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## GRACE OR GAIN

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What a great time of study in God's word this past week! What have you learned? Have you discovered any verses with new personal meaning? Let's continue in our study today starting in verse fifteen. Our verses for today are Philippians 1:15-17 which say,

"Some to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment."

In yesterday's study we ended with Paul sharing about two groups of people who were affected by his imprisonment. The first was the Praetorian Guard and the second was believers. In verse fifteen Paul tells of another group of people who were affected by his imprisonment, those preaching the gospel. He then breaks this group into two categories.

The first category is those preaching Christ from envy and strife.

**Look up the word ENVY. Write your definition here. It always has an evil connotation and is definitely not from God.**

**Now look up the word STRIFE. Write your definition here. There is no godliness in this word either.**

The second category Paul defines is those preaching the gospel from good will. They are motivated by a gracious purpose.

**What are you motivated by? Selfishness and envy or grace and godliness? Read Philippians 2:3 and describe your personal motivations here.**

Moving on to verse sixteen Paul expounds on the second category of people preaching Christ, those motivated by good will. He says they act out of love. The word for love is 'agape,' meaning "a self-sacrificial love that manifests itself in giving and continues to do so regardless of the response." We looked at this word a few days ago. Remember, to love someone unconditionally, you have to understand their needs and give to them regardless of their response. The preachers Paul is referring to loved those around them by responding to their needs and continued to do what was best for them regardless of the circumstances. They preached the gospel in love without fear of the results or fear of a negative response. They were not motivated by self, but by knowing God and His character. See Galatians 2:20.

Let's continue to verse seventeen and look at the final category of preachers spreading the gospel because of envy and strife. Paul says they are motivated by selfish ambition. In 1 John 2:15-16 John talks about sin and the origination of personal sin. All sin stems from pride, materialism or sensuality.

**Take an honest look at your sin life. Is there a sin or a type of sin that you are consistently falling victim to? Write your thoughts here.**

If we follow our own desires, our sin nature will rule us. God tells us to leave our old nature and come under the control of the Holy Spirit.

**Take time to read each of the verses below that talk about denying oneself. Choose one verse and write how it impacted you.**

**Romans 6:4-11, 8:12-14, 12:1-2,**

**Ephesians 5:18,**

**Colossians 3:2-3, 3:17**

**1 John 1:6-7**

Paul finishes verse seventeen by saying that those spreading the gospel because of envy and strife do so hoping to cause Paul distress. Not only do these preachers spread the gospel out of selfishness, but they do so hoping to make Paul's situation of imprisonment worse. Looking ahead to verse eighteen we see that Paul's attitude is unchanging. He is selfless despite their selfishness. Paul does not have a pity party for himself, but rejoices that the gospel is being preached. What a great example of selflessness and trust in God!

REVIEW

~Motivation: Who/what are you motivated by? Selfishness and envy or grace and godliness? Philippians 2:3

~Agape: Does a self-sacrificial attitude, manifested in giving regardless of the response, motivate you? Does your knowledge of who God is and the needs of others motivate you? Galatians 2:20

~Selfish Ambition: Does your sin nature control and motivate you? Do you more often fall victim to pride, materialism or sensuality? 1 John 2:15-16

~Leave the Old: God instructs us to forget our old nature and operate as a child of God! Romans 6:4-11, 8:12-14, 12:1-2, Ephesians 5:18, Colossians 3:2-3, 3:17 and 1 John 1:6-7.