

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Subjecting Yourself

By Micky Galloway

Ephesians 5:21 says, “... *submitting to one another in the fear of God.*” The more I study, the more I am impressed with the many passages that govern the relationships we have toward one another. This passage teaches that we are to “submit or subject ourselves” to one another, but what does this mean?

The original word *hupotasso* (hoop-ot-as'-so) means “to subordinate; reflexively, to obey: be under obedience (obedient), put under, subdue unto, (be, make) subject (to, unto), be (put) in subjection (to, under), submit self unto” (Biblesoft’s New Exhaustive Strong’s Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994). Robertson’s Word Pictures tells us that the word is an old military figure to line up under (Colossians 3:18). (Biblesoft & Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press). It means “to arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection” (from Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by Biblesoft).

This subjection is obviously something that is self-imposed not forced. This self-imposed subjection to one another is what makes God’s plan in the local church work. A look at Ephesians 5-6 makes this very clear. Husbands are not to force their wives into subjection; that is voluntary on the part of the wife. It is a command to wives, not husbands. Masters are not to put their servants in subjection, but servants are to choose to submit to their masters. Parents and children may seem to be the only exception as 1 Timothy 3:4 tells fathers that they are to “*have their children in subjection.*” However, even in this, a parent is to teach his child a voluntary submission, not a submission that is totally dependent on parental punishment. No two people could work together for long without this key ingredient.

In the same way, the work that is done in a local church and the submission that is given one to the other is completely voluntary. We are to encourage one another, we are to provoke to love and good works, but we cannot dominate, force, manipulate, or coerce.

We must remember that God does not accept worship that is forced! Isaiah indicated it was better for them to stop bringing their sacrifices because they were not motivated by the right reasons. “*Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? says the Lord. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me; the New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me; I am weary of bearing them*” (Isa. 1:10-14). Likewise Malachi said, “*Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, so that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, nor will I accept an offering from your hands*” (Mal. 1:7-10).

Have we become guilty of trying to force uncommitted brethren to render service to God? We are to teach and encourage, but to force the submission that is to be voluntary simply will not work.

Even Jesus, when He realized that Judas had made up his mind to betray Him, said, “*What you do, do quickly*” (John 13:27). Remember, Jesus did more with a few committed fishermen than he did with 5000 uncommitted fish eaters (John 6).

Let us be reminded that there is a difference between those who are weak and those who are uncommitted. The

apostle Paul taught in Romans 15:1-2, ***“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.”*** ***“Weak”*** refers to one who is powerless or without strength. Thayer says this is used, “figuratively, of Christians whose faith is not yet quite firm” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft). Therefore, ***“weak”*** does not sufficiently describe someone who is not committed to keeping the Lord’s commands first in his life.

God shows the principle that when a man is faithful in small things, he will be faithful in the more important or weightier things (Matt. 25:23; Luke 16:11; 1 Tim. 3:5). Thus, a person who is unreliable in the small things, such as assembling, is usually unreliable in the larger things such as: (1) Teaching, edifying, and admonishing other Christians; (2) Provoking one another to love and good works; (3) Study or prayer; participation in classes; (4) Spiritual growth or; (5) ***“submitting to one another in the fear of God.”***

Let us realize that ***“subjection”*** is the glue that holds us together. We have made an agreement to do these things together. This is voluntary. No one is forcing you to do so. Let us then fulfill our commitment to God and one another. If you need encouragement, instruction, or help – we are here to help. But if you are unwilling, you become a hindrance to the cause of Christ. Jesus said, ***“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad”*** (Matt. 12:30). ■



Entangled?

By Bill Pierce

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim. 2:4). These words were written to a young evangelist, Timothy, who, as a Gospel preacher, was not to lose sight of work through entanglement in the affairs of this life. The word “tangle” means “to involve so as to hamper, obstruct...to involve as in a mesh; ensnare” (Webster). To be entangled implies a state of being hindered or hampered in one’s faithfulness to Christ – to be confused as to what is to be first in our life as a Christian.

That which is forbidden is not the ***“affairs of this life.”*** Paul often worked when it was necessary to support himself in preaching the Gospel and certainly it is right for a Christian to conduct a business to support himself and his family. But that which is forbidden is the “entanglement” – to allow the affairs of this life to ensnare us, to hinder us in our reaching the goal of eternal life – becoming too involved with our work and pleasure that we fail to be faithful as a Christian. This admonition is serious and should be considered prayerfully by all of us. If we are to be successful in our fight for truth, we will not allow ourselves to become entangled with this life and we will follow the rules, or ***“strive lawfully”*** (2 Tim. 2:5).

How can I know if I am entangled or becoming that way? I am entangled when:

1. I allow my work to keep me from rendering full service to Christ (Mt. 6:33).
2. I allow my friends and relatives to keep me from services or from doing the will of Christ daily (Mt. 10:37).
3. I don’t have time, because of the affairs of this life to pray, read the Bible, visit the sick, and teach others.
4. I enter into any relationship, whether marriage, business or pleasure that will prevent me from living as a Christian.

Love for this world will alienate us from God. (1 John 2:15-17; Jas. 4:4), it will cause us to forsake truth (2 Tim. 4:10), and it will dull our desire for spiritual things (Col. 3:1-4).

Are you entangled? ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodicachurchofchrist.com — Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com — Phone: 209-365-9250