

Peace and Joy

Throughout our history, Americans have held people who stand firm in high regard. We admire people who are stable against pressure, unwavering, uncompromising, courageous and bold. Now if we find that to be admirable in our society, how much more is it essential for the Christian? As followers of the Son of God, we imitate the most courageous, firm-standing person who ever lived. Gaining stability is not easy. We are engaged in spiritual war. So how do we do it?

I. Pursue peace in the fellowship of love.

- A. Philippians 4:2-3: *I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I also ask you, true partner, to help these women who have contended for the gospel at my side, along with Clement and the rest of my coworkers whose names are in the book of life.*
- B. Discord threatens stability. Unity, oneness, peace, and harmony tend to generate stability.
- C. Live in harmony
 1. *I **urge** Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord.*
 - a) A very strong word. Paul is pleading, begging, them to agree the Lord. *Please live in harmony in the Lord.*
 - b) Their disagreement was not over doctrine. What we're looking at here are two people who can't get along with each other. The plea here is simply for them to find a way to agree in the Lord.
 2. Paul enlists the help of others to make this happen
 - a) *Yes, I also ask you, **true partner**, to help these women who have contended for the gospel at my side, ...*
 - b) "True Partner" Partner: "yokefellow." "Someone who carries a common load."
 - c) "partner" in v. 3 could be a proper name, Syzygos, and Paul is urging Syzygos to be a "true" partner and help these women out.
 3. We need more conflict resolvers ... peacemakers ... in the church
 - a) Romans 14:19, *So then, let us pursue what promotes **peace** and what builds up one another.*
 - b) 1 Peter 4:8: *maintain **constant love** for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins.*

II. Maintain a Spirit of Joy

- A. Philippians 4:4: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*
- B. A command: **Rejoice**... "**in the Lord**."
- C. Six Reasons to Rejoice
 1. We can rejoice in who the Lord is, Psalm 139:3: *you are aware of **all** my ways...*
 2. We rejoice because God will supply every need: Philippians 4:19: *And my God will supply all your **needs** according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*
 3. We rejoice in our salvation
 4. We rejoice because we are being used by God to serve in the kingdom
 5. We rejoice because we have unhindered access to the Lord.
 6. We rejoice because death is **gain**, Philippians 1.21.

III. As We Close...

- A. 1 Corinthians 15:58: *Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, **immovable**, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*
- B. How strong is your commitment?