

Title: Esteem Others Better  
Text: Philippians 2: 3  
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**Philippians 2:3: *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4: Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.***

Moved by God the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul is writing to believers at Philippi.

**Philippians 2: 1: If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit,**

If the Spirit of God has made you one with Christ and one with your brethren so that you truly “endeavor to the keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”

**Philippians 2: 1: if any bowels and mercies,**

If in your inward man you are sure that God reserves mercy toward you—who continually deserves no mercy from him—and that God does so for Christ’s sake. If you have put on bowels of mercies toward your brethren so that you want to express the most hearty, inward, tender, and compassionate concern and affection for their welfare: both temporal and spiritual. In other words, if you are truly a born-again believer.

**Philippians 2: 2: Fulfil ye my joy,**

He had great joy in these saints. But this is what would make that joy full.

**that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.**

**Proposition:** As God—the three in one—is likeminded, of one accord, of one mind toward each person in the Godhead and with the same love and mind toward you who he has chosen, redeemed and called freely by his grace, so let each of us be of one mind toward God and toward one another to do each other good. How are we to do that toward one another?

## **I. FIRST, (V3) LET NOTHING BE DONE THROUGH STRIFE OR VAIN GLORY**

**Remember:** This word is not for me to examine how you are treating me but for me to examine how I am treating you.

To “strive” is to work against your brethren rather than for them. What causes strife?

**Hatred** is the cause of strife—

Proverbs 10:12: Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Hatred stirs up strife by uncovering sins in my fellow brethren. If I begin to accuse my brethren of not treating me how I think they ought to treat me, it is the hatred of my flesh. Love from God in our hearts makes us cover the sins in our brethren because God has covered our sins by the death of his only begotten Son.

By fulfilling the law for his people and by putting away our sins, Christ has abolished the hatred between God and his people. And by Christ’s work in the heart, made new by his grace, he has abolished the enmity between brethren and brethren.

Ephesians 2: 14: For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

Believers are not two but one in Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

So I am to love you as a member of my own body. Whereas before, “Hatred stirreth up strifes” now, by the Spirit of grace in the new heart, “love covereth all sins.”

**Pride** causes strife between brethren

Proverbs 13:10: **Only** by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

If I strive against one of my brethren, rest assured, pride is the cause—“**only** by pride cometh contention.” Believer, what have we been “well advised of?” Grace advises us that we have no reason to exalt self--“**In my flesh dwells no good thing.**”—if I believe God’s counsel against my flesh then I will be wise not to exalt myself over my brethren. Grace advises me “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; **of whom I am chief.**” (1 Tim 1: 15)—if I believe God, that I am the chief of sinners, then my pride is struck with the death blow. Grace advises me that “**as Christ is, so is my brother and my sister in the earth.**”—my brethren are perfectly righteous and holy IN CHRIST with his spotless garments on—how then can I expose the faults of my brother or sister? Christ my King advises me that “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (Mt 25: 40)—that makes me no longer want to strive against your brethren because I do not want to strive against Christ their Master.

**A contentious spirit** is the cause of strife—

Proverbs 26:21: As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

Coals put to burning coals become one with the burning coals and fuel the burning coals. Wood put to fire becomes one with the fire and fuels the fire. So a contentious man is the like the wood—he sees strife flame up, he becomes one with it, he fuels it. Such a man is not happy and he makes everyone else unhappy.

What happens when the Prince of peace rules in the heart and subdues our contentious flesh?

Matthew 5:9: Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

**An angry heart** is the cause of strife.

Proverbs 29:22: An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

This is who the old man of flesh is—an angry man. Flesh desires to stir up strife. The sinner who is only flesh, in every relationship, is angry and finds something to strive with others about. Anger rules the fleshly man and prevails in his heart. Everyone else is to blame—yet the common denominator in all his strife—is himself. What is the opposite of anger? The opposite of the flesh...

Galatians 5: 22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

**Foolish questions** stir up strife.

1 Timothy 6:4: He is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

Here is a good question, “What think ye of Christ.” He is my Life, my Light, my Wisdom, my Righteousness, my Peace, my Joy, my Sanctification, my Redemption, my All and in all.

Believer, we can spend all our days answering that question—looking into how Christ is each of those things to us—and we spend our time wisely, asking and seeking the answer to a good question—for the scripture answers those questions. But questions that cannot be answered by the scriptures are foolish, unprofitable and only stir up strife. They are rabbit trails which expose the heart full of strife.

Where does strife come from?

James 3: 14: But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15: This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16: For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18: And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

**So God says through Paul, “Let nothing be done through strife”**

## **II. SECONDLY, TO BE OF ONE MIND WE MUST DO NOTHING FOR VAIN GLORY.**

Vain glory is glorying in one’s self. All glory in our salvation, as well as in our lives, goes to the triune God. If there is any good in you, believer—God gets the glory, not us. God elected a people unto salvation by grace. Christ justified his people freely by grace. The Holy Spirit washes us in regeneration by grace. We grow in grace—by grace. We are kept by grace. A sinner saved by grace has nothing for which to glory in. To do so is vain glory.

