

Paul's Letter to the Romans:



THE PINNACLE OF
CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

The Basis For How We Live...

Romans 12:1

^{NIV} **Romans 12:1**...Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.

“Why do you live the way you live?”

It's a wonderful question don't you think? It sort of cuts through the crud and gets straight to the heart of Christian living and causes us to search our hearts and minds for the right words or the right phrase or even the right idea to express our underlying spiritual motivation for why we do what we do or why we think what we think...or why we live the way we live.

Now it seems to me that the answer to why we live the way we live ought to be different, a lot different, for a Christian than it ought to be for a regular old run of the mill pagan.

I mean, if you ask a regular old run of the mill pagan, **“Why do you live the way you live?”** I think you might expect their answer to be something like this, **“I live the way I live for the pleasure it gives me?”**

Now there is an element of that...even when it is stated that way, that I can understand. I personally believe God has intended life to be enjoyable. If He hadn't intended us to enjoy life there wouldn't be any such thing as laughter. There wouldn't be any such thing as seasons of plenty or going babies or kittens or puppies. There would be no such thing as good food or good friends. But those things do exist and they exist in abundance and I think they are the sign of God's intention that His creatures ought to enjoy His gifts and bounty. I think Calvin is right when he says that one of the evidences that God intended us to enjoy life is trees and flowers come in so many different colors and that so many of them are so fragrant.¹

But you know there are a lot of people out there who approach life as avowed hedonists...that is they approach life in an endless, mindless pursuit of pleasure. They treat life like it is a roller coaster ride that constantly needs to be ratcheted up to go faster or higher or be scarier than it was yesterday to have any value.

Now the strange thing about the pursuit of pleasure is that it comes in so many different colors and forms and we do not all pursue pleasure the same way. If you happened to be in the locker room out at the ballpark and asked, "**How do you pursue pleasure?**" I suspect that you might get an answer that goes something like this, "**I pursue pleasure by pursuing fame**" or "**I pursue pleasure by pursuing money or the things money can buy?**"

And you know there is an element of that that I understand. I think it is a wonderful ambition to desire to provide for one's family and I certainly would never begrudge any person's desire to be distinguished by being accomplished or by pursuing excellence. But you know and I know that the relentless pursuit

of wealth or fame is like a raging furnace that tends to burn away a person's modesty, a person's inhibitions, a person's self-restraint. You and I both know people who have jettisoned their reputation and dignity for a bit of money or a bit of notoriety.

I still stand amazed at some of these reality shows where women will sacrifice both their modesty and their dignity for the chance to cash in on a rich, young, eligible bachelor. But I have seen the same kind of thing in the business world where a good person gets enamored by the glaring spotlight of fame and fortune and finds it necessary to compromise their character or their convictions for the sake of a few bucks or for the sake of a title. God help the man or woman who is so ambitious that they lose sight of their moral compass and are unable to say no or to exercise moral restraint of any kind.

Sometimes, of course, the pursuit of pleasure can become a seedy thing.

If you were to ask any of the men frequenting the strip clubs out there on the line between Arlington and Grand Prairie, **"How do you pursue pleasure?"** I expect their answer, if you could get them to come out of the shadows and answer, might be something like, **"I pursue pleasure in all things erotic."** And you know when you hear someone say something like that it makes your heart ache for them because you know they have misidentified the desire for love and belonging with a desire for the erotic and that no amount of the erotic will ever be adequate to satisfy their emptiness.

Sometimes I marvel at just how much wreckage a person can endure in their life, before they realize that such things, such pursuits are incapable of providing any

sort of meaningful long-term sustenance. I particularly love that line from R.G Lee's sermon *Payday Someday* where he say the **"the devil's pearls are always paste pearls."**²

But, of course, we are not caught in any of those things this morning. We are not mindlessly pursuing pleasure or wealth or fame or eroticism. We are in the sanctuary of a beautiful new facility pursuing our own spiritual sanctification and yet because that is so we find ourselves having to answer the exact same question. In fact, the question of why we live the way we live is even more important for us to answer well than it is for those pursuing a life of pleasure through fame or wealth or the erotic.

