

“The United Way” (Philippians 2:1–4)¹

I’m sure you have noticed that there is a great deal of disunity in the world today. Since 9/11, we have been so polarized from different groups that we are now experiencing both global and domestic isolation. Presently, there is tremendous polarity between democrats and republicans. We face a group of Islamic radicals that want us economically crippled so they can move in for the kill. The United Nations community that was founded upon the principle of global unity has split into either supporters of the USA or haters of the USA. The idea of unity seems like a far fetched fantasy. There has never been a time in our country when company loyalty and unity has been so poor. Corporations blatantly lie about their earnings to keep business afloat; employees sue their employers because they are suffering fatigue for working eight hours a day. The bookstore shelves are littered with “how to” tips for managers to unify their departments. The University campuses are beginning to resemble the same seeds of violence and anger that fueled the 60s. Professors are becoming more and more intolerant of opposing worldviews, which basically means that they are intolerant in establishing their view of tolerance, absolute in their quest to make you become a relativist. And if you don’t conform to their non-conformity you will flunk out of their class.

Worse yet, the home and the church are no better than the world. Our homes have all but lost their once impenetrable defenses. Forty percent of children will go to sleep tonight without a father around. The divorce rate for couples is up to 56% with almost no difference in the church or out of the church. The idea of unity in the home is almost a joke. We are also facing massive division within the churches of America. There are over 6,000 factions and branches of denominational separation in the “Christian Church.” Where we once stood as an example of unity, we now are ridiculed and mocked because we can’t even agree on the most basic assumptions the Bible makes. Do you have to believe in God to be a Christian? Does it have to be the God of the Bible? Can you be a Christian without believing in Christ? Does the only book that teaches us about God have to be believed or can I just come up with whatever I want? Along with denominational differences, local churches are facing increased polarization from those that attend their church. Pastors are openly mocked and ridiculed. Gossip reigns supreme. Men and women who call themselves Christians don’t see the need to be unified with other believers because they feel they have their own “personal” relationship with Jesus and that’s good enough. Infighting, bickering, impatience, immorality, and a total disregard for the lost is common and unity, kindness, patience, and a zeal for those outside of the family of God is uncommon.²

But instead of bemoaning these tragic realities, we must welcome the challenge of uniting as brothers and sisters in Christ. This seems like an impossible and overwhelming endeavor...and it is! But that is where the supernatural strength of the Lord enters in. In Philippians 2:1–4, Paul uses an “if-then” logical argument.³ He says: “If certain things are true, then we are obligated to do certain things.” So in these few short verses you will come to understand why you should be unified with other Christians and how to fulfill this great goal.⁴ Of course, the great temptation is to go after those who disagree with us and make our lives difficult and put these people in their place. You may be surprised to learn that Paul is going to urge you to *put people in their place* (but perhaps not in the way that you might think).

1. Express what God has created in you (2:1–2).⁵ In these two verses, Paul reveals that true unity can occur when the body of Christ recognizes and appropriates her identity in Christ.⁶ Paul begins this section with the word “**therefore**” (*oun*).⁷ This marks a shift from the subject of the church’s struggle with its *external* enemies (1:27–30) to the equally threatening problem of *internal* division.⁸ In other words, Paul’s focus has moved from *without* to *within*.⁹ He understands that it is of little value to be unified against opposition from without and then fail to be unified within. Unity is critical to the mission of the church. Unity also expresses the theme of Philippians to live as heavenly citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27).

In 2:1, Paul shares why you and I should be unified with the body of Christ. His approach is not to tell you what you should do, but rather what has already been done to you by God. Paul writes, **“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion...”** Each of these phrases begins with the word “if” (*ei*), but this is not an expression of doubt. Instead, Paul is assuming the certainty of each of these descriptions.¹⁰ He is saying, “If this is true—and I know it is...” If I address the high school graduates in our church by saying: “If you have been encouraged by the preaching here, if you have appreciated the worship, if you have grown in the Lord through youth group, then when you go off to college this fall, don’t forget to find a home church.”¹¹ I am optimistic enough to assume that the young people of our church have been blessed by God’s work. Since this is true, I expect that they will continue to worship and serve the Lord.

