

## Don't Trip Up in These Two Areas!

Philippians 1:27 - *Only let your manner of life (conduct) be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel...*

Paul uses an interesting word here, which is translated “conduct” in some versions. The English, “manner of life” is one word from which we get our word politics, or politician. The Greek word means your conduct as a citizen or corporately, of a colony, a group of people behaves. The use of this word is the first indication in this letter of a unique condition in the city of Philippi. Everyone in that city was aware they were citizens of Rome- even though they were a thousand miles away. This was because of the victory in a great battle by the Roman Emperor. In gratitude, he declared all residents of Philippi citizens of Rome. And there were so many great benefits to those in Rome.

Paul sees a spiritual parallel to this idea. He tells the believers in Philippi, “you are members of another government. You are citizens of Heaven. You cannot have the same attitude that the rest of the citizens have. You belong to a colony of heaven; you must behave like citizens of heaven. You must let your manner of conduct be worthy of the community to which you belong—God’s kingdom proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.”

How should one live as a citizen of heaven? Paul mentions **two essential things**. **First, stand firm in one Spirit**. Never depart from complete dependency on the Spirit of God to do through you everything within His will, everything that you need to do. The Christian life is lived in a very different process than one lived before receiving Christ. Now, it is God's life through you, through your behavior, your conduct, your manner of life. It is the indwelling Spirit of God expressing the Lord Jesus Christ in terms of your human personality. Never depart from the truth that your life should be a supernatural life. The second essential is to continue, to maintain working for Christ side by side with others. Your primary work for God is to be in a team or in a congregation-side by side.

Interestingly enough, the wiles of the devil- the thrust and power of his activity is aimed at both of these things. He is looking to derail us by poking to find a weakness. When he finds it, he will exploit it. First, he tries to get you to depend upon yourself, not on the power, motivation, maintenance of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Evil One works to make you fearful, worried, discouraged, impatient, or upset with someone or something. Have you felt this? This is the attack of the enemy, trying to budge you from your faithful service. He works to make you forget your position in Christ, which is the victory.

Whenever we get discouraged, we are looking at ourselves, depending on ourselves. We are discouraged because we were expecting that we could do this good thing and we failed. We have been self-confident, counting on ourselves to start, maintain or complete a good work. We focus on our own strength and wisdom. We act in the power of our flesh, as if we don't need any help from God. We become worried, anxious, fearful, timid, impatient, discouraged in ourselves. We have yielded to the attack of the enemy and temporarily have shifted from that position of dependency. Amazingly, we don't often realize we were moving spiritually to self-trust and away from dependence on God and His empowerment.

The enemy may try another strategy. He desperately tries to produce a division between you and those who labor alongside you. He tries to split us up, divide us by creating jealousy, comparison, suspicion, resentments, all appearing as personality conflicts, but in reality they are the result of a losing warfare with the Destroyer. He tries to get us to not talk with each other, have nothing to do with one another, look down on others, cut our team mate off from the heart-fellowship conversation and finally, even our contact.

We have only two things for which to watch: that we stand firm in the power of God's Spirit, (Ephesians 6:10-20) and that we faithfully serve side by side together with others. If we are careful, if we remain alert to Satan's methods, and if we keep depending on the power of God working, our conduct will become worthy of the Gospel of Christ.