And it is impossible to put down my brethren without vainly glorying in myself. If I criticize my brethren or desire to be recognized over them, I may not boast in myself—**expressly in words—yet, that is expressly what I am doing**—and I am offending Christ’s little believing child that he has saved by grace.

**Illustration:** The disciple came to Christ saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” He set a little child in their midst—“Except ye be converted and become as this little child you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Then he said, “Whoso shall offend one of these little ones **that believes in me**, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” So Christ said, cut off the offending, critical eye and hand.

This is what we are truly saying by criticism of our brethren.

Luke 18: 11: The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Any person who loves to have the preeminence is very injurious to the comfort and harmony of the saints. **So God through Paul says, “Let nothing be done through vain glory.”**

## **III. HERE IS HOW WE WILL BE OF ONE MIND—BUT IN LOWLINESS OF MIND LET EACH ESTEEM OTHER BETTER THAN THEMSELVES.**

What is lowliness of mind?

Philippians 2: 5: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Lowliness of mind does not mean that you pretend you are not blessed with the gifts that God has bestowed upon you. Christ is greater than all in that regard—he is equal with God the Father and God the Son. What we see on the Mt. of Transfiguration—when he shined whiter than white and his glory was seen in its full splendor—that is who Christ always was while he walked this earth—“in him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

But lowliness of mind means I make myself of no reputation—it means to empty oneself of glory before others. Christ emptied himself of that reputation before others—Isaiah 53: 2:…he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. Instead of exalting self, Christ highly exalted God—**v9: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him**, A critical tongue makes self of reputation. Lowliness of mind exalts the object of our affection as Christ exalted his Father—

1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Lowliness of mind takes the form of a servant—rather than take a form that would appear comely and beautiful to men to make men desire him—**Christ took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.**

Strife and vain glory wants to be served—it says, “you ought to prove your love to me more.”—but lowliness of mind just serves the other more. Christ did that for God’s elect even when we did not love him, when we exalted ourselves in pride over him, while we made ourselves of reputation and esteemed him not—Christ still loved us and served us. So Christ says to you and I brethren

John 15:12: This is my commandment, That ye love one another, **as I have loved you.**

Lowliness of mind—“**humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**” Lowliness of mind does not begin then stop, based on others treatment of me. Lowliness of mind continues in humility to God, trusting God, even when being crucified by those you love—that is true humility and true obedience.

NOW DO I REALLY WANT TO BRAG ABOUT MY LOWLINESS OF MIND BY ACCUSING MY BRETREN OF NOT BEING HUMBLE ENOUGH? IF SO, HEBREWS 12 TELLS ME THAT I NEED TO TAKE A GOOD LONG LOOK AT CHRIST.

In Hebrews 12, God says, when you suffer and begin to focus on how you are being treated, turn your focus from those weights and sins that so easily beset you, and **focus on Christ’s suffering until your suffering becomes utterly insignificant**—Hebrews 12: 3: For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4: Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Am I so much more humble than my brethren to do God’s will, that my capillaries have busted so that I sweat great drops of blood striving against sin?

Am I so humble to do God’s will that I have persevered, in not defending myself, but trusting God, even when every man, and even God my Father, have forsaken me as I hanged, nailed to a cross?

Christ did so for sinners who in turn are so proud of our humility that we find fault with our brethren who Christ has purged of all sin and made purely spotless in himself.

Instead, (v3) **let each esteem other better than themselves.** Notice, it says “**Let EACH esteem other better than themselves.**” Let me esteem you better than me; let you esteem me better than you. That will end all strife and vain glory between us.

**Think of this: strife and vain glory cannot exist where the other is esteemed better than self. Think about that. If** instead of thinking, “They don’t love me as they ought”—I think, “They love me so much more than I love them.” That ends all strife about how the other loves me. It ends me vainly glorying in my own love. **If** instead of thinking, “They don’t bear my burdens as they ought”—I think, “They bear my burdens so much better than I bear their’s.” That ends all strife about their bearing my burdens. And ends me vainly glorying in how I bear others burdens. Strife and vain glory cannot exist where the other is esteemed better than self.

Brethren, the bible never teaches me how others are to treat me only how I am to treat others. That ends me being critical of how you treat me and makes me to be critical only of how I treat you. That ends all strife and vain glory. But if I become critical of how you are treating me then a root of bitterness will spring up and trouble me and I will become utterly defiled.

And in the event you behold your brother is not treating you as scripture says he ought—**Philippians 2: 4: Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.**

First, remember this:

Philippians 1: 29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but **also to suffer for his sake—**

It is given to us, by his grace, to endure, to persevere, in suffering, even when the suffering is from our brethren.

So if my brother is esteeming himself better than me, I am to take it as an opportunity to bear their burden and to restore them to Christ in spirit of meekness and so fulfill the law of Christ, the law of grace and love. Paul says,

Galatians 6: 4: But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

That is by bearing the burden of your brother’s faults, by restoring them—you prove in your own self to have the love of Christ working in you, rather than you looking for proof of the love of Christ in your brother. (Gal 6: 1-4)

And when I faint from doing so, thinking, “Enough is enough, I will forsake my brother instead.” Then let me remember how continually God bears with my faults for Christ’s sake. Thereby,

Ephesians 4: 31: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.

Peter said, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” (Mt 18: 21-22)

**Amen!**