

CITIZENSHIP & COMMUNITY

(Philippians 2:1-4)

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, ²make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. ³Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

CITIZENSHIP IS BESTOWED; COMMUNITY IS BUILT

- *Therefore,*

Building community requires:

- **Applying our resources (1)** Description of what is...
 - *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*

Unity dominates the thinking of the apostle in this section.... He uses words big in meaning, compacted into brief verbless phrases, rare words, and words never found anywhere else in the NT. He piles clause on top of clause, beginning each clause with the same word. He does all this as if searching for ways to make his readers both think and feel deeply about the essential nature of harmony and its necessity within the Christian community. (Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*)

- **Acting in ways that unify (2)** Description of what should be...

then make my joy complete by...

 - *being of the same mind*
 - *maintaining the same love*

- *united in spirit*

- *intent on one purpose*

Such unity will only come when Christians are humble and bold enough to lay hold on the unity already given in Christ and to take it more seriously than their own self-importance...and to make of those deep differences of doctrine, which originate in our imperfect understanding of the Gospel and which we dare not belittle, not an excuse for letting go of one another or staying apart, but rather an incentive for a more earnest seeking in fellowship together to hear and obey the voice of Christ. (C. E. B. Cranfield, *The First Epistle of Peter*)

- **Accomplishing the greater good (3-4)** Description of how it can be...
 - *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*

There is...something seriously disappointing [in] the realization that we are not at the center of the universe. In an infantile state—and this is true regardless of our chronological age—we have the perception that we are the center of everything. Our needs take precedence over everything, absolutely everything. Our appetites, our welfare, our comfort. (Eugene Peterson, *Subversive Spirituality*)

Living in community made me realize one of my faults; I was addicted to myself. All I thought about was myself. The only thing I really cared about was myself. I had very little concept of love, altruism, or sacrifice. I discovered that my mind is like a radio that picks up only one station, the one that plays me: K-DON, all Don, all the time.... The most difficult lie I have ever contended with is this: Life is a story about me. I hear addicts talk about the shakes and panic attacks and the highs and lows of resisting their habit, and to some degree I understand them because I have had habits of my own, but no drug is so powerful as the drug of self. No rut in the mind is so deep as the one that says I am the world, the world belongs to me, all people are characters in my play. There is no addiction so powerful as self-addiction. (Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz*)