


2020.10.15&18



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

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Questions for Reflection and Discussion

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Has that relationship continued and grown deeper, or diminished (or even ended)? Tell us about it.
- Sometimes relationships become difficult, and require help. Read Philippians 4:1-5. List all of the people spoken of in this passage, and their roles in the relational problem found in v. 2. Euodia and Syntyche were seasoned gospel workers—*not new converts!* What does that tell you?
In v. 1, 2, and 4, believers are commanded to do three things "*in the Lord*". What are they? (v. 1) "_____ *in the Lord*"; (v. 2) "_____ *in the Lord*"; (v. 4) "_____ *in the Lord*"
What do you think it means to "*do something 'in the Lord'*"? What might the **opposite** of that look like?
How could "standing firm in the Lord" and "rejoicing in the Lord" help you live in harmony in the Lord?
It seems from v. 1 that **the whole church** ("brethren") plays **some role** in E's and S's restoration, but in v. 3 **one individual** specifically is asked to take the **pointman role** in helping them get along.
Which of those roles could you see yourself in?
Who has played one role or the other in a situation of church friction? Tell us about it.

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Application-Challenge

- The Bible teaches that the church is a supernatural community, a family. What changes will you make to more faithfully execute on this reality?
- Choose to live out of your radical new identity as a Christian. All other identities must be demoted.
- Find a Christian brother or sister who is deeply different from you racially, culturally, nationally, economically, and determine to really get to know them.



Sermon Summary (Key Text: Ephesians 2:11-22)

The Apostles' Creed speaks to the importance of the church. One of the biggest problems we have in the world today is an inability for people to get along—to love one another, to forgive one another, to live in unity, and Ephesians 2 shows that God gives the church the resources and power it needs to get along with people who are deeply different from one another. **The gospel creates [1] supernatural community through [2] spiritual heart surgery that works itself out in [3] a radical new identity.**

[1] Supernatural community. Ephesians 2:19-21 gives three metaphors that describe the church: **[a] citizenship in heaven, [b] membership in God's household, and [c] joining together as the holy temple for God.** Notice how these three metaphors ascend—each one is more relationally intense than the previous. A king lives in the same country with his citizens, a father lives in the same house with his children, but in the temple imagery, God actually indwells you. Christians are like the blocks in a building—cemented together. I once walked into Starbucks and noticed a big, muscular guy with long hair. His body was tattooed and ears were pierced. It looked as if we had nothing in common—but he was reading the Bible. “Good book” I said. “The best”, he replied. We had this instant connection. He invited me to join him and we had this wonderful conversation about our Savior. You would have thought that we had been friends for years! It was a beautiful thing—God put us together! The gospel unites very different people.

Through Christ we have access to God, but we have to do more than just show up at church two or three times a month for inspiration. Does your relationship with the church mirror these three metaphors? As family, we are to “encourage one another day after day...so that none of us will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13). Sin is deceitful, but if we are living in close relationships in Christ—and this cannot be done on social media!—we can speak truth to one another.

[2] Spiritual heart surgery creates a bond between people who are radically different from one another. Enmity (hostility) towards people who are different from us has to be cut out of the human heart (v. 14-16). God did this for Jews and Gentiles in the first century (v. 11-13). Christ destroyed the “barrier of the dividing wall”, which is the Law of Moses (v. 15)—yet that law was “holy”, “righteous”, “good” and “spiritual” (Romans 7:12-14). God gave the Law so that they could be a light to the Gentiles, but instead the Jews began use the Law to judge the Gentiles. Rather than reaching out to the Gentiles they despised them, and in return, the Gentiles despised the arrogance, pride and judgment of the Jews. The Law became the dividing wall of hostility. The things in which we take pride end up dividing us. For the Jews, it was the Law of Moses; for us it could be our culture. But instead of just saying, “OK, we're just different...” we think, “No—we're better!” Whatever we take pride in becomes a dividing wall of hostility; we despise those who are different from us.

Sinners—both the “moral” sort and the “immoral” sort—need God's grace (v. 17). God reconciles us to himself and to each other through the preaching of the gospel of peace. The gospel tells us that we have no right to feel superior towards anyone; all are sinners in need of God's grace. The gospel not only humbles us, it affirms us “through the cross” (v. 16). On the cross, God treated Jesus as we deserve so that when we believe in Jesus, God can treat us as if we are as virtuous, moral, honorable and righteous as Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21).

