

**Attitudinal Unity**  
**The Peace of God Part 1**  
**Philippians 4:1-2 9-18-2016**

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Summary: Unity is of surpassing importance to God, and is essential for a church to stand firm. And it is always your responsibility to reconcile, regardless of who is at fault or who is upset. The command is to have the same attitude (the attitude of Christ described in chapter 2). We must accept and welcome those with differing opinions on disputable matters, without condemning, judging, or looking down on the person. When there is a conflict, those involved must try to resolve it privately first, but if that is unsuccessful, they should seek outside help. Paul shows by example that the way to have this attitude is by loving one another.

Introduction..... 1  
The Command: Unity ..... 2  
    Urgency..... 2  
    Peace..... 2  
    Your Responsibility ..... 3  
    The Importance of Unity..... 3  
    Stand Together or Fall Apart..... 3  
The Definition: Christ-like Attitude..... 4  
    Same Attitude..... 4  
    Disputable Matters ..... 5  
        Accept..... 5  
        Don't Look Down..... 6  
        Don't Condemn ..... 6  
        Don't Judge ..... 6  
Mediation ..... 7  
    Attitudinal Help ..... 8  
    Paul's Example ..... 8  
Love..... 9  
    Application Questions (James 1:25) ..... 10

**Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends! 2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.**

**Introduction**

Imagine for a moment that you are living in Philippi in the first century and your name is Syntyche. One day there's a big commotion outside and you go out and see - he's back! Epaphroditus is back! When he left to go bring the gift to Paul in Rome, you thought you would never see him again - especially later when you heard he was on his deathbed. But, obviously, he recovered and now here he is! And he's going through town holding up his backpack, "Hey everybody - I've got a letter from Paul!" Wow. The apostle wrote us a letter! This is the greatest thing that's ever happened in this town. So everybody gathers in the church. People have come from miles around, there is standing room only, everybody's crammed in there on the edge of their seat waiting to hear the inspired, sacred words of the apostle. Honestly, you are actually a little uneasy about going because you knew Euodia would be there, and you and she ... Let's

just say things aren't great between you. But you've got to hear this letter, so you go. And they start reading it and it's amazing. It's unlike any letter you've ever heard in your life. It's great to hear about Paul and how he's doing, and all these glorious truths about Christ and about the gospel - it's just amazing. So you're sitting there, enraptured with the whole thing, and then all of a sudden you hear your name ... from the platform! It's in the letter!

## **2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.**

Whoa – direct hit. Can you imagine – all the people turning around and looking at you?

# **The Command: Unity**

## **Urgency**

Does this seem a little strange to you, that Paul would do that? After the incredibly lofty heights of doctrine and glorious eternal revelations about the gospel and the glories of the Second Coming that Paul just laid out in chapter 3, why would Paul take up space in the Word of God to hand out a spiritual traffic ticket to a couple women who aren't getting along? Doesn't he have bigger fish to fry than that? There are heretics out there. There are false teachers. This church was being persecuted by the government and others. And Paul wants to talk about a couple of church ladies who are having an argument?

Why does this deserve space on the pages of the Word of God? Paul gives it space because a conflict between just two people in a church will affect the whole church. What starts out as a small personal conflict can end up being a divisive crisis in the church. There's a disagreement, it doesn't get resolved, and the next thing you know people are drawing up sides – usually not so much on the facts, but based on who they like.

“Oh, my friend is on her side? Well then, I'm on her side too.”

And the congregation starts to part like the Red Sea. Two people fighting can ruin a church, and a ruined church will impact the kingdom of God. When a conflict isn't dealt with biblically, feelings get hurt, edifying communication stops, other people get drawn in, sides start to form, and gossip takes off, and then both sides start attaching their opinions to Bible verses so they can say it's a matter of principle, and now nobody can compromise and it's a full-blown holy war. And it destroys peace and unity in the church. So Paul addresses it here because that's his focus in chapter 4 – peace.

## **Peace**

If the key words in chapter 1 were *suffering* and *joy*, and the key words in chapter 2 were *humility* and *selflessness*, and the key words in chapter 3 were *loss*, *gain*, *running*, and *imitating*, the key word in chapter 4 is *peace*. Paul wants to close out the epistle with a whole chapter about the peace of God that transcends human understanding. Most of the chapter is about inner peace – the peace of God that quiets your anxiety, fills you with joy, guards your heart and mind, and makes you content in any and every circumstance. But before getting to that inner peace, Paul wants to talk about peace in the church. That's where he wants to start, because peace in the church is of surpassing importance to God.

