

Principles for Stability in Your Christian Life Pt2

Philippians 4:1-7

Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

² I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

⁵ Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Dr. Robert Coles, is a social psychiatrist. He is perhaps as esteemed as any man in our country in terms of his area of psychiatry. He is an M.D., he is a research psychiatrist for Harvard University. He is professor of psychiatry and medical humanities at Harvard Medical School. He has written 36 books. He has authored 600 journal articles of one kind or another. And in 1973 he received the Pulitzer Prize. He is a very decorated esteemed and respected psychiatrist.

In an interview he points out the futility of his own area of study. While understanding superficially some things about Christianity, he will not call himself a Christian, and does not believe he is a Christian and makes that clear in another part of an article. But his answers are very interesting.

They asked him why he was not a surgeon.

His answer, "I'm sloppy, not a great quality for a surgeon." He said, "When you get a combination of a befuddled slob who doesn't have the necessary toughness and is a little mixed up himself, you've got a psychiatrist."

" Question: Is it futile then to search for ultimate answers in psychiatry or psychology?

Coles, "The futility is in searching for ultimate answers in the entire secular culture. Psychology happens to be a temporary secular religion. How long will it last? Fifty years. Secular religions come and go. Today it's psychology, tomorrow it will be weight reduction or cholesterol or getting to the moon or Mars. Who knows what our culture will be preoccupied with next? But none of this is going to give us answers to the moral, spiritual questions that we ultimately hunger for. Psychology isn't equipped to answer those questions. Psychology gives us some information about the mind but the mind is not the soul."

Question: Psychology then can help a person's mental health?

Coles, "We shouldn't even use words like mental health. The question is not what is mental health, or do you have mental health. The question is what do you do with your life?"

Question: But even ministers today are becoming psychologists.

Coles, "That is paganism."

Question: Pastoral counseling is the term for it.

Coles, "It's paganism. My mother was dying here in Massachusetts General Hospital. A minister came to see her. He wanted to negotiate her through the stages of dying. She wanted him to pray for her. She knew she was dying. He wanted to talk about anger and denial but she wasn't angry and she wasn't denying, she just wanted him to pray for her."

Referring to psychiatrist. Coles says

Who are these secular experts anyway? What do psychologists and psychiatrists know about the Christian life? What can they tell us?"

Quite an interesting response, isn't it? You get the feeling he's been dropping his bucket in a dry well and he's come to that conclusion.

So many unstable people seeking a solution in a Darwinian Cesspool. Looking for answers to problems that only The Word of God has the solution.

Seeking the secular evolutionary humanist to give them some insight into their troubled heart.

Stability does not come from the world. It cannot be derived from the wisdom of the world . It only comes from God.

LOOK AT PSM 1

As **John MacArthur** emphasizes...

"The Lord is the only sure, reliable, unwavering, unchanging source of joy. Spiritual stability is directly related to how a person thinks about God. No one has stated that truth more clearly than A. W. Tozer. In his classic book on the attributes of God, The Knowledge of the Holy, Tozer wrote

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively

demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech. She can never escape the self-disclosure of her witness concerning God.

Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, "What comes into your mind when you think about God?" we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. (Reprint; New York: Harper & Row, 1975, 9)

Principles for Stability HOW TO STAND FAST

I. Pursue Harmony and Peace.

What are some things that can cause Division

1. Carnality
2. Self-Centeredness
3. Unbiblical Church Government
4. Doctrine
5. Ignorance

A. The Situation

What was the problem here

1. It was not doctrinal or Paul would have corrected on spot
2. These two women were members of the local church they were disagreeing about some opinion of some matter that was not doctrinal.
3. Paul was greatly concerned about this. Its potential is devastating The fact that he mentions there name and it is

put down in holy writ for all to read, means that he was serious about this.

B. The Solution

Urge (3870) (**parakaleo** [word study] from **para** = side of + **kaléo** = call) conveys the basic idea of calling one alongside to help or give aid. Because a person can be called alongside for many purposes, the word has a wide range of meanings including to entreat, appeal to, summon, comfort, exhort, or encourage. Note that the **present tense** points to Paul's continuous urging regarding this matter.

Literally the Greek reads **Euodia I exhort, and Syntyche I exhort** - Paul uses "**urge**" (exhort) (**parakaleo**) twice implying that he went to **Euodia** and urged her and then went to **Syntyche** and urged her, which in turn suggests that they were not exactly seeing "eye to eye" as the saying goes.

The Living Bible renders this verse...

And now I want to plead with those two dear women, Euodia and Syntyche. Please, please, with the Lord's help, quarrel no more—be friends again.

1. Be of the same mind

Live in harmony (**present tense** = continually) - Is more literally "continually be of the same mind" something that is possible only **in the Lord**. If the Lord is in control, there cannot (assuming the parts of the body on in submission to the Head, Christ Jesus) be division. The only way genuine harmony can exist is when the

Lord is in control. When the Head is in control, the parts of the body function as they should.

