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The Pleasantness of Unity

“Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* For brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. *It is* like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing—Life forevermore.”
Psalm 133

A congregation of God’s people have to work at getting along. We all are unique in our own special way. We come from varying backgrounds, social standings and educational backgrounds. We each have our own strengths and weaknesses. What you like may not be what I like at all or your way of doing things may not be my way of doing things. What this means is that we each have to work at getting along. Paul said we must not place our own interest above others. (Philippians 2:4) Doing so is a recipe for disaster. Things often get ugly real quick with flaring tempers and uncontrolled tongues. No one really likes disunity and unpleasantness.

What keeps our quirks, personalities, tongues and actions in check is our common desire to be like Jesus. Paul says to “grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ” Ephesians 4:15 Each of us must strive to be like Jesus. If we all are maturing in our likeness of Christ dwelling together in unity will be a wonderful blessing.

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; Ephesians 4:1-3

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Cultivating Feelings for God

by Doy Moyer

Feelings are strange. We don’t usually pick our feelings consciously. We just feel a certain way, and in that sense we probably think of them as our mood. When something needs to be done, we might then think, “I don’t feel like it,” and instead think, “I feel like doing that.” Then there are the deep-seated feelings that we may have developed over time—feelings that culminate in lust, outbursts, and other actions that are contrary to what we know is good and right. These are feelings that, if not brought under control, will destroy us.

The problem, I believe, is that we haven’t given enough time to cultivating how we feel. We might just chalk our feelings up to the way we are, but this is a mistake, for the way we are can be directed, focused, and changed for the good. This is not easy, though, so how do we begin to make these permanent changes in our thinking patterns?

1. Target what you think about. Phil 4:8. You can decide to think on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise. Don’t accept from yourself the idea that you can’t help thinking a certain way. Decide you will target your thoughts toward the higher ideals.

2. Deliberately set your mind on things above. Col 3:1-2. Think about the resurrection of Jesus. Then think about what

He has done for you. If you have been raised with Him, then you have every reason to set your mind on things above. This takes discipline, but by constantly focusing on this, you can change your attitude.

3. Read regularly and with purpose. Psa 1. The blessed man learns to read God's word regularly, meditating on it, focused on it. He learns to take delight in God's will. Since faith comes by hearing God's word (**Rom 10:17**), regularly reading and hearing it will increase faith, change attitudes, and help us direct our feelings.

4. Surround yourself with people who lift you up to higher thoughts. Heb 10:23-25. Your brethren are there to encourage and strengthen. If you will surround yourself with those who will do this, your own spirit will be lifted, and you can also encourage them. Discuss God's word with them. Confess your own failures. Help each other grow in His grace and knowledge. We need each other.

5. Develop the mind of Christ. Phil 2. This is the culmination of all these points. Notice in the context of **Philippians 2** that developing the mind of Christ is very much tied to focusing on the needs of others (**vv. 3-4**). The more selfish we are, the more we will not feel disposed toward doing what is right. The more we can think of the needs of others, the more we will think like Christ, who died for us that we might live for Him.

Like anything else worthwhile, we must commit ourselves to the time, effort, and discipline necessary to change our thinking, habits, feelings, and actions. May God help us to so commit.

"Ye Are Not Your Own"

- by Greg Gwin

A common question on various applications has to do with our living accommodations. Usually we are asked if we own our home, or if we rent. For those of us who are "homeowners," the correct response is that we "own" our home. But, of course, that's not entirely accurate in most cases. Yes, we have invested in our home. Yes, we are on the record of deed at the courthouse. Yes, we are responsible if the drains back up or the furnace quits working. But, the truth is that the bank or finance company probably has more invested in the house than we do. Because of this, we have certain restrictions about what we can and can not do with the property. Fail to adhere to the terms of the mortgage, and the bank will quickly "repossess" the place. The fact is, the house is not really our own.

There is a spiritual parallel to this idea of "ownership." Many times we hear folks say: "It's nobody's business but my own -- I can do as I please." Such expressions convey the idea that we are accountable to no one. This, of course, completely ignores all that the Bible says about God's judgment (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12).

But, those of us who are Christians have an even greater reason to think along these lines for, you see, we truly belong to God -- He "owns" us! "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19,20) The Father has "invested" a huge amount in us. "You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold . . . but with precious blood . . . the blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:18,19)

Realizing this truth about "ownership," we should also understand that there are obvious restrictions concerning what we can and can not do. We are obligated to adhere to the rules and regulations set forth by the One who actually "holds the note." Think!