I mean, think about it. Isn't it even more important for the people of God, people who identify themselves as Christians, to know why they live the way they do than it is for someone who claims to be a pagan? It seems to me that if the people of God do not know why they live the way they do then there is little or no hope that the unconverted will ever see their lives or their way of living as something to be emulated or desired. Remember the early Christians in the Book of Acts were not called **"the people of the way"** for nothing.

Of course, I am taking it for granted that your life, as a Christian, is actually, really and truly different than the life of the non-Christians you know. I am taking it for granted that you care about things and do things that your non-Christian friends don't and that they care about things you hate. But because I believe that is true let me ask you again, **"Why do you live the way you live?"**

Now before you answer that question let me add one other thought. How you answer that question goes along way toward explaining how you understand your salvation. How you answer that question depends, in a large degree, on what you think Christ has actually accomplished on your behalf. Here's what I mean when I say that.

If I were to say to you, **"I live my life the way I do because I don't want God to be angry with me"** I think you might fairly conclude that I think of God as a frowning, vindictive judge sitting in heaven waiting to hammer me when I disobey Him. I think you might conclude fairly that I think of Christ's saving work as simply the first step in the long drawn out process of me working my way to heaven. I think you might rightly conclude that I think I need to complete what Christ started and that whether or not I am able to pull off my salvation depends entirely on me and my desire and ability to stay at the stuff.

Now, I am not trying to minimize God's unsearchable holiness. I know that sinful behavior on my part or anyone else's part is an affront to holiness but I also know that Christ has atoned for my sins and that He has done that not in part but the whole and that His work is a completed work and since that is true I am no longer God's enemy but God's adopted child and that what God has begun in me He will, in fact, finish up in the day of Christ Jesus.

And if that is true doesn't that mean that God is not out to hurt me but rather that He has my best interest at heart, a point He demonstrated in spades by sending Christ into the world to redeem me from my sin, and that because that is true He is going to actively engage Himself in my ongoing growth and sanctification.

Now I bring all that up because this morning we are going to see the Apostle Paul take up that question, the question of **“Why we live the way we live?”** He does that in the first two verses of Romans chapter 12.

But before we look at what he says about that I thought I might take a minute or two and review what we have learned thus far in Romans...I am doing that because we have had a bit of a break since our last lesson together. In fact, our last lesson together took place some six or even months ago, so unless I am just a much better teacher than I think I am I probably ought to remind you of what we learned in the first portion of our study.

What we learned in our study of Romans 1-11 was that Paul wrote his Letter to the Romans more or less to introduce himself. You see Paul had never actually been to Rome. He had never been to Rome but he knew about the church in Rome. Probably he knew about it through his old friends Priscilla and Aquila, with whom he had ministered in Corinth. And while Paul didn't normally make it a practice to labor in churches that other men had started he certainly would have understood the significance of Rome as the capital of the empire and so he made up his mind that he wanted to visit the church at Rome as he passed through on his way west to Spain.

So he wrote the Romans a letter to introduce his ministry and the content of his gospel to them and what a letter it was.

I think it is the single most important letter ever written in the history of the world.

You see, Paul wrote the Letter to the Romans as an introduction to the gospel he preached. This is what I mean by that. He wanted them to understand what he preached whenever he planted a church in a new area. Now because that was Paul's intent he refused let himself become distracted into giving lots of personal details. As a matter of fact, he didn't really tell the Romans any personal stuff at all. He didn't tell them how tall he was or what color his hair was or what his stylistic distinctives were. No, instead of talking about how to recognize him or what distinguished his ministry from everyone else's he simply explained to them the content of his gospel. Think of that, he didn't spend any time talking about how they might recognize him or his work; instead, he spent his time talking about how they might recognize the gospel.