Paul begins his discussion on unity by appealing to the Philippians’ relationship “in Christ.”¹² He does not focus on their relationships toward one another. Biblical unity is not dependent upon natural oneness but upon supernatural bonding. Paul identifies four blessings that stem from being in Christ. Each of these blessings stem from the immediately preceding paragraph (1:27–30) on suffering.¹³

- **Encouragement.** Our union with Christ gives us encouragement. In the midst of suffering, we need encouragement. The word translated “encouragement” (*paraklesis*) refers to one who comes along side us, directs us, and encourages us to press on. This is the same word that Jesus used when He spoke of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter (John 14:16). Have you ever wanted give up spiritually? Of course! I have too! The reason you haven’t given up and given in is because God refuses to give up on you. He gives you “staying power” and preserves you through His encouragement. When you don’t think you can carry on, you need to recognize the Lord is your encouragement.
- **Comfort.** Our union with Christ gives us comfort or “consolation of love.” Since we have received the work of the Holy Spirit who comforts us, then unity should follow. Since we all share God’s love, that love should produce unity. No one has earned a share in the kingdom. We are all recipients of God’s redeeming love. When you are hurting and discouraged, God will bring you comfort. The Trinity understands suffering. God the Father gave up His Son to die on the cross for the sins of humankind. Jesus’ own family didn’t believe in Him until after His resurrection. He was betrayed by His disciples. The Jewish people that He came to save rejected Him and called to have Him crucified. The Holy Spirit experiences continual suffering from believers who grieve and quench Him through sin. The Godhead can empathize with you in the midst of your suffering like no one can (2 Cor 1:3–7).
- **Fellowship.** Our union with Christ gives us fellowship. This phrase should be understood in the sense of unity and oneness (see 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:3–4), which results from the Spirit indwelling all believers, individually (1 Cor 6:19) and corporately (1 Cor 3:16). When you feel alone, God wants you to know that He is present with you at all times. He will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb 13:5b). He continues to cultivate His very life in you. He grants you not only eternal fellowship, but offers you temporal fellowship in your Christian experience.
- **Affection and compassion.** Our union with Christ gives us affection and compassion.¹⁴ God is the one who has modeled for us perfect affection and compassion. He never disappoints. He always meets our deepest needs. He knows just how to express His great love for us. I will fail you, I will disappoint you. There will be times where I am not even aware of the suffering and persecution that you are going through. Fortunately, God is that friend that sticks closer than a brother (Prov 18:24.) God knows everything that you have endured and will endure. He is there to show you the affection and compassion that you need.

On the basis of Paul's appeal in 2:1, he makes four more statements that relate to our unity as members of the body of Christ. Paul is essentially saying, 'If you love me, make me happy by showing the inner beauty which God has created in you since you were converted. Live together in harmony.' In 2:2, Paul issues the lone command in this section¹⁵: **"make my joy complete by¹⁶ being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."**¹⁷ The command translated "make complete" (*pleroo*) means literally "to make full or to fill."¹⁸ In 1:3–4, Paul states that he already has joy because of the Philippians, but now he asks that this joy be filled to the brim.¹⁹ Paul doesn't get excited about money, possessions, acclaim, or ministry success; he receives joy from the unity of God's people! I have to ask if this is true for me as well. What bring me joy and a sense of ultimate fulfillment? Have you ever ordered a soft drink at an amusement park and when the drink came it was filled with three-quarters ice? That is maddening, especially since it cost \$4.00! The cup gave the impression of being filled to the brim, but it was filled with a cheap substitute—ice. Similarly, you may seek joy in things that don't really matter in this life or in the next. Yet, God urges you to seek your fulfillment and chief joy in that which matters in time and in eternity—the unity of the body of Christ. Paul follows up his command with four responses to our identity in Christ.²⁰

