

SOWING PEACE

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Romans 3:17 describes the normal state of affairs with mankind: “*And the way of peace have they not known.*” The whole world lies in wickedness (1 John 5:19), opposing themselves, in the snare of the devil, taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim 2:25-26). The “wisdom” that is from the devil is full of envying and strife. God’s wisdom is the opposite, and is what we need to follow.

God’s way and the Devil’s way

James 3:13-18 says, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” As followers of Christ, we need to sow peace with others. Galatians 5:19-22 also shows this same contrast between what is of God and what is of the devil, defined as the “works of the flesh” versus “the fruit of the spirit.” The context is established in verses 14-15: “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” The devil’s goal is to cause discord among brethren (an abomination to God in Proverbs 6:19), to have us to destroy one another. The works of the flesh include “hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:20-21). “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal 5:22-23). The passage concludes with a commandment not to provoke and envy one another (Gal 5:26).

Whether or not we follow these teachings will reveal who are spiritual father is. “*In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother*” (1 John 3:10).

Humility, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness

Satan will try to find any way he can to stir up strife among brethren.

Proverbs 13:10 says, “*Only by pride cometh contention:* but with the well

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(continued)

advised is wisdom.” Philippians 2:2-4 says, “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*”

Verses 5-8 then teach us to have the mind of Christ with all its humility. We must choose to be humble, and put others ahead of ourselves to have peace. And then we must endeavor to keep that peace. Ephesians 4:1-3 says, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, *with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*” Might a quarrel arise among brethren? Philippians 4:2 contains instructions to two quarreling sisters in Christ: “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” Satan even found a way to cause a sharp contention between the Apostle Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41). Colossians 3:12-15 shows how to solve a quarrel: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, *bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,* to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

Our souls at stake

First Thessalonians 5:13 succinctly commands, “*And be at peace among yourselves.*” How important is that commandment? Another way of asking that question is to ask whether or not we desire to see God one day. Hebrews 12:14 says, “*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*” Romans 12:18 says, “*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*” God requires us to do all that we possibly can to be at peace with everyone. “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*” (Rom 14:17-19). The best conclusion to this we could find is in 2 Corinthians 13:11: “*Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*”