

Overcoming Division In The Church

(appropriate for High Schoolers and older)

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How Christians treat each other is very important to God.

Galatians 6:10

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

One of the reasons why (that may surprise you) is that it communicates to the people of the world that we are followers of the one true God, Jesus Christ. It points them toward the true God.

John 13:35

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Our love for one another has a spiritual impact on non-christians that is more powerful than we suspect. It tells people, "If you are looking for the one true God, look over there". Similarly, a lack of love in the church hinders people from coming to Christ.

But we can't show love to others in the church if we are not there. That may seem obvious but when you graduate from high school and start your life or go away to college or join the military you will be tempted to stop going to church or Bible study. Sunday morning is a whole half a day. You could use that to catch up on your college education or your career. You will have a decision to make. Put God first or put the priorities of the world first.

Matthew 6:32-33

For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

I urge you to put God first, find and regularly attend church, Bible study, and a fellowship group. You will end up being more successful in life than if you put your education and career first. Why? Because if you put God first He promises to give you the other things that everyone else worries about! Put Him first and He will "work behind the scenes" to bless your educational and career efforts beyond your own capabilities.

Because it is so important for ourselves, other Christians, and even for helping non-christians come to know Him, God commands us to meet regularly with other Christians and serve and encourage one another.

Hebrews 10:24-25

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Nevertheless, there will be times when you will experience some conflict in your church and knowing how to handle it properly will be important.

Sometimes we think that the conflicts we see in our churches today are new. If only our church could be like the early "New Testament Church". But in reality, the conflicts we see in our churches today are the same ones that the church has struggled with from the very beginning and will continue to struggle with until Christ returns.

People who don't understand this may end up spending their whole life hopping from church to church whenever conflict arises looking for that mythical New Testament Church that does not have conflict.

Tonight we are going to look at sources of conflict in the church that the Bible talks about. Because they are mentioned in the Bible, we know that these problems have been in the church from the very beginning of Christianity.

1) Not all “Christians” are Christians!

One cause of division among Christians is that not everyone who claims to be a Christian actually is one. As a result the non-Christian perspective of these people (who are members of churches) will be at odds with what the Bible says. Jesus described this situation as “tares (weeds) among the wheat” in a parable.

Matthew 13:27-30

“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ 28 “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ 29 “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

(Matthew 13:37-39)

And He said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, ³⁸ and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

When the landowner discovered the tares (i.e. undesirable weeds) among the wheat his servants asked if he wanted them removed. He told them to leave the tares among the wheat and let them all grow until the harvest. At the harvest the tares would be burned. As a result, we will always have some non-christians in our churches, some who are in the process of becoming Christians (yay!) and some who are going to be divisive.

Jude 1:17-19

But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁸ that they were saying to you, “In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.” ¹⁹ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

The antidote to this problem is to use the Bible to guide our decisions as our ultimate authority. We need to be able to point to specific scripture as the rationale for our position in a disagreement. If someone is using personal opinion, philosophy, logic, or assertions rather than scripture this is a red flag indicating we should be wary of their position on an issue.

The failure mode that can occur in these situations is that a church leader may be pressured to “restore unity” by compromising with those who are being doctrinally divisive. But unity is not our top priority, obedience to Christ is.

Luke 12:51-53

“Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; ⁵² for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

We can compromise on style and implementation details but not on core doctrine. If we try to compromise on core doctrinal issues the people not following the Bible will stay in the church and continue to cause additional disruption.

The Bible suggests a different approach where the spiritual leader provides a clear doctrinal basis for the church's position on something (**II Timothy 4:1-2**) and the factions in the church that are approved (in agreement with the Bible) then become evident (**I Corinthians 11:17-19**).

II Timothy 4:2 - preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

The spiritual leader is to preach the word when people like it (i.e. in season) but also when they don't like it (i.e. out of season).

I Corinthians 11:18-19

For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. ¹⁹ For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

What will then happen is the factions that are in disagreement will have to make a decision either to repent (change their mind) or leave that church. Either one of these two options is better than having them remain in the church and continue to cause doctrinal disruption.

I John 2:18-19

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

Another problem with non-Christians in the church is when they achieve positions as leaders in the church. The Bible describes these people as false apostles, false prophets, and false teachers.

Matthew 7:15, 22-23

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

Revelation 2:1-2

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

This is a very serious situation because of the amount of damage they can cause and the Bible directs us to take actions to move these people out of the church and not to tolerate them. The church at Ephesus did a good job dealing with false teachers – the church at Thyatira did not!

Revelation 2:18-20

And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

II Timothy 3:1-5

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

Unfortunately, some people will want the false teacher to stay because they find the false teacher to be entertaining or to be saying things they like hearing. False teachers are often very personable, likeable people who are very effective at gaining people's confidence. So much so that people will donate large amounts of money to them. This attractiveness makes them that much more dangerous and difficult to get rid of!

For example, I once read an article about the twenty richest "Christian" ministers in the world. Out of these twenty, two had gained their wealth as secular businessmen before retiring and taking their wealth with them into the ministry and 17 were false teachers (only one was a legitimate Christian minister whose ministry had brought in a lot of money)!

