

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

September 2, 2007

Why people fight

by David King

"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:15-17).

Note in this passage the connection between three sinister elements: envy, strife, and selfish ambition. These three traits are often mentioned together (Gal. 5:20-21; Rom. 13:13; Jas. 3:14-16; 2 Cor. 12:20), so they must be closely related. A brief study of these sins explains much about what's wrong in the world today. Let's start with the effect (strife) and work our way back to the causes.

The human race is all too familiar with conflict. From that moment in the garden of Eden when Adam blamed his wife for their trespass with the forbidden fruit, humanity has been at war with itself. All the differences that exist among people—political, ethnic, racial, social, economic, religious—provide fertile ground for strife to rear its ugly head. Even among those who share much in common, such as families and brethren, disputes arise that can tear the fabric of brotherhood asunder. Hostility between warring factions is so commonplace, that we marvel at those rare occasions when a group manages to make and preserve peace.

So why is strife so prevalent among humans? Intellectuals focus on disparities among groups, and seek to solve the problem by eliminating the disparities. But trying to achieve peace by forcing everyone to be equal

usually ends up compounding the problem. Communism was based on that premise, and it proved to be a dismal failure.

While it is true that disparities among people play a role in the conflicts that arise among them, the real problem lies in the attitudes of the people involved — that is, envy and selfish ambition.

"Envy" is the state of mind of being resentful or unhappy because someone else possesses, or has achieved, what I wish for myself. "Selfish ambition" (a single word in the Greek original) is defined by Thayer as "a desire to put one's self forward, a partisan and factious spirit which does not disdain low arts." Envy and selfish ambition, therefore, are merely two sides of the same coin: I am motivated by a desire to promote myself, to get ahead at the expense of others; and I resent it when I can't achieve that, and others rise above me.

In other words, strife is caused by selfishness, the desire to put oneself above others.

Think about it. Analyze every conflict, every fight, every war; isn't selfishness somewhere at the root of all of them? As long as people are more concerned about themselves than others, strife will inevitably result.

So if we really want to reduce the level of strife in the world, or at least in our lives, here is the simple formula for doing so: "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" (Phil. 2:3-4).