- ***Be of the same mind.***²¹ The phrase "be of the same mind" doesn't mean we should have the same opinions or agree about everything. Paul's desire is for unity, not uniformity. Uniformity is gained by pressure from without. The English word uniformity has within it the word uniform. We dress alike, look alike, sound alike, think alike, act alike. But that is neither healthy nor biblical. Unity comes from deep within. It is the inner desire to conduct oneself in a cooperative manner...to be on the same team, to go for the same objectives, for the benefit of one another.²²
- ***Maintain the same love.*** Let's be honest. There may be some Christians that you don't like. Christians are like porcupines. They have many good points, but they are hard to get close to. The main reason is their prickly personalities keep needling each other.²³ That's okay. The Bible doesn't command you to "like" believers; the Bible commands you to "love" believers.²⁴ As you learn to maintain love (*agape*) for other believers, in time, you may find feelings of fondness follow. Regardless, true biblical love deals with incompatibility. This is the test of biblical love. After all, it is fairly easy to follow these expectations when the body is functioning well, but what about when the body is behaving badly? This is where *agape* loves takes over and wins the day.
- ***Unite in spirit.*** This is a most unusual phrase that Paul has chosen here for it really conveys the idea of having "joint souls" (*sumpsuchos*). We are to be soul brothers and sisters, in harmony with all of God's people.²⁵ E. Stanley Jones (1884–1973), missionary to India, once said, "Talk about what you believe and you have disunity. Talk about Who you believe in and you have unity."²⁶ Christians will always disagree on doctrine; however, we should unite around Jesus. There are two primary dangers in the Christian church: majoring on the minors and minoring on the majors. We need to ensure that we are majoring on the major doctrines that center around the Lord Jesus (e.g., the Trinity, the inerrancy of Scripture, the deity of Christ, the bodily resurrection of Christ, salvation by faith alone, and the personal return of Christ). These things are non-negotiable because they have joined true Christians across the centuries. When we disagree: (1) We should major on what we have in common. (2) We should respect the right of others to disagree. (3) We should hold our convictions in love.²⁷ True unity is not an absence of conflict (doctrinal or otherwise), but a commitment to reconciliation. *Put people in their place.*
- ***Be intent on one purpose.*** When everything is said and done, our one purpose is centered on making disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19–20). Even in the midst of unmet expectations, personal conflicts, and various other schisms, this solitary purpose that we share ought to compel us to stay united. There will be hiccups along the way, but unity remains paramount.

W. Clement Stone once said, “There is little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative.”²⁸ The only way that you and I can have a *consistently* positive attitude is by recognizing what Jesus has done in us. It is only through being aware of your identity of Christ.²⁹

[How can you express what God has created in you? First, you must recognize an appropriate your identity in Christ. Second, you must make a decision of the will to unite with the body of Christ. The second response is followed up further in 2:3–4 where Paul says...]

2. Dismiss what sin has caused in you (2:3–4). In these verses, Paul gives the means by which to fulfill 2:2. In 2:3, he gives two negatives to avoid and two positives to follow; and in 2:4, a negative and a positive. Paul writes, **“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”** Negatively in 2:3, he says, “Do nothing³⁰ from selfishness or empty conceit.” We are not to be motivated by “selfishness.”³¹ Most of us would like to think of ourselves as unselfish creatures. Yet, if we’re honest with ourselves, we know that we are not. The word rendered “selfishness” (*eritheia*) appears nowhere else in the New Testament.³² However, Aristotle used it to describe the self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means.³³ It’s ugly self promotion that steps on the necks of others to lift oneself up. It’s pride intent on advancing itself.

How do we overcome selfishness? We have children and attend church. If you are fortunate enough to have children, you can quickly determine your level of selflessness. After a long hard day when your boy wants to wrestle and you want to watch TV, which do you choose? When your little girl asks you to read her a book, and you’d rather be golfing or shopping, which do you choose? When your children are teenagers (without their license) and want you to drive them all over town, do you put their interests first? God challenges us daily to be selfless as we interact with our children. At work or even in church, we are also tempted to be selfish. It’s easy to get caught up in our project or our ministry. Yet, the Bible is clear that we are to serve others selflessly. This strikes at the very core of our being. It means we are willing to forgo our own comfort, our own preferences, our own schedule, and our own desires for another’s benefit.

