

## Philippians 2:1-4

Verse 1 – paraphrased:

- *If there really is encouragement in Christ* – and there is
- *If there is any consolation of love in Christ* – and there is
- *If there is any fellowship of the Spirit* – and there is
- *If there is any affection and compassion in Him* – and there is
- *Then, make my joy complete by being of the same mind*

### Like Minded Vs. 2

Being of the same mind is the main verb in these verses; all these other actions that follow are secondary- they describe what it looks like to be of one mind. As we are commanded in these verses, “*being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord,*” we are aware this does not come naturally, it is spiritual behavior requiring empowerment from the Holy Spirit. To enable these spiritual behaviors Paul is going to call them ... and us, to humility.

The fact that we are all Christians should keep us in unity. No one can walk in disunity with his fellowman and be in unity with Christ. Often disunity comes when people are earnest about their beliefs and they can become inflexible.

However, conflict can also arise, and is more likely to appear when personal interests take priority over the interests of others.

### Love Intentionally Vs. 2

Vs. 2 “... *having or maintaining the same love.*” The word for love used here is the word *agape*. We’re told to love (agape) “*not with word or tongue, but in deed and truth.*” (1 John 3:18) John also writes that “*we know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren.*” (1 John 3:14)

We don’t all love the same things, but we share the same love. We have all received the love of God through Christ. And we’re to demonstrate that by taking that same kind of selfless love and live it out with each other.

But now we’re in the same family – and we’re actually going to live together forever. The kind of living Paul wants the church to begin rehearsing is going to require a mind governed by selfless humility – because humility overflows with genuine, practical love for others.

### Live Harmoniously Vs. 2

Verse 2 further indicates further the need for unity in the expression “... *being of one accord.*” This could be translated “united in spirit.” “*United in spirit*” is actually one Greek word “*sumpsuchos*” which means “*one souled.*” “*Sumpsuchos*” means living harmoniously.

### Desire Cooperation Vs. 2

The last part of verse 2, “... *of one mind, or intent on one purpose.*” We have the same longing – the same passion. If we take from chapter one Paul’s primary focus of challenging us to live lives worthy of the gospel (1:27), and tie that with “being of one mind, of one intent, and one purpose” we will tie together the idea of living in such a way that we glorify God by obeying Christ Jesus.

The Lord commanded us to be His witnesses – as we go into all the world and make disciples we are to baptize them and teach them all that Christ commanded us. (Matthew 28 and Acts 1) We are witnesses, cooperating together as a local assembly in glorifying God through obedience to Christ.

One thing the devil delights in: distracting the believer and the church from cooperating together in a global strategy to make disciples and to just think about ourselves. Thinking of our own interest is natural; thinking of others is to be spiritually minded.

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So is our church naturally minded, or supernaturally minded? What is my personal contribution by way of cooperation?

### Call for Humility Vs. 3

Notice Paul starts his call to humility by identifying the opposite of humility which is “*selfish ambition*.” In any church there is always the danger that people will work, not to the advancement of Christ’s work, but to only advance themselves.

The Greek word “*empty conceit*” is a compound word, literally translated “empty glory.” The old English called it vainglory, personal vanity, self-promotion.

Want an empty life? Live for yourself. Want a full life? Empty yourself . . . of self. How much do I live for others?

### Humility is an unnatural realization

Notice – verse 3, “*with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves*.” That’s an unnatural realization . . . other people are more important than you are!? The Greek word here translated “*regard*” “*regard one another as more important*” is a word that refers to a settled conclusion. In this case you actually come to the conclusion that other people are more important than you are.

How do we actually arrive at such a conclusion? Notice the first part of the phrase again, “*with humility of mind*.” Not a reference to some sort of “poor me syndrome, I’m no good, I’m so inferior.” The mindset Paul is referring to here, “*with humility of mind*” is a mindset that actually forgets about oneself entirely. We must ask, “What is best for the Kingdom?”

The word translated “*more important*” here in this text means “*to be superior*.” In other words, a humble person doesn’t view himself as superior to anybody.

This is the attitude of Paul when he said he was “*the least of the Apostles (1 Corinthians 15:9)* and even “*the least of all the saints.*” (*Ephesians 3:8*) He wasn’t grouching or groveling or having a pity party. He had come to the conclusion that he was superior to no one.

### Unity as a body of believers is built on an unnatural resolution

Verse 4, “*Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others*.” The words translated “*to look out for*” come from the Greek verb, “*skopeo*”, which means to “*make this your aim in life*.”

“*Skopeo*” to look out for – is used in our word for telescope – and microscope. Metaphorically, we pull out our microscope and evaluate all the details of our daily lives – all the events, relationships, problems, issues, needs – and we focus on them – we talk about them – we pray only about them – we worry about them – we fret over them.

Paul is effectively saying here that humility of mind takes a telescope and trains it on the needs and concerns we see in someone else’s life. It takes the microscope and evaluates ways we can help them, or encourage them, or pray for them, or support them.

Tim Keller writes, “*Our culture today applauds self-promotion; a high view of ourselves; but it then reduces our capacity for humility; accountability; even self-sacrificing hard work for the benefit of someone else.*”

Paul writes – this is how we live and serve together, being of the same mind; here’s what that looks like:

- **Maintaining the same love** – that’s **loving intentionally**
- **United in one spirit** – that’s **living harmoniously**
- **Intent on one purpose** – that’s **desiring cooperation** and that will take humility of mind
- Which leads to an **unnatural realization** – other people are more important than we are
- **It leads to an unnatural resolution** – other people’s needs are more important than ours are.