

That all of them may be ONE

ONENESS GUIDE #4

# TOWARD ONENESS

October 3, 2010

Philippians 2:1-11

DESTINED FOR UNITY...  
WITH GOD  
In Jesus Christ Our Lord  
WITH EACH OTHER  
In The Church  
WITH EACH OTHER  
In Our Family

## Unity: Practical Help Toward Oneness I

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

### IMITATING CHRIST'S HUMILITY

**2** If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

<sup>5</sup> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

<sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

*...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

- Jesus (John 17:21)



## Philippians 2:1-11 - Imitating Christ's Humility

### Philippians 2:1-11 (continued)

- <sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him  
to the highest place  
and gave him the name  
that is above every  
name,  
<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth  
and under the earth,  
<sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory  
of God the Father.



The "First Adam" and the "Last Adam" (Jesus)*	
<p><b>ADAM</b></p> <p><b>His Choice</b> <i>Who was made in the image of God (Gn. 1:26), and regarded to "be like God" something to be exploited ((Gn. 3:4-5) so he aspired to greatness, and the knowledge of good and evil (Gn.3:5)</i></p> <p><b>His Disobedience</b> <i>Seeking to be in the likeness of God, but being found in human form, he exalted himself, and became disobedient, seeking life (Gn.3:6, 22)--he was expelled and alienated from God.</i></p> <p><b>His Condemnation</b> <i>Therefore God condemned him to suffering, and gave him the infamy of death (Gn.3:16-19) so that at his name everyone will be cursed (Galatians 3:10,13) in all creation separated from God (Rm. 5:12-14; 8:22) and no tongue will confess any salvation, but will receive the wrath of God the Father (Rm.1:18)</i></p>	<p><b>JESUS</b></p> <p><b>His Choice</b> <i>Who, being in very nature God, did not consider _____ with God something to be _____ (Phil. 2:6) but made himself _____, taking the very nature of a _____ (v.7)</i></p> <p><b>His Obedience</b> <i>...being made in _____ likeness (v.7) And being found in appearance as a _____, he _____ himself, and became obedient to _____ --even _____ on a _____! (v.8)</i></p> <p><b>His Exaltation</b> <i>Therefore God _____ him to the _____ place, and gave him the name that is _____ every name (v.9), that at the name of Jesus every knee should _____, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue _____ that Jesus Christ is _____, to the glory of God the Father (v.11)</i></p>

\*from Hawthorn & Martin, Philippians

## Self Study in Oneness for Week Four

YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH. - PSALM 119:105

**Look:** Read Philippians 2:1-4

**Day 1 Ask:** 1. In v.1 Paul says "if" but he means "since." What four reasons does he give for us to strive toward oneness?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_

2. What characteristics of a unified community does Paul give us (v.2)?

3. What are two motivations we might have for our actions that will kill unity (v.3)? What is the antidote for this?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

4. What can we do to help one another stay together in unity, in Christ (v.4)?

**Meditate:** Think about the reasons these verses give us (v.1) for working to be unified. What difference do these make to you? How well do you think you and your church are doing in showing the positive characteristics that promote unity and shunning the negative ones that destroy our oneness?

**Pray:** *Each day* - Praise Jesus for His eternal life-giving sacrifice for us. Confess the ways you tend to help yourself at the expense of others. Thank our Lord for His Word & ask Him to help you understand & apply it.  
*Today* - Pray for God's help as you accept the great challenge of following Jesus, the epitome of unifying humility, this week.

- Day 2** **Look:** Read Philippians 2:5-11... Fill in the blanks in the “First Adam” & “Last Adam” chart on page 2.
- 2 Ask:** 1. What do you see as the most important similarities between the man (Adam) we meet at the beginning of the Bible and the man (Jesus) we meet in the Gospels? What are the most striking differences?
- Meditate:** Where do you see “Adam-like” qualities and behaviors in yourself--striving for more, trying to promote yourself, etc.--instead of resting in God and serving Him? How does this passage help you work against these natural tendencies?
- Pray: Today** - Express your gratitude to Jesus for His self-giving which reversed the curse of death that Adam brought, and each of us brings, upon us.
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- Day 3** **Look:** Read Philippians 2:5-11 - Christ’s Exemplary Attitude
- 3 Ask:** 1. If you had been inspired by God to write these words as a Hymn to Jesus, what title would you have given this hymn?
2. Why does Paul put these words about Jesus here? What is the “big idea” that Paul is trying to convey to the Christians in Philippi? What does he want people like us to do? Why?
- Meditate:** Think of people you have emulated, imitated, tried to be like? What was it about them that cause you to do this? What would it look like if you were a more dedicated and persistent imitator of Jesus?
- Pray: Today** - Thank God for the positive examples (name them) you have had in your life. Thank Jesus for the things you know about Him (name them) that exemplify healthy and fruitful living for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be a better follower.
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- Day 4** **Look:** Read Philippians 2:5-11 (esp. vv.6-8) -- Descent from Glory to the Cross
- 4 Ask:** 1. What was Jesus like before He came to earth? What kind of attitude did he have toward Himself & His Father (v.6)?
2. How did Jesus show His humility to us? Where do we see the ultimate example of this (vv.7-8)?
3. What are some other stories of Jesus from the Gospels that also reveal the humble character of God the Son? How did His actions bring people together rather than push them apart?
- Meditate:** When is a time when you allowed yourself to be “made low” (gave up something precious, suffered undeserved pain or humiliation...) for the sake of someone else? How did it feel? Why did you do it?
- Pray: Today** - Pray for Jesus to show how you can follow Him more closely and faithfully today.
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- Day 5** **Look:** Read Philippians 2:5-11 (esp. vv.9-11) - Ascent from the Cross to Glory
- 5 Ask:** 1. Where does Jesus start out in this hymn (v.6)? Where does he end up (vv.9-11)?
2. The word “therefore” means that there is a logical connection between what comes before it and after it. What does it mean that Jesus’ chosen “humiliation” is logically connected to His Father’s action of “highly exalting” Him?
3. What happens in the scene described at the end here (vv.10-11)? How many people and how many parts of God’s creation are included in this scene? Why is this important? How does it relate to the goal of “oneness/unity?”
- Meditate:** What does it mean for people to “bow their knee” at the name of Jesus? What does it mean for us to “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord?” How will you do this today?
- Pray: Today** - Bow before Jesus, physically and in your heart, and tell Him all the ways you see Him as Lord over your life? Thank Him, the Lord of the Universe, for humbling Himself all the way to the Cross for you.



