

## **Romans 12:16 (NKJV)**

**16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.**

This passage is, in essence, saying the same thing in three different ways. So we are going to deal with it as one congruent passage broken into 2 sermons.

First we are told that **we are to have the same mind toward one another**. Now does this mean that we are all to think the same exact thing? Does it mean that we are to agree on every point of doctrine? Are we to look at every verse of scripture and all conclude that it means exactly the same thing? No! It does not mean that. Look around you. You are surrounded by people that God has given different gifts. He has given them different concerns. He has given them different strengths. He has given them different weaknesses. And He has placed them in a body for a specific reason. They are there to represent Him. They are there to add to the ministry of the body. Evidently God does not think that He is adequately represented by a single individual other than His Son. So he has placed us in a body.

I guaranty that all these other body members will not see all scripture the same way you do. And that is a blessing. They will bring a depth of understanding in some areas and a dearth of understanding at others. That is how God wants it to be. God wants us to live in love. He doesn't want sameness. He wants love and unity to cover the differences that He has created in us. He wants us to depend upon each other to provide the things that we don't have. I remember a time that Carla had voiced frustration to Mike that no matter how much she studies, she could not see the things Mike could see. Do you know what his answer was to her? He said, that's ok. You aren't supposed to. His message was basically- if you had my gift you wouldn't need me and if I had your gift I wouldn't need you. We are supposed to need each other. All this was to say that having the same mind does not mean having identical thoughts.

So what does this verse mean? **Be of the same mind toward one another**. The question boils down to this. What is supposed to be the same?

Again, let's look at what it doesn't mean.

Suppose we are to start a hypothetical band.

Now Tom wants to play the drums on every song as loud and as fast as he can because he wants to show off just how good he is on the drums.

And Aaron wants to just play ballads on the guitar because he is really good at ballads.

Suz just want to show off how high she can sing with all the trills and frills in her voice.

And Jarrod wants to show off his bass runs through every song, because he really has that down.

So when they start playing, how is it going to sound? What will be the effect? You can bet that there will be a lot of discord. The sound will be horrible. Why? There is no singleness of purpose. There is no unity. Everyone intends something different.

What does **“Be of the same mind toward one another.”** mean? After studying it I believe that it means we are to have the same goals, the same desire, the same intentions. It is not that we need to think the same exact thoughts. But at the end of the day we want to glorify God. We want the same end to be accomplished. We want the things that God cares about to be accomplished. We are to mind the same things. We are to agree with each other about why we exist and what we are for.

In the band illustration it would mean we are here to accomplish a good sound. We are here to make the music sound as good as it can sound. As a church we are here to, as Mark says, give God maximum glory. I like that phrase. That is the essence of our existence.

Another way to say “to have the same mind” is to have the same goal, the same ambition, the same desire.

Let me give you another illustration.

Suppose some of us come here because we want a social club.

Some come because they want marriage help.

Some come because they want family help.

Some come to show off their orator skills.

Some come to show off their leadership skills.

What do you suppose will happen? It is as predictable as the sunrise. There will be chaos and conflict. People will always be in turmoil because they are not getting what they want. Their expectations are not being met.

But Paul gives different advice. He tells everyone who is reading his epistle to **Be of the same mind toward one another.** He is essentially telling them here what he always tells believers. We all need the same reason to come together. We are in this together. And we are all to look out for the benefit of every other believer. We are to do our best to see fit that everyone’s life glorifies God. We have the same goal, the same mind.

I think sometimes we wonder meaninglessly about why the church is not what **it should be**. It isn't complicated. In this instance I think there is a truth we can focus on. **The more we come together for the same purpose as the church in Acts came together, the more we will have similar results that the church in Acts had.**

Do we come together having **the same mind toward one another**? Do we only want what God wants for us? Do we share that desire this morning?

Let's look at some other verses about having a specific mind toward a situation.

**1 Corinthians 1:10 (NKJV)**

**10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**

This is spoken by Paul right before he begins to speak about dissension. He goes on to say that one person says "I am of Paul", or Paul is my patron saint, or I believe all the paperbacks that I read that Paul has written. Others are saying I am of Apollos or I think his commentaries are correct and everyone else's are wrong. Another says, no Peter is the patron saint of scholars. You get the idea. Being of the same mind is the exact opposite to discord. Being of the same mind will not allow for divisions on insubstantial things. Being of the same mind will not allow for division for anything but error and heresy.

When Paul says that

**you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**

He helps us understand what he means when he tells us what the opposite is. He goes on to ask his audience, were any of these teachers crucified for you? The answer is obviously "no". He doesn't focus on a single point of doctrine. But he focuses on how we view Christ. If we view Christ as our savior and Lord, if we get that straight and don't stray from that, we have everything in mind that we need to mind. That is the single mindedness that we need. Then he goes on to emphasize the message of the cross. That is what we must focus on. And if we will focus on that, if we will focus on how all believers were saved and what they were saved from, we will have the mind that we need toward our brothers and sisters.

