

JESUS STRONG IN PEACEMAKING

Part 9 of Jesus Strong. Philippians 4:2-3.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. November 17, 2024.

FROM BELIEF TO BEHAVIOR

Philippians 4 marks the transition ...

- From a focus on Christian belief to a focus on Christian behavior.
- It's about following Jesus in practical ways.
- Today's teaching is about resolving conflict between Christians.

Philippians 4:2-3 (CSB) I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 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.

WHAT WE KNOW

The passage doesn't have a lot of detail, but here's what we know:

- Two women in the church were having a disagreement.
- They were genuine believers - "names are in the book of life" (Rev. 21:27).
- The women had been active in ministry with Paul - "contended for the gospel at my side."
- The disagreement was serious enough that Paul found out about it hundreds of miles away in Rome.
- He asked the women to "agree in the Lord."
- He asked someone in the church - the "true partner," possibly the pastor - to help the women resolve their conflict.

HOW TO AGREE IN THE LORD: FOUR PERSPECTIVES

Perspective One: Conflict is normal.

- Conflict is normal due to the clash of desires, attitudes and behaviors.
- Not all conflict is sinful or negative. But some conflict is.

James 4:1-3 (CSB) What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from your passions that wage war within you? 2 You desire and do not have.

- The roots of sinful conflict are pride and selfishness.
- There is no point in pretending that Christians always get along.
- Don't let conflict shake your love for the church.

Perspective Two: Conflict can be resolved.

- Paul hints at this when he writes, "AGREE in the Lord" - verse 2. "Agree" is translated "live in harmony" in Romans 12:16. It's used 2x in Philippians 2:

Philippians 2:2-5 (CSB) make my joy complete by **thinking the same way**, having the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. 4 Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others. 5 Adopt **the same attitude** as that of Christ Jesus,

- Jesus was humble and obedient. He laid down his life for his enemies.
- Nearly every conflict can be resolved by overlooking it. Let it slide - over to Christ and his cross. Peace and forgiveness are blood bought.

Ephesians 4:32 (CSB) And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

- Forgiveness only happens when we value relationships over being right:

1 Peter 4:8 (CSB) Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers (hides) a multitude of sins.

Ephesians 4:1-2 (CSB) Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with (put up with) one another in love... (Also: Proverbs 10:12; 19:11).

Perspective Three: Conflict can be confronted.

- Turning a blind eye to seriously sinful behavior is neither wise nor loving.
- Pray and look for opportunities for a constructive conversation.

Matthew 18:15 (CSB) “If your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother.

- Take care that the conversation doesn’t turn into a fight. Attacking the person is never helpful. Colossians 3:12-14 is helpful. Ask yourself:
 - Why am I doing this?
 - How am I doing this?
 - What is my goal?

Perspective Four: Conflict is in the Lord.

- We are connected to Christ and each other. We are “in Christ.”
- Paul refers to this in 2:1, 5; 3:3, 9; 4:2, 7. His fullest explanation is in Ephesians 1:1, 3-4, 7, 11, 13; 2:13-14, 21-22.
- Therefore, we must work on resolving our conflicts. People are so much more than friends or enemies; they are in the Lord.
- Our bond is deep, blood bought, Spirit-wrought, and sacred.
- Self and pride and everything that divides must be set aside (Romans 12:18).

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review the November 17 study guide (<https://www.famousgod.com/study-guides>).
- What were the highlights of the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
 - S: Sins to confess
 - P: Promises to claim
 - E: Examples to follow
 - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
 - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

Discuss

Have a long conversation about conflict in the church. Use the following questions to frame the discussion:

- Are disagreements normal and unavoidable? Healthy and constructive?
- When is it wise and productive to overlook an offense or disagreement?
- When is it wise and productive to confront, discuss, and disagree?
- What are good ways to prevent a discussion becoming a fight?
- What roles do the cross, forgiveness, and humility play in conflict?

Prayers

- Pray for the entire Cornerstone family to grow Jesus Strong in peacemaking.