## Notes

**Philippians** was written by the Apostle Paul from a prison cell, and evidence from this letter indicates that his execution was an imminent possibility (see 1:19-26). Yet Philippians comes down to us as a letter marked by the theme of “Joy!” And the joy Paul expresses is no denial of reality. Neither is it a retreat into some sort of “just be happy” fantasy world. It is a joy born of hardship suffered, faced and overcome. As Paul shares, he has “*learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*” (4:12-13) This joy and contentment finds its source in the humility of Jesus Christ, promotes unity in fellowship among believers and is a powerful motivation toward spreading the Good News of Jesus. The church at Philippi was founded during Paul’s second missionary journey (see Acts 16) in response to a vision Paul had where a “man from Macedonia” called him to “come over and help us.” With this church the history of the Gospel in Europe began. Sometime later, the Philippians sent a gift to the imprisoned Paul with his old friend Epaphroditus. When he returned he brought this most personal of all Paul’s letters back with him. Which prison was Paul in at the time? we don’t know for sure. We know he was imprisoned in Philippi itself (Acts 16), in Jerusalem (Acts 21-23), in Caesarea (Acts 23-26) and in Rome (Acts 28). Many Bible scholars also believe he was in jail for a while in Ephesus and perhaps Corinth as well. Ephesus (sometime around 54 AD) or Rome (after 60 AD) are the location possibilities favored by most scholars. “Fellowship” (*koinonia*) is a key term in Philippians, and amidst all the joy Paul affirms, he also expresses a grave concern: There is dissension among the Philippian believers (especially the people of “Euodia and Syntyche” - 4:2-9) and this disunity threatens the church as a whole especially since a disunified church offers less resistance to false teachers who would undermine their faith in Christ. Against the forces of dissension, Paul especially holds up the example of Jesus whose humble attitude led Him to the Cross where He saved us.

**2:5-11** - It is generally agreed that Paul is quoting from an already-existing hymn of the early here though the form we now have may well have been the result of his editing and re-working. Theologically, this is the most important section of the Philippian epistle as it reveals the inner and eternal character and quality of Jesus that took Him by His choice to the Cross and so by His Father’s will and power to the highest place. It takes us from the Pre-Existent and Glorious Christ, through the Earthly Saving Christ and to the Resurrected and Glorified Christ. Some have called this cosmic journey “The Way of the Parabola” (a U shape) with the Cross at the bottom and the movement down and up from glory to glory. Note that in the first part of this hymn, Jesus is the subject, and in the last half, God is the subject. Jesus humbles Himself, and God the Father exalts Him. Paul is commending this principle to the Philippians: Give it up! Pour it out! Humble yourself! Be like Jesus! For as God the Father exalted Him, so will he raise up high those who follow Jesus and His way of humble self-giving, His Way of the Cross.

**Additional Notes:** **If** (v.1) - In its original Greek language, this phrase assumes a positive response, so it is a Greek way to say “since.” **Humility** (v.3) - This was not a virtue in Greek culture. It was an attitude fit only for a slave. Paul puts it in a more positive light with the definition in v.4 and the example of Jesus that follows. **In appearance as a man** (v.8) - The word for appearance (*schema*) denotes what is outward and changeable as opposed to essential and eternal. William Barclay says this: *Jesus is essentially divine; but he was for a time human. His mankind was utterly real, but it was something which passed: the godhead was also utterly real, but it is something which abides forever.*



## Small Group Guide

**Hearing About Us** - 1. Who’s someone whose unselfishness made a difference in your life? What did they do? 2. Where did you see someone behaving unusually selfishly or unselfishly this week? How did they promote either discord or togetherness?

**Heeding God’s Word** - 1. What do you find most amazing about the example of Jesus given in Philippians 2:5-11?

2. If God humbles those who try to raise themselves against Him (like Adam) and raises those who humble themselves for Him (like Jesus), why don’t people tend to be more humble?

3. As time permits, share other insights you gained from your Self Study in Oneness for this week (see page 3).

**Helping One Another in Prayer to God** - Share prayer requests among group members as you are willing and able.

Pray silently for one another with one of you closing this time by praying out loud.