

Romans 12:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Analysis

Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. This verse contains three related commands on relational humility. **Be of the same mind one toward another** (τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες, *to auto eis allēlous phronountes*) doesn't demand uniformity of opinion but unity of purpose and attitude—what Paul calls 'like-mindedness' in Philippians 2:2. The shared mind is cruciform humility, considering others better than yourself. Second, **Mind not high things** (μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονοῦντες, *mē ta hypsēla phronountes*)—don't set your thoughts on lofty, ambitious, status-seeking pursuits. Instead, **condescend to men of low estate** (ταῖς ταπειναῖς συναπαγόμενοι, *tais tapeinais synapagomenoi*).

This phrase can mean 'associate with lowly people' or 'adapt yourself to humble tasks'—probably both. The verb *synapagō* means 'be carried along with, accommodate yourself to.' Pride resists descending to lowly people or menial work; humility embraces both. Finally, **Be not wise in your own conceits** (μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς, *mē ginesthe phronimoi par' heautois*) warns against intellectual arrogance—thinking yourself wise in your own estimation (Proverbs 3:7). Self-proclaimed wisdom is folly; true wisdom is humble, teachable, and others-oriented (James 3:13-17).

Historical Context

Roman society was stratified by class: senators, equestrians, plebeians, freedmen, slaves. Social mobility was limited; honor attached to rank. Associating with social inferiors was scandalous; aristocrats avoided manual labor and the poor. Jewish culture also had hierarchies—priests, Pharisees, common people, Gentiles. Jesus violated these boundaries constantly (eating with tax collectors and sinners, touching lepers, honoring women and children). Paul calls the Roman church to the same social revolution: a community where masters and slaves, wealthy and poor, educated and uneducated associate as equals in Christ.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does your church demonstrate 'same-mindedness'—unity of purpose despite diverse backgrounds, opinions, and preferences?
2. What 'high things' distract you from humble service—career ambitions, intellectual pride, social status?
3. Who are the 'lowly people' or 'humble tasks' God is calling you to 'condescend to' (embrace) rather than avoid?

Interlinear Text

τὸ	αὐτὸ	εἰς	ἀλλήλους	φρονοῦντες	μὴ
G3588	Be of the same G846	one toward another G1519	G240	Mind G5426	not G3361
τὰ	ὑψηλὰ	φρονοῦντες	ἀλλὰ	τοῖς	ταπεινοῖς
G3588	high things G5308	Mind G5426	but G235	G3588	to men of low estate G5011
συναπαγόμενοι	μὴ	γίνεσθε	φρόνιμοι	παρ'	ἑαυτοῖς
condescend G4879	not G3361	Be G1096	wise G5429	in G3844	your own conceits G1438

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 3:8 (Parallel theme): Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

Proverbs 3:7 (Parallel theme): Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

Hebrews 13:5 (Parallel theme): Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Isaiah 5:21 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Romans 15:5 (Parallel theme): Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

Romans 12:3 (Parallel theme): For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

1 Corinthians 3:18 (Parallel theme): Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

Proverbs 26:12 (Parallel theme): Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

Romans 11:25 (Parallel theme): For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

2 Corinthians 13:11 (Parallel theme): Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org