

## **Be of One Mind and One Body in the Lord**

Our relationships with others are often complicated and varied. With some people we get along instantly and it's effortless. With others, it takes time to build trust and develop a friendship. This week we will be looking at a few verses that focus on the relationship between Euodia and Syntyche. Although they are believers in Jesus Christ, they clearly need some help getting along.

### **Let's read Philippians 4:1-4.**

*1 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!~Philippians 4:1-4*

Philippians chapter 4 begins the closing thoughts of Paul to the church at Philippi. So, verse 1 begins with a Therefore. If you will remember from our study of Lydia, Philippi was the first Christian church in Europe. Since there weren't enough Jewish men to establish a synagogue, the women met by a river to pray, and Paul met with these women and converted many. This is the church to whom Paul wrote and to which Euodia and Syntyche belonged.

In verse 2, we meet Euodia and Syntyche. Even though we don't get a detailed description of these two women, Paul is imploring them to be of the same mind in the Lord indicating that there was some type of contention between the women. The word tells us much about contention. Contention is strife in words or debate; an argument; angry opposition; or dispute. In Proverbs 21:19 it says, "Better to dwell in the wilderness, Than with a contentious and angry woman." Proverbs 26:21 tells us, "As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife." And Proverbs 18:19 reminds us that "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle." Clearly, when there is contention between believers, it creates tension in the body of Christ.

Because we are fallible human beings, we sometimes have disagreements. Even Paul experienced his own contention with a fellow believer in Acts 15:36-40:

“36 Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.” 37 Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.”

However, Paul understood the importance of resolving conflict between believers and makes a request in verse 3, “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel...” Despite his contention with Barnabas and Mark, Paul later mentions both men positively in 2 Corinthians 9:6 and 2 Timothy 4:11 indicating that they were able to reconcile their differences. So, Paul understood that the contention needed to be addressed and resolved and enlists the help of fellow believers.

All relationships are complicated and require effort and nurturing. Growing up, some of the first relationships that we develop are with our parents and siblings. If we grew up in a dysfunctional family, as adults it takes love, time, and effort to shed some of the negative behaviors that we learned to survive in that environment. If we grew up with siblings, we may have become competitive to get attention from our parents, to get enough to eat, to watch our favorite TV shows, or simply to get to the bathroom first before everyone else wakes up. As adults it takes time to learn that we don't have to compete with everyone for everything. If we were an only child, we weren't forced to share anything so we might become self-centered, so as adults we have to learn to be considerate and share with others. If we grew up in a safe and nurturing family, we must learn to be discerning because not everyone is kind. Everyone's experiences are different. For Euodia and Syntyche, their names give us a clue about their experiences. The name Euodia translated from the Greek is good fortune, and Syntyche is accidentally. Based on their

names, we can see how they were perceived by their parents and understand the different mindset that may have contributed to their disagreement.

### **One Mind in the Lord**

But Paul implores them to be of the same mind in the Lord in verse 2. The word implore is translated from the Greek word *parakalō* which today is used as both please and you're welcome. The phrase of the same mind is from the Greek *tó aftó phroneín*. Phroneo means to think, regard, hold an opinion; to set one's mind on; to have a (certain) attitude.

In the world, the first time that we learn to “be of the same mind” with someone is when we develop friendships. We find others who think and act like us, and we develop friendships with these people, sometimes for a season, sometimes for a lifetime. But as believers in Jesus Christ, being of the “same mind in Lord” changes us profoundly. As believers, we can leave behind the dysfunction, competition, and self-centeredness that we might have experienced apart from Christ and embrace the love, mercy, and grace of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ with fellow believers.

So, what does it mean to be of one mind in the Lord? Philippians 1:27 tells us, “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” It begins with our conduct reflecting Christ, and our mind focused and striving for the gospel. Romans 15:5-6 reminds us, “5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Therefore, we must love God first by setting our hearts and minds on the Lord.

It's exhibited by being humble and caring for others. Philippians 2:2-4 tells us, “2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests

of others.” Romans 12:16 says, “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.” And 1 Peter 3:8 exhorts us, “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous.” Therefore, we must love one another in Christ by being considerate, being humble, and having compassion for our brethren. We must not only give it, but also receive it.

### **One Body in Christ**

In verse 3, we discover that these women “labored” with Paul in preaching the gospel. Verse 3 says, “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.” Paul is urging his companions to help these women as fellow workers to come together as fellow believers in Christ because they are part of the body of Christ. In Romans 12:4-5, Paul tells us, “4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, Paul explains what it means to be one body in Christ. As fellow workers, we must consider that we are members of the same body:

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

Because we are members of the same body, we each have different roles to play.

15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God

has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

Sometimes it takes time to determine what our role is and sometimes the roles change, but we must work together for the good of the body.

20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”

22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.

23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Therefore, we must all work together for the good of the body. If we have our eyes set on doing what is best for the whole, we will be more patient with and kinder to one another understanding that everyone is in a different place in their relationship with Christ and their role within the church. We should not be overly critical when new believers don't behave like seasoned Christians. We should disciple and exhort by speaking the truth in love. In *The Soul Winner*, Spurgeon wrote, “When you preach, speak out straight, but be very tender about it. If there is an unpleasant thing to be said, take care that you put it in the kindest possible form.” (p. 78).

If we are able to be of one mind and one body in Christ, then we will certainly be able to rejoice as a fellowship of believers since there are many life events to celebrate with one another and many burdens that we can help each other carry. It's easy to focus on each other's faults and weaknesses, but rather, let's focus on the beautiful work that Christ is doing in each one of us. For as Philippians 4:8 tells us, “8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”