

- 2) God wants us to feel comfortable associating with the humble, lowly, common believers in the congregation. Generally, our flesh likes mingling with the upper classes of people, but God knows that we may struggle to mingle with the lower classes.
- 3) We need to make every class of people feel welcome and comfortable.

Our fourth responsibility is to ...

4. Be not wise in our own conceits.

a. What does that mean?

- 1) **Conceit** in English refers to feelings of excessive pride; Excessive appreciation of one's own abilities or worth.
- 2) The Greek literally says, "Do not become wise in yourselves." That is, we are not to be wise in our own eyes or mindful of our own interests. It depicts a person who thinks more about himself than anyone else.
- 3) God harshly condemns such action. (Proverbs 26:12) **"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."**

b. Conceit was the original sin.

- 1) Satan lost his angelic position due to conceit (Isa 14:12-14). He tempted Eve with conceit (Genesis 3:5) **"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."** **God hates conceit** (Pr 8:13; Jer 9:23-24).
- 2) Life is not about us; life is about God. God is our creator and sustainer. He deserves all the glory for our successes.
- 3) If we have thoughts of our greatness, our talents, or our wisdom, they will hinder our ability to be impartial to others. God commands us to quash our conceit.

Conclusion: If you have not been interacting with others in a biblical manner, God is calling you this morning to change. You may need to quash your pride and begin reaching out to those you feel are under you. Perhaps you need to spot someone in church that you do not know and introduce yourself to that person. Go out of your way to make others feel welcome. Pull down the fences that interfere.

Song: More Like the Master - 325

Interacting Biblically

2 October 2022 AM – Romans 12:16 – Rom2022 – Scott Childs

Introduction: We regularly interact with other Christians. However, we do not always interact with others as the Lord desires.

Transition: In our text this morning, the Apostle Paul addresses four responsibilities that Christians have in order to interact biblically.

Our first responsibility is to ...

1. Be of the same mind one toward another.

a. What is Paul saying?

- 1) The key word in this phrase is the word **"mind"**. It has to do with our feelings, thoughts, and understanding.
- 2) **To be of the same mind** is to be thinking the same toward one another.
- 3) I believe that Paul is talking primarily about the way we view each other, interact with each other, and treat each other. We are to share common thoughts, feelings and beliefs with other Christians.
- 4) Paul used the same word (translated likeminded) in (Romans 15:5) **"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:"**
- 5) Again, Paul wrote in (Philippians 2:2) **"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."** (Philippians 2:5) **"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"**
- 6) The Apostle James addresses the closely related topic of showing respect of persons. (James 2:1-4) **"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?"**

b. Culture in the first century added to this problem.

- 1) Many Jews had a difficult time accepting the Gentiles as equals. Jews typically felt superior to Gentiles.
- 2) Jesus contrasted the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:10-13. The Pharisee was very religious, moral, and self-righteous. The publican was a low class Jewish trader working for the Roman government to collect taxes.
- 3) The book of Philemon is about a prosperous master and a runaway slave. Slaves owned nothing. Scholars estimate that between 10 and 20% of the population in the first century Roman Empire were slaves with no rights.
- 4) Some men held high positions like that of a Centurion soldier or a royal official, but most people were common shepherds, farmers, carpenters and fishermen.
- 5) Women were often treated with less dignity than men.
- 6) Spiritual gifts also differed from believer to believer (1Co 12). Believers in the Corinthian church found themselves striving for the best gifts. Some felt that those with lesser gifts were of lesser importance.
- 7) These cultural realities help us to understand why Paul and other New Testament writers included instructions on interacting biblically with fellow believers.

c. How does this apply to us?

- 1) It is true that our culture no longer has as harsh of distinctions between classes of people, but we still face the temptation to look down on or to avoid those below us in society. In our minds, we may elevate those who are rich or popular and put down those who are poor.
- 2) With God's help, we must work to overcome these feelings and to treat all fellow believers with equal honour and dignity. "We will not always agree with each other, but we should disagree in a state of harmony." ^{Pett}

Our second responsibility is to ...

2. Mind not high things.

a. We are not to be thinking exalted things.

- 1) Peter Pett rightly states, "Ambition to fulfil ourselves through the guidance of the Spirit is good, but in the

church it should never have the aim of achieving high position or of being honoured."

- 2) Another commentator added, "Be not haughty and snobbish, but readily adjust yourself to people of every station and give yourself to humble tasks." ^{Henry Mahan}

b. This helps to govern the first responsibility.

- 1) God is not forbidding us to honour spiritual leaders. In fact, he elsewhere commands us to do this.
 - a) Christians are to honour their pastors. (1 Timothy 5:17) "**Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.**"
 - b) (1 Timothy 3:13) "**For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.**"
- 2) Instead, God is forbidding us to focus our thoughts and attention on high things or elite people. We must not seek their favour or position.
- 3) God does not want us to be thinking that wealthy, affluent, famous, exec or educated Christians are higher in rank ought to be treated better than the poor, the widows, or the common people.

Our third responsibility is to ...

3. Condescend to men of low estate.

a. BUT

- 1) This word is the Greek word *alla*. It is that strong contrasting conjunction.
- 2) God wants us to know that the phrase "**mind not high things**" and the phrase "**condescend to men of low estate**" are **complete opposites**.

b. What is God telling us here?

- 1) The word translated "**condescend**" is an interesting word. It actually means to allow yourself to be carried along with the lowly things or common people. For this reason, the KJV translates it *condescend*, which means to, "**Do something that one considers to be below one's dignity.**"