

Christians Are A Submissive People

Text : **Philippians 2: 1-11**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Most Americans do not travel far from home.

1. Few born here have lived in another country.
2. Few have even traveled to another country.
 - a. It's expensive to travel internationally.
 - b. Americans don't learn other languages because we don't need them here.

B. In these times more people move around inside the country.

1. Upon graduation young people are recruited to work in far away places.
2. Jobs transfer people to other areas.
3. People retire to warmer climates.
4. Air fare is relatively cheap.

C. When one moves into another culture he must adjust. (domestic or foreign)

1. People in different parts of this country are the similar, but also different.
 - a. Rural and Urban thinking
 - b. Flatlanders and Mountain folks
 - c. North, South, East, West
2. People in other countries have radically different value systems.
 - a. We cannot understand them by using our value system.
 - b. Unlike tourists, people who want to accomplish something adjust to the local culture.
3. When communicating the gospel, Christians must adjust to the culture.
 - a. The message is eternal, universal and unchangeable, but can be presented in many ways.
 - b. Cultural relevance enhances acceptance so Christians adjust.
 - c. **BUT ... As missionaries, we cannot go native.**

D. Likewise, when one becomes a Christian, he must adjust to the Christian culture.

1. When one becomes a Christian, he becomes a citizen of a different kingdom.

Phil. 3: 20- For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;
2. The new Christian's friends and neighbors still have the same earthly citizenship.
3. When born again, one must accept a new set of values which makes him different.
4. The more one adjusts to Heaven's culture, the more he's different from his neighbors.

TRANSITION :

With this lesson we want to notice one of those new values which distinguish the Christian from those in the world around him. We want to observe that the Christian's king requires them to be a humble and submissive people.

I. Christianity is not a formula for success on the earth.**A. Before becoming a Christian must count the cost.**

1. Jesus will not be second to anyone else in the life of one of His followers.
Read & Apply ... Matt. 10: 33-39
2. Jesus will not be second to anything in the life of His follower.
 - a. **Luke 16:14-** "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."
 - b. **Matt. 6: 33-** But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
 - c. **Read & Apply ... Mark 8: 33-37**
3. Christianity is an all-consuming life, not an add-on to one's life.

B. Christianity seldom leads to the world's definition of success.

1. Accumulating wealth requires that one prioritize his business. (**seek success**)
 - a. Jesus requires that He be one's top priority. ... **sought first in your life.**
 - b. He demands that He be the one master you serve. ... **undivided priority**
2. Jesus viewed financial success as an obstacle to one's relationship with Him.
 - a. **Luke 18: 22** ... He instructed the "*Rich Young Ruler*" to divest himself of wealth.
 - b. **Luke 18: 24-25** ... Earthly wealth is an obstacle to eternal salvation.

C. The Christian's cultural view of wealth clashes with the world's value system.**II. Christians are forbidden to have the aggressive attitude that leads to earthly success.****A. Successful people of the world compete for the "alpha" position.**

1. In business and industry people who don't stand out don't get the good promotions.
2. There is stiff, often cutthroat, competition for the top spots.
3. Those who don't have sufficient "competitive spirit" aren't even considered.

B. The Christian's culture forbids him to have that competitive attitude.

1. We're taught that greatness is achieved by serving, not by achieving the "alpha" status.
Matt. 23: 10-12 Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ.
¹¹ But the greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.
2. We are required to treat others as better than ourselves. (**not dominate or surpass**)
Phil. 2: 3- Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;
3. Imagine living and working in an environment like that.
 - a. Won't Heaven be Great !!
 - b. We shouldn't have to wait that long to experience it.

C. This is the environment which should exist in the church, the kingdom of God.**III. Each individual Christian subjects himself to every other Christian.****A. When one comes into the kingdom of God, he is required to change his world view.**

1. **Rom. 12: 2-** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, ...
2. **Col. 3: 12-** So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;
3. Thus, to be a Christian requires a change of mind which results in a changed life.

B. Christians are required to be submissive people.

1. Christians submit to each other.
Eph. 5: 18-21 And do not get drunk with wine, ... , but be filled with the Spirit,
¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; ²⁰ always giving thanks for all things ... ²¹ and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.
2. Christians submit to those who instruct them.
I Cor. 16: 15-16 (You know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), Now I urge you, brethren ¹⁶ that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors.
3. Christians submit themselves to their leaders.
Heb. 13: 17- Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.

4. Most of all Christians submit themselves to God who is their Father and their king.
James 4: 7- Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
10- Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.
5. The Christian's submissive mindset affects every aspect of his life in this world.
I Pet. 2:13- Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution,

C. The submissive spirit comes to us directly from our king.

1. Jesus demonstrated the submissive attitude He requires of every Christian.
Phil. 2:8- Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
2. Every Christian is commanded to develop the same submissive spirit as Jesus.
Phil. 2:5-7 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who , although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

IV. Having a submissive attitude has significant ramifications in one's life.

A. One whose heart is truly submissive will be considered odd by people in the world.

1. People of the world cannot be expected to practice the Christian culture.
 - a. In many ways American culture is "*Christianized*" but it is not Christian.
 - b. Thus, Christians cannot expect their neighbors to be like them.
2. Christians must guard against being absorbed into the culture of the world.
 - a. It's natural for people (including Christians) to try to be like others, to fit in.
 - b. **ALL CHRISTIANS are missionaries sojourning as change agents in the world.**

B. Having this Christian attitude will cause us to be abused by the world.

1. People apply social pressure to maintain sameness.
2. Worldly people will seek to exploit that which they perceive as weakness.
 - a. **I Cor. 6: 7-8** **Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? ⁸ On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.**
 - b. **Matt. 5: 40-42** **If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. ⁴¹ Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.**

C. Having this Christian attitude will change the way Christians function in the church.

1. Church conflicts will be eliminated. (**This one attitude could change the brotherhood.**)
 - a. Those who love each other don't seek their own interests. { **my way** } (**I Cor 13: 5**)
 - b. Those with the attitude of Jesus seek the benefit of others. (**Phil. 2: 3-5**)
 - c. **Eph. 4: 1-3** **Therefore I, ..., implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**
2. The fellowship of the church would be joyous and happy.
 - a. **Why ?** Every member would seek to please every other member.
Rom. 15:2- Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.
I Cor. 10: 24- Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.
 - b. **Can you imagine missing an assembly when you knew everyone there was going to try to make you happy?**

CONCLUSION :

- A. **This attitude must be the goal toward which we strive ... to be like Jesus.**
 1. If we have the heart of Jesus, we will treat others as He treated His fellowman.
 2. If we have the heart of Jesus, we will bear the same kind of fruit He bore.
- B. **Let us each one of us accept this as a personal goal; to strive to "have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2: 5**
- C. **As we each strive to develop this attitude in our own hearts, let us put it into practice in the congregation.**
 1. When people find out you have something really good, they will want it.
 2. If the love of Christ is lifted up, it will draw others to Him and to His church.
- D. **The attitude of Jesus must to be emulated is His desire to obey the Father.**
 1. **John 4: 34-** My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.
 2. He was so obedient he surrendered all that He had to God. (**Phil. 2 -cf- Heb. 5:8**)
 3. That kind of surrender and obedience is what He wants from you right now.

INVITATION :

Will you follow His example of obedience ?