

Conclusion

- A. The Grace Approach
- i. “First, set your sights first and foremost on pursuing a humble spirit in all your behavior toward God and others.... Mediate often on Philippians 2:5-11 in striving for the humble spirit that is ours in Christ Jesus.”
 - ii. “Second, if you find yourself needing to address an offense with someone, always carefully plan your approach in peacemaking. Think about the best time to engage. Never react from a place of high emotion, frustration, or defensiveness. Choose words carefully, knowing the power of the tongue.... Whenever you can, relate in person with someone as opposed to using the phone, social media, or email. Too much is lost in communication through those means.”
 - iii. “Third, don’t prematurely give up on pursuing reconciliation with others. Give your brothers and sisters time to process. Wait, wait, wait, wait. Just because you don’t see a breakthrough on the first or second time doesn’t mean that the Lord will not honor your efforts further down the road.” There is a finish line and it is restoration!
 - iv. “Fourth, when you think you’ve taken all you can take of the messiness other create in your life—and *sometimes* that can be true—more often than not, you can endure more. You can bear more. By God’s grace and his Spirit’s help, you can put up with more from the saints with which you share community in your church.”
 - v. “Fifth, and most importantly, draw strength from the gospel to do all of the above. Soak in Colossians 3:13 regularly.”
- B. We are all prone to blindness regarding our own sin.

Advancing the Gospel of the Kingdom: *Kingdom Culture (Part 1)*

Jerry Cisar — February 6, 2022

Text: Galatians 6:1-3

Introduction

Francis Schaeffer: “If an individual Christian does not show love toward other true Christians, the world has a right to judge that he or she is not a Christian..... We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus’s claims are true, that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians.”

I. Restore in Gentleness

CSB “Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing....”

- A. The “spiritual” are to restore them.
- i. The excludes it from being reserved for an office in the church alone.
 - ii. The “spiritual” are those who can seek to restore one caught in sin *in a spirit of gentleness!*

Augustine: “There is no surer test of the spiritual person than his treatment of another’s sin. Note how he takes care to deliver the sinner rather than triumph over him, to help him rather than punish him and, so far as lies in his capacity, to support him.”

- iii. The goal is always restoration.

B. In a Spirit of Gentleness

- i. Gentleness or meekness is a central character trait of Christ

- a) Matthew 11:29
- b) James 3:13
- c) Galatians 5:22-24, 26

The alternative to restoration in a spirit of gentleness is biting and devouring one another by becoming conceited and provoking or envying one another.

- d) Col. 3:12-13
- ii. Isaiah wasn't talking about the zoo, but the church (Isa 11:6-9).

II. Watch Yourselfs

A. A Clear and Present Danger

- i. Paul thought Timothy needed to guard against this (2 Tim. 2:23-26)
- ii. Two of Paul's co-laborers got tangled because they did not guard sufficiently (Phil. 4:2-7).
 - a) Paul's exhortation to them is not to agree to disagree! It is to *agree to agree!*
 - b) "Let your reasonableness be known to everyone."
 - NIV says "gentleness" and CSB "graciousness"
 - BDAG lexicon: "not insisting on every right of letter of law or custom, *yielding, gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant*"
- iii. Bring your anxieties to the Lord in prayer.

III. Bear One Another's Burdens

A. Bearing with another's burdens is hard!

- i. One cannot love their brother or sister in Christ if they are not bearing their burdens.
- ii. Galatians 5:14, 15

B. How do we bear one another's burdens?

i. Listening

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*: "The *first* service one owes to others in the community involves listening to them. Just as our love for God begins with listening to God's Word, the beginning of love for other Christians is learning to listen to them. God's love for us is shown by the fact that God not only gives us God's Word, but also lends us God's ear. We do God's work for our brothers and sisters when we learn to listen to them.... Many people seek a sympathetic ear and do not find it among Christians, because these Christians are talking even when they should be listening. But Christians who can no longer listen to one another will soon no longer be listening to God either...."

Bonhoeffer: "There is also a kind of listening with half an ear that presumes already to know what the other person has to say. This impatient, inattentive listening really despises the other Christian and finally is only waiting to get a chance to speak and thus to get rid of the other. This sort of listening is no fulfillment of our task.... It should be no surprise that we are no longer able to perform the greatest service of listening that God has entrusted to us—hearing the confession of another Christian—if we refuse to lend our ear to another person on lesser subjects."

ii. Bearing.

Bonhoeffer: "The *other person* is a burden to the Christian, in fact for the Christian most of all.... Christians must bear the burden of one another. They must suffer and endure one another. *Only as a burden is the other really a brother or sister and not just an object to be controlled.* The burden of human beings was even for God so heavy that God had to go to the cross suffering under it.