

Assignment 14

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1 flow of thought

How does Phil 2:1-4 relate to vs 5-11

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.

The flow here is what our motivation and thinking should be – not prideful self-seeking, self-exaltation but genuine caring for others – and the next verses point us to the ultimate example – that of Jesus – what He gave up and did for us in service. That this is the only way to be truly exalted – not by seeking to exalt one's-self

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, **to the glory of God the Father.**

Isaiah 45 ²² *"Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!*

For I am God, and there is no other.

²³ *I have sworn by Myself;*

*The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness,
And shall not return,*

***That to Me every knee shall bow,
Every tongue shall take an oath.***

This reflects Jesus' prayer in John 17 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. **Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,** ² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³ And this is eternal life, **that they**

may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴ I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.
⁵ And now, **O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.**

Bowing to Jesus Christ is the same as bowing to the Father – by honouring Christ one is honouring the Father.

What is the connection between Eph 5:15-21 and vs 22 – ch 6:9?

¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

From verse 22 on Paul elaborates specifically on how the various categories of people in the assembly and their different roles and places in that society are to apply the teaching given from v 15-21 – and how they are to relate and behave towards one another.

Wives and husbands, children and fathers, bondservants and masters (masters and Master in heaven). Note that the one to be subject is mentioned before the one with authority – and the overriding theme is mutual love and respect, not domination.

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might [ⓐ]sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, [ⓑ]of His flesh and

of His bones. ³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects *her* husband.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: ³ "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

⁵ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

⁹ And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that ¹⁰ your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

What role does 1 Cor 13 play in the larger unit of 1 Cor 12-14?

In chapter 12, Paul is helping the Corinthians to "discern the Body of Christ" – something some were not doing at the Passover memorial – "the Lord's supper" (recorded in chapter 11). In chapter 13 love – which is the most important gift of God's Spirit that we all need to desire and ask for – the ways and fruits of this love are described and explained. It is how all other gifts are to be used. If they are not, they have no lasting benefit. Chapter 14 describes how the assemblies are to be organised and gifts used for edification – all from the motivation described in chapter 13. This chapter (13) is pivotal to understanding chapters 11-14.

2 take the following (1 Peter 5:6-7) through all five steps of the Interpretive Journey – explained in ch 14

The original town – *the times people lived in then could be quite brutal – and society was very hierarchical with a great motivation to "climb the ladder" to attain a more comfortable life.*

The width of the river – *not that wide* – *there are people around the world today who suffer serious persecution and hardship – and some are a lot better off. Pride is as much of a problem today as it was back then – if anything, more so.*

The principles – *not “vaunting oneself” is a quality of love – and caring about the interests of others as much as one’s own. The devil is the prince of all the proud, so humility is our greatest protection from his influence. Humility is essential for us to have a relationship with God through Christ and it’s the cement that bonds fellowship.*

The Biblical context – *the surrounding verses give the context – and the Bible has a lot to say about pride – particularly Proverbs. See the note on the meaning of the Greek word translated “clothed” (with humility) in verse 5, below.*

The town we are in – *these “towns” vary with where one lives in the world, but one can apply this Scripture directly and very easily to wherever one lives. Many of the “towns” today are a bit like Capernaum (Luke 10:15) “exalted to heaven” – filled with prosperous, proud people*

1 Peter 5 ⁵ Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and **be clothed*** with humility, for

“God resists the proud.

But gives grace to the humble.”

⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

*knot or band by which two things are fastened together, to fasten or gird one's self (Blue letter Bible)

This was the white scarf or apron of slaves, which was fastened to the belt of the vest and distinguished slaves from freemen. Therefore, [1 Pet 5:5](#) ("gird yourselves with humility as your servile garb") encourages Christians to show their subjection one to another by putting on humility. This could also refer to the overalls which slaves wore to keep clean while working—an exceedingly humble garment.

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

3 Write a pastoral letter to the church. This can be to your local church, to the Church of God, a denomination you're familiar with, or to the church at large.

Encouragement

Historical, Biblical precedent or connection

Edification/exhortation/correction

Personal greeting/reflection

Prayer request

Share your heart - love for the Lord, your love for His people, your deepest desire for the church ...

To our Sabbath discussion group.

Through the years we have develop a close bond of fellowship in sharing our knowledge and understanding from Scripture, experiences of how to apply it in our lives and also sharing the trials and blessings we have.

We value the freedom of thought and speech we enjoy that is not controlled by anyone "in charge" but by self- control. If that crosses the boundaries set by Scripture, then any censure has to come from group consensus – even if that might be led by an individual.

This has given us great freedom for learning and growth – but there are always dangers in freedoms – the freer we are the more responsible and careful we have to be.

We have to be careful of what drives and motivates us. The desire for more knowledge can be motivated either by pride or by a desire to better understand how to walk in love and to obey and please God. Being human, there is a battle between these two drivers – which highlights the real need for self- awareness. We can help each other by provoking in the right way rather than the wrong.

We live in an age of ever- increasing knowledge and access to knowledge electronically. The higher the climb, the greater the fall. We are admonished to be "sober minded". Increasing knowledge without the anchoring of the basic axioms of Scripture can lead into a turbulent and stormy sea where the dangers of shipwreck are real.

We need knowledge – just as we need money – poverty is no virtue, neither is ignorance, but there are both a right and a wrong ways to pursue these necessary things.

The apostle Paul wrote about "not going beyond what is written" – and in the spiritual warfare, our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual – we are to "cast into captivity every thought that exalts itself above the knowledge of God". This is a vital warning for us today.

