

Things Which Make for Peace

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In Romans 14:19, Paul exhorts: "So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another." Every local church needs these words today, as the church at Rome needed them originally.

Likewise, all across the world these words need to be heard in relations between brethren. We all know that Paul was no doctrinal or moral compromiser, so to begin with, let us understand that he is not urging a "peace at any price" philosophy. He is rather striving to help us overcome the petty immature personality traits that unnecessarily cause division among brethren from time to time.

Paul's exhortation implies that there are some things that destroy peace:

- 1) A desire to have one's own way at whatever cost." As coals are to hot embers, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to inflame strife" (Pro. 26:21). Only babies constantly contend for their own way.
- 2) A spirit of vengeance. How many times the peace of a church has been destroyed by some brother or sister who is determined to "get even," only eternity will reveal. Paul urges, "Render to no man evil for evil . . . Avenge not yourselves . . . I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Rom.12:17, 19);
- 3) A dictator-despot attitude that desires to rule the church or ruin it. Diotrefes was sharply condemned for seeking to rule his brethren (3 John 9). Such destroys peace.
- 4) A tendency to ask foolish questions. Some people seek to display their wisdom through questions or problems they pose, when really, they only display ignorance. "Foolish and ignorant questions refuse, knowing that they gender strifes" (2 Tim. 2:23).
- 5) A murmuring spirit. The chronic complainer can never be pleased and will only discourage others and incite them to fuss and complain. "Do all things without murmurings and questionings" (Phi. 2:14). Such elements cause constant trouble.

There are some outstanding traits that will help maintain peace among brethren:

- 1) A conscious effort to live peacefully. "Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3);
- 2) A total surrender to the authority of Christ. "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17);

- 3) An earnest attempt to treat others as we want them to treat us Mat. 7:12);
- 4) A forgiving spirit. "If he repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3). Remember, Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Mat. 5:9).

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