

“The Epistle of Joy (Part 11 – Philippians 4:2-3)”

Paul writes in Philippians 4:2-3: *“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.”*

The Apostle Paul calls out two ladies who were involved in a spat. These were solid, mature, leading members of the Philippian congregation; but they couldn't agree about something (it was likely Gospel-related). Since Paul didn't want to Gospel work in Philippi to get sidetracked, he pleads with his loyal yokefellow to help them get along. Here's the main idea: ***If we want the Gospel to move along, we must get along.***

This passage gives us seven principles to help us get along with others so we can get on with the Lord's work:

1. **Take conflict seriously.** Paul *“implored”* these two ladies to *“be of the same mind.”* It was if he was on his knees begging them to work it out. He didn't take sides but urged both of them to *go the way of Christ.*
2. **Assume personal responsibility.** Whatever had happened to bring disharmony between these sisters it was time for each of them to take personal responsibility to make things right.
3. **Focus on our unity in Christ.** Paul's appeal for them to *“be of the same mind”* has to do with harmony, like musical notes in a chord. We don't have to agree on everything to be united, but when we *disagree*, we should do so without being *disagreeable.*
4. **Be open to the help of others.** A *true yokefellow* brings two people together in a *yoke* so they can get back to working together. Step in when others need help to walk in harmony.
5. **Recommit to the mission.** These two women had previously been on mission together, using their gifts and abilities for Gospel/Kingdom purposes. But somehow, they went from serving side-by-side to becoming a pain in each other's side. The next time you're tempted to lash out at another person, before you figure out what to say, make sure to stop and pray. Maybe, after praying, you'll end up *not* saying what you were planning to say.
6. **Restore relationships.** Paul reminds in this passage that ministry flows across relational bridges. We are brothers and sisters in the same spiritual family; we are members of the same team; we are different parts of the same Body.
7. **Focus on our shared future.** Since we'll be sharing eternity together with other believers *“...whose names are in the Book of Life...”*, we might as well start getting along now.

On an episode of the “Wardens of the North” television show, two male deer (bucks or stags) had fought so fiercely with one another to establish dominance and secure exclusive mating rights to the females in a herd that they got their antlers entangled and couldn't get loose. A hunter had called a Warden to the scene, where one of the bucks had already died, and after getting them

untangled and giving the other time to revive, the Warden determined that the other buck was too weak and injured to recover, so he put him down. Neither of these bucks lived to gain a harem because they fought each other so fiercely to the death. Neither of them could fulfill their “mission” because they fought so fiercely with each other.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. *“If possible, as far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”* (Romans 12:18)
2. Let’s stop making noise with our conflicts and start making music by living in one accord.
3. When someone is doing something that bugs you say to yourself: *“Not wrong, just different.”*
4. Don’t attack or hurt someone who tries to help you resolve your conflicts.
5. Don’t let a human affect the status of your name being written in God’s Book of Life.