

## ***Theme for 2018***

# **WE ARE THE ARMY OF GOD & WE ARE ARMED AND DANGEROUS!**

*“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)*



## ***This Week’s Thought – August 5, 2018***

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*“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:3-5 (NRSV)*

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Christians often talk about becoming “more like Christ”. In fact, “Christlikeness” is arguably the most clear and compelling way to think of the journey of discipleship. You and I are faced with a choice, day after day, to open our hearts and lives to the Spirit of God, asking Him to renew and restore us from within so that our lives more clearly reflect the likeness of Jesus. Yet what does this look like in actual practice? How can we know if we are truly growing into the likeness of Christ?

According to Paul, we see Jesus the most clearly when we understand the nature of His love towards us. Jesus is the perfect example of humility, *“who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.”* True humility and selfless love is seen when Jesus does not cling to what is rightfully His, but draws near to us in our frailty and weakness. His desire to heal and restore the world is so great that He is willing to empty Himself and live as one of us in order to restore us to God. The ability to love another more than we love ourselves has always been and will forever be the single most important character trait we can desire in our lives. It is the clearest and most compelling way that we show our love for God to be true.

In practice, we must acknowledge that this is incredibly difficult to live out. In our wider culture we are told constantly that our personal happiness and satisfaction is the primary filter through which all decisions should be made.

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If it doesn’t bring immediate happiness and pleasure, why do it? Questions like “where should I go to school?”, “where should I work?”, or “where should I live?” are rarely driven by a desire to see the flourishing and happiness of another.

To grow in “Christlikeness”, we must start asking hard questions of how we use our time and where we invest our love. For example, if you have children, are you willing to sacrifice a great promotion in order to be faithful to the promises you have made to be present and invested in their lives? If your parents are still living, are you willing to sacrifice a portion of your retirement funds so you can care for your aging parents? Etc.

Hard as they may be, these are the kinds of questions we must not only ask, but also have the courage to respond to with faithfulness and bold living that shows the transformation that comes from walking the self-giving way of Jesus!

**Application:** Where has your selfishness and concern with your own interests kept you from loving those closest to you as Christ would have you love them?

**Prayer of reflection you might pray this week:** “Dear God, I pray that I will have a new, God-given communication that will help me relate to the people in my life in a more positive way. I pray that I uplift others and that people feel good in my presence. I pray that I am a light of Your love, and that I am strong enough in You that I seek not to change others to my point of view but to bless them where they are. I pray that I have the power to forgive, to release seeming wrongs of the past, and to walk forward into a new day of positivity in my family, church and all other relationships in my life. This is my prayer in the matchless, wonderful and compassionate name of Jesus, Amen!”

*“And then God answered: "Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time.”* Habakkuk 2:2-3 (MSG)

Yours in Christ, Pastor King