

New Website Offerings

Excerpts Only

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MONTH OF OCTOBER

MINI-MESSAGES

THE NEW MINISTERS

Business people and ministers may have more in common than pained expressions. In fact, I believe that you, today's Christian business leaders, can be some of the most influential ministers! So, hats off to the "new ministers"!

Today, the marketplace holds enormous clout and it is business leaders who now broadly influence our values. So, authentically Christian business leaders are strategically positioned to perpetuate our ethical, moral and spiritual heritage. You may not wear the title comfortably, but you are the "new ministers."

Of course, every Believer is a "minister," priests ministering to the world (I Peter 2:9-17), but business and professional people can minister in special ways.

I am impressed by the tough questions being raised by some Christian business people:

**Did God make me affluent, visible and powerful?
If he made me affluent, visible, and powerful, why?
How do I witness in the marketplace without taking
advantage of my position?
How will I do so without appearing partial to believing
employees?**

How will I do so without being typecast with phonies who tout religion for business advantage?

You courageously navigate waters beyond the depth of most churched ministers. We are deeply grateful that God has placed you, the "new minister," where you are.

At times it may seem easier to follow the church at a detached distance or to zip past the cumbersome thing toward more vigorous para-church enterprises. In either case, both business people and the church lose.

I often hear Christian business leaders confess enormous need for the church. Facing the chill wind of the secular marketplace alone, without the support and accountability of the church, overwhelms even the strongest.

You know you need the church. But some of you ask, "Does the church need me? Am I of any value to the church, given the mouse and elephant phenomenon? Beyond dropping my generous check in the plate, does the church really expect anything significant from me?"

I reply with a thundering, "Yes!" You are profoundly important to the church. Not merely to pay the bills, not only to prop up the sagging self-esteem, but as primary colleagues in ministry. You enrich our understanding of the faith. "Business ministers" help keep "Church ministers" in touch with the marketplace. You call us to accountability and excellence. Personally, I cannot imagine functioning as a balanced Christian without a circle of spiritual confidants from the marketplace. Today, as we face a vacuum of character and the vertigo of change, we look to you. This is your hour. Thank God for "new ministers."

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

It was poet Robert Burns who wished for humankind the power to see ourselves as others see us. My, what insights that would bring! But there is still another perspective on human affairs that is greater still.

WHAT IF WE COULD SEE AS GOD SEES

What if we could see as God sees? I'm convinced His perspective would set us free to really live.

If we could see as God sees, we would know that most human fears never materialize.

Most of the things we spend time worrying over are never going to happen anyway. So we waste energy and weaken ourselves for the day's task. Maybe this is why Jesus said, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

If we could see as God sees, we would realize that no problem that does come is insurmountable.

In our gloomier moments of financial stress, illness, or family problems, we brood over questions without answers. But the promise of Scripture stands: "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it."

If we could see as God sees, we would understand that no trial comes without a blessing attached.

THE LEARNING TREE

UNITY

Paul's letter to the Philippians serves as a passionate plea that encourages every generation of Christians to stand united

against such divisive opponents as social separatism, spiritual segregation, congregational competition, religious rivalry and disunity in the body of Christ.

The letter to the Philippians is designed to inspire Christians to embrace one another with the humble attitude of Christ. This was a timely message for the church at Philippi because it was under assault from within and without by people motivated by a toxic mindset of carnal egotism.

A selfish, self-promoting, self-seeking and self-centered spirit threatened to tear apart the spiritual fabric of the fellowship in the Philippian church. There were hidden agendas driven by individualism and selfish ambition that caused members in the church at Philippi to competitively pursue the satisfaction of their own interests to the neglect of the interests of others.

There was a major disagreement between two prominent members in the Philippian church. This bitter conflict threatened to split the Philippian congregation into two warring camps with two separate loyalties dedicated to two powerful personalities.

This potential church split led Paul to plead with Euodia and with Syntyche in Philippians 4:1-2 to agree with each other in the Lord. Regardless of what divided them Paul knew the only way for them to resolve the conflict between them was for both of them to rely upon their mutual agreement they could find only in their common Lord.

Paul's advice to the Philippians is still true for the church today. No matter what serves as the basis of our disagreements in the church today, the only place we are going to find total mutual agreement is in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

It is only through the Lordship of Christ that Christians are able to stand in unity with each other. It is only through the Lordship of Christ that we are able to give up our attempts to use human strategies and solutions to defeat the other side. It is

only through the Lordship of Christ that we shall find agreement in the midst of an array of theological differences.

It is the Lordship of Christ that stands at the center of our relationships with one another and not doctrinal arguments and theological positions. It is the Lordship of Christ that enables us to discuss our theological differences without expressing a mean spirit of negativity towards one another.

In Philippians 2:13, Paul says, "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." Paul encourages them to work out the works that God is working in them. He tells them to act out the will of God that God has placed in them. The Philippians are commanded to manifest the miraculous work that God is doing within and among them. They were to be revealers of God's harmonious nature before a divided and conflicted world.

It is interesting to note that Paul does not tell the Philippians to attend a seminar or a conference on church conflict. He does not tell them to read the most recent Christian literature written by Christian authors on Conflict resolution. He tells them that they already have what they need to work out their salvation as a congregation. They have Christ working in them.

Christians today must realize that we have what it takes in Christ to work out our salvation. We can work out the salvation in our marriages. We can work out the salvation of our families. We can work out the salvation of our congregations. We can work out the salvation of our friendships. Paul says in 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

It is possible in the power of Christ for Christians to erase the color line in the body of Christ.

It is possible in the power of Christ for Christians to overcome class warfare in the body of Christ.

It is possible in the power of Christ for Christians to exalt the interests of others above their own.

It is possible in the power of Christ to exalt the body of Christ above the body politic.

It is possible in the power of Christ for Christians to exalt the Christian party above the Democrat or Republican parties.

It is possible in the power of Christ for Christians to relate to each other as brothers and sisters instead of liberal and conservatives.

Let us make the solid commitment to refuse to use the church as a vehicle to promote our personal agendas of vain conceit and selfish ambition. And commit ourselves to doing all we can through the power of Christ to protect and defend the unity of the Holy Spirit in the bond of peace.

Yes, we come together as the body of Christ with the Godly determination to reflect the divine unity that exists within the Godhead between Father, Son, and Spirit. We stand as one person, in one spirit, against every strategy of division devised by the evil forces of hell.

We will soar above division.

We will soar above competition.

We will soar above rivalry.

We will soar above separatism.

We will soar above selfish ambition.

Thank God for soaring!