underlying interest is she wants your kids not to get discouraged or exasperated. Those are both mandated in Scripture – we can't throw either one out.

If your interest is just a personal preference – like you're in the mood for Mexican tonight and your spouse wants Chinese, then it's fine to sacrifice your preference so they can have what they want (because their preferences are more important than yours). We should be very quick to be willing to give up our own preferences. But if it's more than just a preference, and it's for the good of others, don't give it up as your first option.

## **Five Approaches to Conflict**

When there is a conflict, there are five possible approaches that you can take. And which approach you take will depend on how much you value the relationship compared to how much you care about your position.

### **Defeat**

If you care only about your position, and not about the relationship, you will try to defeat the other person. You do whatever it takes to get your way. Maybe you shout the other person down, maybe you intimidate the other person, maybe you use tears to manipulate the other person, maybe you manipulate just by the fact that your spouse knows if you don't get your way you will be in a bad mood the rest of the day, maybe you just wear the other person down by arguing so much that they finally get sick of arguing and give up - we have all kinds of methods we use to get our way. When you defeat the other person, you get your way that you sacrifice the relationship.

### **Accommodation**

On the other extreme, if you care about the relationship more than your position, you'll go more in the direction of accommodation. You just throw your position out the window to make the other person happy. You have sacrificed your interests, but you saved the relationship.

### **Avoidance**

A third possible response is avoidance. This is when you don't really care about the position or the relationship as much as just avoiding conflict. So you don't even deal with the situation at all, and you might have resentment towards the other person, but you don't deal with that either. That is really a bad option.

### **Compromise**

So what should you do if you care about both the relationship with the person, and your position on the issue? Both are important to you – then what? The typical response at this point is compromise. I will sacrifice half of my position and you sacrifice half of your position and we will meet in the middle. We both lose a little bit, but we both at least come away with something we wanted, and the relationship stays intact. Is that the best outcome? No, there is one more possibility that is much better than compromise: collaboration.

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration is when I adopt your interests as my own, and you adopt my interests as your own. So now I have two sets of interests, and you have two sets of interests. Each person has looked – kept his eye on the other person's interests the whole time – and has now adopted those as his own interests. So if you

walk up to that man on vacation and say, “What is it that you want?” He would say, “I want two things. I want to stay within budget, and I want the family to have a great time on this vacation.” And if you walk up to the woman and ask her, “What is it that you want?” She would say, “I want two things. I want to stay within budget, and I want the family to have a great time on this vacation.” So both the husband and wife have two desires.

But how can they fulfill both of those desires? How can they possibly stay within budget *and* make it an enjoyable vacation for everyone? That’s not easy. That’s going to require some creativity and problem-solving. And one person probably won’t be able to come up with the solution by himself. It’s such a difficult problem that it is probably going to require some collaboration. The husband now has two desires, and the wife has the same two desires, and they need to put their heads together and figure out how both desires can be met.

## **A Form of Love**

And when you do that, very often you can find creative solutions that will serve both interests. If they really work at it, that couple might be able to figure out a way to make the occasion enjoyable and stay within budget. If they both really, genuinely care about the budget and really, genuinely care about making it enjoyable, and they work together as a team, they may come up with a solution that accomplishes both.

But what if they can’t? They try their hardest, but every option they come up with has to either sacrifice one interest or the other. So, say you and I are in a conflict over whether or not to build a new foyer. Your interests have to do with welcoming people to the church and providing for fellowship. My interests have to do with using that money for a missions project, to reach the lost. And we both put Philippians 2:4 into practice – you start really caring about the missions opportunity, and I start really caring about fellowship and welcoming people, so now we both care a lot about both interests. We try and try to come up with a solution that serves both interests, but we just can’t come up with anything. No matter how much we collaborate, we just can’t think of a way to do both. So something has to be sacrificed. Either the missions thing goes out the window, or we have to stick with a cramped, inadequate space for fellowship - one or the other. And so we end up deciding on one.

But the fact that we first adopted each other’s interests will make a huge impact on our unity and love for one another. Suppose the decision is to go ahead and build the foyer. So I didn’t get the missions thing I wanted – that got sacrificed. But I’m not upset with you at all, and I don’t feel mistreated in any way, because when the decision was made to go ahead and build, you stood up and said, “But wait – what about the missions thing?” And I could tell that really mattered to you. You had adopted that interest, and it was important to you. So when it was finally decided that we would build, the fact that the missions project couldn’t happen felt to you like a loss just as much as it did to me. You walked away from the whole thing thinking, “I think we made the right decision, but I didn’t really get my way. I didn’t really get what I wanted, because I really, genuinely wanted the missions project to work out.” When I see you care that much about my interests, then I don’t feel angry or upset when that interest has to be sacrificed. And not only that, but, I’m happy about the fact that we are building the new foyer, because when I adopted your interest as my own interest, that started to matter to me. So even though the decision didn’t go the way I thought it should have, still, I got something I wanted.

Or suppose it went the other way. We decide to do the missions thing. And that feels like a loss to me. When a decision is made, I speak up and say, “But what about the fellowship problem?” That’s a big deal to me, because I adopted that interest as my own. And you can tell that. So our relationship stays intact because you felt loved when I adopted your interests, even though the decision didn’t go that way. And, you’re happy because you did get something that you wanted, namely, my interests.

You see, if you adopt the other person’s interests, you are guaranteed to walk away with at least something that you wanted. Whether it goes your way or the other person’s way, you come out ahead because you now desire both. And our friendship remains as strong as ever because I could tell you really cared about my interests and you could tell I really cared about yours.

