

# Glad Tidings

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

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## A Godly Filter

(Jerry Fite)

Peter writes, “*Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded...*” (1 Peter 3:8). We are commanded to “*keep the unity*” that has been given us in Christ (Ephesians 4:3). A unity exists based upon “one faith”, but maintaining or keeping it demands controlling our words and deeds. Peter offers us a mental filter through which our imminent deeds and expressive words should first pass if unity in Christ is to continue.

We are to be “*likeminded*”. This is fine when we are all on the same page, but when we have different viewpoints regarding Scripture, what then? How should we react to one another when we hold contradictory beliefs, all claiming to be of the “one faith”? A solution is ahead of us because we are “single-minded”, knowing that two contradictory viewpoints cannot both be correct in the same context. We are willing to examine the respective viewpoints in light of our united belief in the harmony of truth. We may at times disagree, but our “like-mindedness” draws us to together for a rigorous exercise in determining the truth of the one faith.

An even deeper mind set is needed in maintaining unity. This is how we think of ourselves. In the deep recesses of our mind we are to be “*humbleminded*”. We are humble enough in our thinking to consider the views of others, even placing their thought processes above our own (Philippians 2:3-4). How you go about “*bringing up your children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4), may be different from your fellow brethren in the Lord. Before we exalt our way above others, and utter words of criticism, a humble mind demands you ask yourself, “*Is what I am about to say helpful for them, or is it really about me seeking ‘vain glory’*”? Is what I am about to say really necessary, or is it motivated by pride? A humble mind in a reflective moment may avoid hurtful words creating needless faction.

What may also help us in interacting with others constructively is “*compassion*”. Mentally going to the side of one, and “being touched with the feeling of their infirmities” is Christ-like (Hebrews 4:15). Knowing Christ cares enough to be touched with our struggles is comforting. Compassion for another’s struggle and sympathy with another’s plight is godly comfort we offer each

other in Christ. Reproving and rebuking another’s conduct will be necessary in teaching the truth of the Gospel. But compassion, which considers the person did not have godly instruction in the home, has not been a Christian very long, or lacks experience in the Word may cause the reproof to be received as one carrying for one’s spiritual success, instead of sentencing one to spiritual failure.

One of the closest ties we have in life is with fellow family members. The same is true in God’s spiritual family. We are to be “*loving as brethren*”. Our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ is a genuine, sincere love that is affectionate and kind (1 Peter 1:22, 2 Peter 1:7, Romans 12:10). Brothers and sisters in the same family will be longsuffering with each other, and never give up on one another. A *tender heart* will filter words and deeds, helping to avoid hurt feelings. But, when hurt feelings inadvertently arise, family members can talk it out and solve issues. A closeness in Christ walks hand in hand with tender words and kind deeds.

The next time you interact with your brethren, use this helpful godly filter before you speak or act.