Paul goes on later in his epistle

**1 Corinthians 11:17-19 (NKJV)**

**17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.**

**18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.**

**19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.**

You might recognize this as part of the communion text. Here again Paul laments about the divisions that are in the church. He is talking about eating the Lord's supper in unity, but laments that they will not eat it in unity. They do not have the same mind about it. Again we see that everyone looks at it from their own fleshly selfish perspective. They want what they want, but they don't care about what their brothers and sisters get. Their minds are self centered instead of Christ centered. They are not single minded.

Paul goes on to talk to the Philippians about the same thing.

**Philippians 1:27 (NKJV)**

**27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,**

Here Paul lays out what he hopes to find. And what he wants to find is that they stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Do you see that? The mind that he is after is similar thinking, similar ambitions in working hard to see the true gospel be proclaimed and true gospel faith to be displayed. That is the single mindedness we should all have.

He wants the true gospel to be proclaimed.

He wants true faith to be displayed.

Is that what we want? Do we come together with that singleness of purpose? Do we understand that at the end of the day this should be what we accomplish?

Here is another mention of single mindedness.

**Philippians 3:15-16 (NKJV)**

**15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.**

**16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.**

And what was Paul talking about in this context?

**Philippians 3:13-14 (NKJV)**

**13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,**

**14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

What is this? He is talking about how he is living out the gospel, how he is living out his faith. He isn't talking about single points of doctrine. He is talking about how he is following Christ.

I am just trying to make the point that being of the same mind is not thinking the exact same things about doctrine, but it is about sharing the reason for why we live, for why we breathe, for why we serve God. And it is something we should all share.

Here is another passage. Pay attention when Paul says "knit together".

**Colossians 2:1-3 (NKJV)**

**1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,  
2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,  
3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

You can see that Paul wants those in Laodicea to be knit together in love and to attain all the riches of full understanding. And who is that understanding about? The knowledge of the mystery of God, both the Father and Christ. This is another way of saying the same thing. Paul wants them to be of the same mind. He wants them all to see Christ in the proper perspective. He wants their lives to be intertwined in love in the same pursuit, in the same goal, towards the same end. Do you get it? What Paul is after is that we all share the same reason for living, the same reason for breathing, the same reason for serving. The reason we live isn't for some **selfish** purpose. It is for a **common** purpose. He does not want us to have competition or division. What he desires is that we have unity.

And with all of this, he wants us to regard our brothers and sisters from this perspective. We can't possibly get high minded if we will orient to Christ and the cross. We did not deserve what we got. We could **never** deserve what we got. And neither could anyone else deserve it. We are all together gathered equally and humbly at the foot of the cross.

Then our text goes on

**Do not set your mind on high things,**

Now there have been lots of argument on this text. Some would say that we should not set our minds on high **things**. Others would say we are not to set our mind on **high people**. The beauty in this passage is that no matter which you chose, the answer is true in both cases. And it is likely that both cases are the target.

We are not to worship any kind of intellectualism. And we are not to allow ourselves to be swayed by any influential people in the church. We are simply to live in the sphere of the truths we can understand and apply. We are to keep in touch with the truths that keep us moving in a heavenly direction. We don't need a Dr Brad and Dr Jon. Brother Brad and brother Jon are plenty when Christ is the focus of our worship. Along with that, there is no person who should be blindly followed. There is no "high" person who should be regarded any different than any other believer.

Let's look at a good example of what we are talking about. Let's look at what David says in Psalm 131

### **Psalm 131:1-3 (NKJV)**

**1 My heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me.**

**2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me.**

**3 O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever.**

Look at this. Here is the King in Israel, the top dog. And what does he say? I am not going to get caught up in thoughts that are too great for me, in topics that are too lofty and profound for me. But how will he live? He will be like a weaned child with his mother, a child that is content. A child that is secure. And what is his application punch line from this?

### **hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever**

This is what he does instead of pursuing intellectual pursuits for their own sake. He focusses on the very practical items of placing his mind on those things that matter most. He is going to earnestly expect from God those things that God has promised. It is not that he is going to refuse to think at all. That is very anti-scriptural. No. He will think and he will love God with all His mind. He will hope in the Lord and rest in Him like a weaned child. He does not have to know everything. He only needs to know God and what God has communicated about His will.

Now lets look at an example of high mindedness and the problems it creates.

### **1 Corinthians 8:1-13 (NKJV)**

**1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.** (here we see the problem listed right off

the bat. Knowing things can create problems. Because knowledge makes us **feel big** without **being big**.)

**2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.** (again, if we get full of ourselves because we think we know stuff, the truth is, we are nearly clueless. We only have a piece of the whole.)

**3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.**

**4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.** (You see this is what the high minded people knew. They had their facts straight. They knew their scripture. They had the right answer. They understood intellectually that there really is no such thing as another god.)

**5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),**

**6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.**

**7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge;**

(Here is the problem with the high minded people. They place the **things** they know above the best interest of the **people** they know. They think that **what they know** is more important than the **people** they are supposed to love. They think knowledge is more important than love.)

**for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.**

**8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.**

**9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.**

Here Paul cuts to the quick. He is saying, do not allow **what you know** to be the source of another's harm. Now get this straight. These people are right about the facts. And **it is good** to be right about the facts. We should always strive to be right about the facts. But being right about the facts is never enough.