So yes – not only will Paul mention these two women, but he makes it a matter of urgency. You can feel that urgency by the fact that instead of just telling them what to do, Paul *pleads* with them. And he says it twice. He doesn't just say, “I plead with Euodia and Syntyche.” He repeats the whole line for each woman. It's like if he were there he would look straight at Euodia – “Euodia, listen, I'm begging you, please, get on the same page with Syntyche.” Then he turns to Syntyche and says, “Syntyche, listen to me, I'm pleading with you, would you please reconcile with Euodia?”

## Your Responsibility

That shows us a very important principle about peacemaking. Whose responsibility is it to make the first move in reconciling a broken relationship? *Yours!* Always, yours. If you were the one who was in the wrong initially - it's all your fault – then whose responsibility is it to seek the other person out and make things right? Yours. If the other person was the one who was in the wrong and you were the innocent victim, whose responsibility is it to reach out and try to reconcile the broken relationship? Yours.

**Matthew 5:22 anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.**

If you're the one who is angry, you are the one who needs to take action to reconcile. What if you don't have a problem with the other person – it's that other person who has something against you?

**23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.**

If you are mad at them, or if they are mad at you, you need to go and reconcile. If you are waiting for the other person to make a move, you're out of step with God's Word.

## The Importance of Unity

So Paul doesn't hesitate to bring it up, he doesn't hesitate to name names, and he presses each of them individually to reconcile. All that shows us the urgency. This was Jesus' prayer for us.

**John 17:20 “... I pray ... 21 that all of them may be one, Father”**

Jesus wanted the Father to grant his desire for unity in the church. And you can bet that if it's that important to God the Son, it's equally important to God the Father. And to the Holy Spirit as well.

**Ephesians 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**

It's not our unity. It is the Holy Spirit's unity, and we are commanded to make every possible effort to guard it through the bond of peace. If we fail to do that, we will destroy ourselves. The church will fall. We will stand together or we will fall apart. That's not just a clever saying – that is the point of verse 1.

## Stand Together or Fall Apart

Take a look at how Paul introduces this whole section. Before he brings up the conflict, look what he says in verse one. He says **that is how you are to stand firm in the Lord**. In the Greek, it just says **stand thus in the Lord**. I have always taken the **thus** as pointing back to chapter 3, but it's also possible that it could point forward to what he is about to say about unity.<sup>1</sup> And that would make sense because that's what he was talking about the only other time in this book when he talked about standing firm.

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<sup>1</sup> The NIV translators, and most scholars, take the **thus** as referring backward to what was said in ch.3 (...follow godly examples and keep your eye on the Second Coming - *that* is how you are to stand firm in the Lord).

John Calvin took the **thus** to refer only to v.1 (You are my joy and crown, so stay that way. You're doing great as a church, you're filling me with joy – hold onto that”).

And several other scholars see it as pointing forward to what he's about to say in ch.3 (“Let me tell you how to stand firm in the Lord...” and then he goes on to talk about church unity). What is most attractive about the third interpretation is the fact that it fits best with the other time Paul told them to stand firm in this letter (1:27).

Of those three interpretations it's very difficult to know for sure what Paul had in mind. But one thing everybody agrees on is that verse one is clearly a transition between the discussion in chapter 3 and the discussion in chapter 4. So perhaps Moises Silva is correct when he suggests that the **thus** points in both directions. Paul is intentionally gathering in both chapters and saying, “All of this is how you stand firm in the Lord.”

However we understand it, we do know for sure from chapter 1 that in order to stand firm is a church we must maintain our unity, so we are certainly not wrong to draw the connection between standing firm and unity.

## **Philippians 1:27 ... Then I will know that you stand firm (same word) in one spirit, contending as one man...**

So there is definitely a connection in Paul's mind between standing firm and church unity.

In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus taught that when the storms of life hit, some people's lives collapse; others stand firm. And it's the same way with churches. Some churches run into adversity and trouble and they fall apart. People freak out, they get upset at each other, some people leave, others stay and fight, others leave and fight, until finally the church is destroyed and they close their doors. Other churches stand firm. Disagreements come up, controversies arise, problems happen, and it's difficult, but year after year the church stands firm. All churches have troubles and problems, but how can we make sure that we are one that, when the troubles come, we will stand in the Lord? We will stand firm if we have unity, and we will have unity if we all adopt the attitude of Christ in humility and selfless love. We will stand together or fall apart.

