
UNION WITH CHRIST

Our study of chapter one ended with Paul's command that we, as believers, should conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel. Our actions, speech and attitudes should be conducted in the sphere of the Holy Spirit so that we are righteous in the eyes of God. We should not be alarmed when conflict arises, but continue acting in the sphere of the Spirit confident because of who we are IN Christ. Now, let's read verses one through four of chapter two and continue our study.

"Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." Philippians 2:1-4

These verses are so powerful and convicting! Paul wants us to understand that there are resources available to those who are IN CHRIST. He identifies five natural resources available to every believer. He introduces each one with the word "if." In the Greek this is a first class "if" (of four types) meaning "since."

Reread verse one using the word "since" instead of "if."

Here are five natural resources for believers "since" we are in Christ.

Look up the verses that correspond with each point:

Natural Resources in Christ

1) Encouragement in Christ - To call alongside for comfort, encouragement, direction and support in Christ. Who is our comforter? It is the Holy Spirit! He is the One God sent to live in us, direct us, teach us and convict us once we've accepted Christ as our personal savior. As a result of our union with Christ, we have the Holy Spirit to act as our comforter, encourager, director and supporter. John 14:16-17, 26

2) Consolation of Love - Cheering and encouragement originating from self-sacrificial love. Because we are in Christ, we have the very words of God that are generated from His self-sacrificial love to comfort us. Romans 8:38-39

3) Fellowship of the Spirit - Any common communion from the source of the spirit. As believers our position in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit gives us a common source of fellowship with one another. 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 2 Corinthians 6:16

4) Affection - Passionate affections generated by deep-seated feelings. When we are guided by the Holy Spirit through the understanding of Biblical teachings, we have the principles needed to perform our ministries in Christ which include affection for others. 2 Peter 1:5-8

5) Compassion - Love for others as a result of their circumstances. Compassion is the source that our motivation to love and minister to others should come from. Colossians 3:12-13

Isn't it incredible that God provides so much for us because of our position in Christ!? We don't perform works to earn these resources, but receive them as a result of God's unconditional love for us.

In the space below, write about which resource impacted you the most and why.

When we depend upon the natural resources of our placement in Christ, Paul tells us there are five results.

Results of Depending Upon the Natural Resources in Christ

1) We fulfill Paul's joy - It is possible for our conduct to bring joy to others! When we conform to God's plan in our attitude, actions and speech it is pleasing to witness and can bring joy to others.

2) We will be of the same mind - When we make Paul's joy complete through conformity to God's plan, our mindset has the potential to be like Paul's.

3) We will maintain self-sacrificial love – An attitude of love that manifests itself in giving and continues to do so regardless of the response should be our response to God's grace and provision in our lives. It should also be our attitude towards others at all times.

4) We will maintain unity - As believers we are part of the same body, the body of Christ. We have the same Holy Spirit. Our attitude towards one another should be one of love and harmony. If one member of the body rejoices, we should all rejoice. And if one suffers, we should all suffer with him.

5) We will have one purpose - This literally means that we should think in the sphere of oneness. Again, as Christians our unity of mind should be due to our common Spirit and purpose. We should all desire to glorify God with the ministries He has given us.

God's word is amazing in that it gives us all that we need to function in righteousness as believers here on earth. When we claim the promises of God and understand the benefits we

have because of our position in Christ, we can have freedom from the pain and hardships of life. Joy is ours because of Him.

Write about a trying circumstance in your life that you are struggling to trust God with.

How do God's promises of the resources we receive in Christ change your view about this circumstance?

Finally in verses three through four Paul instructs us on the motivation and attitude of our service to Him and to others.

- 1) Nothing should be done out of selfishness - Our motivation to serve should not be done in self-seeking ambition.
- 2) Nothing should be done out of empty pride - Pride should never be our motivator. It only glorifies self which sets us against God.
- 3) Regard others as more important - Our motivation should come from an attitude that the needs of others are greater than our own. Read Philippians 4:19. We don't need to worry about ourselves. God promises His provision in our lives.
- 4) Evaluate the needs of others - We are commanded to not just look at our own needs, but the needs of others and provide for them as God allows.

At times reading these verses can be frustrating because we see our failures so clearly. It doesn't have to be this way. Paul's instructions, motivations, attitudes and beliefs can only correctly be performed under the power and control of the Holy Spirit. It is only when we are submitted to God that we can carry out His will and the instructions of His word. So be encouraged that it is nothing that we do and everything that He does that brings righteousness to our lives!

To close, write about how your motivation to serve God and glorify Him matches the list Paul gives in verses 3-4? How can you improve and change your motivation?

REVIEW

~There are 5 Natural Resources we receive when we are In Christ.

1. Encouragement in Christ: John 14:16-17, 26
2. Consolation of Love: Romans 8:38-39
3. Fellowship of the Spirit: 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20, 2 Corinthians 6:16
4. Affection: 2 Peter 1:5-8
5. Compassion: Colossians 3:12-13

~There are 5 results of the natural resources we receive.

1. Fulfill Paul's joy
2. Same Mind
3. Self-Sacrificial Love
4. Unity
5. One Purpose

~ Our Motivation and attitude toward service should not be done out of selfishness or pride, but we should think of others as more important than ourselves and evaluate the needs of others. All of this is possible because of our position in Christ.