Live in harmony (5426) (**phroneo [word study]**) refers to the basic orientation, bent, and thought patterns of one's mind, rather than to the intellect per se.

PHILIPPIANS 2

David extols the virtues of harmony writing

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers
to dwell together in unity! | (Ps 133:1-3)

2. in the Lord
3. Get a Fellow believer to Help

There's several possibilities. One, he's referring to somebody we don't know, somebody that was known as Paul's yoke fellow. We don't know who it is but it's somebody unnamed. That would seem a little strange to me since he just named the two women so explicitly, since he names Clement so explicitly in a moment, why would he not name this person? And since he was under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and had perfect recall of everything, it wasn't that he forgot the guy's name. So why wouldn't he put his name in here? So it wouldn't seem to me to make any sense that this is the name of somebody whose name isn't here but who knew who he was and would know that this was him.

The other option is that he's using this singular term in a collective sense and he refers to the church. Indeed as a church entity, you are my yoke

fellow so I ask you...it's a singular but it's a collective noun involving the whole church...I ask all of you to help those women. That's a possibility.

But I think there's a better explanation. Let's say we don't translate the word at all and we just leave it in the Greek. It would say, "Indeed, genuine suzugos, I ask you also to help these women." And I prefer that we leave it untranslated and that he's really talking to a guy named Syzygus. You say, "Well who is Syzygus?" We don't know, but it's very likely that he is one of the overseers or elders mentioned in verse 1 of chapter 1. Remember Paul was writing to the Philippians including the overseers and deacons. Syzygus must have been one of the elders in the church, one of the pastors who hadn't really fulfilled his duty, who hadn't solved this problem. And so Paul taking apostolic authority from God says I want you, Syzygus, to get on this case and help these women.

Now somebody says, "Well if you take the term suzugos as a proper name, then why the word true or genuine? Why would he say true suzugos, or genuine suzugos? It doesn't seem to make any sense." But it does...but it does if you understand it this way. Syzygus was named Syzygus and his name meant yoke fellow. When he calls him true Syzygus, he is simply saying...hey, you are a genuine Syzygus in that you are a yoke fellow. It was a way to sort of identify the man as true to his name.

To help (4815) (**sullambano** from **sún** = an intensifier or together with + **lambáno** = take, receive) means to take hold of together with, to take or seize all together. It has the idea of clasping together or grasping with the hands, seizing and holding fast to someone. The **present imperative** calls for this to be their continual endeavor.

3. Their Significance

1. These Women Labored in the Gospel.

Shared (my) **struggle** (4866) (**sunathleo** from **sún** = together or together with + **athléo** = to strive, contend for a prize, compete in the games = English "athletic") means to strive together with. In secular Greek it referred to an athletic contest in which a group of athletes co-operated as a team against another team (the world, the flesh and the devil),

2. Clement and fellow workers

3. The Book of Life

Rev 13:8

8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain

Rev. 21:27

27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life

1. Pursue Harmony and Peace

II. Maintain a spirit of JOY v. 4

Rejoice in the LORD

This is a command

Let me suggest a few things that should give us JOY

Well first of all you can just rejoice in who He is, right?

That He is sovereign over everything.

To me that is...that's the ultimate. You can't really steal my joy when I realize that God is in charge of everything. He is in charge of every circumstance. The single greatest truth I know about God as a Christian is His sovereignty. He is in charge of everything. Nothing happens out of His control, He controls it all, absolutely all of it. What comfort is in that. Furthermore, He controls it all...get this one...for my good.

We read Psalm 139, we saw how God knows your sitting down, your rising up, He knows the words you speak before you speak them, He knows the way you're going to walk and He holds every part of your life in absolute and total control. What a tremendous truth it is. And when you realize that God is loving, that God is wise, that God has an infinite understanding of every vicissitude, every aspect of life. It's a whole different approach to understand that. It's one thing to know it, to read it, it's something else to believe it with the fiber of your being and that's what holds you in the environment of joy.

Think about it this way. Why do I have joy unspeakable and full of glory? First of all, because everything in my life is controlled by God.

Secondly, **because God saved me and made me His own child** and promised me to give me an inheritance in Jesus Christ. I'm His child, I belong to Him. I rejoice because Jesus Christ is coming some day to take me to be with Himself. And He is right now there preparing a place for me that where He is I may come. I rejoice in that. Furthermore I rejoice because my God is able to supply all my...what?...needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. Furthermore I rejoice because I am being used by God to serve the one I love the most. What a privilege.

I rejoice because God is using my life so that other people can hear the gospel and be saved and God is using my life so that other Christians can be encouraged to love God more and serve Him more faithfully.

I rejoice because I enjoy instant access to God. Do you know that any time I want to, I can talk to God and He listens? I don't even get that in my own house. But I get that from the God of the universe. The God of the universe listens to everything I have to say, even if it's a long conversation.

You know why I have joy? Because death is gain.