I love that. In fact, I think there is a wonderful lesson there for missionaries. I care about geographic stuff but not very much. If I want to know geography, I will go to the National Geographic web page. What I want to know from our missionaries is this, **“What does your gospel look like? Are you taking any good news with you where ever you are going? Does your gospel look like the gospel of the Lord Jesus and Paul and the great missionaries of past?”**

That's what I want to know.

And that's exactly how Paul started off with the Romans. He reminded them that he was a new apostle but that he wasn't really preaching a new gospel. Instead, he told them he was preaching the same old gospel as that proclaimed by the prophets of old. Of course, after he made that point clear, he turned to explain why the gospel was needed in the first place. He did that by describing

mankind's awful condition under sin. You will remember, I hope, how in chapters one through three he explained that both Jews and Gentiles alike were under the penalty of sin...that both Jews and Gentiles were pent up under the abiding wrath of God and that that was so because **"all mankind (both Jew and Gentile) had sinned in Adam"** and because every single person (both Jew and Gentile) had sinned individually by breaking the law of God written both on tablets of stone and in their consciences.

You will remember, no doubt, the awfulness of Paul's devastating conclusion in Romans 3:19.

^{NIV} **Romans 3:19**... Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Of course, it was at that point...at the point where the whole world stands condemned that Paul could begin to talk about the good news of the gospel. First, he had to explain how awful the bondage of sin was and then...and only then could he begin to explain the wonderful redemption Christ had obtained for His people.

That's what Paul does in Romans 3:21.

^{NIV} **Romans 3:21**...But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

And then through the rest of Romans chapters 4-11, Paul puts the wonderful jewel of justification by faith on display. In fact, I think it is fair to say that Paul

shows the Romans the doctrine of justification under a magnifying glass, turning it first this way and then way pondering with them and for them its extraordinary value and worth...almost like a bride adoring her wedding ring...studying it from every angle...admiring each sparkle and each gleaming facet.

Now in doing that, Paul explains that the justification available by faith was just like the justification that Abraham knew and experienced...that is, Christ's righteousness was imputed to the Romans through faith just as it was to Abraham. Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. They believed God and it too was reckoned as righteousness.

And then Paul explained how that being justified the Romans were no longer under God's wrath. He explained how Christ's borrowed righteousness covered over their sin and caused them to be at peace with God. He explained how they were to reckon themselves to be dead to sin and how that their struggle with remaining sin was the same for every other every believer and how they as redeemed sinners were able to come to view the law of God as good and holy even though they struggled with fulfilling its commands. He then described how the abiding presence of the Spirit of God interceded on their behalf and how they were now viewed as the wonderful adopted children of God in Christ. And then, Paul began to answer their questions about the Jewish people. He explained how it was that most of Israel refused to believe the gospel and how the consequences of their unbelief ought to prevent the Romans as Gentiles from being puffed up or thinking too highly of themselves.

It was only then, starting in Romans 12:1, that Paul finally started to talk about how the Romans ought to live.

I really wish you would let the reality of that sink in.

You see, the Letter to the Romans contains 7,111 words in Greek and it is not until Paul gets to the word number 5, 191 that he begins to talk about how the Romans needed to live.

Or to say it another way, Paul took the first 74% of the Letter to the Romans to explain to the Romans what God had done for them. Only the last 26% of his letter is concerned with their ethics or behavior.

Or to say it one other way, three fourths of Paul's message to the Romans was theological and only a fourth of it was ethical.

Or to say it one other way, theology may be more practical than what we normally think is practical.

Now I don't know about you but that tells me that Paul believed that the best way to get the Romans to live a certain way was to open their eyes to the wonder of what God had already accomplished on their behalf in Christ. In other words, Paul believed that Christians are best motivated to live a certain way on the basis of what God has already done and not because they are afraid God is going to hammer them in their disobedience.

Another way to say that is to say that Paul believed the best way to get the Romans to live a certain way was to teach them theology, to teach them wonders of their salvation in Christ.