The word translated “empty conceit” (lit. “empty glory”)³⁴ is a graphic description of the glory this world affords us. Picture a balloon full of hot air and you’ve got the right idea. It may appear beautiful and attractive but it is, in fact, empty. One day the glory of humankind will wither like a scorched flower when the light of God’s glory has risen upon the earth. In that day all the glory of man will be seen as absolutely vain and empty. Thus to live for the glories of this day is a very hollow pursuit (cf. John 5:44). John Wooden, former coach of the UCLA Bruins basketball team gives this helpful advice: “Talent is God given—be humble. Fame is man given—be thankful. Conceit is self given—be careful.”³⁵

Paul now moves from the negative to the positive. Instead of being consumed with self-promotion, he says, **“but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves”** (2:3b). Here, Paul calls for “humility of mind.”³⁶ But what is humility?³⁷ It seems that most believers want humility, but no one really knows what it means.³⁸ I think most of us have just concluded that it sounds better than “hubris.” Humility means seeing yourself realistically—as God sees you. Not higher than you are—but not lower, either. Humility doesn’t mean that you put yourself down, but that you lift others up.³⁹ Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. The goal is that Jesus Christ increase and that we decrease (John 3:30). One word of caution though: The more we make humility our aim, the more we’re tempted to become proud of our motives. Humility is like a slippery watermelon seed. Once you get it under your finger and you think you have it, it slips away from your grasp.⁴⁰ Our focus is not to be on pursuing humility but pursuing Jesus and seeking to be Christlike. As we seek Christ and become like Him, humility will naturally and inevitably follow.⁴¹

Paul says it like this: **“regard one another as more important than yourselves.”**⁴² The word “regard” (*hegeomai*)⁴³ speaks of accounting or reckoning. Practically speaking this means when you go home to your family, you must deliberately regard your spouse as more important than yourself. When you go to work you must consciously regard your co-workers as more important than yourself. Before you pick up the phone you must regard that person on the other end as more important than yourself. Before you reply to that email you must regard that person as more important than yourself. This will require supernatural responses throughout the day. But the rewards are great. Paul Moody said, “Greatness is not measured by how many people are your servants, but by how many people you serve.”⁴⁴ This demands regarding others as more important.

I should point out that various English versions (NIV, NRSV, KJV/NKJV, NLT) offer the translation “better” instead of “more important” (NASB, NET, HCSB) or “more significant” (ESV). The English word “better” is awkward and doesn’t quite capture what Paul is saying.⁴⁵ It raises the question, “How can I consider someone better than me when I know they’re not? I can sing solos better than they can; my voice is better, and that’s an objective fact. I can lead a meeting better—everyone knows that. I can organize an activity better; I know how to do it. How can I consider someone better when I know realistically that they’re not?” The word “better” doesn’t quite capture what Paul is saying.⁴⁶ There will always be people who are better or worse than you are. Regarding others as more important than yourself has nothing to do with gifting, skill, personality, or ministry responsibility; it has to do with understanding the value, dignity, and worth of other believers. Whenever you look into the eyes of another believer, regard that brother or sister as more significant than yourself. This is not only beneficial to the individual, but it will also teach you humility.

Paul’s final word is especially relevant: **“Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also⁴⁷ for the interests of others”** (2:4). My favorite word in this entire section is the verb “look” (*skopeo*), which means “to pay careful attention to, look out for, notice.”⁴⁸ If you have ever collected coins, stamps, or baseball cards, you know what it’s like to look closely at objects you care about. You may even take out a magnifying glass and spend long quantities of time discerning the quality of your collectible. Similarly, God wants you to study believers to an even greater extent. He then wants you to prioritize their interests over your own. However, a word of caution is in order. Many Christians assume that we are to pursue the interests of others with all that is within us. ‘No rest for the righteous; there will be plenty of time for rest in heaven! While we’re one earth, we must minister to the death.’ However, this can often lead to the neglect of one’s marriage, family, and personal walk with Christ. Sadly, this is done in the name of ministry! Many well-intentioned people lose their children, end in divorce, and burn out on ministry and the church. Others remain intact, but develop a root of bitterness and resentment toward the church and other believers (Heb 12:15). This festers until it destroys them and those around them. Far better to care for your own physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs so that you can care for others for many decades of ministries. Paul is simply saying: There’s nothing wrong with looking out for your own personal interests; however, if that is all that you look out for, beware.

