

"HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEASANT"

With unmistakable inspiration and insight, the psalmist wrote "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*" (Psa. 133:1). Such was God's intent for mankind from creation, but even within the first one hundred and thirty years of man being placed in a beautiful garden of peace and tranquility, the harmony of this first family was shattered when Cain killed his brother Abel.

Even David who penned these words of encouragement and hope was destined to live a life of turmoil and pain from strife within his own family. His father-in-law sought his life. Because of his sin with Bathsheba his son died. Another son had his own brother murdered. His son, Absalom, rebelled in seeking David's kingship and committed adultery with David's concubines. This son was killed in fleeing from David and David mourned at the loss of this rebellious son. As God had said to David through Nathan, the prophet, "*Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house*" (2 Sam. 12:10). What misery David must have suffered.

THIS CONTINUES TO BE A SPOT IN OUR "GARMENTS OF WHITE"

How sad that what could have been a beautiful world in which to live, has through the centuries been marred by strife among its inhabitants. Among the causes of such the Scriptures lists: anger, wrath, envy, jealousy, pride, bitterness, failure to forgive, holding grudges, and such like. These are the result of the lack of self-control, often prompted by lack of patience and failure to consider the feelings and needs of our fellow-kin in the family of our heavenly Father. It is such a tragedy that we for whom Jesus gave His precious blood are often torn by strife. It should not and does not have to be!

Matters will not always go as we feel they should; and sometimes it is best that they do not - for we are not always correct. We are advised, "*Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others*" (Phil 2:4). We must learn to not be too critical, but with patience permit another point of view.

If we stand corrected, be grateful that our brother thought enough of us to point us in the right direction. He might have saved us from a harmful or embarrassing mistake. We must not

allow pride or ego to rob us of the opportunity to perfect ourselves as we mature in age and experience. An orchestra cannot properly perform unless the instruments are played in harmony. A football team will never win unless the players coordinate their efforts. A family cannot enjoy life together unless they pull-together. The Lord's church cannot be the light intended by God for it to be, nor the individual members feel the closeness that should exist, unless it follows the admonition of Paul, "*Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind*" (Phil 2:2). Then he adds, "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves*" (v. 3). The church is composed of individuals whose lives and conduct should enhance a feeling of belonging to those within and encourage acceptance by those who view it from without.

QUALITIES WHICH PROMOTE PEACE AND UNITY

Have you noticed that often those who are avoided by others constantly complain and find fault, mostly speak in the negative, rarely compliment others for their success, and seldom smile? You feel uneasy in their presence, don't you? Have you noticed others avoiding you? Could this perhaps be your own problem? To humbly follow Paul's advice in Philipppians 2:14-15 will surely aid in correcting this situation, "*Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*"

What a grand contribution we can make toward peace and harmony when we display the "*fruit of the Spirit*" (Gal. 5:22-23) such as "*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*" all of which are in perfect accord with the will and desire of our Father.

What a blessing it would be, both for him and ourselves, when another brother "*be overtaken in a fault*" and we "*which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*" (Gal. 6:1). I do not always like what I see in the mirror; but it tells the truth. I can only adjust that image by correcting the person it reflects.

THE BENEFIT IN BEING A PEACEMAKER

"Be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11).

James wrote, "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (3:18).

Jesus Himself said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Mat. 5:9).

Many of our ills, both emotional and physical, would be eliminated if we lived in an atmosphere free from strife, but where instead peace and harmony prevailed. We ourselves, yes you and me, can be the instrument God uses in bringing this about if we will only permit His presence to control our thoughts and conduct.

Indeed, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalms 133:1)

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APOLOGIA

QUESTION: I often hear the expression "we are to glorify God". Can you explain this?

ANSWER: This expression is very common today. Some people use it in an irreverent way while others use it quite seriously. Either way we know that it is a Biblical principle that every Christian is responsible for implementing in the life that they live for the Lord.

