

**Imagine...A Simple Holiday Season**  
**November 26, 2017**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

“Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.” Philippians 2:1-5 (NLT)

The above verses speak to how we should feel, act and think about others and how that must tie in to what we know of how Jesus feels, thinks and acts. This week, we will break down this passage verse by verse to think about how we can make wiser, simpler choices using the example of Jesus Christ as our behavioral template.

**Digging Deeper**

**Feel**

- Verses 1-2: “Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate?” Have you experienced consolation in Christ? Can you describe how becoming closer in relationship with Christ has changed your demeanor? In what ways could that inner sensation you've experienced be extended outwardly in order to “tenderize” the spirit of others who might be in need of a similar kind of consolation?

**Act**

- Verse 3: “Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.” Love is a verb. If we choose to keep it locked up all to ourselves, who are we serving? Jesus calls us to live of one accord, in relationship with like mindedness and a common goal. In what areas do you struggle the most when it comes to living out your faith? Do you find it easier to give of your possessions, rather than of yourself? Why or why not? If you were to choose differently in that regard, how might it impact those around you?

**Think**

- Verses 4-5: “Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.” In Stephen M.R. Covey's book “The Speed of Trust” he makes an observation that “we judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their behavior.” It is so easy to judge the actions of people we know nothing about. Jesus invites us to not only think of them the way that He does, but to also take an interest in them. What would you say it means to genuinely take an interest in others? What concerns you about doing so?
- Jesus voluntarily placed Himself in a lesser position in order to emphasize the importance of humility for those who seek to one day join Him in the Kingdom of Heaven. How would you

respond to people who think it is acceptable to exalt themselves as “better” than others who may look, think or act differently, particularly if those people are not Christians?

### **Conclusion**

During the holiday season and beyond, regardless of what is thrown your way, recognize that you have the power to choose your reactions. And because we are commanded by Christ to do so, we must choose to personify love through our feelings, actions and thoughts. In effect, we must make ourselves vulnerable. C.S. Lewis once said, “To love is to be vulnerable.” This week, spend time in prayer evaluating your typical response to certain people or situations and consider your level of vulnerability. Are you speaking love in a Kingdom changing kind of way with every interaction? Jesus made His point quite simply when He said, “Love each other in the same way I have loved you.” (John 15:12 NLT)