

Expository Files

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Edited by Jon W. Quinn & Warren E. Berkley

The Lord Is Patient
The Front Page
By Jon W. Quinn

In 2 Peter 3:9,10 the Scriptures state that “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”

God has not yet handed down judgment. Life continues to take its course despite various acts of sin, wickedness and rebellion. The militant atheist can shake his fist at heaven and curse God without fear of any immediate consequence of divine wrath. The only consequence of wickedness in this world at this time is the suffering it causes; disease, trouble, mental and emotional anxiety and trauma, broken homes, social disorder and low self-esteem, to name a few. Thus it shall continue until “the day of the Lord” (See also Acts 17:31).

Now is the time of grace - our grace period given to us by God. He is now reconciling all who desire it through His gospel (2 Corinthians 7:17-21). Further, God’s grace instructs us to deny ungodliness and to live soberly and righteously in this present age (Titus 2:11,12). Some of us answer His call. Many do not and each day we live is one day closer to that final day when

this age of grace will pass and eternity will begin. It is something to think about. It is something to prepare for.

In the Faith, Jesus In You
“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith...”
2 Corinthians 13:5
By Jon W. Quinn

One thing that every disciple needs to do fairly often is to take a careful look at himself and make some honest evaluations about how he is doing and what could be done to grow. We need to be careful and not allow our opinion of ourselves get in the way of making an accurate evaluation. James wrote, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:22-25).

Am I In “The Faith”?

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you -- unless indeed you fail the test?” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Perhaps of first concern is “Is my faith the faith”? This is because there are many, many different faiths across the earth, but there is only one faith that is what the Bible calls “the faith” (see also Ephesians 4:4-6).

Is my faith according to the Scriptures? We have the responsibility to look into the word of God and ask ourselves: Have I done what is necessary to become a Christian? I am not in the faith if I simply do what my parents did (whether they were right or wrong). I am not in the faith if I simply do what "many people" believe or practice. Is my faith according to traditions of men, or according to the Scriptures (1 Timothy 4:6; 6:3; 2 Timothy 4:3)?

Is “The Faith” Active in My Life?

To be “in the faith” that faith must be exhibited in our lives. Faith can never grow, or even be tested at all, if it is not active. Jesus talked about the power of faith, and figuratively described it as being able to move mountains. Men and women of faith can accomplish so much simply because they are empowered by faith, but only if that faith is active. Otherwise, it is dead.

I have designed several web sites. I am no expert, by any means, but I have used maybe a half dozen web design programs through the years. If you had asked me about one of these programs before I had used it, I would not have been very helpful in providing any useful information. It would only be after I had actually used it that I could tell you how its features worked and how it compared to other design programs that I have also used. This is also what is demanded of the Christian; putting our faith to the test! Only then can we discover the various features of the faith.

Mid Term Exams

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” There is one thing that you can do better than anyone else on this earth. While everyone can look at your life and deeds, only you can test yourself in a way that goes beyond outward appearances. Sometimes outward appearances do not fully tell what is within a person's heart. This is because we can pretend to be something we are not. The Pharisees were notorious for appearing to be righteous (Matthew 23:28), but their faith and righteousness was false. It was insufficient (Matthew 5:20).

The same can happen today. Only I can examine myself to see if I am in the faith with reference to what is within. I pray in the assembly, and others know that. But do I pray in private? I contribute to the Lord's cause on the Lord's Day, and others know that. Do I contribute when no one is watching but God? Paul's admonition was that these brethren look at themselves that they might know how they might better themselves, put away those things that must be put away, and ensure that they are truly in the faith.

Is My Heart With God?

Worship is more than words, though it does consist of words of praise and devotion. Worship is more than actions though certainly activity as has been appointed by God is involved. Worship includes true adoration of and

reverence for God. It is from the heart and is genuine. There are many, many more “worshippers” of God than there are “true worshippers” of God! “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.” (John 4:23).

The Pharisees came to God, saying some of the right things, but believing or meaning little of what they said or did. They did not seek to give God their best, to truly honor Him, or to put His will even above their own; they came to God on their own terms and acted as if that was acceptable. Their worship was more about pleasing themselves and impressing others than it was about glorifying God (Matthew 15:9; Colossians. 2:20-23).

My worship, and indeed all my walk “in the faith” ought to be an expression of what is truly on my heart. If I am “in the faith” then my worship will be founded upon my heart's desire to be pleasing to God in showing my sincere love for Him.