Now this pattern of teaching theology first and then following with implications for ethics or behavior is often referred to as the **“indicative and the imperative.”** The **“indicative”** refers to what is or what has happened, while the **“imperative”** refers to the **“what ought to follow based on what has happened.”**

You can see this pattern of **“indicative”** and **“imperative”** in almost all of the epistles.

For example, in Ephesians chapters 1-3, Paul describes how Jews and Gentiles have been formed together **“in Christ”** to make one new united people of God. He explains how there is no inferior status...how every person in the Body of Christ is a holy stone being incorporated into the living temple of God. That’s the **“what is.”** Then in Ephesians 4-6, Paul explains what he wants the Ephesians to do in light of their new position. He states it like this.

^{NIV} **Ephesians 4:1**...As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

And as Paul fleshes out his expectations, he explains that he wants men to love their wives as Christ has loved the church. He explains he wants women to submit to their husbands as the church does to Christ and he wants children to obey their parents, slaves to obey their masters and so on. Now the basis for all

that ethical behavior is **“who they are in this wonderful new society”**. So, Paul has no hesitation in saying this is **“what ought to be”** based on **“what is”**.

That’s what I mean when I say **“indicative”** and **“imperative”**.

But in case that’s not clear let me give you a simple example to illustrate what I mean. Whenever I used to visit my mom and dad on the farm, my mom would always say something like, **“I have cooked all the things you like. Your dad went out to the field and picked corn on the cob and I picked some beans and made some cornbread and I even made some blackberry cobbler.”**

Now when she told me all those things, she wasn’t asking me to do anything. She was simply informing me about what had been done. She was giving me the facts, the **“indicative.”** But when she was through giving me the facts, she felt somehow...that that gave her the right to give me a command. And her command was always the same and always simple, **“Come and eat.”** Now I have to tell you when it comes to obeying my mother I have always been a very compliant child.

Her command was an imperative and I would have followed her command **“to come and eat”** even without receiving the **“indicative”**. But when she told me how much work she had put into making all my favorite dishes I felt a wonderful sense of duty to obey and as I ate first then dish and then that one, I thought to myself, **“You know my mother loves me...she really, really loves me.”**

Now I bring that up because Paul does almost the exact same thing in Romans 12:1-2 when he toggles between the **“indicative”** and the **“imperative.”** You see Romans 1-11 form the **“indicative”** in Paul’s Letter to the Romans and chapters 12-16 form the **“imperative.”**

Chapters 1-11 explain what God has done for us.

Chapters 12-16 explain what God wants us to do in light of what He has done.

And now that have said all that I have said, you ought to know the answer to the question, **“Why do you live the way you live?”**

The answer to that question is, **“I live the way I live because I am so grateful for what God has done for me in Christ.”**

You see that’s Paul underlying argument in Romans 12:1-2 Look at just the first portion of Romans 12:1.

^{NIV} **Romans 12:1**...Therefore, I urge³ you, brothers, in view of God's mercy...

You see whatever Paul is about to ask the Romans to do (perhaps, it would be better to say command) is not going to be based upon something they hope God will do. No, it is based upon something God has already done. It is to be based upon something they have already seen and experienced, it is based upon God’s mercy.

Now I want to talk for a minute about what Paul means by God’s mercy but before I do that I want to spend just a minute and talk about the significance of

the word **“therefore”**. It is really is an important word for anyone reading or studying the Bible and there is an old saying, somewhat overworked but still true, that whenever you see the word **“therefore”** you ought always to ask what it is **“there for”**. You see whenever you see the word **“therefore”** you ought to expect that some wonderful conclusion is being drawn based on whatever has gone before and that the relationship between the tow things being talked about is very important.

Take for example this phrase from 1 Corinthians 4:16.

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 4:16**...Therefore I urge you to imitate me.

Now it's an imperative, plain and simple. It uses the word **“therefore”** so it follows some wonderful bit of truth that will give us a real measure of insight into how Paul viewed the Corinthians. So I tried to guess what the verse before it was going to say and you know what I figured it would say? I figured it would say something like this, **“Look I am an apostle. I have suffered a lot for Jesus so I know a lot about righteousness and stuff... Therefore I urge you to imitate me.”**

But you know what. That's not even close. No what he says is this:

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 4:15**...Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. ¹⁶ Therefore I urge you to imitate me.