Knowledge without love is dangerous. Knowledge without love will end up hurting people more than helping them.

**10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?**

**11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?**

**12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.** (Look at this. Paul doesn't call this a simple mistake. He calls it sin. And what did the brother do? Didn't he just tell the truth? Didn't he set the record straight on food offered to idols? Wasn't he being scripturally accurate? As a matter of fact he was. But he was not looking out for his brother's best interest. He was not caring about the soul of his brother in his discourse or lifestyle. And that which is true became a sin.)

**13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.**

Paul ends with **how love acts**. He speaks to the cure of high mindedness. Yes, we should know the doctrine, but not at the expense of building our brothers up in the faith, not at the expense of caring for Christ's sheep.

Paul would forego any freedom in order to see a brother or sister grow.

Let's look at another passage.

**1 Timothy 6:17 (NKJV)**

**17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.**

Here wealthy believers are told not to be haughty. They are not in any way to see themselves as superior to other believers. He is essentially telling them that the only difference between a wealthy believer and one who is not wealthy is the number of dollars in their bank account. And what about that money? It is not to be trusted. It cannot give us the things we need most in this life or the next. What should we trust? We should trust God. And who has more of that trust, the rich or the poor? The poor tend to trust God more than the wealthy. So in essence, the poor have more of what matters than the wealthy do in this regard. We are not to be haughty. We are not to be high minded.

Then Paul goes on to say in our text in Romans,

**but associate with the humble.**

Now again we are not certain if the humble means humble people or humble thoughts. My guess is that it means both.

The word for associate is a bit odd.

Really it is the word for **carried about**.



He is saying, be carried about by people and ideas of low estate.

Let's look at an example of this word, carried away. It was used when Paul needed to exhort Peter.

**Galatians 2:13 (NKJV)**

**13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with Peter, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.**

See how this word was used. Barnabas associated so much with these people that he went with them where they were going. He became part of their group. That is the kind of thing that Paul is telling us should happen with us and people in low estate or those who are humble, those who have little status or few goods. These are the people who do not get much attention and are not highly esteemed by men.

We are not to tip our hat to the humble or poor and give them lip service. We are not to condescend in the bad sense of the word, as if the important are bowing to the unimportant. That would be all wrong. And that is not what Paul is saying. He is telling us to be enough a part of their lives so their lives carry us along with them. We are traveling the path together. There is no "us" and "them". There is only "we".

Look at how David applied this concept. Look at his ambitions. Look at how he judged career choices.

**Psalm 84:10 (NKJV)**

**10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

If you are ever in the place of picking a career path, you would do well to choose David's model. Fellowship with God is the top priority. Everything else is secondary. So if he has to choose between a humble job that puts Him close to God or a lofty job that puts him far from God, there is no choice. He will pick being the doorkeeper, the lowliest of temple positions. You see how David was carried away with the humble. He did not carry the ambitions for greatness that were so prevalent with King Saul. God's presence was enough for David.

Let's look at another passage that gives us guidance here.

**1 Corinthians 3:18-23 (NKJV)**

**18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.**

**19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness";**

**20 and again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."**

**21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:**

**22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come--all are yours.**

**23 And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.**

Here we see some of the same thinking. Paul tells us what worldly wisdom and intellectualism will accomplish. Worldly wisdom when not submitted to the Lordship of Christ will always turn into a snare for the man who possesses it. Their thinking will lead to futility. It will not grant to them that which they most need.

But as for every believer- we already have that which is most important. We have a relationship with Christ that nothing can sever.

Let's look at another passage about associating with the humble.

**James 2:1-5 (NKJV)**

**1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.**

**2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,**

**3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"**

**4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?**

**5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?**

James lays it out simply. It is the humble that God has given rich faith to. It is the rich, the high minded, that give you so much trouble. Don't allow your preference to fall to them. No, seek out the humble and love and associate with them.

We are to follow Christ's example. He didn't spend much time with the religious big shots of his time. And when He did it was usually to rebuke them. He found himself far more often in the company of the humble.

**Matthew 11:19 (NKJV)**

**19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."**

Well, that is all we have time for this week.

We will look at the last phrase in our passage next week-  
**Do not be wise in your own opinion.**

So to review

**16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.**

Isn't this wonderful? Really! Do you feel like you are not all that special? Do you feel like your gifts don't warrant much attention, your life isn't exactly an exciting biography, many of the things you must do are mundane and virtually invisible to everyone else? Well guess what? Paul is saying that all of us are the object of ministry. We are all the ones that each of us are to associate with and minister to. He will not leave us out. We are to share one mind and have the same goals and orientation. We don't need to get caught up with those things that are out of our sphere. We don't need to be the one with the extraordinary biography. We don't need to be the one with the piercing insights into truth. We don't need to be a genius or an astounding talent. We can be just who God made us and be faithful in the sphere that He has placed us. And do you see the truth here? Hanging out with each other and being caught up in each other's lives- That is EXACTLY God's will for our lives. We are to live in such a way that in our fellowship **God** is given maximum glory. That is the **one mind** we are to share.