

Can't We All Just Get Along

Philippians 4:2-3

2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

Paul understood that discord and divisiveness pose an equally crippling threat to the church. Even if its doctrine is sound, disunity robs a church of its power and destroys its testimony. And a church facing hostile external enemies cannot afford to have its members fighting among themselves. Such infighting frequently gives the enemies of the Cross an avenue of attack. The resulting discord, disunity, and conflict could have devastated the integrity of the Philippian church's testimony. *MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Philippians.*

- I. It takes two to tango
 - A. The two ladies
 - 1. Euodia
 - a. means “prosperous journey.” This woman in modern language could be spoken of as “one who has arrived.” She has gotten somewhere in her life. *Wuest*
 - 2. Syntyche
 - a. “pleasant acquaintance, happy chance, good luck.” The verb of the same stem means “to meet with.” Her name indicates that she was one of those pleasant affable people who are what we call today “good mixers,” one of those valuable people in the local church who is the first to greet strangers and who makes everybody feel welcome and at home. *Wuest*
 - B. They had been fellow labors with Paul in the ministry.
 - C. They were both good women.
 - 1. They were not bad people, they were Christians.
 - 2. But still something had come into the fellowship of the church there at Philippi that had the potential to divide the church and set other believers against one another.
 - D. Just think, for the almost two thousand years, the only thing that these women have been known for in Christianity is that on some issue that probably not all that significant they could not get along.
- II. I implore

- A. He speaks to each one individually.
 - 1. This show that Paul was not taking sides.
 - 2. There may not have been a wrong or right side.
 - 3. But when this issue caused them to be at odds with one another then that became wrong.
 - B. Here is a personal request from Paul for them to settle this matter.
 - C. It seems their only sin is in not being able to put this matter to rest and restore the fellowship that they had in Christ Jesus.
- III. The same mind
- A. Their issue probably was not a moral one.
 - 1. Paul often addressed
 - 2. Moral issues cannot be compromised to make them go away.
 - 3. God is the definer of what is moral and what is not.
 - B. It was also probably not a doctrinal one.
 - 1. Christianity has tried to reduce doctrine to the lowest common denominator.
 - 2. This only robs the gospel of its power. Having a form of Godliness but denying its power.
 - C. There are hints earlier in the letter about this.
 - 1. Philippians 2:1-4 (NKJV) 1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.
- IV. In the Lord
- A. He is the common element in all Christian relationships.
 - B. He is influence behind the fellowship of the believers and the local church.
- V. Everyone needs a little help
- A. It is obvious to Paul that these women are not going to solve this without help.
 - 1. But we don't like help because it means that we have a weakness.

2. Men especially don't like to admit that they cannot fix it on their own.
- B. Everyone needs help along the way.
1. That is one of the purposes of the church.
 2. Sad to say the church is the third most likely place where we will put on airs. After the lobby of a fancy hotel and the car lot the church is the third most likely place for people to fake it, to put on airs.
 3. There is not a person here who does not need the help and support that the church is supposed to provide.
 4. Remember you are all broken.
 5. And there is not a marriage here that doesn't need help.
 - a. Some more than others but none are perfect.
 - b. One of the problems that a congregation has after the pastor has been there for 19 years is that the pastor knows where all the blemishes are.
 - c. I don't assume that none of you have marriage problems, instead I assume that you all have marriage problems, because you are all sinners and if that weren't enough, you are married to a sinner.
- VI. A true yokefellow in deed and in truth
- A. Paul calls especially on one individual that might be best fitted to help these women to solve this issue.
 - B. We do not know who this is.
 - C. Wuest translates it this way. 4:3 Even so, I make request of you also, Syzygus, who are a genuine yokefellow in deed as well as in name, lend a hand with these women in their efforts at settling the differences which they have between themselves, women of such a character that in the gospel they labored and contended in perfect co-operation with me (as a team of athletes would), together also with Clement and the rest of my fellow-workers whose names are in the book of life.

Nothing so hinders the cause of Christ as Christians who have unresolved disagreements with each other. Unbelievers are ever eager to pounce on dissension in the church as proof that there is nothing to Christianity. While the church has to work very diligently to publicize the gospel, a church quarrel always publicizes itself. It has winged feet! Let there be a quarrel one evening in a church business meeting, and it will be the talk in the coffee shops the next morning. *Ellsworth, Opening up Philippians (pp. 81–82)*

They had contended at Paul's side for the gospel, and ought not now to strive against one another, Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Braune, K., & Hackett, H. B. (2008). A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Philippians (p. 65). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software

Quarreling is not the nature of the church nor was it of the women involved. They had fought alongside Paul like gladiators in the arena to spread the gospel message. God had written their names in heaven's registry of citizens alongside all the others to whom he promised eternal life.

Anders, M. (1999). Galatians-Colossians (Vol. 8, p. 261).

The apostle sends a personal word to two saints in the Philippian church. They were two women of prominence, leadership and capability, as their names indicate. Euodia, not Euodias, which is a man's name, means "prosperous journey." This woman in modern language could be spoken of as "one who has arrived." She has gotten somewhere in her life. Syntyche means "pleasant acquaintance, happy chance, good luck." The verb of the same stem means "to meet with." Her name indicates that she was one of those pleasant affable people who are what we call today "good mixers," one of those valuable people in the local church who is the first to greet strangers and who makes everybody feel welcome and at home.

Translation: 4:3 Even so, I make request of you also, Syzygus, who are a genuine yokefellow in deed as well as in name, lend a hand with these women in their efforts at settling the differences which they have between themselves, women of such a character that in the gospel they labored and contended in perfect co-operation with me (as a team of athletes would), together also with Clement and the rest of my fellow-workers whose names are in the book of life. Wuest, K. S. (1997). Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader.

John 13:34–35 (NKJV) 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

James 1:19–21 (NKJV) 19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Ephesians 4:31–32 (NKJV) 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

It was probably owing to the prominence of Christian women at Philippi that the apostle became such a debtor to the most liberal of all the Churches. Their sympathetic natures would initiate and sustain projects of Christian generosity.

Nothing is so productive of unity as our assurance that we are citizens of the same heaven. Why should compatriots fall out in this distant land? Should we not bury our differences and march forward shoulder to shoulder? Euodias and Syntyche must be of the same mind in the Lord.

Pulpit Commentary Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.). (1909). Philippians (p. 172).