

# PRINCIPLES WHICH PROVIDE CONTENTMENT

## “PEACE”

PROVERBS 17:1; EPHESIANS 4:1-7

Text: Proverbs 17:1

### **Proverbs 17:1**

<sup>1</sup> Better *is* a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices *with* strife.

Introduction:

The comparison of the life of the godly and ungodly continues in this chapter. Over the next few weeks we will look at the things that provide for contentment.

As we read in our text this first principle of contentment deal with strife and the blessing of peace.

To better illustrate this let's look at Ephesians 4.

### **Ephesians 4:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, <sup>2</sup> With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; <sup>3</sup> Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup> One Lord, one faith, one

baptism, <sup>6</sup> One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. <sup>7</sup> But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Notice Paul's use of the word "therefore" in verse one. This word draws our attention back to the previous chapters, where Paul has been laying a foundation of biblical, Christian doctrine. As he begins his remarks in chapter 4, Paul is saying that there is no divorcing Christian doctrine from Christian duty!

He is basically saying, "You know the truth, now walk in it!"

Where there is genuine faith there will be genuine works to back it up.

**James 2:18**

<sup>18</sup> Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

I want us to see this evening that being one in the Lord is God's will for His people.

**Philippians 1:27**

<sup>27</sup> Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

**1 Corinthians 1:10**

<sup>10</sup> Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

This passage gives us the necessary details on how this is possible.

Notice:

## 1. THE SOURCE OF UNITY (VS. 4-7)

### **Ephesians 4:4-7**

<sup>4</sup>*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup>One Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. <sup>7</sup>But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

If we are to be united in the Lord, what is to be the basis for our unity?

We all come here today from different backgrounds, different cultural foundations, different economic backgrounds, different lifestyles, etc. How can we possibly find any common ground? These verses tell us about to areas that every saved person in this room holds in common with every other saved person. These two areas provide us with the source of Christian unity.

### A. We Share Common Ground (vs.4-6)

The night before the Lord was crucified, He prayed for His people.

One of the things He prayed for us that His people would be “one”.

**John 17:20-23**

<sup>20</sup> Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; <sup>21</sup> That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. <sup>22</sup> And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

To ensure that we would have the foundation upon which build in unity, the Lord provided us with 7 great possessions that every Christian in this room shares in Him.

- One body
- One Spirit
- One Hope
- One Lord
- One Faith
- One Baptism

- One God and Father

Notice that everything is about Him? When our lives, our desires, our will, our interests, etc, stop being about Him and start to focus on us, we are headed for trouble!

As believers, we may come from different places, but we stand on common ground.

### B. We Share Common Grace (vs. 7)

Verse 7 begins a new thought. Paul begins to speak about the spiritual gifts.

Every believer possesses at least one spiritual gift.

The source of our unity lies in what we share in common and in the fact that we have each been especially equipped by the Lord to be a blessing.

## **2. THE SECRET OF CHRISTIAN UNITY (VS. 2-3)**

### **Ephesians 4:2-3**

<sup>2</sup>With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; <sup>3</sup>Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Now that we know where our unity originates, how are we to go about the business of practicing, protecting and strengthening our unity?

We find the simple answer in these verses.

### A. We Must Exercise the Right Walk (vs. 2)

#### **Ephesians 4:2**

<sup>2</sup>With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Note we're not told to make unity. Unity already exist, our duty it to maintain it. Notice how this done.

- **Lowliness**

This word means humility; an accurate understanding of our own smallness.

It's not "How Great I Am" but rather "I Am What I Am by the Grace of God."

It's about us getting off our pedestal and realizing that were it not for the grace of God, we would still be a hell bound sinner living for the devil!

Having a "lowly" spirit keeps me reminded of the fact that I am just one heartbeat away from failing God myself, therefore, I won't look down my nose at others who may have fallen!

Most problems and contention in our homes and in churches is the product of pride.

**Proverbs 13:10**

<sup>10</sup> Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

- Meekness

This word means “gentleness; power under control.” It refers to having the power to react against others, but refusing to for the sake of Christ!

Sometimes, it means keeping your mouth shut, instead of setting someone else straight. Sometimes it means reacting with honey when you want to react with vinegar!

Those who are meek and lowly are in good company.

**Matthew 11:29**

<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

- Long Suffering

This word means “patience, endurance”. It literally means “to be long tempered.” It refers to having a long fuse!

- Forbearing in Love

The word “forbearing” means “to endure, or to put up with”. It means giving people space to be themselves. You see, the word “love” refers to God’s kind of love. It is a love that is unconditional and eternal. It doesn’t end based on what others do, but it remains constant and strong in spite of injury.

### B. We Must Embrace the Right Work (vs. 3)

#### **Ephesians 4:3**

<sup>3</sup> Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Maintaining unity requires more than just a change in the way we walk, it also requires hard work.

The word “endeavoring” means “to exert oneself”.

We are to work hard to ensure that the unity the Spirit of God wants to produce within our homes and the church is unhindered and unbroken!

How are we to do this?

By maintain the bond of peace.

“Bond” refers to “that which binds something together”.



We might call it “glue”!

“Peace” simply refers to “harmony between individuals”.

As we determine within our hearts that we will walk in love toward one another, we will be exerting ourselves to see that the Spirit’s purpose in our church is carried out.

Illustration:

Most Americans can recall what they were doing on January 28, 1986.

On that historic date, the space shuttle Challenger exploded just seventy-three seconds into flight.

Seven families were robbed by death and an entire nation was racked with grief.

All of this loss was ultimately blamed on one inexpensive O-ring.

Records revealed that the space shuttle was comprised of one million components.

With all of the mechanical makeup, it took just one part to destroy the whole.

One million parts did their job, but one failed and disaster occurred.

Most people feel their role within the home and church is not only small and insignificant as well.

But like that small and seemingly insignificant O-ring, one failed performance can produce catastrophic results.

### **3. THE SATISFACTION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY (VS. 1)**

#### **Ephesians 4:1**

<sup>1</sup>I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

If we decide to walk in unity, one with another, what is the payoff?

#### **A. We Will Live a Balance Life**

As we walk together, for the glory of God, we are declaring to a watching world that what we have is real!

#### **B. We Will Live a Blessed Life**

As we walk in unity, we will be what the Lord saved us to be: living proof that Jesus makes a difference in all those He touches!

Being united won't make you rich, beautiful or famous, but it will bring honor to God and it will draw the Lord's blessings in this direction.

Close:

The May 1987 edition of National Geographic included a feature about the arctic wolf.

The author described how a seven-member pack had targeted several musk-oxen calves that were guarded by eleven adults.

As the wolves approached the musk-oxen bunched in a semicircle, with their deadly rear hooves facing out, and the calves remained safe during a long standoff with the enemy.

But then a single ox broke rank, and the herd scattered into nervous little groups. A skirmish ensued, and the adults finally fled in panic, leaving the calves to the mercy of the predators. Not a single calf survived.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 that after his departure wolves would come, not sparing the flock. Wolves continue to attack today, but they cannot

penetrate and destroy when we stand together in unity.