We will begin by examining the concept of glorifying God. The word glory comes from the Greek word *doxa* which literally translated refers to majesty, honor, or fame. All of which are applicable to God. God is often referred to as the God of glory. This shows that glory is not something that God needs added to Him. It is a description of His very nature. Some see the idea of glorifying God as something that we add to God. The Bible teaches that He already possesses glory. It is our duty to draw attention to the glory that describes Him. Therefore we by the life that we live should glorify God.

The subject of glorifying God is indeed a deep one and we recognize that we cannot completely cover this subject in this

brief article. We, however, do want to provide a few observations concerning it.

All things that God does is for His glory. In fact the creation of the world and all created things both angelic and earthly were created to glorify God, to draw attention to His very nature. Consider the psalmist in Psalms 19. David writes,

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech. And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the Sun. Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat." (Psa. 19:1-6)

The concept of glorifying God is plainly given in the first few words. Note that things created declare God's glory by showing His wisdom and power. This entire passage illustrates how the created universe glorifies God.

Just as the natural world was created to glorify God so was it to be with the creation of man. Man was the crowning act of God's creation. It was God's intent that humankind glorify Him. However Satan did not like all the attention being given to God and thus sin entered the world. It was Satan's intent to receive glory and if not at the very least keep God from receiving it!

However, God had a plan. This plan was to glorify Himself by providing redemption and reconciliation to mankind through His Son. Jesus came to seek and save the lost and by so doing He glorified His Father. In John 17, Jesus prays unto the Father right before His crucifixion. Note carefully His words.

"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify you, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as you have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now; O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the

glory which I had with You before the world was." (John 17:1-5)

There are several points in this passage that is worth noting but we will draw our reader to two. The first is that glory was inherent in the nature of God before He created the world. This establishes once again that glorifying God does not mean to add to God anything that He lacks but to draw attention to that which He possesses. Jesus asked that both He and the Father be glorified with the glory they had before the world was! The second thing to note is that Jesus glorified the Father by giving eternal life to those who receive Him. Even our salvation is about God's glory!

Now we turn our attention to our part in this subject. How do we glorify God?

As the passage in John 17 suggests, we glorify God through the Son. When we obey the Gospel we draw attention to the loving God who gives us life both physical and eternal. We are cleansed, redeemed from sin, and reconciled unto God and this in itself speaks volumes about the God whom we serve! He demonstrates His loving nature by forgiving our sin through His Son.

In addition to our redemption, we now live a life that bears record of the wonderful God who saved us. Peter in 2 Peter 3:17-18 explains how this is done. He writes,

"You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever."

Peter shows us that as the redeemed we are to become like the Savior who saved us. We do so by growing in His grace and knowledge. As we become like Him we glorify Him.

The apostle Paul teaches us that our life that we live in Christ is all about us becoming like Him. We are to become partakers of His nature.

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

The purpose of Christ-likeness in our life is that we glorify God. As Christians everything we do becomes about the glory of God.

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
August 1 - 3	New Bethel Congregation Cullman, AL	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
August 8 - 10 Fri. - Sat. 7:30 p.m. Eastern Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.	Mt. Carmel Road Congregation Gay, GA	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
August 8 - 10	Willow Oaks Congregation Russell Springs, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
August 8 - 10	Mt. Zion Congregation Crab Orchard, KY	Hunter Bulger (Fort Deposit, AL)
August 11 - 15	Westwood Congregation Ashland, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN) & Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
August 22 - 28	Gablesville Congregation Gablesville, PA	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
August 25 - 31	Chapmansville Congregation Chapmansville, WV	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
August 29 - 31	Fourth Avenue Congregation Algood, TN	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
August 29 - 31	Verona Congregation Verona, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. According to 1st Chronicles, how old did a male have to be to serve in David's armies?
2. Where did God send Jeremiah to learn a lesson about His ability to remake a nation?
3. What did "Boanerges," the name Jesus gave to James and John the sons of Zebedee, mean?
4. Paul instructed the Colossians not to be cheated out of their reward by people who practice what two things?
5. Whom does Paul refer to as "My own heart?"