Death is gain. That's why I have joy. And the more I understand my God and the stronger my faith in Him and His inviolable plan, the greater the depth of my joy and the deeper my joy the more untouchable it is. You can't get to my joy very easily. On the outside you're not going to touch it, circumstances and all of that, because it's buried deep in my confidence in who God is and in His eternal promises to me. That's spiritual stability.

Why would I compromise? God's in control. Why would I waver in my faith? God is in control. Why would I doubt? How can I doubt a God who is so clearly revealed in Scripture? I can tell you, dear friends, spiritual stability is directly related to these two things to start with...spiritual stability is the product of a person whose life is filled with the love of Christ shed abroad by the Spirit within him and spiritual stability belongs to the person who is so deeply in understanding of the character of God and whose understanding has been translated into a real faith and he believes God to be the God He is revealed to be and in those things he finds his stability.

Spurgeon writes...

There is a marvelous medicinal power in joy. Most medicines are distasteful; but this, which is the best of all medicines, is sweet to the taste, and comforting to the heart. We noticed, in our reading, that there had been a little tiff between two sisters in the church at Philippi;—I am glad that we do not know what the quarrel was about; I am usually thankful for ignorance on such subjects;—but, as a cure for disagreements, the apostle says, "Rejoice in the Lord always." People who are very happy, especially those who are very happy in the Lord, are not apt either to give offence or to take offence. Their minds are so sweetly occupied with higher things, that they are not easily distracted by the little troubles which naturally arise among such imperfect creatures as we are.

III. Cultivate Humility

⁵ Let your gentleness be known to all men.

Let be know *Aorist Passive Imperative*

ginóskó: to come to know, recognize, perceive

Original Word: γινώσκω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: ginóskó

Phonetic Spelling: (ghin-oc'e'-ko)

Short Definition: I come to know, learn, realize

Definition: I am taking in knowledge, come to know, learn; aor: I ascertained, realized.

HELPS Word-studies

1097 *ginóskō* – properly, *to know*, especially through *personal experience* (*first-hand* acquaintance). **1097** /*ginóskō* ("experientially know") is used for

example in Lk 1:34, "And Mary [a virgin] said to the angel, 'How will this be since I do not *know* (1097 /*ginōskō* = sexual intimacy) a man?'"

Gentleness

epieikés: seemly, equitable, yielding

Original Word: ἔΠΙΕΙΚΗΣ, ἔς

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: *epieikés*

Phonetic Spelling: (ep-ee-i-kace')

Short Definition: gentle, mild, forbearing, fair, reasonable

Definition: gentle, mild, forbearing, fair, reasonable, moderate.

HELPS Word-studies

1933 *epieikés* (an adjective, derived from **1909** /*epí*, "on, fitting" and *eikos*, "equitable, fair"; also see the noun-form, **1932** /*epieíkeia*, "equity-justice") – properly, *equitable*; "gentle" in the sense of truly fair by relaxing *overly strict standards* in order to keep *the "spirit of the law."*

1933 /*epieikés* ("justice beyond ordinary justice") builds on the real *intent* (purpose) of what is really at stake (note the *epi*, "upon") – and hence, is *true equity* that appropriately fulfills the *spirit* (not just the letter) of the law.

this word in first position in the sentence and emphasizes the need for this Characteristic

your unselfishness (your considerateness, your forbearing spirit) (Amp)

have a reputation for gentleness (Phillips)

Let your sweet reasonableness, your forbearance, your being satisfied with less than your due, become known to all men. (Eerdmans)

Gentle (Forbearing) (1933) (epieikes [words study]) describes a person who does not always insist on every right of letter of law or custom. It stands for the spirit or attitude that does not seek to retaliate. It denotes one's willingness to give and take instead of always standing rigidly on one's rights. This is the person who is yielding his rights and is therefore gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant or as one has described it exhibits a "sweet reasonableness" or an ability to extend to others the kindly consideration one would wish to receive themselves. The forbearing person is not spineless but selfless.

Titus 3:2

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, ² to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

I Tim 3:3 pastors should be

³ not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome,

James 3:17

¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Matt 5:38

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, '*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*' ³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him

have *your* cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Romans 12:10

¹⁰ *Be* kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³ distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*" says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

If he is thirsty, give him a drink;

For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

What we are talking about here this morning is how we think
Its the battle of the mind.

Arranging Your Mind - Several years ago I read a story about a 92-year-old Christian woman who was legally blind. In spite of her limitation, she was always neatly dressed, with her hair carefully brushed and her makeup tastefully applied. Each morning she would meet the new day with eagerness.

After her husband of 70 years died, it became necessary for her to go to a nursing home where she could receive proper care. On the day of the move, a helpful neighbor drove her there and guided her into the lobby. Her room wasn't ready, so she waited patiently in the lobby for several hours.

When an attendant finally came for her, she smiled sweetly as she maneuvered her walker to the elevator. The staff member described her room to her, including the new curtains that had been hung on the windows. "I love it," she declared. "But Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen your room yet," the attendant replied. "That doesn't have anything to do with it," she said. "Happiness is something you choose. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how it's arranged. It's how I arrange my mind."