The philosophies and knowledge that has developed over the millennia, centuries and decades has resulted in a mixture of fact and fiction that have produced grooves of certainty in the minds of a majority of the educated. It is natural to want to make sense of the world we live in – to understand about our origins and existence.

Regarding origins the Bible gives a simple explanation about how the world we live in came into existence – it was spoken into being by the Word of God. His servant Moses - who had learned the skill of writing in the Egyptian royal house-hold - recorded it all. He was inspired to write the record and history in the first book of the Torah – “Bereshit” or “Beginning” – known to us as Genesis. Once sure of correct translation from the Hebrew, one has a choice of believing and accepting it, or using one’s imagination to think about alternatives. These are presented on an “intellectual platter” of a fact and fiction cafeteria served as knowledge in our present age. This knowledge is the result of generations of great minds that have tried to make sense of the world through observation, measurement, recording, documentation, extrapolation and imagination. Patterns and natural laws have been discovered, understood and developed that have enabled man to do and make extraordinary things, both good and bad.

Rather than the thought that this amazing ability and creative capacity in man is a direct proof of an even more amazing One who brought it into existence - the desire to figure things out for ourselves, and trust in our own intellectual capacities, seals off the simple acceptance and belief in a creator God. Amongst many of the “intelligentsia” belief in God is considered an “intellectual cop-out” adopted by “weaker minds” to explain what seems impossible to explain. Piled in with this is a strong peer pressure to fit in with the majority view of “science”. We don’t want to be thought of as ignorant and foolish – there is a strong desire in our natures to be considered sophisticated and knowledgeable. This was the main temptation of the fruit forbidden to our first parents – it was “a tree to be desired to make one wise”.

We are told not to try to be wise by ourselves, but to accept and obey the wisdom we are taught in the inspired Word of Scripture. Human nature desires to rationalise – using our emotions and senses. This is the thought path taken by mother Eve. The Word of God – the same as back then – sets very clear boundaries. They can be called “absolutes”. Human thinking likes to bypass these clear lines with a philosophy of relativity. Decisions of what is right and wrong, good and bad are made by human reasoning – individual or collective. By “what has been said” rather than by “what is written”.

Genesis proves a threat to this reasoning. Philosophies have arisen to bypass it – to attempt to turn it into fable rather than an actual account of historical truth. Several great intellects over the past centuries have posited that “natural forces” provide the reason for life’s existence. The problem is explaining all the interacting complexities of functional life – and the ideal “just so” planet it exists on - as solely dependent on time and chance interacting with the laws of physics and chemistry. But where did these laws come from? - the order in

those things that underpin the order all around us - discovered and used by mankind for their purposes.

The need for a greatly extended timescale was seen as necessary to sustain this idea of life resulting from blind chance. It became the lens through which information about the universe and geology was viewed - and theories have developed and grown to support this idea.

One sure thing from current science I don't think is disputed, that there had to be a starting point, and the universe is aging, running down.

This old age construction that seems to have a basis - reasoning from current observations, and is so foundational to the evolutionary world view – directly undermines the timescale given in Genesis, throwing the documented historical record written by Moses into question.

This has proved a challenge for educated people – educated in the philosophic worldview of our age. There are three options I can think of, that have been taken here –

1. Question the “science” world view – and hold it to be a construct based on pre-suppositions and extrapolations - and accept the Genesis account as it is written.
2. Discard the Genesis account as a “creation myth” not credible factual history – an early idea based on the primitive observations and reasonings of Moses.
3. Attempt at giving credibility to the Genesis account by claiming it is not to be taken literally, but is poetic metaphor and has deeper hidden meanings than those that lie on the surface.

Using this thinking, an attempt at syncretising Genesis with the “old age” requirement of the current world view is thought intellectually possible and rational.

The attraction of this last option is that it seems to make it possible for one to accept the current “scientific” thinking, without having to discard Genesis. It also avoids the embarrassment of being considered an ignorant “nut-case” by educated peers.

If one adopts this position, a number of uncertainties raise their heads that are not a problem with literal reading. The Word of God becomes a matter for personal interpretation and conjecture – not to be accepted and believed as read.

If the definite certainty and “reality” of Genesis is undermined then this has a negative impact on how the rest of Scripture is read. The Word of God hangs together as Truth (notwithstanding the flaws of man in transmission of texts and translation issues – if they can be forensically proved as valid). Once Scripture has been shown to be authentic text, it is not to be argued around, but believed – “trembled at” – believed and accepted over and above the reasonings and philosophies of man – however widely accepted they are.

Which is true, God's Word, or the philosophies of men? - “let God be true and every man a liar” – if we reject the Word of God as not being true, then we become the liar. “Faith comes

by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Clever philosophical ideas that set themselves against that Word undermine faith. “Whatever is not of faith is sin”. What we decide to believe has serious ramifications on how we think and live.

It is so easy to be distracted by fascinating ideas and theories that have been accepted as the way things are by the educated in society, but if they directly contradict inspired Scripture, by definition they do not stack up as true. I plead with you all to be aware of the subtle spiritual dangers in seeking to find ways of adapting and bending Scripture in an attempt to fit these philosophies. I’ll say goodbye with a quote from Isaiah.

From a science loving brother, Michael

Isaiah 29

¹⁴ Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work
Among this people,
A marvelous work and a wonder;
For the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish,
And the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hidden.”
¹⁵ Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD,
And their works are in the dark;
They say, “Who sees us?” and, “Who knows us?”
¹⁶ Surely you have things turned around!
Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay;
For shall the thing made say of him who made it,
“He did not make me”?
Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it,
“He has no understanding”?