

# Body Life - #8

## Biblical Unity

**Introduction** – There is one Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is one body. And that body is to display it's unity to the glory of God.

**The Source of Biblical Unity** (Eph 4:1-3) – Having completed three chapters of glorious doctrine, the first application of it is given to the believers in these verses.

**Walk Worthily** – Our inheritance is a high calling. Act like it. This means you put to death the deeds of the flesh and you live in obedience to your King. This, of course, is detailed in the next three chapters, and is done ‘*according to the power that works in us*’ (3:20).

**A Corporate Walk** (vv2-3) – But get that individualistic mindset out of your head. He is talking to the Church, not simply to a clump of autonomous individuals.

**Keeping What You Have** (v3) – We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, not make unity. The source of unity is the work of God (Eph 1:10), not man-made rallies. How do we keep this?

**Biblical “*lowliness and gentleness*”** (Eph 4:2) – These attributes reflect how we view ourselves in the church. Lowliness is humility of mind. It means that you do not think too highly of yourself. Gentleness (praus – often translated ‘meekness’) is that disposition of complete dependence upon God rather than upon one’s own strength (for salvation, for sanctification, for knowledge, for everything). Understanding this, it is not ‘meek’ or ‘lowly’ to deny the truths of the Word, or consider doctrine as unimportant. The Scripture declares quite the opposite. Relativism or doctrinal apathy is not meek. It is arrogant. Meekness means we do not dare stand against anything the Word declares.

**“...with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love...”** – These attributes reflect how we view others in the church. We are not yet all on the same page doctrinally. We do not yet all understand chapters 1-3 (and the rest of the Bible). This is why God gives the Church her teachers (vv11-16). As we go through this growth process, we must know what it means to bear with one another.

**“Doctrine-less” Unity is not Biblical Unity** (1 Cor 1:10-13) – There was a problem in Corinth. Divisions were arising among the believers. Paul’s answer was not at all like our modern answer – ‘dumb-down the statement of faith so we can all sign on’.

**“I plead”** – This is a strong urging. Paul does not see these differences of belief as insignificant at all.

**“speak the same thing....no divisions”** – Unity requires that we say the same things about Christ, grace, faith, salvation, the work of the Spirit. We know this because these are the subjects which Paul corrects in the following chapters. We cannot pretend to agree through our silence. “Schismata” is a word that pictures the forceful destruction of unity. God is of one mind and doctrinal differences do not reflect His lightheartedness about truth. Divisions, rather, reflect our carnality (1 Cor 3:1-4).

**“perfectly joined together”** – This comes from the Greek word ‘katartidzo’, which means to put in order or to restore to its former condition. It is used of mending nets (Matt 4:21). We are told to be so in the same mind (our articulated doctrine) and in the same judgment (our doctrine applied).

**Various Schisms** – We do not know exactly what schisms existed in Corinth, although the corrections that follow throughout the rest of the book are probably related. We know of doctrinal errors that Apollos and Cephas had to be corrected in at different times (Acts 18, Gal 2). The divisions were doctrinal and crucial to the integrity and unity of the church.

**Reformation – Messiness without a “Party-Spirit”** – Like ‘mending nets’, we are praying for God to reform the church – this church and the Church generally.

**Where We Divide** – The Scriptures teach us there are times to divide. When the gospel is twisted, we must condemn it (Gal 1:6-10). It is not divisive to put a divisive man out of your midst (Tit 3:10). Today, too many ecumenical movements stress unity at whatever the cost. Their understanding of unity is muddled.

**The Nets Aren’t Mended** – And so we must study the Word of God together. This might be necessary with a brother who does not yet see God’s absolute sovereignty. This is necessary as we study the doctrine of baptism. Nets that aren’t mended tear easily, and a “party spirit” will split a church.

**Denominations** – Corporately, we must repent of our thousands upon thousands of denominations. Corporately, we must strive for like-mindedness according to the Scriptures. Unity is preserved and strengthened when the whole gospel is clearly, sharply, and truthfully proclaimed. The CRE is one attempt at promoting biblical unity.

**God our Father, The Church our Mother** (Gal 4:26) – This concept is very foreign to the modern Christian, but it is central to building unity in the church. As one man said, “*The Church, like a nursery, can be a messy place at times, ripe with the smell of rebellion and ignorance*”. There are many forces that will tempt you to keep ‘church’ at a distance, internally and externally. We must understand Church as Mother and see the church as the central place where God will grant true reformation – evangelism, social change, and the good life, will flow from God’s ordained place of blessing (Mic 4:1-2).

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