Is There Sin in My Life or Flaws in My Character?

It is seldom a problem of not knowing what sin is. At the very least, most behavior that is sinful on a moral basis (lying, cheating, stealing) will be questionable even to one new in the faith. Sometimes, doctrinal error may be more difficult to discern. That is why we need to be diligent in learning the Lord's will (Hebrews 5:13; Philippians 1:9,10; 1 Thessalonians 5:21,22).

Honesty with self is demanded here. We must not intentionally overlook, excuse our own flaws. When sin is discovered, there ought to be a willingness to put it away. That mindset is called “repentance” in the Scripture. Repentance involves the change of heart that results in “showing sin the door.” To help me in this, the Lord promises forgiveness if I will confess sin to God (1 John 1:6-2:1). This would include “secret sins” (Psalm 66:18). For example, not only do I stop taking revenge on others, I even stop myself from imagining it or dreaming about it. Our success in these things depends on getting the heart right, and that process is not completed overnight. It is a part of “working out our own salvation” as we continue to walk by faith (Philippians 2:12).

Even when it is not a sin, those who seek to give God excellent service desire to excel in “the faith”. We are not looking just to get a passing grade, but to get an “A+”. This means we will seek to grow in positive spiritual attributes, to reach beyond what is acceptable to what is excellent. If this becomes our goal, then we are well on our way to passing the “final exam”. That is the ultimate purpose, after all.

Grace and Works, Knowledge and Salvation

2 Peter 1:1-11

By Ethan R. Longhenry

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in that world by lust. Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:1-11).

As Peter begins his second letter to Christians, he again considers the nature of salvation and the expectation of certain forms of conduct from God's people. Passages like this demonstrate the absurdity of the bifurcation of Protestant thought. Protestants have obsessed over the distinction between "faith" and "works", and often do all they can to avoid any form of "works based salvation", whatever that would mean. Sure, they recognize the need for obedience to God, but such is always considered an afterthought in any

discussion. What must be primarily emphasized is that salvation is not by works.

Peter (and Paul, for that matter) here is not bothered by the Protestant obsession. The "discrepancy" between "salvation by grace" and obedience is simply not there. He asserts without qualification that we have obtained a "like precious faith" with the Apostles themselves in the righteousness of Jesus (2 Peter 1:1). He then continues in 2 Peter 1:3-4 by establishing that all things pertaining to life and godliness have been given to us by His divine power, and that He has granted us many great promises based upon our redemption from the corruption of the world.

So far this sounds like "good" "salvation by grace" theology. And yet Peter's conclusion to this is for the believer him or herself to add diligence, faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, kindness, brotherly love, and love (2 Peter 1:5-7). Such things allow one to abound, growing mightily in the faith in the knowledge of the Lord-- but the lack of these qualities indicates that a person is blind, having forgotten that they have been cleansed of their former sins (2 Peter 1:8-9). So much for standard Protestant theology! Peter clearly has no difficulty with the idea of works having a role in one's final salvation.

2 Peter 1:10-11 provides further demonstration of this: we must give diligence to make our calling and election sure, and in so doing we will be supplied with the entrance into the eternal Kingdom.

It is a puzzling thing how one could read such verses and come away with the standard Protestant "faith/works" distinctions. Such things are clearly imposed on the text. Yes, the Bible makes it clear that we are not saved by our works-- nothing we can do can make up for our sin (Romans 1-4). We must have the grace of God, manifest to us in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the remission of our sin (Romans 3-5). Nevertheless, there is a full expectation that the forgiveness of sin and the acceptance of this mighty salvation will lead one to be an obedient servant of Christ (Romans 6-8)!

This is what Peter makes clear: yes, we have the opportunity to have faith, even equal faith with the Apostles, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We have all of these wonderful promises given to us in His divine power. Yet the result is that we should be out doing things. The result is that we develop our own faith and its attendant qualities.

It is also interesting to note the connection between the knowledge of Christ and practicing of the truth. Grace and peace is to be multiplied in the knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 1:2). All of the aspects of 2 Peter 1:5-7 lead one, in verse 8, to being not idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Knowledge and action are to be mixed in the life of the Christian: one cannot learn how to discern good from evil without the knowledge of what is good and what is evil, yet one will not train one's powers of discernment to that end without constant practice (cf. Hebrews 5:14). Practicing righteousness leads to being fruitful in the knowledge of Christ; the knowledge of Christ ought to lead one to practice righteousness.