If a minister is wearing \$3,000 suits or \$1,000 sneakers or has a private jet or lives in a mansion that, by itself, does not mean they are a false teacher, but it is a huge red flag that they might be, just based on this data. In these situations what they are teaching needs to be closely examined.

II Timothy 4:2-4

preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Again, the antidote to this conflict is to refer to the Bible to validate whether or not the teachings of these leaders is in agreement with the Bible, regardless of how much we may personally be attracted to them.

2) Christians who Cling to Sins of the Flesh

In addition to non-Christians, churches also have some Christians who have sins of the flesh they really like and are unwilling to repent of. The result of this is: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, and carousing. In the long run God will not allow Christians to continue to practice these things without disciplining them but in the short run Christians who have not yet repented from these sins of the flesh will cause conflicts in the church.

Galatians 5:16-26

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

James 4:1-4

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ² You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. ⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

In these cases the best thing to do is take the actions specified by the Bible that will lead them to repentance.

Romans 13:12-14

The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴ **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.**

One way to counteract the sins of the flesh is to make no provision for them. For example, a married man could argue that it is not a sin for him to have lunch in public with a woman who is not his wife. But if he truly wanted to obey this command and make no provision for the flesh he would not do so. The issue is not whether something is a sin or not but whether it makes provision for or opens a door that is best left closed.

I Corinthians 5:9-12

I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; ¹⁰ I *did* not at all *mean* with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. ¹¹ **But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.** ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within *the church*?

3) Empty Chatter, Foolishness, and Ignorant Speculations

There are some Christians who want to argue about things that are not worth the damage the argument causes. The Bible describes these things as worldly and empty chatter based on false knowledge, foolish and ignorant speculations and controversies, and disputes about words and genealogies. These are people who take a strong position on something where the Bible does not, or where there is no strong evidence one way or the other.

These are people who want to spend their time arguing over the definition of a word instead of just looking up the definition in a dictionary! Although these problems may seem like nothing more than a waste of time, the Bible tells us that, if left unchecked, these things can lead to people going astray from the faith.

I Timothy 6:20-21

O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”— ²¹ which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.

They can also cause people to not become Christians.

II Timothy 2:23-26

But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. ²⁴ The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

They also cause envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men.

I Timothy 6:3-5

If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, ⁴ he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, ⁵ and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

The Bible provides instructions on how to handle these people in **Titus 3:9-11.**

Titus 3:9-11

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, ¹¹ knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

In these cases we are to warn people to stop this behavior. If they continue after two warnings we are to reject them. You may hear people say that we need to “love them back into fellowship” but that’s not what the Bible says. We are to warn them because we love them and want what is best for them but that is not always the same as making them feel loved.

4) Some Christians View Obedience to God as a Low Priority

There are some Christians who work hard at not only understanding God’s will but also at putting it into action. There are other Christians who attend church and go to Bible study but they never really put much effort into putting what they learn into action. The Bible teaches that the accumulation of knowledge without action results in arrogance which leads to conflict in the church.

I Corinthians 8:1

.... Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

Measuring how we are doing by measuring actions instead of Bible knowledge will counteract this arrogance problem and reduce conflict in the church.

5) Some Christians Love Other Things More Than God

We are commanded to love God above everything else.

Mark 12:30

AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’

But some Christians love other things more than God. This creates conflict in the church. For example, some Christians are more concerned about money or other things of the world that they worry about and put these things as a higher priority in life. This causes them to be unfruitful and can result in conflict with others in the church who are being fruitful.

Matthew 13:22-23

And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²³ And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”

Some Christians love the approval of men more than God’s approval so they change their behavior to satisfy men and not God.

John 12:42-43

Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

Even mature Christians can occasionally fall to this temptation.

Paul had to publicly rebuke Peter for doing this.

Galatians 2:11-13

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. ¹³ The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

A related problem is selfish ambition. There are some in the church who serve because they feel that it gives them recognition or honor. If this is taken away and given to someone else they get jealous which causes conflict in the church.

James 3:13-16

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

Believe it or not there are even those who preach the gospel from a motive of selfish ambition!

Philippians 1:15-17

Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; ¹⁶ the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷ the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

6) Some Christians are Divided Due To Differences in Spiritual Maturity, Faith, and Experiential Understanding of the Bible

We are all at different points in our spiritual maturity and this can lead to focusing on the wrong thing. For example, some Christians will focus on a particular spiritual leader and will come to believe that the style and emphasis of that particular person is the only right way of following Christ. This leads to divisions and quarrels.

I Corinthians 1:10-13

Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹ For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you. ¹² Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." ¹³ Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

The Bible also indicates that people who do this are spiritual infants and need to grow in their personal reading and study of the Bible.

(I Corinthians 3:1-6)

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? 5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

A similar problem can occur when it is not recognized that there are a variety of spiritual gifts, ministries, and effects that are all important and have been chosen and distributed by the Holy Spirit. From a human standpoint some ministries may appear to be weaker or less important than other ministries, which seem to have more honor given to them. Not recognizing the importance of all the ministries can lead to conflict in the church.