One of the biggest reasons why Satan always goes after the unity of a healthy church is because that's the best way to stop the work of that church in its tracks. He knows he can't stop us by tempting us to just quit ministry, he knows he is not going to be able to get us to buy into false doctrine or throw out the Bible, he knows he is not going to be able to divert us off the track of ministry by pushing us into politics or social issues – he knows none of that will work, and so he goes after our unity. Because Satan knows that if he can disrupt our unity, we will be distracted from the work of the gospel. On a normal week, we have a whole bunch of people focused on praying for one another, learning from God's Word, teaching God's Word, encouraging the saints, sharing the gospel with the lost, helping the weak, worshipping God – but what happens when there is a big church conflict or a split over something? All that stuff gets put on hold. People aren't talking about that anymore – they are talking about the crisis.

“Have you heard this?”

“Here's the latest gossip.”

“Did you know so-and-so said this?”

“How do you think this will play out?”

“I think this is my opinion on this.”

“And so-and-so had her feelings hurt, and I heard that someone was crying.”

“Why do problems like this come up in this church?”

“Here's my theory on how it's connected to all the other problems that have every happened...” on and on and on and... Satan sits back and laughs because all the work of the ministry has ground to a halt. It just breaks my heart when I look over past conflicts that we've had and see how much lost time we've had where really important things had to be put on hold in order to deal with some conflict that's drawing everybody in.

## **The Definition: Christ-like Attitude**

So, Paul is urgent about it because unity is so important. But what is unity, exactly? Both these women are responsible to take action, but what action? What does unity look like?

## **Same Attitude**

### **2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.**

They are to agree. What kind of agreement is he talking about? Was this a doctrinal issue? Did it have to do with philosophy of ministry? Was it some opinion? Whatever it was, how does Paul expect them to just suddenly agree? When we have conflicts in the church, the reason it turns into a big fight is because it usually involves things that both sides regard as really, really important. Both sides feel passionately about it, and that's why they are so upset. So what are we supposed to do – just give up our convictions? Just give up what you believe is right and agree with someone who you think is wrong in the name of unity? Paul didn't do that when he had his disagreement with Barnabas in Acts 15:39. And he

certainly didn't want them to agree with the dogs that he warned them about in chapter 3. So what kind of agreement is this?

The word he uses here translated **agree** is one we've seen numerous times already in Philippians. It's the word for *attitude*.

**Philippians 2:2 then make my joy complete by having the same attitude, having the same love, being one in spirit and attitude, 3 doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility considering others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you looking not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...**

And then he goes on to describe how Jesus did all those things – humbled himself and considered our needs above his own comfort and our interests ahead of his own. That's the attitude – selflessness, humility, graciousness, deference – truly valuing the other person's interests, not just your own.

We don't know what these women were arguing about. They were spiritually mature, godly women, so I'm guessing it wasn't a fight over which tablecloths to use at the next potluck. I'm sure it was something substantive. It might have been about the best way to welcome new people into the church.

"Let's do it this way."

"No, that will make people feel uncomfortable, let's do it that way."

"No, that will make them feel unloved..."

Or maybe one of them got slighted. Euodia led the singing for years, and suddenly they gave that job to Syntyche, and Syntyche never communicated with Euodia about it. Maybe Syntyche believed it was ok to eat meat that had been sacrificed to an idol in a pagan temple. She said, "Idols are nothing, meat is meat, and I can get some really good deals on the leftover stuff – it's good stewardship." And Euodia says, "How can you participate *in any way* with paganism? You should stay as far away from that pagan temple as possible!"

We don't know what the issue was because Paul doesn't tell us. He doesn't bring up the details of the issue, because whatever the issue was, that wasn't the issue. The real issue is their attitudes. Paul doesn't tell them, "Change your opinion" – he says "Have the same attitude."