2 Peter 1:9 itself is quite telling, for Peter's words presuppose the recognition that receiving the forgiveness of sin must be followed by obedience to God. Peter establishes in 2 Peter 1:9 that if one lacks the qualities of faith described in verses 5-7, one has forgotten how he or she has been forgiven of sin. How can Peter be so secure in his conclusion? Peter, of all people, recognizes how great a salvation is effected through Jesus Christ. If a person recognizes what sin is, the nature of sin, the consequences of sin, the fact that they have sinned, and that they have been able to escape from all such things through Christ's blood, such a one will be humbled, thankful, gracious, and so happy at his fortune that he will do whatever is necessary to please his Lord. It is only when a person forgets where he or she came from and forgets about the greatness of the salvation which he or she received that he or she becomes slack in their faith and its attendant virtues, being blinded by present circumstance.

This idea is not new to Peter; Paul establishes the same in Titus 3:3-8. Yet it is a very critical thing to those who would profess Christ. Let us not fall for the Protestant trap, forcing a sixteenth century controversy upon the first century. There is no contradiction between salvation by grace through faith and obedience to God. It is not enough to simply profess Jesus; the expectation is that you recognize how great a salvation has been accomplished on your behalf without you doing a thing about it, and be therefore willing to devote your life to the One who devoted His life to you. And this is the promise: with diligence, faith, virtue, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly love, and love, we will not be idle but will be fruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, making our calling and election sure. If we ever forget where we came from, or forget about the salvation that God provided for us, we become blind, and stumble into the pit.

Let us all indeed grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ
(2 Peter 3:18)!

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“Confidence In The Flesh”
Phil. 3:4

One trademark of the Pharisees and Judaizers was to boast about their attainments in Judaism. They were not silent or slow to recite to people all their grounds of boasting: *the day of their circumcision, the name of their tribe, the language they knew, the soundness they claimed, and the zeal they “performed.”* It was like they handed out their religion resumes wherever they went, proud of their attainments in Judaism (pedigree, rank, reputation). And by “Judaism,” I don’t mean the law of Moses but the whole religious complex established by the scribes and Pharisees; institutionalized, traditional, but without divine authority.

Before becoming a Christian Paul had been involved in this! He was a militant Pharisee and full-time persecutor of Christians. He was high up in the religion of Judaism. If anyone could boast or claim the confidence of this establishment Paul could. But something happened that changed Paul forever. He saw the risen Christ. He heard Ananias preach the gospel. He was baptized. And, was called to be an apostle. Upon his conversion he renounced his status in Judaism. His confidence in the flesh was crucified. His confidence was now in Christ.

“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eight day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ,” (Phil. 3:3-7)

Confidence in the flesh is what happens, *when we rest on past achievements.* What we did one time becomes our grounds of boasting: a battle we won . . . an experience we went through, *that others didn’t have . .*

. an award we won . . . an honor we had. To rest on past achievements represents confidence in the flesh.

Confidence in the flesh is what happens, *when men claim they are good and right because of their connections*: your blood connections; who you knew; who you were or are associated with.

Confidence in the flesh is what happens, *when you claim to be sound because of what you oppose*. Paul persecuted the church. He opposed the disciples of Christ. Among the militant Pharisees and Judaizers, this was considered to be the mark of soundness – *what you opposed*. {While there are things we must oppose, soundness cannot be measured merely by opposition.}

When people are anxious to throw their religious resume around and brag about their attainments and elevate themselves above their fellows, that's **confidence in the flesh**. It carries absolutely no weight in our approach to God. And in fact, our confidence in the flesh is pathetic and worthy of no admiration at all, compared to what Christ did.

“But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith,” (Phil. 3:8,9).

Why The Gospel Is Important (Galatians 1)

Jay Taylor

The apostle Paul never grew weary of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He preached it, wrote about it, and lived it. It was important to him and he wanted it to be important to others. The churches of Galatia desperately needed to be reminded of the importance of the gospel. It was being distorted by certain individuals causing some to desert and fall away from the faith. Paul, armed with the gospel, reminds them about the importance of the one gospel. And what Paul says about it has great meaning for us today. *We* need to be impressed with the importance of the gospel.

