

Tolerance and Intolerance

I like brown shoes, and wear them most of the time. However, if you insist upon wearing black shoes I will argue the point. Go right ahead! I'm a very tolerant man with respect to shoes.

By Robert F. Turner

But some of my friends tell me I am intolerant in religious matters. They can't understand why a kind hearted, tolerant fellow like me would say they must obey God's commands and practice in religion only that which God has authorized. (Well, maybe that is the way they put it.)

Some intolerance" is born of egotism-- self-loving individuals who think they are the center of the universe, hence their ways must be accepted by all. This is bad (Jas. 4:11-12). But there is an "intolerance" of a sort, which is born of love. I love my granddaughter, and insist that she not eat the shoe polish. (The brown, that is.) And

there is an "intolerance" born of respect for superior authority, and deep concern for those who fail to respect that authority. Paul contended with the Israelites frequently (a) because he loved them, and (b) because he knew they could not be saved while they followed their own erroneous ways.

It is well and good to be tolerant in matters of indifference--and in matters where the rights of men are equal. But to "tolerate" sin and transgression of God's law is to assume the right to "judge" that law (Jas. 2:9-f.) or to relegate divine matters to the category of black and brown shoes.

"Tolerance" is often a disguise for a lack of concern! "

Classes This Week

Sunday 5:15 PM Kid's Class at the Building	Sunday PM College Devo and Singing at the Miller's. David Deason from Pine Lane speaking!	Tuesday 10 AM Ladies Class at Laura Humphrey's house on "Giving God Control"	Tuesday 8 PM Truth-seekers in Student Center Rm 2310
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Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Joy Powell (Tori Luther's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	William Herd	Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	Ray Humphrey (Seth's dad)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Ellie Vaughn (Scott and Genna's baby)

September Birthdays

- 1-Jacob Smith
- 1-Aiden Hahn
- 3-Jennifer Hasty
- 3-James Malloy
- 4-Jordan Corneil
- 6-Jessica Anderson
- 7-Molly Borden
- 8-Heath Fowler
- 12-Stacy Norman
- 17-Abbie Harrison
- 18-Eric Shotts
- 20-Evan Pender
- 20-Keith Bailey
- 21-Zac Slay
- 22-Christopher White
- 22-Meredith Bragwell
- 24-Sara Beth Roberts
- 24-Suzanna Roberts
- 25-Bethany Bradford
- 26-Palmer Daniels
- 26-Esther Biddle
- 29-Belle Johnson
- 29-Matt Hall
- 29-Julie Britnell
- 29-Madi Luther
- 29-Stewart West
- 30-Caleb Gandy
- 31-Kitty Tam

News and Notes

- ☒ - Let's keep in our prayers our expectant mothers, Jessica Anderson and Nicole Pender!
- ☒ - David Deason from the Pine Lane church in B'ham is speaking tonight and leading the student devo!
- ☒ - There will be group meetings tonight.
- ☒ - Our new quarter starts next Sun.
- ☒ - Ariel Ramsey's uncle, Dan Hamilton, was in a serious car accident last week.
- ☒ - Greg and Lisa Lanier's granddaughters have been in the hospital this week with infections after their tonsils were removed the previous week. Both are now at home!
- ☒ - Tyler Tucker has identified with the University church!
- ☒ - Eleanor McKay, 6-year-old friend of Erica Seymore, has had a reaction to her chemo treatments.
- ☒ - Eleanor McKay, 6-year-old friend of Erica Seymore, has had a reaction to her chemo treatments.
- ☒ - Please remember Ada Owen's sister, Wanda Price, in your prayers as they try to determine the cause of sudden blindness in one eye.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Like-Mindedness: A Neglected Duty

By Earl Kimbrough



Thoughts to Ponder

Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. (Philippians 2:2)

The Philippian Christians aroused such joy in Paul that he continually thanked God for them (Phil. 1:3). They comprised a model church, except for a hint of discord that gave the apostle concern. The trouble was nothing like that at Corinth. But even a healthy church can become unraveled if small snags are unattended. Paul wisely treated the problem as a danger, but not as an emergency. He did not issue rebukes or thunder threats. He gently urged the Philippians to follow principles that promote like-mindedness in a congregation (Phil. 2:14).