## Disputable Matters

God gave us a Bible that contains some things that are crystal-clear, and some things that aren't as clear. I know that because the Bible itself says that. Romans 14 is a whole chapter instructing us on how to deal with what God himself calls **disputable matters**. So obviously there is such a thing. There are some things that are essentials of the gospel – not disputable. Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation, the Bible is the Word of God, salvation is through faith in Christ, not by works, Jesus rose from the dead and someday he will return and judge the living and the dead – those kinds of things are not debatable. But there are other things that aren't as clear. And so we find ourselves falling on different sides of those issues. What should we do when that happens? How can you and I disagree on some issue and yet have the same attitude so that we don't disrupt unity? Paul gives us some very specific instructions in Romans 14.

## Accept

**Romans 14:1 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.**

So that's the first thing – **accept** the other person. That word means *to receive* or *to welcome* the person. I don't agree with your opinion, but I still want you to feel welcomed into my heart. I want you to feel accepted and not looked down on.

## Don't Look Down

The example that Paul gives us in Romans 14 of a disputable matter is the issue of eating meat.

**3 The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.**

So that's another part of the attitude. If you are the person with the more lenient view, you must not **look down** on the person who has the more strict view. He's got all kinds of strict rules that you don't think are biblical. Fine, but don't look down on him. Don't call him a legalist.

## Don't Condemn

And if you are the one who's more strict, Paul's instruction for you is don't **condemn** the guy who's more lenient. Don't say, "Oh, he goes to those movies? He smokes? He must not be a very strong Christian." Don't do that. Don't pass judgment on each other's character over differences of opinion.

## Don't Judge

**4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant?**

That guy might have good reasons for holding the view he holds.

**6 ... He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.**

Both sides are doing what they're doing because they want to honor the Lord Jesus Christ. That's a great motive!

If we would have an attitude that says, "I don't agree with your call on this disputable matter, however, I welcome you into my life, I accept you I don't look down on you or condemn you or judge you; I assume you love the Lord. I am assuming that you're holding your opinion because you really believe that honors God the most. I assume that you feel this way because you believe that's what the Bible teaches, and you want to follow God's Word. That's awesome! In a world that dishonors Christ and rejects God's Word, I'm so happy to be dealing with someone who loves Christ and loves his Word..." – if we would approach our differences of opinion that way, it wouldn't be that hard for us to work them out. The reason we can't work out our differences is we start impugning the person's motives, we look down on them, then it becomes personal, and once it gets personal and feelings are hurt, it feels impossible to try to reconcile with that person because you don't even like them anymore.

Paul isn't concerned about which one of these women has the better opinion. And he doesn't tell them to just drop it. Maybe it's important and needs to be debated. He is not even concerned about what the issue is. His concern is their attitude. He knows that when you have two godly women, if they will both adopt the attitude of Christ in Philippians 2, then they will be able to work out their differences in the way that glorifies God and strengthens the church.

That's how you protect the unity of the church. You don't protect unity by sweeping your differences under the rug. You don't protect unity by everybody blindly, mindlessly following some leader without thinking. You don't protect unity by arguing until the other person is so exasperated that they give up. The way that we guard the unity of the Spirit is through the bond of peace – peaceful relationships. And the way to have peaceful relationships is by really caring about one another's interests and humbly listening to each other with an attitude like Christ's attitude in Philippians 2. That's what will make the church bombproof.

## Mediation

Ok, so that's all the guidance Paul gives these women. Just four words in the Greek – **have the same attitude in the Lord**. That's it. If all their efforts to deal with the situation haven't worked, does Paul think that he can just give four words of advice and it's going to clear everything all up? No, he does not. Paul isn't thinking that these women are going to be able to resolve their dispute. So how is it going to get done? Look at verse 3.

### **3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women**

How is it going to get done? This yokefellow is going to help them. Paul is bringing in a third party. Actually, a fifth party. The third party was whoever told Paul about the situation. The fourth party was Paul, and now Paul is bringing in a fifth party. That shows us a very important principle about conflict resolution: mediation. Most conflicts you can resolve on your own. And that must always be our beginning point. In Matthew 18 Jesus was very clear.

**Matthew 18:15 If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.**

The Holman version says **in private**. The ESV says **between you and him alone**. That's important - always start by trying to work it out between the two of you. Don't involve anyone else until you've done everything you can do just between the two of you. This is probably the point where we most often go wrong in dealing with conflicts. So often we have this impulse to talk to someone else about it. Sometimes that might be wise, if you know it's a volatile situation and there is someone else who knows the person better than you who could give you some guidance on the best way to approach it. But we probably do that way too much. Unless it's an extraordinary situation, the default should always be to go to the person one on one, in private, and keep it just between the two of you as long as possible. And Jesus says, **if he listens to you, you have won your brother over**. You confront him, he repents, and it's done. No need to tell anyone about it – ever. No need to bring it up with that person again – ever (even if they sin against you again in the future). No need to talk about it, no need to think about it – it's over.