You see the connection is with Paul's heart. He's not going to argue here that he has apostolic authority over the Corinthians. No, he's going to argue that he loves them like they were his kids and because he wants what is best for them he

wants them to imitate his life. You see there is a lot of difference in saying, **“Do this because I said”** and **“Do this because I love you as my child.”**

And it is the same kind of thing in 2 Corinthians 12:9. Don't turn to it just listen.

^{NIV} **2 Corinthians 12:9**...Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses...

Now if you do the same thing I did you might expect that Paul is going to say something like, **“People love humility and because they love humility I will therefore boast in my weaknesses...”** But that's not what preceded the **“therefore”** at all. No, this is what it says.

^{NIV} **2 Corinthians 12:9**...But he said to me, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”** Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Do you see his point? Paul is not concerned with himself at all. As far as Paul is concerned...the manifestation of Christ's power and the resultant honor Christ receives in manifesting His power is plenty good enough reason to rejoice in his own weakness. Christ's power is demonstrated in his weakness and he is willing to be the weakest of all vessels for that to happen.

That is why whenever you see the word **“therefore”** you should special attention to both what follows and what went before. The **“therefore”** connects two important ideas.

Now getting back to our verse, you can see that Paul's argument is going to go like this, **“Because God has shown you mercy, I can urge you to live a certain way and to do certain things...”**

Now the question is, what does Paul mean when he talks about **“mercy”**? There are some that seem to think Paul is only talking about whatever was contained in chapters 9-11. They do that because the word **“mercy”** is used some six times in chapters 9-11. It is used for example in:

^{NIV} **Romans 9:15**...For he says to Moses, **“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”**

^{NIV} **Romans 9:18**...Therefore God has **mercy** on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

^{NIV} **Romans 11:30**...Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received **mercy** as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's **mercy** to you. ³² For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have **mercy** on them all.

Now those that hold that Paul is talking specifically about the **“mercies”** contained in chapters 9-11, think that Paul's stress is on the inclusion of the Gentiles into people of God. And if that were true then Romans would read a lot and sound a lot like Ephesians. But the truth is the words **“mercy”** in 12:1 is a different word than the word used in chapters 9-11 and while Paul may have used a different word just to avoid repetition, I think it means that the **“mercies”** he is referring to are all of the mercies demonstrated in the first eleven chapters. And what are those mercies? Here are a few:

- ...the revelation of the gospel through His holy prophets
- ...the incarnation of the Son of God
- ...the giving of the law to push men toward the gospel
- ...justification through faith apart from the law
- ...the redeeming work of Christ purchasing us from the bondage of our sin

- ...the imputation of Christ's righteousness
- ...peace with God
- ...future hope of glory
- ...the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit
- ...deliverance from God's wrath
- ...reconciliation to the Father
- ...eternal life
- ...a promised future resurrection
- ...being freed from the dominion of sin
- ...transference from the realm of sin to the realm of life
- ...freedom from the condemnation of the law
- ...the abiding presence of the Spirit of God
- ...adoption as the children of God
- ...intercession of the Spirit
- ...be named as co-heirs with Christ
- ...the privilege of suffering with Christ
- ...the future redemption of our bodies
- ...the promise of our sanctification
- ...the certainty of our ultimate glorification
- ...the certainty that God is for us
- ...the promise that He will give us all we need
- ...the promise that we can never be separated from God's love
- ...inclusion into the people of God

Now it is in light of those mercies that Paul finally tells us what he wants us to do. He wants us to...

^{NIV} **Romans 12:1**... to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--

Now I have to tell his request would have been a lot more shocking in first century Rome than it is to us this morning. It would have been a lot more shocking because they were not used to seeing "**living sacrifices**" in Rome. The only kinds of sacrifices they ever saw were dead. They were dead and in the process of being burnt.

