

## Life in Ministry Ministry: Part II

### Discussion Question:

1. Share something a friend told you this past week that encouraged or discouraged you for that day?
2. How is humility seen in campus and work life?

*<sup>[10]</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>[11]</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>[12]</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>[13]</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. <sup>[14]</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>[15]</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>[16]</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. (Romans 12:10-16 ESV)*

### Disciplining the Tongue

*<sup>[11]</sup> Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. (James 4:11 ESV)*

1. One of the ways to fight against evil thoughts and emotions is to not let it be expressed outwardly.
  - a. *Often we combat our evil thoughts most effectively if we absolutely refuse to allow them to be expressed in words. It is certain that the spirit of self-justification can be overcome only by the Spirit of grace; nevertheless, isolated thoughts of judgment can be curbed and smothered by never allowing them the right to be uttered... He who holds his tongue in check controls both mind and body. (pp.91-2)*
  - b. *<sup>[2]</sup> For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. (James 3:2 ESV)*
2. This leads to a clear and bold rule regarding how we speak to one another depending on each circumstance.
  - a. *Thus it must be a decisive rule of every Christian fellowship that each individual is prohibited from saying much that occurs to him. (p.92)*

- b. *But to speak about a brother covertly is forbidden, even under the cloak of help and good will; for it is precisely in this guise that the spirit of hatred among brothers always creeps in when it is seeking to create mischief. (p. 92)*
3. When our mouth has been tamed by discipline, we discover the joy of God's creative glory in each person and as a result moved to praise God.
  - a. *Where this discipline of the tongue is practiced right from the beginning, each individual will make a matchless discovery. He will be able to cease from constantly scrutinizing the other person, judging him, condemning him, putting him in his particular place where he can gain ascendancy over him and thus doing violence to him as a person. Now he can allow the brother to exist as a completely free person, as God made him to be. (p.93)*

We are humbled by the discovery of how God made the person uniquely and of great worth for his "creative glory".

- b. *His view expands and, to his amazement, for the first time he sees, shining above his brethren, the richness of God's creative glory. God did not make this person as I would have made him. He did not give him to me as a brother for me to dominate and control, but in order that I might find above him the Creator. (p.93)*
- c. *God does not will that I should fashion the other person according to the image that seems good to me, that is, in my own image; rather in his very freedom from me God made this person in His image. (p. 93)*

We discover the joy to of being uniquely created and being freed by the constraints of others in order to serve others. The acknowledgement of God's worth and purpose for that person shatters what we think is the strong and weak.

- d. *Now the other person, in the freedom with which he was created, becomes the occasion of joy, whereas before he was only a nuisance and an affliction. (p.93)*
- e. *I can never know beforehand how God's image should appear in others. That image always manifests a completely new and unique form that comes solely from God's free and sovereign creation. To me that sight may seem strange, even ungodly. But God creates every man in the likeness of His Son, the Crucified. After all, even that image certainly looked strange and ungodly to be before I grasped it. (p. 93)*
- f. *Strong and weak, wise and foolish, gifted or ungifted, pious or impious, the diverse individuals in the community are no longer incentives for talking and judging and condemning, and thus excuses for self-justification. They are rather cause for rejoicing in one another and serving one another. (p. 93)*

- g. *They are rather cause for rejoicing in one another and serving one another. Each member of the community is given his particular place, but this is no longer the place in which he can most successfully assert himself, but the place where he can best perform his service. (p. 93-94)*
- 4. We move from a life lead by self-justification to a life of justification by grace. The humility learned from grace means that we see each person through God's eyes. Each person no matter their position has worth in God's eyes and in the community.
  - a. *Not self-justification, which means the use of domination and force, but justification by grace, and therefore service, should be govern the Christian community. (p. 94)*
  - b. *Once a man has experienced the mercy of God in his life he will henceforth aspire only to serve. The proud throne of the judge no longer lures him; he wants to be down below with the lowly and the needy, because that is where God found him. (p. 94)*

### **Living a Life of Meekness**

*For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. (Rom 12:3 ESV)*

God's justification by grace means God declares us not guilty where we did not do anything to deserve it. Justification by grace leads us to live a life of humility because we acknowledge that it based on who God is and not our human standards.

*This is the highest and profitable lesson, truly to know and to despise ourselves. To have no opinion of ourselves, and to think always well and highly of others, is great wisdom and perfection. Thomas a Kempis (p. 94-95)*

Justification by Grace leads to:

1. Meekness in our wisdom.
  - a. *Only he who lives by the forgiveness of his sin in Jesus Christ will rightly think little of himself. He will know that his own wisdom reached the end of its tether when Jesus forgave him. (p. 95)*
  - b. *Because the Christian can no longer fancy that he is wise he will also have no high opinion of his own schemes and plans. He will know that it is good for his own will to be broken in the encounter with his neighbor. (p. 95)*

- c. *He will be ready to consider his neighbor's will more important and urgent than his own. Is it not better to serve our neighbor than to have our own way? (p. 95)*
  2. Honoring people in meekness.
    - a. *The desire for one's own honor hinders faith... One who seeks his own honor is no longer seeking God and his neighbor. (p. 95)*
  3. Enduring suffering with meekness.
    - a. *What does it matter if I suffer injustice? Would I not have deserved even worse punishment from God, if He had not dealt with me according to His mercy? Is it not justice done to me a thousand times even in injustice? Must it not be wholesome and conducive to humility for me to learn to bear such petty evils silently and patiently? (p. 95)*
    - b. *One who lives by justification by grace is willing and ready to accept even insults and injuries without protest, taking them from God's punishing and gracious hand. (p. 96)*
    - c. *The sin of resentment that flares up so quickly in the fellowship indicates again and again how much false desire for honor, how much unbelief, still smolders in the community. (p. 96)*
  4. True humility by acknowledging that I am the worst of all sinners.
    - a. *To forego self-conceit and to associate with the lowly means, in all soberness and without mincing the matter, to consider oneself the greatest of sinners. This arouses all the resistance of the natural man, but also the self-confident Christian. (p. 96)*
    - b. *There can be no genuine acknowledgement of sin that does not lead to this extremity. If my sinfulness appears to me to be in any way smaller or less detestable in comparison with the sins of others, I am still not recognizing my sinfulness at all. (p. 96)*
  5. Ministering others in humility.
    - a. *He who would serve his brother in the fellowship must sink all the way down to these depths of humility. How can I possibly serve another person in unfeigned humility if I seriously regard his sinfulness as worse than my own? Would I not be putting myself above him; could I have any hope for him? Such service would be hypocritical. (p. 97)*
    - b. *Never think that thou hast made any progress till thou look upon thyself as inferior to all. Thomas a Kempis (p. 97)*