However, sometimes that doesn't work. You try and try to work it out, but the more you talk the worse it gets. You meet with the person to resolve X, and you come away with X unresolved, plus now you're in conflict over Y and Z. You're both trying, but it's just not working.

If it's a clear sin issue, then you follow the steps of Matthew 18 (bring multiple witnesses to confront, then bring it before the church, etc.). But what if it's not a clear sin issue? It's a matter of opinion, or a communication problem, or something that you both just see from totally different perspectives, or something like that. Then what? Get a mediator. Bring in a third party – someone you both respect, who can be objective, listen to both sides, and help you work it out.

That's what the Bible teaches us to do. Think about it - how did Paul know about this situation? He's in prison 800 miles away. Do you think when this letter was read, they got to that point and said, "Wait a minute – how does Paul know about this? Ephaphroditus! You must have gossiped about us to Paul." You can just picture both these ladies, when this part of the letter was read, turning around and looking at Ephaphroditus.

Paul must have heard about it from Ephaphroditus, but he doesn't make any apology about that. He doesn't say, "I'm sorry, I should have never listened to the gossip." If nothing else had been done yet then Paul might have said something like that – "Don't talk to me about it. If you have a concern, you go to them yourself." But there does come a point when nothing else is working where someone in leadership or some third party needs to step in and help. And given the fact that these are two godly women, it's very likely that they were *glad* to have the help. Because no one who loves the Lord wants to continue to be at odds with a sister in Christ.

## Attitudinal Help

So Paul speaks directly to this individual he wants to step in and gives him some direct instruction. What does Paul tell that guy to do? Does he say, “Rebuke these two women”? No. “Kick them out!” No. “Tell them to just be quiet and keep their big mouths shut in the church.” No. What does he say? “Help them.”

### 3 Yes, and I ask you true yokefellow, help these women...

Help them do what? Is he telling some church leader to step in and figure out who's right and take sides and settle the matter – “Ok, she's right, you're wrong, you need to agree with her”? No he doesn't tell him to settle the matter. He just says, “Help them.” Help them do what he told them to do in verse 2 – **have the same attitude in the Lord**. Well, that's tricky. How do you help someone have an attitude? It would be one thing to step in as a judge or an arbiter and say, “She's right, she's wrong – I rule in favor of her.” That would be easy, but that's not what Paul asks for. He doesn't say, “Make a ruling”; he says, “Help them have the right attitude.”

When you see the Bible calling us to unity and to think the same thing, it's not saying we have to have the same opinions on everything. The issue is attitude. Two people can have opposite opinions and still have the same attitude. You can disagree with someone but still be on the same side. I disagree with you, but I'm on your team. I'm on your side. I'm for you, not against you. I care about your interests. I'm eager to put your interests ahead of my own comfort and preferences. If you can get both Syntyche and Euodia saying that, then you've reached your goal. From there they can debate and discuss and hammer out their differences, but it's not going to fracture the church. It will strengthen the church.

Now, are there some times when it is good to have arbitration – where two people just can't come to agreement and so both sides agree to just let a neutral, wise third party make a decision on the matter? Sure. That is basically what we see in 1 Corinthians 6, where it says that instead of taking each other to court, let the church handle irreconcilable disputes. You find someone in the church – maybe your prayer group leader, maybe the elders, the deacons, or just some individual, and you say, “We both trust them, we both respect them – let's just both make our case to them and let them make a decision, and we'll both agree to whatever they decide.” If Christians would handle conflicts that way instead of going to court – not only would you tend to get a much better decision (because we have access to biblical wisdom and the mind of Christ), but it's a whole lot cheaper. I am always amazed when some couple splits up and it comes time to divide the property, and by the time they pay the lawyers and take it to court, there's hardly any property left to divide up! Why not let the church do that and get it done for free? That's called arbitration, and it's where we end up if all else fails.