Do you look out for the interests of others? When you talk to others, do you talk about yourself or them? God gave you two ears and one mouth for a reason. He expects you to listen twice as much as you talk. The goal should be to ask questions such as: How are you doing spiritually? How is your marriage and family? Is work going well? What has God been teaching you? How can I be praying for you?⁴⁹ Do you pray more for others than you do yourself? Are you seeking to ask certain mature Christians to pray for you so that you can pray for others? Do you genuinely long for the success of others more than yourself? Do you get as excited about what God is doing in and through others as you do about what He is doing in and through you? Do you find satisfaction in seeing your spiritual children surpass you in the work they are called to do? Do you want other life-giving churches in your county to succeed more than your church? Do you study the persecuted church and lift these precious brothers and sisters in Christ up in prayer? If so, you’re applying this verse.

Many years ago, in Dallas at a NCAA basketball Final Four playoffs, a head coach was asked, “Why has your team done so well? What is it about this team that has made it come as far as it has, because everybody wants to know about success?” He said, “We have a motto on our team, and the motto is this: ‘Good people do for themselves; great people do for others.’”⁵⁰ I love this! Perhaps you are like me and you aren’t satisfied with being “good”; you want to be great. Well, this coach nailed it! “Great people do for others.”

On the hit TV show, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, whole communities work together to provide a new home for a family in need. It is amazing to watch the cast and crew of the show as they rally the town, the builders, and each other in order to complete the project within seven days. Then, when it’s time to bring the family home, all those people get the chance to celebrate the accomplishment together. Even viewers feel they have a chance to participate in the celebration.

Now, imagine the excitement and joy we would experience as a community of believers if we banded together in the name of God to effect change in our homes, communities, states, nation, and world! It would be remarkable to see what would happen if we all worked together for God’s purpose. We can and we should. If you are facing a challenge in your life, don’t try to go it alone. Surround yourself with people who love the Lord; then ask them to work with you to accomplish His will. You will find you are stronger in your efforts, and when it comes time to give thanks for what God has done, there will be a pervasive sense of joy for everyone involved.⁵¹

Copyright © 2009 Keith R. Krell. All rights reserved. All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, and 1995 by The Lockman Foundation, and are used by permission.

Permissions: Feel free to reproduce and distribute any articles written by Keith Krell, in part or in whole, in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way or charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. It is our desire to spread this information, not protect or restrict it. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: by Keith Krell, Timeless Word Ministries, 2508 State Ave NE Olympia, WA 98506, 360-352-9044, www.timelessword.com

Scripture References

Philippians 2:1–4
Colossians 3:12–17
Romans 12:9–13, 16
Romans 15:1–6
Galatians 5:22–26
Galatians 6:1–10
Ephesians 4:1–3

Study Questions

1. Am I aware of the spiritual provisions God has given me (2:1)? If so, which of the provisions listed in 2:1 is the most meaningful to me? Do I daily live out my Christian life with gratitude to God for His gracious gifts? Or, do I live my Christian life to gain God's favor? This week, will I stop and reflect on God's unconditional love for me?
2. How do I apply and employ God's provisions in my relationships with other believers (2:2)? Do I love my Christian brothers and sisters with Christ's unconditional love? Do I bring my pastor joy by living in harmony with my fellow believers? How do I exude Christian unity in my church? How do I model unity among other believers at my work, neighborhood, and in my community?
3. Chuck Swindoll says, "Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to what happens." How do I react when other believers treat me poorly? Do I believe the best about my brother or sister and give him/her the benefit of the doubt, or do I immediately question other believers' motives and fly off the handle in anger? How can I learn to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry (James 1:19)?
4. When do I sense that I am the most selfish (2:3)? What brings selfishness out of me (outside of the obvious—sin)? Am I prone to be more selfish when I am stressed, busy, or tired? Am I the most selfish with my spouse, my kids, my time, my hobbies, my money, my food, etc.? How can I overcome my selfishness (2:3)? Who can help hold me accountable to elevate others?
5. What can I do this week to intentionally promote goodwill and unity among the Christian brothers and sisters at my church (2:4)? How large is the circle of my prayers? Do I pray for more than just my family and me? Will I begin diligently praying for others in my church? How can I truly "look out for the interests of others" this week?"