The Gospel - What It Is (Galatians 1:3-4)

The gospel is important because of what it is. The churches of Galatia needed this reminder because of the distorting views that were being spread about the gospel. They needed to know what it is all about. It is about a *plan*, a *person*, and a *purpose*.

The gospel is important because it was *planned* by God. The death of Jesus was no accident. Paul said it was "*according to the will of our God and Father*" (Gal. 1:4). Peter said that Jesus was "*delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God*" and adds that "*God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer*" (Acts 2:23; 3:18).

The gospel is important because of the *person* at its center. It is all about the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that He gave Himself for our sins. Anything that makes Jesus secondary is not the gospel. Anything that ignores His death or treats sin lightly is not of the gospel.

The gospel is important because of its *purpose*. God planned and Jesus died so that we could be delivered from this present evil age. The purpose of the gospel, then, is rescue and transformation. How thrilling it is to know that I can be rescued from sin! How amazing it is to know that I can live above the standards of this world as a citizen of heaven!

The gospel is important! It was planned by God. It centers on Jesus. Its purpose is righteous and worthy.

The Gospel - Only One (Galatians 1:6-17)

The gospel is important because there is only one. It originated with God and was revealed to Paul. The churches in Galatia were in danger. They were turning to another gospel. What qualifies something as another gospel? If it is contrary to what is revealed then it is another gospel.

Paul wrote these churches to let them know that he didn't invent the gospel. He didn't even learn it from others. God gave it to him. The fact that there is one gospel is important. It means that we have not followed the cunningly devised fables of men (2 Pet. 1:16). It means that there are consequences for preaching another gospel. The gospel is important.

The Gospel - What It Does (Galatians 1:18-24)

Change. That is what happens when one obeys the gospel. Paul mentions the surprise that some had when they learned about his conversion. They were amazed at the change that took place. He went from being a persecutor to a preacher.

There is a change of relationship with God when one obeys the gospel. One goes from being alienated from God to being brought near to Him by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:11-13). There is also a change in behavior. "Such were some of you" describes the change that takes place (! Cor. 6:11). It is a fitting description for all who have been changed by the gospel.

The gospel is important because of the change it produces. Without this change we would be lost and our behavior would grieve God. The good news, however, reveals that we can be doers of the word and please God in what we do.

The Gospel Is Important

In a world that says it doesn't make a difference what you believe, Paul would say, "don't be deceived." The gospel matters. It matters on a personal level. We must constantly ask "How am I responding to the gospel." Is it important to you? Have you been delivered? Have you deserted the one gospel? Have you changed? Let's be thankful for the one gospel and what it does. It is important!

The Final Seven Things Topical Study By Jon W. Quinn

The Scriptures indicate that at least seven things will definitely happen at the end of the world. These things we can know about through the inspired revelation of God. There will certainly be countless facets of these events and how they will effect each one of us. Will it occur in my lifetime? Will I be ready? What will I be doing?

Consider seven things which we know for sure will happen at the end of time as we know it now, and at the dawning of eternity.

Jesus Shall Return

“But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.” (1 Corinthians 15:23,24). One thing Jesus will do at the end is deliver up His kingdom to the Father. Many people have the concept that Jesus is returning to set up His kingdom on earth and reign over it for a thousand years. However, the Scriptures teach He is coming back only to gather His kingdom together and to take us home.

In fact, citizens of His kingdom will rise to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). As close as the Bible puts Him to the earth is the sky above. The faithful meet Him there, and He delivers us home.

Once, when people of Jesus' day also had the mistaken idea that He came to be king over an earthly kingdom, Jesus would have no part of it (John 6:15). Later, He explained to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this realm (John 18:36). He also told His disciples that He was going to go away and prepare a place for them so that they could one day go and be with Him there “in (His) Father's house.” (John 14:1-3)

The Dead Will Be Raised

"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:28,29). There is a place from which the dead will rise. This resurrection will be of “all who are in the tombs” both the doers of good deeds as well as of bad deeds. There will be a resurrection (Acts 24:15). When Christ returns, we will receive either life or judgment.

The Living Will Be Changed

“Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:50,51). There will also be living people on the earth when Jesus returns. The dead will rise from the tombs, but what of the living? They will be changed. This will be necessary because these bodies we have presently are prone to wear out. We need something new, eternal and spiritual in nature, with which to enter into eternity. We will have it. “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised

in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44; see also 1 John 3:2).

