

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. **Colossians 4:5**

Peace and Truth

Doy Moyer

Store In My Heart 1Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

It is important to remember that gratitude is not all that is mentioned here. First Paul tells us to rejoice, not the “be happy” of the world but true joy that comes from knowing God and that He is always with us to help in the difficulties and struggles of life.

Also, one who has devoted their life to the service of God should be the happiest person on earth. For no matter what happens to us here, those who are true servants of God know that Heaven awaits.

Keeping in close touch with our Maker and remembering that all things come from Him will help us handle the difficulties and struggles with a joyful heart.

God wants us to be thankful and rejoice in every part of life!

There are people I genuinely like, but with whom I have strong disagreements. There are some on opposite theological and political isles, yet I feel kindly disposed toward them. I cannot explain this. It’s just something that you either get or don’t. I suspect that this is true of most people. We have those in our circles, social media included, that we like even while we dislike what they stand for. On the flip side, there are those whom we might not feel so kindly disposed toward even though we agree on most issues. There are people who, as we say, rub us the wrong way, and so we struggle a bit to be kind. Again, I don’t know how to explain that, but it reflects how we feel.

Feelings are often inexplicable, and it is important that we do not let those feelings cloud the truth, especially when it comes to people we like. It is also important that we don’t let negative feelings keep us from acting properly toward those we might not feel so good about. Feelings do not determine truth. They do not excuse us from teaching what is right because we don’t want to offend those whom we like. Nor do feelings serve as an excuse to treat people poorly.

While feelings are a God-given part of who we are, they must be tempered by truth and the determination to act properly. We choose to show compassion. We choose to be kind. We choose to be patient, to bear with each other, and to forgive. We choose to love. Hear, then, what Paul wrote to the Colossian Christians:

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful” (Colossians 3:12-15, ESV).

The challenge in bringing our feelings in line with what we ought to be doing is difficult, but by doing what is right consistently and willingly, we may find that our feelings follow suit. It is difficult to continue disliking people toward whom we are showing compassion and



forgiveness. When we act with kindness and mercy, even toward those on opposite sides of issues, we will probably begin to like them more, which allows us to build relationships that lead to better communication and influence. If we already like them, then perhaps further communication can lead to better understanding and building bridges across divisive lines. One thing is sure: we can't achieve peace and unity when we don't try or when we refuse to talk.

"Let love be genuine," Paul wrote (**Romans 12:9**). Then in the next chapter, *"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law"* (**Romans 12:8-10**).

"Love your neighbor," the second greatest command, comes out of **Leviticus 19**. In that context, Israel is told how this love is shown: leave gleaning from the harvest *"for the poor and for the sojourner"* (**v. 10**); don't steal, deal falsely or lie (**vv. 11-12**); don't oppress or rob others, don't curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind (**vv. 13-14**); do no injustices in court, don't be *"partial to the poor or defer to the great,"* but judge righteously (**v. 15**); don't slander or stand by when your neighbor's life is at stake (**v. 16**); reprove your neighbor as needed, but don't take vengeance or bear a grudge, *"but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD"* (**vv. 17-18**).

These actions are associated with love, and they all have to do with how we would treat others, including those against whom we might be tempted to keep grudges. How do we proceed? We do what Jesus taught: *"In everything, treat others as you would want them to treat you, for this fulfills the law and the prophets"* (**Matthew 7:12**, NET). This "Golden Rule" keeps us in check because we know how much we dislike being mistreated, slandered, misjudged, and unforgiven. If we want grace, we need to show grace. *"Speak and act as those who will be judged by a law that gives freedom. For judgment is merciless for the one who has shown no mercy. But mercy triumphs over judgment"* (**James 2:12-13**, NET).

Our interactions can be blessings or failures. As much as it depends on us, we must seek peace with all (**Romans 12:18**). That peace cannot be at the expense of truth, but this is not an either / or proposition. Seek peace and teach truth. This is God's way.

Contact Us

We like opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

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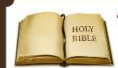
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The
CHURCH OF CHRIST

MEETS HERE



10:20 AM • Sunday Worship Service
5:00 PM • Sunday Night Bible Study
7:00 PM • Wednesday Bible Study

For Our Information

Shannon Soliday is scheduled to have shoulder surgery on Monday afternoon.

Jim & Sue Soliday are still dealing with their other health issues but are getting over their recent illness.

Gloria Hurst's Sister, **Susan**, is at home and recovering nicely from her knee surgery.

Jimmy & Annette Gray are out of town this weekend.

Stanley & Gloria Hurst are also out of town this weekend.

Sunday Evening – **Zechariah 2** Wednesday – **John 11**

Question sheets are available to help with these studies.