Notes

¹ I would have preferred to have preached the entire unit of Phil 2:1–11; however, I had severe time limitations (communion Sunday, etc.). Since 2:5–11 is so critical I didn't want to rush through this text.

² This opening illustration has been adapted and revised from David Fairchild, "True Unity" (Phil 2:1–5): www.kaleochurch.com/sermons/sermon-series/philippians/.

³ Phil 2:1–4 is one long sentence in the Greek text (see also 1:27–30).

⁴ See Eph 4:1–6 where Paul refers to being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

⁵ This outline is from Doug McIntosh, "The Mind of Christ" (Phil 2:1–11): www.cornerstonebibch.org/html/Sermons/Philippians/Phil03.pdf.

⁶ I take a minority view and agree with O'Brien that Phil 2:1 refers solely to God's expressions toward believers instead of some phrases referring to the response of the Philippians. For a defense of this view see Peter T. O'Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*. New International Greek Testament Commentary series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 165–76, see esp. 175–76.

⁷ For other uses of the conjunction *oun* in Philippians see 2:23, 28, 29; 3:15. The NIV chooses to omit *oun* from its translation.

⁸ See David Alan Black, "Paul and Christian Unity: A Formal Analysis of Philippians 2:1–4," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28:3 (Sept 1985): 301.

⁹ O'Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 164.

¹⁰ In cases like this, the Greek word *ei* ("if") can be translated "since." O'Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 165.

¹¹ Revised from Ray Pritchard, "Getting Along With Cantankerous Christians" (Phil 2:1–4):

www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1998-10-18-Getting-Along-With-Cantankerous-Christians/.

¹² Paul uses the phrase "in Christ" (*en Christo*) a total of seventy-three times in eleven of his thirteen letters. This phrase is used ten times in the 104 verses of Philippians. Only Romans (thirteen times) and 1 Corinthians (eleven times) use this phrase more.

¹³ Frank Thielman, *Philippians*. NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 96.

¹⁴ "Compassion" (*oiktirmos*) is chiefly an attribute of God in the OT (Pss 24:6; 50:1; 102:4; 144:9).

¹⁵ Gk. *plerosate*, aorist active imperative. This is the lone command in Phil 2:1–4.

¹⁶ This is an unusual rendering of the conjunction *hina*, which typically denotes purpose ("in order that"). Yet, this rendering is rightly supported by O'Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 177; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 476; and Moisés Silva, *Philippians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 2nd ed. Edited by Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1992, 2005), 90.

¹⁷ In Christ's prayer found in John 17 we are given insight into the reasons why unity among believers is absolutely essential. Jesus says, "I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me" (17:23). Here, we see two critical purposes for unity. First, for sanctification (progressive holiness): "that they may be perfected (i.e., made mature, complete) in unity." Second, for evangelism: "so that the world may know that You sent Me." Paul wants them to be one in mind, love, spirit, and purpose. What a dynamic church we could have if we were characterized in this way. If we want to fill up God's joy then we must do these same things.

¹⁸ BDAG s.v. *pleroo* 1.

¹⁹ BDAG s.v. *pleroo* 3: "to bring to completion that which was already begun, complete, finish."

²⁰ It is worth noting that both the first and last phrases refer to the mind. In both clauses, a form of the Greek verb *phroneo* ("to think") is present.

²¹ The phrase "the same mind" (*to auto phronete*) occurs in Paul four times (Rom 12:16; 15:5; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:2). The term *phronete* isn't so much an expression of intellectual agreement, but that the Philippians are one in intent and disposition. O'Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 178.

²² Charles R. Swindoll, *Laugh Again* (Dallas: Word, 1992), 80–81.

