Philippians 2:1-11
King James Version
January 27, 2019

The **International Bible Lesson** *(Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series)* for **Sunday, January 27**, is from **Philippians 2:1-11**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse **International Bible Lesson Commentary**. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website along with the **International Bible Lesson** that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week’s commentary and lesson at the **International Bible Lesson Forum**.

*(Philippians 2:1)* If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

Paul described what we should find in every healthy church. Some in the church may not demonstrate these traits, so we need to be careful and not judge a church defective because some members do not manifest a Christ-like spirit or attitude. Paul wrote a lot of letters to churches to help them achieve what he describes in this verse; for example, we can think of his corrective letters to the Galatians and to the Corinthians. In addition, whether inside or outside the church, all followers of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will find encouragement in Christ, comfort from the love of Christ, and participation in the Spirit of Christ that will give them affection and sympathy in fellowship with Christ.
(Philippians 2:2) Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

When everyone in a church centers their mind and heart on the Jesus Christ of the Bible, and not on the Christ of their imagination or popular culture, Christian unity becomes possible—and not because it is forced upon a church by the leadership. Love for God, the Scriptures, and one another are the motivators that inspire people to agree on the essential truths of the Scripture and work together to achieve the goals God has set for all Christians as we find them in the Bible.

(Philippians 2:3) Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Whereas some preached the gospel to hurt Paul, because they thought they were better than he was, or because they thought he was wrong and they were right, Paul stressed humility toward others. Some may have better skills than others in certain areas, or even know more than others on certain topics, but Paul wrote of a “servant attitude” that every follower of Christ should practice towards others—using their special skills and knowledge to promote the well-being of others and not for selfish reasons.

(Philippians 2:4) Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Selfish ambition or conceit can lead to sinning against others by taking unfair advantage of them or cheating them. And believers need to remember that there are people (even in a church) who will not look out for their interests, but try to cheat them; therefore, Jesus said, “be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16). In business and in the church and in all of life, we need to consider the concerns and interests of others. Jesus taught the Golden Rule: “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets;” therefore, the Golden Rule should prevent someone from selfishly using someone else, because they themselves would not want to be selfishly used by others (Matthew 7:12). Notice, the Golden Rule of Jesus is positive:
Whatever good thing you would like for someone else to do for you in a situation, you do for others in a similar situation.

*(Philippians 2:5)* **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**

The same mind, the same attitude, the same overall purpose that Christ had, we should have. As His Father sent Him into the world, so Christ has sent us into the world. Christ set His mind on doing His Father’s will no matter what the personal cost to Him—even humbling Himself by coming into the world and dying on a cross rather than staying in and enjoying the comforts of heaven. In His heart, mind and actions, Christ gave of His time, talent, and treasure sacrificially to do His Father’s will and save others.

*(Philippians 2:6)* **Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:**

I prefer and appreciate the translation “exploited,” to “grasped.” I think “exploited” better conveys intention. Jesus did not exploit or take undue advantage of His equality with God, as the divine Son of God, for self-centered purposes. He did not use His power to help Himself selfishly or unfairly or to the disadvantage of His Father or others. He did not try to control others to make them do what He wanted to serve Him.

*(Philippians 2:7)* **But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:**

To leave His heavenly throne and come into our world in human flesh and weakness, to serve us, to suffer and die for us as a common criminal on a cross, was certainly taking the form of a slave, a slave for us and the whole human race. But Jesus did this willingly, lovingly, and from the depth of His heart for us—to set us free from slavery to sin and the fear of death.

*(Philippians 2:8)* **And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**
Jesus humbled Himself and Jesus serves as an example to us in humility. No matter how much we may humble ourselves in any situation, we can never humble ourselves as much as Jesus humbled Himself for us. Humility and obedience work together. One must be humble toward another to obey them, or especially to serve them when you know they do not deserve your service. None of us deserve the service of Jesus. Humility was the character trait Jesus demonstrated when He obeyed His Father and when He served us, for He knew (and we know) that we did not and do not deserve His sacrifice or service.

(Philippians 2:9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

Jesus humbly obeyed His heavenly Father in everything. No matter how humiliating His obedience would be, Jesus knew and agreed that His heavenly Father knew what was best for the world and for Himself as the Lord and Savior of the world. Jesus obeyed His Father for our benefit, as well as for His—for the glory set before Him. God the Father rewarded the Son for His obedience, and there is no higher name in heaven than “Jesus.” Think of all the names of all the famous people and false gods throughout human history, there is no higher name than “Jesus.”

(Philippians 2:10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

Jesus humbled himself, and part of His reward is all people will bow down before Him and acknowledge Who Jesus is, the Son of God. True believers will not only honor His Name, but they will also try to live as He lived and taught on the Earth. True believers will actually bow before Him as their King and do as He taught as His humble servants. True believers will bow gladly before Jesus with loving, humble hearts; whereas, those who have hated God (those “under the earth,” including demons) will bow before Jesus Christ under compulsion with fear and trembling.

(Philippians 2:11) And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Some with loving hearts of praise will confess Jesus Christ is Lord—this will especially glorify the Father and the Son. Others may grudgingly admit that Jesus is Lord, but even that admission will bring glory to God. Christians glorify God when they confess Jesus is Lord by their words and obedience.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Which of these needs seem most important to you: “encouragement in Christ, consolation from love, sharing in the Spirit, compassion and sympathy”? Why

2. How might a leader mislead people using these words: “be of the same mind and have the same love and be in full accord”?

3. What happens when selfish ambition is expressed in the church, especially among leaders?

4. What do believers need to do to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus?

5. How can you apply what Paul wrote to the Philippians to the situation of obedience today as you see it?