[3] Radical new identity is how God works out this radical new community. The gospel gives us a radical new identity that's received, not achieved, an identity that does not depend on our own performance, so that we cannot look down on others. Our differences still exist—but they have been demoted. Jesus is our identity! Jesus is not ashamed to call any of us “brethren” (Hebrews 2:11). When we think about what Jesus has done for us on the cross it destroys any hostility we've felt toward others in the past. This radical new identity enables us to learn to love and appreciate others. In the church we gain perspective because we come from a wide range of cultures. This radical new identity calls us to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage. We can use it to learn about supernatural community based on a radical new identity...

Monday—Study 1 Timothy 1:5 & 1 Peter 3:16-17. What should Christian community look like?

Tuesday—Study Philippians 4:8 & Psalm 40:8. What source of truth guides Christians' choices?

Wednesday—Study Acts 9:31 & 2 Corinthians 5:11. What attitude guides Christians' choices?

Thursday—Study 1 Peter 3:8-12. What does "the blessed life" look like?

Friday—Study 1 Peter 3:15-16. How does loving community help others come to faith in Christ?

Saturday—***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord with your church family,*** study Revelation 21:1–6 & 22:1–5.

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]



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- 6 What do you think it means to "*do something 'in the Lord'*"? What might the **opposite** of that look like?
- 7 How could "standing firm in the Lord" and "rejoicing in the Lord" help you live in harmony in the Lord?

It seems from v. 1 that **the whole church** ("brethren") plays **some role** in E's and S's restoration, but in v. 3 **one individual** specifically is asked to take the **pointman role** in helping them get along.

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- 1 Before the group meeting, think of a possible response to this question (in case no one volunteers). If you happen to know that one of your group members has had such an experience, ask them (privately, before the meeting) if they'd be willing to share it. If you don't know of a group member with such an experience, second best would be a story from your spouse. If neither of those two options come to mind, and if no one in the group volunteers an example (wait for 30 or more seconds to let folks think!), share your story.
- 2 Your goal with this question is mainly to find out the trajectory of the relation (towards better or towards worse?). They can also share a few details about how the relationship went.
- 3
 - (v. 2) Euodia ("You-o-di-ah") and Syntyche ("Sin-tick-e")—two ladies () that are having trouble "agreeing in the Lord".
 - (v. 1) Paul ("I", "my")—the author of this letter to the church of Philippi ("Fill-a-pie"). Since Paul knew about this problem, we assume that he'd done what he could to help them live in harmony.
 - (v. 1) "brethren"—all of the believers in the church of Philippi. They'd been experiencing the fall-out of the disunity. Perhaps they were dividing up into factions, some following E, others following S.
 - (v. 1) Yahweh—the Lord of the church!
 - (v. 3) "True Companion"—either a proper name (Greek: "Syzygos") or else a description. A trustworthy man ("Syzygos" is masculine) in the church. Paul is relying on him to help resolve this.
 - (v. 3) Clement—one of many "fellow workers" who've labored with Paul, Euodia, and Syntyche.
 - (v. 5) "all men"—all the believers and the non-believers in Philippi. Church harmony is a powerful witness to the world (see John 13:35). Division in the church is a bad witness to the world.
- 4 Even mature people are susceptible to sin and disunity (see Acts 15:36-40; 1 Corinthians 10:12).
- 5 (v. 1) "stand firm in the Lord"; (v. 2) "live in harmony in the Lord"; (v. 4) "rejoice in the Lord"
- 6 "...in the Lord..." signifies the sphere in which the believers' activity exists—a sphere unrelated to the circumstances of life, but related to an unassailable, unchanging relationship to the sovereign Lord.

The opposite of "in the Lord" would mean that you're doing it for your own purposes, simply because you want to (ie, there's no authority telling you to do so), and in your own human strength.
- 7 Living in harmony requires power—which is what "standing firm in the Lord" would supply. Living in harmony requires a superior joy to overcome the bitterness of not getting one's own way.
- 8 This is a hypothetical question, yet it is helpful. You're asking group members which role (pointman in the peacemaking venture, or supporting role in bringing about harmony) is in the realm of possibility for them. Their response to this question may point to whether they've ever seen peacemaking take place (in their family, at work, in church). It may indicate spiritual gifting or personal maturity. It may point to a role they could play at TCC sometime, or it could point to some needed growth in their lives. This question is just helping you "know your flock" a little better.
- 9 Moving from hypothetical to actual, this question is giving a group member the opportunity to "flesh out" what peacemaking looks like, thus helping other group members to envision playing a role in peacemaking sometime in the future.
- 10 If you sense that someone needs help in the area of peacemaking, suggest this to them privately.
- 11 Don't forget to point group members to the Application-Challenge. You can use them as prayer points.