²³ Sam Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy: The Message of Philippians*. Truth for Today Commentary Series (Belfast, Ireland/Greenville, SC: Ambassador-Emerald International, 2004), 69.

²⁴ Jesus put it well in John 13:34–35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love (*agapao*) one another, even as I have loved (*agapao*) you, that you also love (*agapao*) one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love (*agape*) for one another."

²⁵ Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy*, 73.

²⁶ Preaching Today citation: E. Stanly Jones, *Leadership*, Vol. 8, no. 3.

²⁷ Pritchard, "Getting Along With Cantankerous Christians."

²⁸ Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy*, 68.

²⁹ If you are looking for more on your identity in Christ, I will be glad to send you my worksheet entitled “Reflection of Who You Are in Christ.”

³⁰ Lit. “Not according to selfish ambition.” There is no main verb in this verse; the subjunctive (*phronhete*, “be of the same mind”) is implied here as well. Thus, although most translations supply the verb “do” at the beginning of 2:3 (e.g., “do nothing from selfish ambition”), the idea is even stronger than that: “Don’t even *think* any thoughts motivated by selfish ambition.” See NET Bible Study Notes at net.bible.org/home.php.

³¹ Gk. *eritheian*, cf. Phil 1:17; see also Rom 2:8; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; Jas 3:14, 16.

³² Paul uses the cognate *kenodoxos* in Gal 5:26, where it appears to be understood as involving a spirit of envy and provocation. This is suggestive of its meaning in Phil 2:3. See also Silva, *Philippians*, 90.

³³ BDAG s.v. *eritheia*.

³⁴ Gk. *kenodozian*, used only here in the NT.

³⁵ Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy*, 75.

³⁶ Gk. *tapeinophrosune*, see Acts 20:19; Eph 4:2; Col 2:18, 23; 3:12; 1 Pet 5:5.

³⁷ A.W. Tozer said, “Humility is as scarce as an albino robin.” Quoted in Gorge Sweeting, *Who Said That?* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 244.

³⁸ When Augustine was asked to list the three central principles of the Christian life, he replied: “One, humility. Two, humility. Three, humility.” Quoted in Gordon, *An Odyssey of Joy*, 76.

³⁹ Kent Crockett, *Making Today Count for Eternity* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2001), 129.

⁴⁰ Michael P. Green, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989).

⁴¹ For an extremely helpful book on humility, see Andrew Murray, *Humility*: www.worldinvisible.com/library/murray/5f00.0565/5f00.0565.c.htm.

⁴² Gk. *huperecho*. The other two instances a form of this word occurs in Philippians, it is translated “surpassing” (3:8; 4:7).

⁴³ BDAG s.v. *hegeomai* 2 defines this word as “to engage in an intellectual process, think, consider, regard” (Phil 2:3 6, 25; 3:7, 8; Acts 26:22; 2 Cor 9:5; 1 Thess 5:13; 2 Thess 3:15; 1 Tim 1:12; 6:1; Heb 10:29; 11:11, 26; Jas 1:2; 2 Pet 1:13; 2:13; 3:15).

⁴⁴ Crockett, *Making Today Count for Eternity*, 129.

⁴⁵ However, note the definition of BDAG s.v. *huperecho* 3: “to surpass in quality or value, *be better than, surpass, excel.*”

⁴⁶ Don Sunukjian, “It’s Not Thinking Less of Yourself; It’s Thinking of Yourself Less” (Phil 2:1–4): www.preachingtoday.com.

⁴⁷ O’Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 185 notes that the phrase “but also” (*alla kai*) includes the priority of looking out for others.

⁴⁸ Gk. *skopountes*, see Phil 3:17; Luke 11:35; Rom 16:17; 2 Cor 4:18; Gal 6:1. BDAG s.v. *skopeo* defines this word as “to pay careful attention to, look (out) for, notice.”

⁴⁹ Cf. Rom 15:2–3; 1 Cor 10:24, 33; Gal 6:2.

⁵⁰ Preaching Today citation: Phil Lineberger, “Great People Do for Others,” *Preaching Today*, Tape 62.

⁵¹ David Jeremiah, “Home Makeover,” *Today Turning Point*, 9/25/08.