

Weekly Devotions: LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER 9

Agape Love starts with an Attitude of Humble Selflessness

Gary Thomas in his book *Authentic Faith* emphasized; “The Christ-like life is not simply about practicing impeccable morality and overcoming temptation and faithfully performing a few spiritual disciplines. All of these were done by the Pharisees far more faithfully than any of us will ever perform them, and yet Christ Himself said these religious zealots had missed God’s intention. To experience Christ’s joy, passion, and fulfillment, we need to adopt an entirely new mind set and motivation. We are invited to join our Lord in living for the glory of the Father instead of for our own reputation, and we are called to give ourselves over to the salvation and sanctification of the Church, rather than to be consumed by our own welfare. This holy self-forgetfulness is the most genuine mark of true faith, the evidence of God’s merciful grace in our lives.”

He went on to say; “When our happiness is dependent on what happens to us and when our self-focus determines our daily mood, our joy will necessarily be limited to whatever good thing happens to us. But when we learn to truly delight in the welfare of others and rejoice in what God is doing in their lives, the potential for increased joy skyrockets. ...The authentic faith of selflessness focuses our minds and hearts on serving God by serving others. It affects not only where we minister and what we celebrate but also *how* we minister and *whose strength* we are dependent on.” (Edited Extract from *Authentic Faith* by Gary Thomas.)

Read Phil 2: 1-11

Selflessness is not expected only of those who are mature in faith but expected of all believers. The apostle Paul urged the Church in Philippi to strive towards selflessness so that they could stand united and be one. He appealed to them from his prison cell that they should not do anything out of self-interests but in humility consider others better than themselves and to look out for one another (3-4). He encouraged them to look to Christ and emulate His example of humility and selflessness (5-8).

Questions to ponder

1. What did Paul urge the early believers to work towards so that they could stay united and on what ground did he make the appeal (1-2)?
2. How should the Church in Philippi relate to one another in the church (3-4)? Give examples of what it means for you to look out for the interests of others and how can you guard against conceit in your ministry?
3. How does Christ’s humility and selflessness impact you (6-8)? What practical steps can you take to be like Christ in these two attributes?

Prepared by Rosalind Chen