

# Midweek Bible Study

## **Philippians and Conflict Resolution**

### **The nature of the NT church**

1. The Church, the body of Christ, lives in the tension of the already-not yet.  
In terms of what the church is already – (this age)  
In terms of the not yet – (age to come)
2. A major part of the tension between the already and the not-yet is that we are both a supernatural and natural people, we are both made new/indwelt by the Spirit but still battle the flesh.
3. Sometimes the natural and the flesh eclipses the supernatural and the Spirit/spiritual and there is conflict.

### **The nature of NT epistles**

1. Occasional
2. Examples

### **The Book of Philippians**

Phil. 4:2-3

- 1) **The first is that the conflict between the two women was not doctrinal or ethical.**

### **Paul's strategy for resolving the conflict**

- (1) minimally but directly address it (4:2)
- (2) to enlist the help of Paul's "true companion" (4:3)
- (3) to praise the women involved in the conflict (4:3).

- (1.1) The exhortation could certainly be taken as direct address.

For Paul to identify them by name is unusual and demonstrates how seriously he took the rift.

The exhortation "live in harmony in the Lord"  
to agree in the Lord. (Phil 4:2 ESV)  
to be of the same mind in the Lord (Phil 4:2 NIV)

The phrasing here is by no means accidental. It hearkens back to Phil. 2:2-5.



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(2.1) The next step in Paul's approach is to enlist help in the process. He asks his "genuine yoke-fellow" to "aid or assist" them.

(3.1) The next step is Pauline to the core, he affirms and praises the women.

Further counsel

1. Rejoice
2. Let your gentleness be known to all
3. The Lord is near
4. Don't be anxious, rather be prayerful

Philippians should be read as a conflict resolution manual.

