

KEEP THY HEART

A Bible-Based Devotional

Turn to: **Philippians 2:1-11**
"Prove it!"

Perhaps you've heard an unsaved person mocking the church as being "full of hypocrites." While it is true that many in the church are unsaved (and the Bible is very open about that, see Matthew 7:21), this is really just an excuse; by their own admission, such hypocrites do *not* define true Christianity. But how do we live in such a way that our authentic Christianity is undeniable (Titus 2:8)? I believe that in this passage, we see five ways we can "prove" it to the world.

1: Be in step with each other (v1-2).

First, we can demonstrate true Christianity by being on the same page regarding Jesus and His Word. **Consolation in Christ** could be likened to saying, "Everything will be okay; Jesus is here for you"; **comfort of love**, like saying, "We're here for you too"; **fellowship of the Spirit**, like saying, "Let's get a cup of coffee together"; and all of this is fueled by **bowels and mercies**—that deep concern you have in your heart for others, the kind that makes you yearn to see them happy. Paul asks, "**If there be therefore**"; i.e., do they exist? If you have been saved, then they do; and so Paul says, in a sense, "Prove it!" Boldly show these things to a dying world.

(v2) When a church is loving and unified, it is such a relief and **joy** to good leadership. And interestingly, joy can be at different "stages," ending up as **fulfilled** or **full** (John 15:11). Christian unity is described in four ways: **likeminded**, which means that our minds work the same, that we approach problems in a biblical mindset; **having the same love**; perhaps you've meet someone who shares your favorite ice cream. How much better to meet someone who shares your same best Friend! **Being of one accord** means that our doctrines are basically the same, and **of one mind** means, I believe, that we have the same resolve. Now *that's* the type of unity in Jesus Christ for

which we should strive! There are lots of unbiblical calls to unity in the church today, asking us to stop making a big deal about important doctrines and Christian living and just get along. But biblical Christian unity is found only around Jesus Christ and His truth, not around the "least common denominator" of compromise.

2: Be humble (v3). Second, we should prove our Christianity to the world by being humble. It's easy to do things **through strife**, having a spirit of, "I can do better than that," or, "What does he think he's doing?" I like it how Paul calls it **vainglory**; does it *really* matter what other people think? Will they remember who was most talented, most rich, or most popular a hundred years from now? Not really; so let's have **lowliness of mind** rather than proud eyes (Proverbs 30:13). And what an amazing attribute to **esteem other better than ourselves**; can you imagine people actually saying, "You know, Sister So-And-So would really do a much better job than I would at this," or, "Brother So-And-So has a tough job." Having that sort of gentle spirit, instead of always thinking of *ourselves* as the best at everything, is a real asset.

3: Be compassionate (v4). Third, to prove our Christianity to the world, we should look out for each other. Today, big cities typically lack this; they have lots of people and lots of loneliness. God wants us to think not just about ourselves, but **also on the things of others**; to look out for the *other* kid that has nothing to eat at recess; to look out for your neighbor's dog that has escaped the yard; to make sure the sweet but quiet person in the group isn't abandoned in conversation. Make a conscious effort to notice how others are hurting. A church that claims to follow Jesus should never be a lonely, uncompassionate place.

4: Be a servant (v5-8). Fourth, to prove our Christianity to the world, we should have a servant spirit. A soldier who has a **mind** to fight will carry himself a certain way, with a certain stride and resolution. Likewise, those who have the same mind **which was also in Christ Jesus** will carry themselves a certain way, with humility, willing to be a servant.

(v6) Jesus Christ was **in the form of God**—i.e., God in a human body; and so He was

equal with God. He's not **robbing** Him of any glory by receiving worship or prayers, since He is God.

(v7) So if *anyone* had the right to be proud, it was Jesus Christ; yet isn't it amazing that He was humble (Matthew 11:29)? Who do we think we are to have a proud spirit? Jesus **made Himself of no reputation**—He wasn't forced to die for us; He **took upon him the form of a servant**, as if grabbing a dish towel, showing that He was ready to serve. God made man in His image, man marred it, then Jesus **was made in the likeness of man**, quite a humbling experience.

(v8) Jesus' humility was real; it wasn't like a big company executive at a groundbreaking ceremony, with a clean pressed suit, a hardhat, and a shiny new shovel, nudging it into the soil for a good photo. Jesus didn't simply "grab the shovel," so to speak; but He actually put in sweat and tears and blood to serve us. And it's one thing to **be obedient** to hard work; yet it's another thing to be obedient **unto death**—what servant would die for his cause? And His wasn't just any death, but it was **even the death of the cross**, suffering more than any person who has ever lived. Yet sadly, sometimes we complain about obeying God in much lesser things.

5: Exalt the name of Jesus (v9-11).

Lastly, to demonstrate our Christianity, we should exalt the name of Jesus Christ. Lots of people are comfortable talking about "God" generically; yet they are nervous if you mention Jesus Christ. Jesus modeled for us the principle that "before honor is humility" (Proverbs 15:33); even He did not exalt Himself but waited for **God** the Father to do so. And because of His humility on the cross, His name will be honored **above every name**; more than any famous person now living; more than saints like Moses or Abraham or Paul; more than world-recognized leaders and dictators throughout the centuries ever were.

(v10) **Every knee**, one day, will bow, not at the name of any false god or dead world leader or any angel; but **at the name of Jesus**; **things in heaven**, like Christians and angels, will joyfully bow; **things in earth**, everything in nature, from animals (Luke 19:30) to wind and sea (Matthew 8:27), to the stars and

lightning (Job 38:35, Psalm 147:4), obey Jesus implicitly. And yes, even **things under the earth**, kept in hell until this day of judgment before being cast into the lake of fire, will also bow their knees in humiliation and terror at the awesome power of Jesus Christ, no matter what they say today.

(v11) And they won't just bow; but **every tongue should confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord. To "confess" means they will admit it willingly, not with a gun to their head making them say particular words; it will be genuine, though from wicked hearts. I read about a formerly arrogant Nazi, Adolf Eichmann, who once said he would "leap laughing into the grave" because of all the Jews he had killed. He was captured about 15 years after the war, and during all that time of running and hiding, his emotions had broken down significantly. When he was captured by the Israelis, he ended up confessing his name and position within Nazi Germany. How much more, I imagine, will the most arrogant and vile men today break down before, and on, judgment day. Specifically, they will confess **that Jesus Christ is Lord**. I believe they will still hate Him as much as ever, but His lordship will be painfully undeniable at this point. And all of this will be **to the glory of God the Father**, as He deals with all the blasphemies throughout history against His Son and His glory. Never be ashamed of the name of Jesus, but exalt it here on earth.

In conclusion, from this passage, we can prove our faith in five ways. We can (1) Walk in unity with other godly Christians, having a sacrificial love for each other that puzzles and convicts the world. We can (2) Be humble; the rest of the world lives and fights for power and glory, but we are different. We can (3) Be compassionate, actively looking for ways to help and encourage other people who need it. We can (4) Be a servant, following the example of Jesus Christ by laying down our lives for each other (1 John 3:16). And finally, we can (5) Exalt the name of Jesus here and now; it is such a powerful, weighty name to which *everyone* will bow and confess one day. Doing these things will help us prove to the world the convicting power of authentic Christianity.