But in this case, all else hasn't failed yet. The goal at this point is to help these women have a Christ-like attitude of humility. And Paul asks the guy in verse 3 to help with that. That's really going to help us, because how many of you know someone right now who is in some kind of conflict, and you wish you knew what you could do to help resolve it? That's what we are going to learn how to do in verse 3. But before we do that, before we look at what Paul tells the yokefellow to do, let's see what we can learn from what Paul himself does.

## Paul's Example

So, he's telling us to stand firm in verse 1, but look at how much extra verbiage there is in that verse. In the original Greek, the statement that Paul makes in verse 1 about standing firm in the Lord is four words - **thus stand in the Lord**. And yet there are 15 words in the sentence. He addresses them six times with expressions of love in this one sentence. Literally it's **Therefore, my brothers, my beloved, the ones I long for, my joy and crown, stand thus in the Lord, my beloved!** If I would have written that in my high school English class my teacher would have said, “You don't have to say “my beloved” twice in the same sentence – it's redundant.” This has got to be the most effusive expression of love in the whole Bible outside of the Song of Songs. Why is he laying it on so thick? Could it be flattery? Before you step

into the middle of a fight between two women, you do all you can to butter them up so they don't get too mad at you? Well, I think there is definitely some wisdom behind expressing love and affirming the relationship before giving a rebuke. That, in itself, is not flattery, it's just wisdom – as long as what you're saying is actually true. Flattery is when you don't mean it. You say all kinds of complementary things to someone in order to gain their favor, but you don't really believe the things you are saying. One thing we can be assured of here is that what Paul says in verse one really does reflect what is actually in his heart. Every word in Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit does not inspire lies. Everything Paul expresses in verse one is absolutely accurate. This is exactly how Paul feels about these people. He really does love them this much.

## Love

And what we learn from this is that if you want to help people have a humble, loving attitude, the best way to do it is by modeling the kind of love you want them to have. Once again Paul is teaching by example. The number one key to church unity is love. There's no getting around that. If we don't genuinely love one another from the heart, we will not have unity no matter what else we try to do. We can try to rally around a slogan or a purpose statement, we can try to rally around some common goals and objectives, we can make sure we are all following the same processes and policies, we can all sign on to the same doctrinal statement in philosophy of ministry – we could do all of that, but if we don't love one another, we will not have unity.

When you are working together with a group of people and you don't love one another, you might be able to have a shallow kind of unity as long as things are going smoothly. But as soon as adversity and suffering hit, or some big crisis comes up, that shallow unity will evaporate. Whenever there's a lot of pressure that starts coming down on a group of people that don't love each other, they will start to turn on each other. They start to blame one another. They become suspicious about each other's motives. Instead of assuming the best about each other, they start assuming bad motives. They stop communicating. They start focusing on each other's faults instead of overlooking them. Gossip takes off. Bitterness and resentment creep in and start to become entrenched.

A lot of times you won't see any of that as long as things are running smoothly, but as soon as a crisis hits and there is some pressure, all of those things begin to emerge, and unity is destroyed. The only thing that has the power to hold a group of people together even in the face of trouble and suffering is love.

So let's plan on picking it up there next time. We'll learn from Paul about all the various aspects of love – family warmth, heartfelt affection, genuine desire, joy, and eager association. And then from there we can study what Paul told this yokefellow guy to do to help the women have a Christ-like attitude. But for now, let's give our attention to the command that Paul gave these two women. Have the same attitude. We have felt some pressure because of various difficulties the past few years, and we are feeling some pressure right now. We had a congregational meeting last week and there were some differing opinions. We need to strive to work that out. But while we're doing that, let's make sure that we all stand before God in compliance with Philippians 4:2 – all of us, with one heart, having the selfless, humble, loving attitude of Christ. In every conflict, the smallest and least significant to the biggest crisis – let's, every one of us, humble ourselves before God and one another, and let's love one another as Christ loved us, and our unity will be a sweet and pleasing savor to God in heaven.

**Benediction: Ephesians 4:29-32 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

## **Application Questions (James 1:25)**

- 1) If you can think of a time when you had a conflict with someone, and that person had a humble attitude about it, or if you had a humble attitude that softened the other person, describe that to the group (without using names).
- 2) Some people struggle more with looking down on those who are more lenient in the Christian life, and others struggle more with condemning those who are more strict. Which tendency is a greater danger for you?
- 3) If your attitude toward a person starts to go bad, what do you find to be the greatest assistance a third party can give to help your attitude return to a Philippians 2 kind of attitude?