

# Choose the Low Road

by K.P. Yohannan

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*The sermon teaches that true unity in the Body of Christ is achieved through humility and love.*

**Scripture:** Philippians 2:1

**Topics:** "Unity in the Body of Christ", "Humility"

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## Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the vital connection between humility and unity in the Body of Christ, drawing from Philippians 2:1-4. He shares personal experiences of overcoming pride and the importance of submitting to one another in love, illustrating that true love and service stem from humility. Yohannan highlights that without humility, unity cannot exist, and he encourages believers to actively seek opportunities to serve and honor others. He reflects on the transformative power of humility in relationships and the necessity of addressing conflicts with love and grace. Ultimately, he calls for a community of believers willing to bend and submit to one another to experience God's blessings.

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## Transcript

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind. Let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-4). The essence of this Scripture is that unity and humility work hand in hand.

Unity comes from love, love comes from humility, and humility comes by submitting to one another. When there is no humility, there is no unity. Mother Teresa once said, "Humility is the mother of all virtues. It is in being humble that our love becomes real, devoted and ardent. If you are humble nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know what you are."<sup>1</sup> She also said, "To love and to be loved, we must know our brothers and sisters. For knowledge always leads to love and love in action is service.

Our work is only the expression of the love we have for God."<sup>2</sup> Romans 12:10 pleads with us to "be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another." I used to be a fighter. I fought for my doctrines. I fought for my way of ministry. I must have been one of the most difficult human beings to live or work with. I won every argument and always got things to go the way I wanted them to. But in reality, every argument I won I really lost because I lost the people--I alienated the Body of Christ around me.

Every time I won, I hurt my brothers and sisters, as well as God, because I would not choose to do things His way--the way of love and humility. But praise God that He didn't give up on me. Slowly I began to understand the importance of submitting to my brothers and to my sisters, truly loving them. Willing to Bend I used to be absolutely radical about my theological doctrines. Even now, there is a whole theological world that fights over so many different points of view on a variety of subjects.

Volumes are written containing thousands of pages debating these different opinions. Yet the root of all these arguments and debates is really hardness of heart and a lack of love. Any doctrine or form of "Christianity" that is not spoken and upheld in love, that induces people to continually fight for their side, creates disunity and rips the Body of Christ apart. When we handle our pain, our rights, our gifts or our talents without love, we are walking on dangerous ground.

It does not matter how right we may be in standing for truth--if what we say is not done in the love and humility of Christ, disunity will result. But there is joy and life in giving in to the ways of God and being broken and humbled. A few years ago I attended a pastors conference in California. I was scheduled to share on missions along with a couple other speakers from across the United States. To be honest, I didn't like one of the other plenary speakers at this missions conference.

This man had written some articles that I thought were really destructive to the work of God. As I remembered the things he wrote, I began to get very upset over the whole situation. I couldn't believe he was invited to the conference to speak on missions. As I started to speak before the assembly full of people, I made an unkind, unloving comment about him. I considered myself justified in what I said because I thought the damage he did to the kingdom's work was great. Directly from this missions conference, I flew to India.

While I was there, the Lord began to speak to my heart and show me how I had spoken wrongly. As soon as I came back to the GFA office in the United States, I knew what I needed to do. I had to call and ask forgiveness from the man who invited me to speak at that conference. But what I said was not just a private thing--it was public, involving many people. So when I called him, I said, "Would you please do me a favor? Next time you write to all of the pastors who attended that conference, would you please tell them I ask their forgiveness for having made that statement?"

It was not in the Spirit of love or the Spirit of Christ that I spoke it, and I am sorry." Do you think this was easy for me to do? Not at all! Each one of us has our pride, our knowledge and our own way we think is right. But what we know will never justify us saying anything rude or unkind. Remember the famous chapter in 1 Corinthians that says, Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). The beauty of this whole incident is that when I humbled myself and sought forgiveness, this man that I had spoken against responded back to me. He had received the letter that was sent to all who attended the conference and read of my asking forgiveness. He called me and thanked me for my humility, saying, "Brother K.P., no wonder God is using you so much.

No wonder God's grace is upon your life." And I said, "Thank you for saying that to me." God knows how hard it was for me to humble myself and ask for forgiveness. But He is faithful to give us the grace and

strength to submit to others and admit when we are wrong. But this doesn't mean we must always say, "Yes, yes" to everything. Maybe we know that someone's actions or beliefs are wrong or the way we've been treated is not right. We don't just pretend these things are okay for the sake of keeping the peace.

Instead, what we need to do is commit these situations to God and let it go into His hands, praying for our brother or sister, asking God to give us wisdom and to work things out His way. William Barclay once said, "In our dealings with men, however unkind and hurting they are, we must exercise the same patience as God exercises with us. It is simple truth that such patience is not the sign of weakness but the sign of strength; it is not defeatism, but rather the only way to victory."<sup>3</sup> In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul describes a situation of a man living in blatant, unconfessed sin.

It took great love for Paul to put this man out of the church. Maybe it sounds horrible and unkind, but Paul did it with a firm, tough love. And look at the result. In 2 Corinthians 2, that man was restored to fellowship again. This kind of love--God's kind of love--always brings unity to the Body of Christ. It is a tough yet humble love that gives in but doesn't give up. Unity in Action If we really desire to be like Jesus and to walk in love and power as He did, we must humble ourselves.

We cannot just underline Scriptures on humility in our Bibles and never implement them into our lives. Scripture is practical, and we must live it out to experience its transforming power in our lives and relationships. We have to be willing to bend and break and live a life of "not [thinking] of [ourselves] more highly than [we] ought to think" (Romans 12:3). We have to "honor [and give] preference to one another" in real ways, everyday (see Romans 12:10). Because Scripture tells us to humble ourselves (see James 4:10), let us look for ways to do just that.

Let us seize the opportunities God puts before us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to consider them better than ourselves. Be sensitive to other's needs, and when you are wrong, say so. "I am sorry for saying that. I didn't know it would hurt you. I didn't mean it that way." Often I am not sensitive enough to even know when I am being insensitive! Let us all pray, "Lord, make me more sensitive to my brothers and sisters." This is what I believe the Lord desires for each and every person who confesses His name, whether in full-time ministry or not.

God is looking for lowly hearts that are ready to be filled with His love and power. He is looking for a Body ready to be broken for the millions who are spiritually starving because they do not know Jesus. Only to the measure that we are willing to bend and submit to one another will we experience the unity and love that Christ can bind us together with. And it is the people who dwell in unity on which He said He would command His blessing (see Psalm 133).

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