

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## How to Avoid a Factious Spirit

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**W**hat does factiousness mean? Does it mean “strife”? Or, could it mean “divisions”? Factiousness must have a different connotation than these qualities, for it is listed separate from them. Among the works of the flesh, Paul lists “. . . *strife, jealousies, wraths, faction, divisions and parties. . .*” (*Galatians 5:20*). While contention or *strife* may accompany one who is factious, and result in *divisions*, the factious spirit must be differentiated.

The Greek word, ERITHIA comes from the word ERITHOS which denotes “a hireling”. Receiving pay for work accomplished is not wrong in itself. The attitude degenerates into a work of the flesh when the only reason one works is for the pay. Like all sin, selfishness lies at the root. Factiousness therefore denotes an ambitious, self-seeking and self-willed spirit.

Since a factious spirit will keep one from his or her inheritance in heaven (*Galatians 5:21*), we should possess attributes which keep such a soul damning

spirit from fostering in our heart. Here are some reminders:

Keep Christ the center of your life and the focus for your thinking. Like Paul, we must die to self and live for Christ (*Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:21*). Ambition, the strong desire to achieve something, is centered on pressing toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (*Philippians 3:14*). The selfish ambition to receive glory from others is replaced with the desire to glorify God.

Humility will help repress the factious spirit. Humbling ourselves before the Lord and submitting to His truth is an action foreign to the factious spirit. In fact, the factious will “*not obey the truth*”. Their pride hinders submission to God’s way, but in reality they are submitting in obedience to “*unrighteousness*” (*Romans 2:8*).

Keeping jealousy out of our heart will go a long way in suppressing a factious spirit. The selfish desire to have the glory others have can create false motives, which can even creep in to

one’s presentation of God’s truth. There were some in Philippi who preached the truth of Christ. Their motive was not to promote the cause of Christ, but “*to raise affliction*” for Paul “*in his bonds*” (*Philippians 1:17*). Out of envy people become factious (*Philippians 1:15*). Why be jealous? We stand before God with our own abilities, and will be rewarded by our own work (*Matthew 25:14-30, I Corinthians 3:8*). Why waste life’s energy on envy?

Eliminating the stubborn spirit will help one avoid the factious spirit. The factious are stubborn because you can admonish them with truth more than once, and they still will not comply (*Titus 3:8*). Void of humility, it is but a short step to obstinacy. Such a person will not bend or be molded by truth, for they know everything. One must constantly be open to God’s truth, humbly measure self by the truth and faithfully follow the truth wherever it leads. The virtue of conviction is but sinful stubbornness when one no longer listens to the truth. May we grow spiritually and avoid the factious spirit!