This Present Earth Will Be Destroyed

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.” (2 Peter 3:10; cf. vss 9-17). Nothing will be left of the earth beneath nor the stars above. We sometimes get so attached to the present system that we forget that it is temporary.

It should be pointed out that the Bible speaks of three distinct heavens. One is a spiritual place. This is not under discussion here as it is not made up of elements of matter. The atmosphere around our planet is what the Bible calls the “first heaven.” It will be gone. So will “the second heaven” which is where the stars are. When the elements are destroyed, so will they be.

The Judgment of All

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10). The final judgment will also accompany the end of time. It will be a time of reckoning and the carrying out of eternal decrees. We know about all there is to know about this judgment. We know who will be judging and who will be judged. We know what the basis and standard of judgment will be. We know what the possibilities are regarding reward or punishment. We certainly need to be prepared for this final event, for if we are not, then there simply is no other recourse or provision for redemption, forgiveness and victory (see also Hebrews 9:27; Romans 2:16; 14:11,12; John 5:22).

Christ Will cease His Reign

“For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.” (1 Corinthians 15:25,26). At the final resurrection when death is abolished, the Lord will deliver up His kingdom to the Father, as we have already seen. Jesus is not coming again to begin His reign, but to end it. He now reigns over His kingdom from His heavenly throne as Lord (Colossians 1:13; Acts 2:30,31; Hebrews 1:8). This is in accordance with the ancient prophecies (Daniel 7:13,14).

Until that final day, when that last enemy finally yields, Jesus reigns at God's right hand. But the last enemy will yield. His name is death.

Christ Will Deliver The Kingdom to His Father

“...then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.” (1 Corinthians 15:24). We already mentioned this earlier when we discussed Christ's return and the purpose of it. “And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.” (1 Corinthians 15:28). No enemy of God is left unconquered. Every sin has either been punished in judgment or paid for by Christ. All the faithful are at home with their Father and share His glory. Everything is right. That is the meaning of the phrase “that God may be all in all.” Everything is finished, complete, and perfect (Colossians 1:19,20).

Plan of Salvation **By Jon W. Quinn**

Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

Acts 2:36-38

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

(Acts 2:36-38).

Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

The Sinner's Prayer:

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

Come On Sisters, Get It Worked Out *Quickly!*

Phil. 4:2

Warren E. Berkley

"I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord."

We don't have any reason to believe that the church in Philippi was torn apart like Corinth, but here is a direct statement indicating two women were, in some way, at odds with each other.

It has been my observation, after many years in local churches, **I don't care how big the church is, if two people are at odds, there is a good possibility it is disturbing more than just those two people.** Bitterness, coldness, anger and wrath are impossible to conceal. And when such things are displayed or detected, it is discouraging and can have nothing but a bad influence.

Now I want you to imagine, you are one of these two. And at an assembly of the church one of the elders makes it known – "Epaphroditus has returned. He is well now and he brings to us this letter from Paul. Listen to this letter from Paul." The elder or Epaphroditus reads the letter aloud; **you are one of these two individuals and you hear this.** "I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord."

How would you feel? *I would feel – first, shame, then MOTIVATION to get with the other person, and resolve the matter righteously.*

Now look back in your Bible at verse 2 in Philippians 4, and I want to ask this: **How many people are implored?** Two. Both of them are addressed. I don't know exactly what the issue was between them – but Paul assigned to both of them, the responsibility to resolve the conflict. Some things you can't just ignore. There needs to be some outside or third party help or admonition. Have you ever heard this little quote? “To dwell above with the saints we love, O that will be glory; But to dwell below with the saints we know, that's a different story!”

It is highly possible, sometime in your life, to some extent – there will be some sort of conflict. The test of character is – do we seek to resolve it, and how do we resolve it, and how quickly do we seek to resolve it. I've had people come to me on various occasions through the years and say something like – **I'm concerned that I have offended you, and I'm sorry.** And I have no idea what they are talking about. I wasn't offended. I may remember something that was said but I took no offense. But listen – the attitude of being worried about it, and wanting to resolve it, **is an attitude I honor; I really appreciate it.**

Do you recall what Jesus said about this?

“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny,” Matt. 5:23-26.

If you think it may help you in your reading and study in the future, underline this word, “**Quickly.**” NIV: “Settle matters quickly with your adversary...”

Are you in one of these conflicts? Jesus says to you, “Quickly!” Get it settled.

