

27 THREE THINGS

Philippians 2:4 (KJV) Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Philippians 2:21 (KJV) For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

- **Things Of Your Own (v4)**

'Things' include possessions as well as interests. We are entitled to our own things. It is not wrong, but we are not to keep looking on them or looking out for them as the love of our lives. True self-possession never comes by hoarding or holding on to our own things, but by a healthy detachment from them. If you keep looking on your own possessions and interests, you will squeeze out the life of God and stifle the nobler part of your being. The corrupting nature of things which we call our own stems from the fact that we cannot really hold them – they hold us instead. We become obsessed by what we possess. One of the manifestations of the new life in Christ is a disposition of dispossession, which is able to *"count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:8).

- **Things Of Others (v4)**

This is not a call to neglect our own things, but not to be ruled by them. We need to look after them with responsible stewardship. At the same time, we should spare some attention to look also on the things of others. This runs against our natural grain as we are conditioned to do our own thing and mind our own business. The blight of an affluent and acquisitive society is individualism. The self-selecting and self-serving demands of a high-pressure lifestyle leave little room for the concerns of others. Why bother about others when I have enough burdens of my own? Individualism kills altruism, which is devotion to others as opposed to selfishness. If we do not begin to dispose of our right to things of our own, we will never make enough room in our hearts to accommodate the things of others and of God.

- **Things Of Christ (v21)**

Self-absorption is a great contradiction for the Christian life. Many a spiritual edge has been blunted by the cares and things of this world displacing the things of God. It is what we seek and are drawn to that tells where our treasure truly lies. The real battle is always between the worship of self and of Christ. Whether self or Christ is on the throne of my life determines whether my creed is that of ownership of things for myself, or stewardship of things for God. It is wonderful to discover the mystery and liberty that *"all things are yours"* because *"you are Christ's"* (1 Corinthians 3:22-23). It takes the sweat and strife out of having to acquire enough for myself because it will never be enough as long as I am still calling the shots. Like Timothy whom Paul commended in the verse, they that are Christ's should be seeking and minding the things that are Jesus Christ's.