The Basis of Like-Mindedness

"Therefore" ties the like-mindedness to the preceding exhortation (Phil. 1:27). Their standing "fast in one spirit, with one mind striving for the faith of the gospel" was what Paul wanted most to hear about them. The motives on which he based his appeal to this end are introduced by four "if's" (Phil. 2:1). The conjunction here does not express doubt but assured certainty. Anchoring his plea in facts they knew to be true, he poured out his heart in fervent eloquence, urging on them the highest possible duty. The facts are fundamental. "Consolation in Christ" is the comfort one receives by assurance of union with him. Christians breathe the atmosphere of Christ, and none can do this without genuine af-

The unity enjoined is deeper than common belief, harmonious worship, or mutual work. As important as these are, they must be coupled to a unity of feeling. Ephesus shows that a church may be one in faith and practice but fall short of the inner bond of love that is essential to true oneness in Christ (Rev. 2:2-4).

fection for the Lord and his people. "Comfort of love" is the encouragement love brings and which we share with all who are in Christ. The "fellowship of the Holy Spirit" is our participation in the Spirit's influence through his word dwelling in and guiding us to fruitful lives (Gal. 5:22, 23). "Affection and mercy" are also valued blessings the Philippians knew.

The aim of Paul's exhortation was the completion of his joy (Phil. 2:2). This was not merely for his personal benefit, but his joy was so entwined with the joy of Christ that he knew what made him glad made Christ glad. But as great as Paul's joy in them was, it would not be full until he knew they were truly "like-minded." The word means "to think the

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Elders
Walker Davis (334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse (334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
E-Mail:
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same thing" and is the general word for harmony. It is followed by two specifics. (1) There is unity of affection: "having the same love." Love will not survive unless it is mutual. (2) There is unity of sentiment: "being of one accord." This means to be of "one soul; having your souls joined together . . . (and) acting together as if one soul actuated" the body (Albert Barnes).

"Of one mind" repeats the idea of harmony in stronger form and gives it greater emphasis. The unity enjoined is deeper than common belief, harmonious worship, or mutual work. As important as these are, they must be coupled to a unity of feeling. Ephesus shows that a church may be one in faith and practice but fall short of the inner bond of love that is essential to true oneness in Christ (**Rev. 2:2-4**). **The Lord prayed for unity that is more than form (John 17:20, 21).**

The Qualities of Like-Mindedness

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition" (**Phil. 2:3**). Christians, as members of Christ's body, must not act according to faction, or in separate interests. Neither should they act in opposition to or in competition with one another, whether as individuals or a party. Rivalry among Christians has no place in the service of Christ. There are two ways to do a good work: through strife and through love (**Phil. 1:15-17**). What Paul has in mind is the modesty of self-assessment that is learned at the feet of Jesus.

"Let nothing be done through . . . conceit." Empty pride or vain glory is meant. Conceit is the spirit that moves one to boost himself and put others down. Vanity and discord are common bedfellows for vanity creates discord. It can ruin a marriage, a family, or a church. "Christ came to humble us, and therefore let there not be among us a spirit of pride" (Matthew Henry).

Each Christian is to be characterized by "lowliness of mind." This is the opposite of self-seeking and vain glory. The apostle does not recommend that we think any less of ourselves than we should. Everyone needs a sense of worth and accomplishment. How often, even in the church, do we hurt and discourage people by ignoring or making light of what they do because they do not do it as well as others? Some act as if feelings for others were a mark of apostasy. Christianity was not designed

to make door mats or neurotics of people. When it does, it has been perverted.

