

UNITY **(Ephesians 4:1-16)**

I. The prerequisites for unity - having the right attitudes (vs 1-3).

- A. Being content towards self - "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you were called."
 - 1. Philippians 4:11-13.
 - 2. 1 Peter 1:13-16.
 - 3. When one is not content towards self, disharmony with others will soon result.
- B. Being content towards our brethren - "with all lowliness and meekness, and longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."
 - 1. Romans 12:9-18.
 - 2. Diotrophes was one who was not content (3 John 9-10).
 - 3. When not content towards or with our brethren, division soon occurs.
- C. Being content towards God - "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
 - 1. This means living within the authority of Jesus (Colossians 3:17).
 - 2. 2 John 9.
 - 3. Those who are not content with God's word will cause problems and division.

II. The principles of unity - having the right doctrine (vs 4-6).

- A. One body - the church.
 - 1. Ephesians 1:22-23.
 - 2. Colossians 1:18.
 - 3. Any other body causes division.
- B. One Spirit - the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. John 14:26.
 - 2. Another other creed or doctrine than the one inspired by the Holy Spirit brings about division.
- C. One hope - heaven.
 - 1. John 14:2-3.
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 5:1.
 - 3. Any other hope causes division.
- D. One Lord - Jesus Christ.
 - 1. Peter made the great confession - "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).
 - 2. Hebrews 1:1-3.
 - 3. Any other Lord or head brings about division.
- E. One faith - the system of belief God has given us.
 - 1. Jude 3.
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 13:5.
 - 3. Any other faith brings about disunity.
- F. One baptism - the defining act of salvation.
 - 1. Acts 2:38.

2. Colossians 2:12.
 3. Preaching any other type of baptism or diminishing the importance of baptism causes division.
- G. One God and Father - the physical and spiritual Creator of all.
1. Galatians 4:6.
 2. 1 John 3:1.
 3. Holding to any other Father creates division.

III. The plan for unity - having the right organization - (vs. 7-12).

- A. That Christ should rule from heaven.
1. Hebrews 8:1.
 2. 1 Peter 3:22.
- B. That gifts should be given to me, which was done by the Holy Spirit.
1. Acts 2:4.
 2. John 14:16-17.
- C. That men would use these gifts according to the grace of God.
1. 1 Corinthians 12:24-30.
 2. Romans 12:4-8.
 3. God provided structure for the early church.
 4. He provides structure for us today through the office of elder, deacon, evangelist and members.
 5. It is our duty to work together within this organizational structure in a peaceful and united way.

IV. The purpose of unity - having the right spirit of edification in love (vs. 13-16).

- A. Where there is unity, there is soundness and growth and edification.
1. 1 Corinthians 1:10.
 2. Philippians 2:1-2.
 3. John 14:20-21.
 4. A united body will be healthful and grow.
- B. Where there is division there is fragmentation and decay.
1. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.
 2. Romans 16:17-18.
 3. A sick and diseased body will suffer and die.
- C. Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but look what they can do when they stick together.