You would be amazed how much this would help your marriage. When a husband has to say no to something his wife wants, it's so much easier for her to accept that if there's no doubt in her mind that he really understands her interests and cares about them. Whenever there is a conflict, take some time to discover the other person's interests, and keep your eye on those interests the whole time so that your heart begins to wrap around them.

## Same Interests; Different Methods

Now, someone might ask, "What if the two parties already have the same interest, but opposite ideas on how to serve that interest?" For example, both you and your spouse want to have peace in your household, but you think the way to accomplish that is by stricter discipline on the kids, and your spouse thinks the way to accomplish it is by more leniency in discipline. Or two people in the church both want a more worshipful praise time, but one of them thinks the way to do that is by increasing the volume and adding electric guitars, and the other person thinks the way to do it is by eliminating the instruments altogether. If that happens, the two parties talk it over the best they can, give each other a fair hearing and really listen, and then you trust whoever is in authority to make the decision. That's why God gave us authority structures.

## Sinful Interests

Another question that comes up is, "What if the other person's interests *are* sinful?" Obviously, if somebody has sinful interests, you can't adopt those as your own. So what should you do? You are in a dispute, and you discover that the other person's underlying interest is that he wants to take revenge on someone. Or he wants to engage in some kind of immorality. In that case, the place to go is not Philippians 2:4, but Galatians 6:1.

**Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught by a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.**

You gently, respectfully, try to bring the person to repentance.

**James 5:19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.**

When they have sinful interests, your goal is to bring them to repentance. And one of the most powerful ways to do that is to appeal to their godly interests that they may have lost sight of.

## Appeal to Godly Interests

A great example of that is Abigail in 1 Samuel 25. This is the story I started with at the beginning of the sermon. Proud Nabal returned David's kindness with insults, and David is infuriated and decides to kill everyone. But thankfully, someone was smart enough to go tell Abigail, Nabal's wife.

**1 Sam 25:18 Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys.**

What were David's interests in this matter? Initially it was food and respectful treatment, and then, after Nabal's response, revenge. There was nothing sinful about the first interest, so Abigail goes out of her way to serve that interest and brings all kinds of great food. And she is extremely respectful in the way she speaks to him (vv.23-35). But what about David's other interest – revenge? That is a sinful interest. So how is this woman going to deal with that? She reminds David of a godly interest that he has lost sight of, namely, fighting the Lord's battles and trusting the Lord to fight David's battles.



**28 Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD's battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live.**

Abigail reminds David that he has placed himself in a position to receive God's blessing, because he has always trusted God to fight his battles rather than taking revenge himself. But now all of that is in jeopardy. In his heart, David desires to have a clear conscience before God. He desires to do what's right before God. But he has lost sight of that in this case so Abigail reminds him of it in the most respectful language possible. And it is inspiring language, too. Look at verse 29.

**29 Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling.**

She uses a metaphor that would remind David of the most dramatic moment of him fighting God's battles and God protecting him that had happened in his entire life - the time when he went up against Goliath with a sling.

**30 When the LORD has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, 31 my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself.**

When the other person has a sinful interest, chances are there are some non-sinful interests also mixed in (like food or respect). Go ahead and serve those good interests if you can. And then when you try to bring him to repentance over his sinful interest, appeal to godly interests that he has lost sight of – things that would be ultimately good for him. Remind him that he doesn't want to have to deal with a guilty conscience before God, and that he will be glad if he does the right thing.

## **Assume the Best**

And another thing we can learn from Abigail – show some confidence that the person *will* do the right thing. Assume the best.

**26 Now since the LORD has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands...**

David is standing there with a sword and 400 men ready to go slaughter the entire household, and she says "the Lord has kept you from bloodshed." She just assumes he is going to listen to her and do the right thing.

### ***God's promise***

And one more thing she does – she points him to God's promise. God had promised David a lasting dynasty, and so she reminds him of that in verse 28, and then attaches it to David doing the right thing.

**28 ... the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD's battles.**

The point of that is this: She is saying, "You don't have to take anything by force – God is going to give you everything." When someone is trying to fulfill their desires through sin, we can remind them, "You don't have to revert to sin to serve your interests. God has promised that if you remain faithful to him, he will serve your interests. He will bless you and give you everything you need and supply you with joy and give you far more than you could ever get through sin."

Abigail gives David a perspective of the past, present and future. And that is a great model for how to bring someone to repentance. Think of what it was like when you were walking in obedience to God. Wasn't your life better then? Your conscience was clear, you had God's favor, there was meaning and

purpose in your life. Don't you want to be like that again? Don't you want to go to bed at night with a clear conscience? Trust in God right now to take care of this. And set your hope on what God has promised in the future and don't do anything to forfeit that.

## Conclusion

This kind of humility is so important that God wasn't content to just explain it to us. He decided to actually come down into his own creation, become a man, and show us how it's done. If Jesus' only reason for coming into this world was to die for our sins, he could have arrived as an adult and the whole thing could have been over in one day. But he subjected himself to human weakness and suffering for 30+ years so that we could see exactly what this looks like. And Paul spells that out in some detail in verses 5-11. He gave us the motivation, the mandate, and the means, and now he is going to give us the model. And that's where we will plan on picking it up next time.

**Benediction - 1 Thessalonians 3:12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. 13 May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.**

## Application Questions (James 1:25)

- 1) When you have a conflict with someone, which response are you most prone to: defeat, accommodation, avoidance, compromise, or collaboration?
- 2) What virtue do you need to cultivate to enable you to move more toward collaboration?
- 3) Name one of the most humble people you know. Describe that person to the group, or give an example of their humility.