But neither was it designed to encourage us to think of ourselves more highly than we should (**Rom. 12:3**). What Paul desires is a balance between a healthy self esteem and a wholesome regard for others, with the preference tipped in their favor. He is discussing moral worth, not knowledge, skill, or ability. His words must be taken in perspective. We see our faults better than anyone else, if we are honest, because we view them from within. But we do not see the faults of others with the same clear vision because we view them only from without, and perhaps with warped lenses. Love's eye is quick to detect virtues and overlook defects in others. It is in this light that we are to esteem others better than ourselves.

"Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (**Phil. 2:4**). Each one is to watch for his own interests, of course. This is not wrong; but do not miss the "also." What is forbidden is fixing the vision on our interests to the point that we fail to see the interests of others. The thief on one hand and the priest and the Levite on the other represent two types of excessive self-interest. The first is aggressively harmful to others, and the second is negligently harmful. There is another kind of excessive self-interest that cuts more deeply. It finds expression in Demas, a supposed friend who deserts one in time of need.

Paul is not encouraging us to be busy bodies, or to intrude into things that are not our business. Where looking into the personal affairs of others is needed (as in helping one in distress), the utmost delicacy should be used. Some enter such situations with a bulldozer, and shout the ill fortune from the rooftops, leaving injured souls along their path. Perhaps the main thought in the verse is care for the spiritual welfare of others. We are not lords of others' faith, but we are helpers in their service. We need the wisdom to know the difference.

"Probably there is no single thing so insisted on in the New Testament as the importance of harmony among Christians" (Barnes). What Paul describes is ideal. It is not always possible to attain this degree of oneness (**see Rom. 12:18**). But we must constantly strive to reach it. And remembering this will also help promoting disunity.



How Can You Tell?

By Aubrey Belue

If he preaches "love" more than he does "truth", and bases his solution more on discerning human hearts than on coming to agreement on specific Bible doctrines.

It is a sad fact of life that there are more teachers today than there are truth-tellers. Obviously, this is no secret to God, and in several ways He has put us on notice. **Matt 7:15** says to beware of false prophets, who will come to us appearing to be innocent. **2 Cor 11:13-15** warns that they will appear to be righteous. **1 John 4:1** calls upon us to "do not believe every spirit...try the spirits...many false prophets .." **Gal 1:6-ff** mentions some who pervert the word of God, who will stand accursed.. Much more scriptural information confirms the nature and intensity of the danger. So, we must be on guard. In my experience, I have picked up on some telltale indicators which – more often than not –signal the possibility of a false teacher.

If he presents his side, but is too "sweet" to argue with anyone to establish proof, and rejects his obligation to "contend earnestly". (Learning and maintaining the doctrine of Christ is "heavy lifting" and often causes fallible men to be at odds with one another, as they seek to reconcile actions and authority. We must confront one another "with all perseverance" (**2 Cor 12:12**), as long as the issues divide us.)

If he claims high respect for divine authority, but then quickly goes outside the written word to determine actions and activities of the church and disciples.

If he elevates his assumptions to the level of divine law.

If he complains when someone informs others of his positions, properly represented, and plays the victim.

If he seeks to minimize the doctrinal differences between various brethren, and urges glossing over them.

If he in some way makes light of those who are intent on simply learning, obeying

and teaching the will of God.

If he resorts to "special definitions" to strengthen his case, often to leave the impression his chosen meaning is virtually the only one.

If he preaches "love" more than he does "truth", and bases his solution more on discerning human hearts than on coming to agreement on specific Bible doctrines.

Obviously, these are not Bible-revealed qualities, but they are common tactics which usually can be found in those with a special agenda. There may be those who exhibit one or more of them who are still trusting in God's word.

We are all flawed, and being mistaken about what is truth is likely to happen to any of us, at any time. The one who pleases God is not the one who perfectly understands, but the one who is open to correction, and has the courage to plainly teach his convictions and be patient in explaining them.