But Paul wants us to offer our bodies, not just our minds but our actual bodies and the actions that come from our bodies as “**living sacrifices**” to God and that action will drift up to heaven just like the aroma of ancient burnt offerings used to waft up toward heaven as a pleasing, holy sacrifice in the nostrils of God. Now our action is not intended to turn God’s anger or really even to gain God’s favor. We already have that. Our living sacrifice flows out of heart filled with gratitude for all God has done and really is just recognition of the fact that we do, in fact, finally comprehend something of his mercy.

That is why I love the last phrase of verse one and wish the modern translations had stuck with the old authorized translation.

^{KJV} **Romans 12:1**... *which is* your reasonable service.

You see Paul’s point is that such behavior is the least we can do. It is the rational, intelligent response of a people overwhelmed with God’s mercy.

When I was in high school I asked my girlfriend, who is now my wife, to go the junior prom with me. Now the car I owned at the time was a bomb. So I asked my dad if I could drive his pickup to the prom instead of my car since it was a special occasion. He told me that I could and then he set about, without my knowledge, to make his pickup extra special for the prom. He took a garden hose and washed it out and cleaned out the bed of the truck and then he decided to paint the dashboard of his truck. Now when I say he painted it, I mean he painted everything, speedometer, gauges, radio face, knobs...everything. He painted it a bright, shiny, metallic gold. Now because of how he painted it...you could not read any of the gauges. You couldn’t tell how fast you were going or

whether you were about to run out of gas or if the engine was hot. You couldn't tell if the heater was running and you couldn't even tell what station you were listening to on the radio.

When I saw it I laughed out loud. I spit out something like, "**Well dad you painted the gauges and everything.**" I could tell from the second I spoke what I said had hurt his feelings. He had worked hard to make his truck extra nice and I was too much of an idiot to understand that. But I understand it now. I understand the love that father has for his kids and how he wants to do the best he can with limited resources. Oh, how I wish...how I wish I could go back and do that over and tell him how grateful I was for his expression of love.

And that attitude is one that ought to permeate our lives and our behavior. And it does that as we begin to comprehend something of God's kindness toward us in Christ. We'll never do it justice and someday we'll regret that we weren't able to better comprehend the height and depth and breath of His love toward us but we do understand it plenty good enough to turn our lives to live the way He wants us to live and we do that out of an abiding sense of gratitude.

Let's pray.

¹ John Calvin, Institutes, Volume 3. Chapter 10. "Thus the purpose of clothing, apart from necessity, was comeliness and decency. In grasses, trees, and fruits, apart from their various uses, there is beauty of appearance and pleasantness of odor. For if this were not true, the prophet would not have reckoned them among the benefits of God...Scripture would not have reminded us repeatedly, in commending his kindness, that he gave all such things to men. And the natural qualities themselves of things demonstrate sufficiently to what end and extent we may enjoy them. Has the Lord clothed the flowers with the great beauty that greets our eyes, the sweetness of smell that is wafted upon our nostrils, and yet will it be unlawful for our eyes to be affected by that beauty, or our sense of smell by the sweetness of that odor? What? Did he not so distinguish colors as to make some more lovely than others?"

² R.G. Lee, *Payday Someday* (*Payday Someday* was Lee's sermon on the historical battle between Ahab and Elijah out of 1 Kings)

³ Walter Bauer, (Rvd. By Arndt, Gingrich and Danker), "παρακαλέω" in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* Third Edition, Copyright © 2000 by The University of Chicago Press...**to urge strongly**, *appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage w. acc. of person and infinitive following*. See the following verses as examples of the construction.

^{NIV} **Romans 15:30**...I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

^{NIV} **Romans 16:17**...I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

^{NIV} **2 Corinthians 2:8**...I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

^{NIV} **2 Corinthians 6:1**...As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.

^{NIV} **Ephesians 4:1**...As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

^{NIV} **Philippians 4:2**...I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.

^{NIV} **Titus 2:6**...Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.