

# Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: June 22, 2013

## Be Of The Same Mind Toward One Another

by Dan Trygg

**“Be of the same mind (thinking the same-thing) toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”**

Romans 12:16

**“Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind (He might give to you the to think the same-thing) with one another according to Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Romans 15:5-6

**“Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”**

II Corinthians 13:11

**“...make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”**

Philippians 2:2

**“I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony (to think the same thing) in the Lord. Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have contended beside me in the cause of the gospel...”**

Philippians 4:2,3

**This is an interesting “one another” service we are to do toward our brothers and sisters in Christ.** It is translated as “be of the same mind toward one another” or “live in harmony with one another”, but **the literal Greek wording is “thinking the same-thing toward one another”.** On the surface, this could be construed almost to sound like we are to give up our individuality, or become like robotic clones of one another. That is not at all what Paul had in mind. Note that *all* of the passages above are from his epistles. Paul received the clearest revelation of the unity of Christ with His Body, the church. He had been aggressively hunting down, persecuting, torturing, and even killing Christians. When Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, He said, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute *Me*?” He responded, “Who are *You*, Lord?” The voice said, “I am *Jesus*, whom you are persecuting.” Not only did he surrender his life to Christ, but his understanding of the reality of the unity of Christians with their Master, and with each other, was profoundly impacted by this experience. We are like limbs, or organs, of a spiritual Body. Every part is important, and each one has a significant function. None is to be minimized, or rejected. In fact, one of our key responsibilities is to help one another become strong and mature in Christ. This is the foundation for understanding Paul’s teaching regarding our thinking toward one another. For example, in Romans 12:3, Paul wrote, “For I say through the grace given to me to everyone being among you, not to think beyond what it is necessary to think, but to think (and be thinking) unto the to-think-healthy, to each as God distributed a measure of faith.” From this passage, we find there is such a thing as “healthy thinking”, and that we have the ability to control or direct our thought process. We are *not* to go beyond what is healthy and appropriate thinking regarding ourselves, or others. Instead, we are to cultivate healthy thinking, especially in regard to each other and the roles we play in the Body.

**In some cases, healthy thinking means to not think too highly of yourself, in comparison to others.** This is the message of Romans 12:16. Literally, it says, “Thinking the same thing toward one another, not thinking high things (inflated, pretentious, arrogant things), instead being-ones-associating-together-with the lowly. Do not become ‘wise-ones’ in your own estimation.” It is quite evident, in the context, that Paul is dealing with the tendency many of us have to think we are “better” than others. Thus, we choose to gather around those we look up to, or are attracted to, and disregard those who are not as flashy or “socially-attractive” in the world’s eyes. We tend to gather in clusters or cliques of people who are like us, ...or maybe a notch above, if we are a “social climber”. It is amazing how quickly we “size people up”, and make judgments about them, and esteem some as more desirable than others. This tendency is flat-out sinful! It is not the heart of God, nor inspired by the Spirit of God. **To be of the same mind toward one another means that we approach each individual as a valuable brother or sister in Christ, and treat them accordingly.** To put this evil spirit of partiality to death, Paul reinforces his point by saying that we ought to become ones who “associate with the lowly”. The word for “associate with” can either mean to “be led astray with” or, more in keeping with Paul’s thought here, “(for yourselves) going off together with” the lowly. In other words, we are to voluntarily hang out with those who are the lowly. There is to be equality that is expressed in action, not just inner self-talk. God wants us to value each other equally in ways that are practical and visible. How do we do that? By spending time talking and listening to them. Someone wisely observed that love is spelled “T – I – M – E”.

**To be of the same mind toward one another can also mean to value one another enough to accommodate ourselves to the other person’s preferences.** In Romans 15:1-6, it is clear that the lesson was that “we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not just to please ourselves.” As so often happens, those who had a little more liberty in their understanding of certain practices were looking down on those who were more rigid in their scruples. These others tended to judge those who did not agree with them. Paul told both sides to stop it, and to

put aside these differences in order to pursue the business of building one another up (14:19). “Keep your divisive opinions to yourself. And, you who are strong, ...you who supposedly have freedom..., should be able to adapt to those who have their scruples, so that you can get along and work toward edifying one another” (15:1,2). Just as Jesus did not please Himself, but even went so far as to bear the reproaches and unfair treatment at the hands of His accusers, we can call upon God to give us the encouragement and perseverance we need to value one another equally. If God will grant us the ability to have the same mind toward one another, then we can join together in one passionate heart to praise Him freely. **To “think the same thing” toward one another is to see our unity in Christ as more important than our differences, and adapt ourselves to be able to do the work of Body-life.**

The next time this phrase occurs it is at the conclusion of Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians. It is a summary statement of the apostle’s wishes for these believers. “Finally, brethren, rejoice, be fully-equipped, be comforted, think the same thing, live in peace; and the God of the love and peace will be with y’all” (II Cor. 13:11). It is evident that all of these ideas have to do with spiritual health and maturity. In light of the surrounding words, and the usage of “think the same thing” in the previous contexts, it would seem to also be used here in the same way. **It seems, again, to mean to approach one another with humility, and to adjust our preferences to promote support and unity. Note, too, that Paul says if we develop a community where we are being equipped, encouraged, where people are treated equally, and where they live in peace, God will be with us.** He is the God of *agapē* love and peace (reconciled relationships, harmony, tranquility).

**The next context again uses Jesus as our example,** “If therefore 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, fulfill my joy **in order that you might think the same thing, having the same love, joint-souls, thinking the one thing**” (Phil. 2:1,2) What is he talking about? He continues on, “Do nothing from rivalry or vain conceit, rather in lowliness-of-mind considering one another better than yourselves, each one looking not to the things of themselves, but each one the things of the others” (Phil. 2:3,4). Where does he get this? **“Think this among yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus,** who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be held on to, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” We saw the same mindset in John 13, “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup> got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. <sup>5</sup> Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.” Afterwards, He said, “Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup> You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup> If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> For **I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.** <sup>16</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> **If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them**” (John 13:12-17). **Jesus is the consummate example of valuing and thinking of others before Himself. We are to think as He did.**

In one last example, we find two of Paul’s former co-laborers in the gospel at an impasse. They seem to have had a difference that they had not been able to resolve, and had allowed it keep them from being able to work together. He wrote, “I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to think the same thing in the Lord.” He even appealed to his friends at Philippi to “help these two women” (4:2,3). This seems to be saying that they were to put aside their grievances and focus on their common interests, effective service for Christ and a fruitful walk in the Spirit. **To tell them to “think the same thing” was an admonition to get their minds back on track.** Sometimes we may need someone to tell us to clear our minds and get refocused on the things that really matter. **There will be differences** which we will have with one another. Since we are all different in so many ways, this is to be expected. **What is important is to be willing to put these minor differences aside and return to the ground we do share in common, (1.) Jesus Christ is Lord of all; and, (2.) We have a responsibility as His servants to build each other up in Him.**

**In summation, to “think the same thing unto one another” is an act of service we are to offer to one another to promote communication and healthy, interactive relationships in the Body of Christ.** It means to not allow ourselves to be prejudiced toward others, but to treat everyone with equal openness. It also means to put aside minor differences for the sake of open relationships and loving service. In addition, it means to put aside privilege and power in order to serve others, putting their interests and needs before our own. To “think the same thing unto one another” also means to put aside disagreements for the sake of oneness and fruitful ministry. Finally, we saw that Jesus Himself provided for us the best example of considering others before Himself and putting their needs before His personal comfort or convenience. **We are to “think the same thing” as He thought, and be willing to give up place, privilege, power, preferences and prejudice in order to help and edify others.**