

DAY 14

READ

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

FOCUS

THEREFORE IF YOU HAVE ANY ENCOURAGEMENT FROM BEING UNITED WITH CHRIST, IF ANY COMFORT FROM HIS LOVE, IF ANY COMMON SHARING IN THE SPIRIT, IF ANY TENDERNESS AND COMPASSION, THEN MAKE MY JOY COMPLETE BY BEING LIKE-MINDED, HAVING THE SAME LOVE, BEING ONE IN SPIRIT AND OF ONE MIND. DO NOTHING OUT OF SELFISH AMBITION OR VAIN CONCEIT. RATHER, IN HUMILITY VALUE OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELVES, NOT LOOKING TO YOUR OWN INTERESTS BUT EACH OF YOU TO THE INTERESTS OF THE OTHERS. IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ONE ANOTHER, HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS: WHO, BEING IN VERY NATURE GOD, DID NOT CONSIDER EQUALITY WITH GOD SOMETHING TO BE USED TO HIS OWN ADVANTAGE; RATHER, HE MADE HIMSELF NOTHING BY TAKING THE VERY NATURE OF A SERVANT, BEING MADE IN HUMAN LIKENESS. AND BEING FOUND IN APPEARANCE AS A MAN, HE HUMBLERD HIMSELF BY BECOMING OBEIDENT TO DEATH— EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS! THEREFORE GOD EXALTED HIM TO THE HIGHEST PLACE AND GAVE HIM THE NAME THAT IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH AND UNDER THE EARTH, AND EVERY TONGUE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

REFLECTION from PASTOR AUTUMN IGO

When I was in 8th grade, I decided that I didn't want to be a nerd any more. I started cultivating friendships with popular kids, joined the girls basketball team, and started styling my hair and clothes to fit in as best I could. My goals were slightly hampered by my lack of athletic ability and the fact (I know this will shock you) that I'm just not really that "cool" at heart. It was a rather embarrassing year. General dorkiness aside, one of the things that makes me cringe the most about this time of my life was how conniving and ruthless my young mind was in seeking out friendships and situations I thought would contribute to my popularity. I would spend hours befriending someone I didn't even like or playing a sport I really hated for no other reason than to try to gain some sort of elusive social glory. Thankfully, I've grown up a bit since then but even still, it's not very pleasant to remember that I really am capable of such single minded and complete self-devotion.

I think that kind of self-focus is pretty common. In fact, the great ancient Christian philosopher St. Augustine had a phrase for it: homo incurvatus in se. This literally translates as, "man curved in on himself." What this means in today's terms are that we are a bunch of navel gazers...our lives revolve first and foremost around making sure our goals, ambitions, and desires are met or exceeded above all else.

Jesus is just the opposite of that.

Today's passage is one of my very favorites in the entire Bible. In it, Paul points out that our natural state is one in which we reach out continually for self-benefit and for empty glory. In this state we can expect nothing but conflict with those around us...if we are all so focused on self we are naturally going to get in each other's way. But what Christ did when He came was to reveal that God's heart for us is exactly the opposite: where we reach for the good of self, He reached for the good of others. Where we reach for empty glory, He revealed glory in it's true and effective fullness.

And the key to all this? It's our minds! The phrase in v. 2 is sometimes translated, "be like minded." I think this misses the force of Paul's command. A better translation is "purposely grab" the same mind! Our mindset is not something that just happens to us, it is something we take hold of. And what is it that we are supposed to set our minds on? Humility: a proper estimation of ourselves in light of God and others. It is only in this humble state--when we continually discipline our minds to think about what is best for others, to put their needs before our own--will our actions begin to follow. Even as we work over the next few weeks to continue to detox our bodies, remember that the true battleground begins and ends with a humble heart and mind.

QUESTION

- HOW MUCH OF YOUR DAY WOULD YOU ESTIMATE IS SPENT THINKING ABOUT YOURSELF (YOUR DESIRES, NEEDS, AND GOALS)?
- HOW MUCH IS SPENT THINKING ABOUT OTHERS?
- HOW DOES HUMILITY HELP TO DISCIPLINE YOUR THOUGHT LIFE?