

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice." (Philippians 4:4)

I. Be United

- a. There was personal conflict in the church between Euodia (*success*) and Syntyche (*lucky*). We do not know the nature of their disagreement, but the "true companion" was asked to help.
 1. These women were Paul's co-laborers in ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 2. Paul does not take sides but encourages the two to agree in the Lord (shared mindset, 2:3-4).
- b. Euodia and Syntyche were friends and co-workers, leaders in the community of faith in Philippi, but it appears their disagreement impacted their ability to minister.
- c. Christians belong in "family unity." It should always be a serious matter whenever members have personal conflict. Christian conflict is to be dealt with quickly and in love.
- d. Unresolved conflict impacts kingdom fellowship and our witness.
- e. As the church must work very diligently to publicize the gospel, a church quarrel always publicizes itself.
- f. Paul describes the church as a place of fundamental oneness: *whose names are in the book of life*.
- g. Division among Christians is a serious flaw in the church's armor against the world.
- h. Our reasonableness (kindness and understanding) is to be a witness to our local community. (v.5)
- i. It is against the nature of the church, to confess unity in heaven and practice disunity on earth.

II. Be Joyful

- a. Rejoicing is a choice. Paul is not referring to general optimism, but every Christian has a reason to rejoice, regardless of external influence or happenings.
- b. We serve the cause of Christ, which brings us into fellowship as *one*.
- c. We strive to attain the character of Christ, which is to give of ourselves to others.
- d. We seek to comprehend Christ, to know Him more. If we seek to know Him, we will understand each other. *I don't like that man, I must get to know him.* – Abe Lincoln
- e. We have the care of Christ as our peace. All of our concerns can be turned over to Him.

III. Be in Prayer

- a. Christians are **not** to be filled with anxiety (worry). What is *worry*? In Greek, the word means "to be pulled in different directions." Worry is the greatest thief of joy and our ability to rejoice.
 1. Our hopes pull us in one direction. Our fears pull us in the opposite direction.
- b. Worry has physical consequences: headaches, hypertension, ulcers and even back pain.
- c. Paul's secret of victory over worry was prayer. He did not say, "Pray about it." He uses three different words to describe "right praying": *prayer*, *supplication* and *thanksgiving*.
- d. *Prayer* is the general word for making requests known to the Lord. It carries the idea of adoration.
 1. Whenever we find ourselves worrying, our first action should be to worship God.
 2. As we worship and magnify God, we see that He is greater than our worries.
 3. We often rush in and out of God's presence without praising Him for His ability to bring change.
- e. *Supplication* is an earnest sharing of our deepest needs and problems.
 1. There is no place for halfhearted, insincere prayer. If you are serious about it, you will stick to it.
- f. *Thanksgiving (appreciation)* – God enjoys hearing *thank you* from His people. Recall the story of the ten healed lepers (Luke 17:11-19). Only one healed leper returned to thank Jesus.
 1. Sometimes God's beloved people are eager to ask but slow to appreciate (give thanks).
- g. Worry often plagues us when we try to change things beyond our control. Change can mean removing, adding or making different. How often do you pray for peace?