

WHEELERSBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Life Application Sunday School Class

One Another - Session 6

January 11, 2004

Continue from last week:

1. What are some practical ways that we can serve one another and place others ahead of ourselves?

Today's Lesson: Be of the same mind toward one another

Passage for Consideration:

NIV Romans 12:16 *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

KJV Romans 12:16 *Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*

READ Romans 12:1-16 for context

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. 3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; 11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, 13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing 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 be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

To better understand this "one another" command, let's first consider the context. Romans 12 is the great transition in the book of Romans from the theological basis of our salvation to the practical application of our faith. The "Therefore" in verse 1 is the pivotal point in the letter. Here is a call to sacrificial living through spiritual service (verse 1). This sacrifice can only happen as we adopt a different way of thinking, a mindset contrary to the world (verse 2). This thinking is founded in a realistic view of ourselves, which will typically need to be lower than what we tend to think of ourselves. (verse 3). This change in view of ourselves only comes from God's grace, and is necessary if we are going to give of ourselves in the way God requires and

calls. It is through humble thinking that we can begin to function as a body – individual parts in unison with a singularity of purpose. (verses 4-8). The glue that holds it all together is sincere love, free from evil motives (verse 9).

In that context, the practical ways we are to function together is expounded in a series of commands; one another commands. In past weeks we have looked at "being devoted and giving preference to one another. This series of commands is addressing attitudes and motives and demeanor such as fervency, diligence, rejoicing, hospitality, blessing others in the face of provocation, weeping and rejoicing with others. And then we come to our verse for today, verse 16 ; *"Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation."*

What does this mean, "to be of the same mind one toward another?"

In context, it means that our thinking need to be in unity with others thinking, regardless of their worldly position or status. We need to have a relationship and fellowship with others without partiality. This is because we are in the same body, have the same desires and goals – the glory of Christ and furtherance of the kingdom, and therefore we should not be exclusive of others, that is, thinking of ourselves as superior to others, based on things such as economic status, social status, or even religious background. Recall the upcoming 14th chapter of Romans, which addresses the acceptance of one another without passing judgment. This was an issue throughout the early church, Gentile and Jewish believers learning to live in harmony and acceptance of one another, and the principle of acceptance and unity with those of differing heritage and background is certainly a relevant and crucial issue in today's church.

Near the close of this letter, Paul offers a prayer that addresses this same admonition.

READ Rom 15:5-6

5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The greek word translated "one accord" is homothumadon. This word is a unique Greek word, used 10 of its 12 New Testament occurrences in the Book of Acts, and helps us understand the uniqueness of the Christian community. Homothumadon is a compound of two words meaning to "rush along" and "in unison". The image is almost musical; a number of notes are sounded which, while different, harmonize in pitch and tone. As the instruments of a great concert under the direction of a concert master, so the Holy Spirit blends together the lives of members of Christ's church.

Because of our diversity and uniqueness as individuals, we contribute different gifts, perspectives, thoughts, and ideas to the body of Christ. But because we are one in Christ, our Lord takes each individual note, and blends it into a harmonious expression of His glory and grace. It is our responsibility not to allow discord to enter that expression through pride and individualism. To be of the same mind is not to show partiality based on outward status. The result is shown in these verses, that we as one bring glory to God – it is a singular expression of praise – the glory and focus on God and not on any individual. The individuals do not matter; it is the result of the coming together and common thinking and functioning that is important. A cymbal crash or drum beat or even the solo strains of a violin are certainly enhanced a made more meaningful in the context of a full orchestral score. Each musician must yield and submit to the director, and follow the musical score for the beauty and majesty of the writer to come forth. We are the individual musicians in the body of Christ. Jesus is our director, and the author of the musical score. The intention of this score is to sound a symphony of His matchless grace, majesty, and greatness. We need to submit to His leadership, play the music that He provides, and blend harmoniously with our fellow musicians.

What are enemies to this harmonious unity?

James 2:1-9 gives us an answer to that question. Partiality, or being a respecter of persons.

1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? 7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? 8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

God is no respecter of persons according to Acts 10:34, and neither should we be. He is not persuaded or impressed with our accomplishments, wealth, wisdom, or social status. He is the perfect judge who will judge all on the same basis, His righteousness. If God has accepted a person, who are we not to accept that person? God accepts us on the basis of His Son; we should accept one another on that same basis.

Application

1. How do we show partiality in the church today? How do you as an individual do so?
2. What practical steps will you take to avoid being a respecter of persons?
3. How has this issue negatively affected the church today? What are some of the blessings that will likely result in our midst if we take this commandment seriously?