

21. Learning to Be Like-Minded to One Another

In our last topic, we saw that one of the ways that we show the love of Christ is by showing kindness both to Christians and also to those who are unthankful and evil. We are only able to teach our physical and spiritual children those things as we model them in our own lives. Today, we are going to be learning what it means to be like-minded and learn how to help our children learn to be like-minded. Romans 15:5 says, “Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus.” We see that we are to learn to be like-minded toward one another even though we may have different opinions about certain areas than other Christians have about those same areas. That will be our focus today.

Romans 15:1 says, “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” To “bear” means *to carry a weight*. If we consider ourselves to be strong Christians, we are to help carry the weight of the burden of those who are weak Christians. We do this by showing love and kindness to those who are weak even though they may feel burdened down by heavy burdens. That provides an opportunity for us to serve them. It also provides an opportunity to show our physical and spiritual children how to carry the weights that burden weaker Christians.

This verse also shows us another key that makes it possible to be like-minded when it says that we are to bear with the weak and not to please ourselves. Many conflicts happen as a result of people trying to please themselves or get their own way. The word that is translated “please” means *to accommodate ourselves to the opinions, desires and interests of others*. This means that we will listen to the opinions, desires and interests of others with great interest and not just focus on what we want to say next. This will help us to learn about the concerns of others instead of just being focused on our own concerns.

Romans 15:2 says, “Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.” Instead of seeking to please ourselves, we see that our goal should be to please our neighbor for his good because that will help him to grow and be built up in his spiritual life. As we hear the opinions of others, we realize that some of those opinions do not agree with Scripture. However, by listening to those opinions, we are able at a later time to help them compare those opinions with Scripture. Christ illustrated this principle several times the day of His resurrection as He talked to the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:17 says, “And He said to them, ‘What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?’” Luke 24:18 gives their response, “Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, ‘Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?’” Christ answered their question with another question.

Their answer revealed several of their opinions. Luke 24:19-24 says, “And He said to them ‘What things?’ So they said to Him, ‘The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered

Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.” By the answer of the two disciples, they showed that they believed that Christ was a Prophet, that He had been crucified, and that they did not believe in the resurrection because they just thought that the women had seen a vision.

Once the two disciples had shared their opinions and Christ had listened to them, they were ready to listen as Christ explained the Old Testament prophecies to them. After Christ disappeared, the two summarized how their opinions had changed when they said in Luke 24:32, “And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’” Christ had helped them to compare their opinions with the Scripture and the result was that they had changed their opinions and now believed in the resurrection. That new understanding of the Old Testament also changed their desires and interests. Luke 24:33-35 says, “So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, ‘The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!’ And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.” They could not keep quiet about the new things that they had learned.

Romans 15:3-4 explains what Christ had done because He chose not to please Himself but listen to the opinions of the two disciples. Those verses say, “For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” Christ chose to listen and then share the Scripture. The Scriptures that Christ shared with the two disciples had filled their lives with hope and they had to tell others what they had learned from the Word of God.

It is in that context that Christ tells us in Romans 15:5-6, “Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” These verses show us both how to become like-minded and also the results once we become like-minded. We become like-minded as we learn to think the thoughts of God instead of focusing on our own opinions. God says in Isaiah 55:8-9, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’” We realize that the thoughts and ways of God are much greater than our thoughts and ways.

As we learn to think and understand the thoughts and ways of God, Romans 12:2 tells what is happening in our lives. That verse says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” We see that we no longer think like the world thinks. Instead, we are

learning to think the way that God thinks. We are transformed as this renewing of our minds happens. We begin to more fully understand the will of God; because we have listened to the opinions, desires and interests of others, we will then have the opportunity to help them begin to understand the thoughts and ways of God.

As we discuss the thoughts and ways of God with other Christians, we see in Romans 15:6 the results of becoming like-minded. As that verse says, “that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Because the Word of God is transforming both our own minds and also the minds of those who were sharing their own opinions, desires and interests, together we have a new desire. Our desire is to glorify God. The Word of God has shown us how to glorify God as we think the thoughts of God.

As our physical and spiritual children have this transformation happening in their opinions and thoughts, we are then able to share together with them in bringing glory to God. We are able to do this as we work as a team to speak the Word of God to others so that their lives can also be transformed. In order to help our spiritual children become partners with us, in ministering the Word of God, we have to show them how to listen to the opinions, desires and interests of others. As they learn to become good listeners, the Lord will then provide opportunities to share the thoughts and ways of God from the Word of God. As Romans 15:1 says, we show our children how to listen and carry the weights that are burdening others down instead of trying to share their own opinions, ideas and desires.

As our children learn to listen to the opinions, desires and interests of others, the opportunity will later come for them to share the thoughts and ways of God because they understand how others think. The Word of God will then begin to transform the thoughts and ways of others so that they also begin to have hope in their lives. The result will be that we will be able to work as a team to carry out the words of Romans 15:7. That verse says, “Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.” (NASB) Christ accepted us and now gives us the power to accept others. That provides the opportunity for us to also bring glory to God.

We will see the Lord work through the lives of our physical and spiritual children in very exciting ways as we help them learn to become like-minded because we are all thinking God’s thoughts and following God’s ways. Together we will be able with one mind and one mouth to bring glory to God. The Lord will use that attitude in our lives to give us the opportunity to help others be transformed in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your physical and spiritual children how to become like-minded so that their thoughts, words and ways will bring glory to God.