I Corinthians 12:4-7, 22-23

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; 23 and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable,

7) We Wrestle with Incomplete Knowledge and Partial Understanding

Another source of conflict among Christians is that we struggle with incomplete spiritual knowledge and understanding and we can come to different conclusions as we struggle with these challenges in understanding. For example, spiritual truth is often not intuitive. In other words, what God says is right is often not what we would naturally assume is right.

(Isaiah 55:8-9)

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. ⁹“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

In fact, what we would naturally assume to be right is often quite dangerous!

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way *which seems* right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

In addition, the Bible tells us that spiritual truth has only been partially revealed to us through the Bible and that it will be more fully revealed after this life is over.

I Corinthians 13:12

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

Even Peter stated that some of the Bible written by Paul was difficult for Peter to understand even though Peter had no trouble with the language or an understanding of cultural issues of the time that can confuse us.

II Peter 3:15-16

and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

8) Some Christians Have Legitimate Differences in How They View Circumstances of a Situation

There are some situations where there is no one clear answer. In these cases, we each do our best to understand what the Bible has to say and use our experience and judgment to determine the best path forward. For example, there was a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas about whether to take Mark with them on a missionary journey they were planning.

Acts 15:36-40

After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see how they are.*” ³⁷ **Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also.** ³⁸ **But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.** ³⁹ **And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another,** and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. ⁴⁰ But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.

Paul felt very strongly that Mark should not be allowed to come because he had not been faithful and had deserted them in the middle of a previous mission trip. Paul was right to do this because the Bible teaches that we are to select men to work with and serve with who are faithful.

II Timothy 2:2

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

I Timothy 1:12

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,

Paul had been deserted before by people ministering with him and he knew from experience how damaging this type of behavior was while on a mission trip.

II Timothy 4:10

for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

On the other hand, Barnabas advocated that Mark should be allowed to come. Barnabas was right to do this because he felt that Mark had repented from his previous unfaithfulness and would be faithful this time.

Luke 17:3-4

Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴ And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

In reality no one, including Mark, knew if he would really be faithful or not this time, so the right answer was not obvious. They then made the decision to split up. Paul took Silas with him and Barnabas took Mark on a separate trip. The end result was both Paul and Barnabas made decisions that were doctrinally and scripturally correct and two mission teams ended up going out instead of just one! Even with this disagreement, God’s work was getting done.

Conclusion

We put obedience to Christ and His Word (the Bible) first. We take the actions defined by the Bible to address the specific situations previously discussed when the Bible speaks to them and we defend issues of Biblical doctrine that are non-negotiable. After having done that, the Bible gives us clear instructions on how to maintain unity in the negotiable areas. For example, we ask ourselves, is this non-doctrinal issue worth fighting over knowing that the fight will hinder people from becoming Christians (**John 17:20-23**)?

We are also to take the following approach with non-doctrinal issues: act with humility, gentleness, patience, kindness, compassion, tolerance, love, peace, forgiveness, thankfulness, help equip other Christians so they can be more effective servants of Christ, help other Christians grow into maturity, teach correct doctrine, and speak the truth in love (**Ephesians 4:1-3,12-15, Colossians 3:12-14**). Be devoted to one another, give preference to one another in honor, be diligent, fervent in spirit, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to financial needs, being hospitable (**Romans 12:9-11**), serving one another (**Gal 5:13**), being of the same mind, avoiding selfishness and conceit, and looking out for the interests of others (**Phil 2:1-4**).

Appendix: Verses On Loving One Another

John 17:20-23

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

Ephesians 4:1-3,12-15

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

Colossians 3:12-14

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Romans 12:9-11

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹²rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.*

Galatians 5:13

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Philippians 2:2-4

make 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.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Overcoming Division In The Church*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Galatians 6:10, John 13:35*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 6:32-33, Hebrews 10:24-25*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 13:27-39, Jude 1:17-19*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Overcoming Division In The Church*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 12:51-53, II Timothy 4:2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 11:18-19, I John 2:18-19*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 7:15-23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Overcoming Division In The Church*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 2:1-20, II Timothy 3:1-5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Timothy 4:2-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Galatians 5:16-26*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Overcoming Division In The Church*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *James 4:1-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 13:12-14, I Corinthians 5:9-12*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Timothy 6:20-21, II Timothy 2:23-26*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Overcoming Division In The Church*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Timothy 6:3-5, Titus 3:9-11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 8:1, Mark 12:30*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 13:22-23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Overcoming Division In The Church*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 12:42-43, Galatians 2:11-13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *James 3:13-16, Philippians 1:15-17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 1:10-13, I Corinthians 3:1-6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Overcoming Division In The Church*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 12:4-23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Isaiah 55:8-9, Proverbs 14:12*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 13:12, II Peter 3:15-16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Overcoming Division In The Church*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Acts 15:36-40*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Timothy 2:2, I Timothy 1:12, II Timothy 4:10*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 17:3-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Overcoming Division In The Church*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 17:20-23, Ephesians 4:1-15*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Colossians 3:12-14, Romans 12:9-11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Galatians 5:13, Philippians 2:2-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?