

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”
John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

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The Secret Of Joy In Conflict

People can rob us of our joy. Paul was facing his problems with people at Rome (Phil. 1:15–18) as well as with people in Philippi, and it was the latter who concerned him the most. When Epaphroditus brought a generous gift from the church in Philippi, and good news of the church’s concern for Paul, he also brought the bad news of a possible division in the church family. Apparently there was a double threat to the unity of the church; false teachers coming in from without (Phil. 3:1–3) and disagreeing members within (Phil. 4:1–3). What Euodia (“fragrance”) and Syntyche (“fortunate”) were debating about, Paul does not state. Perhaps they both wanted to be president of the missionary guild or the choir!

Paul knew what some church workers today do not know, that there is a difference between unity and uniformity. True spiritual unity comes from within; it is a matter of the heart. Uniformity is the result of pressure from without. This is why Paul opens this section appealing to the highest possible spiritual motives (Phil. 2:1–4). Since the believers at Philippi are “in Christ,” this ought to encourage them to work toward unity and love, not division and rivalry. In a gracious way, Paul is saying to the church, “Your disagreements reveal that there is a spiritual problem in your fellowship. It isn’t going to be solved by rules or threats; it’s going to be solved when your hearts are right with Christ and with each other.” Paul wanted them to see that the basic cause was selfishness, and the cause of selfishness is pride. There can be no joy in the life of the Christian who puts himself above others.

The secret of joy in spite of circumstances is the single mind. The secret of joy in spite of people is the submissive mind. The key verse is: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better [more important] than themselves” (Phil. 2:3). In Philippians 1, it is “Christ first” and in Philippians 2 it is “others next.” Paul the soul winner in Philippians 1 becomes Paul the servant in Philippians 2.

It is important that we understand what the Bible means by “humility.” The humble person is not one who thinks meanly of himself; he simply does not think of himself at all! (I think Andrew Murray said that.) Humility is that grace that, when you know you have it, you have lost it. The truly humble person knows himself and accepts himself (Rom. 12:3). He yields himself to Christ to be a servant, to use what he is and has for the glory of God and the good of others. “Others” is the key idea in this chapter (Phil. 2:3–4); the believer’s eyes are turned away from himself and focused on the needs of others.

The “submissive mind” does not mean that the believer is at the beck and call of everybody else or that he is a “religious doormat” for everybody to use! Some people try to purchase friends and maintain church unity by “giving in” to everybody else’s whims and wishes. This is not what Paul is suggesting at all. The Scripture puts it perfectly: “ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4:5).

KEY VERSE

Philippians 2:3 (NKJV)

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: Philippians 2:1-11, Romans 12:18

Strive For Unity

1. Philippians 2:2 provides for us characteristics of Christian unity. List these characteristics of unity. In what relationships are you experiencing unity?
2. List some relationships in your life where you are experiencing conflict. Will you commit to pray for these relationships this week?

Tuesday: Philippians 2:3; Proverbs 3:34; 18:12; James 4:6

Never Let Pride Be Your Guide

3. How should Philippians 2:3 impact our thoughts and actions?
4. How does pride lead to conflict? How can humility in our thoughts and actions cause joy?

Wednesday: Philippians 2:4, Romans 12:10; II Timothy 3:1-2a

Pay Attention To Others

5. What are some ways you can look out for the interests of others in your life today?
6. Describe a conflict that you are experiencing. How can Romans 12:10 help you to respond to the person you are in conflict with?

Thursday: Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 3:8-10; Romans 5:6-11

Always Ask: What Would Jesus Do?

7. In Philippians 2:5, Paul points to Jesus as someone who exemplified the kind of life described in verses 3-4. How did Jesus model humility?
8. What was the mind of Christ and the attitude of Christ as mentioned in Philippians 2:6-8?
9. How can you respond like Jesus when you are having a conflict?

Friday: Philippians 2:9-11; Luke 14:11; James 4:10

Remember The Reward

10. How did God the Father respond to Jesus' willingness to humble Himself in obedience to the Father's will?
11. In your own words, write a definition of humility. Think of a biblical example of someone who exemplified humility. Explain the circumstances, how this person displayed humility in their life, and how their humility brought blessing.
12. Is there an area of your life you feel God is calling you to stop acting out of selfish ambition or vain conceit? Is there an area of your life where you feel God is calling you to begin valuing others above yourself in humility? Spend some time in prayer asking God to reveal these areas to you and for the grace to be obedient in them.