

Unity - continued

unity by mentioning the right purpose for the unity (vv. 12-16). The whole purpose for unity among Christians is to bring them to the point of growth and work. Individual members in the local churches of Christ are to grow and work together (v. 12). They are to be united in faith and growth (v. 13). They are to know God's word and have no immaturity or be deceived (v. 14). They are to speak the truth in love and grow (v. 15). And, they are to be united together through their work and love (v. 16).

The only thing left, after reading this great chapter on unity, is to ask a few questions of ourselves:

Are we practicing the right walk of unity (v. 1) and displaying the right attitude about unity (v. 2)?

Are we putting forth the right effort toward unity (v. 3) and obeying the right doctrine that leads to unity (vv. 4-6)?

Are we accepting the right provision of male leadership for unity (v. 7-11) and fulfilling the right purpose for unity - growth and work (vv. 12-16)?

- Chris Reeves -

Sentence Sermons

- There is never an honest way to do a dishonest deed.
- Your ideas will not work unless you do.
- Strong men, not strong walls, make a strong marriage and family.
- Giving without loving is not true giving.
- When you pray for a change in circumstances, don't forget to pray for a change in character to face them.

Warfield Blvd. church of Christ
290 Warfield Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37043

Website
wbcoc.org

Assembly Times
Sunday: 9:30 am, 10:30 am, 6 pm
Wednesday: 7 pm

Everyone Is Welcome!
For More Information Call
(931) 647-1324

Published and Edited By
Chris Reeves
(615) 389-3250
chrisreevesmail@gmail.com
TheGoodTeacher.com

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

The Unity of the Spirit

Having written about the Christian's wealth in Christ in Ephesians 1-3, Paul is now ready to write about the Christian's walk in Christ in Ephesians 4-6. The word "therefore" in Ephesians 4:1 is the connecting word between the two themes of the book. Paul has made the point in chapters 1 through 3 that Christians have enormous wealth in Christ, "therefore", walk or live in such a way that is worthy of that life in Christ (chapters 4 through 6).

In Ephesians 4 through 6, Paul will discuss the practical, daily walk of the Christian. The word "walk" is found several times in this portion of Paul's epistle and it refers to the daily life of the Christian (4:1,17; 5:2,8,15). Paul will cover the various activities and relationships of the Christian life in this portion of his epistle: the local church, the world, the home, the workplace, and the battle with the Devil.

Paul begins his theme of the walk in Christ with a discussion of the Christian's walk in unity (Ephesians 4:1-16). It is this unity of the Spirit that I want to consider in this article. The call to unity in Jesus Christ has three things:

First, it has a divine plan that must be followed (4:1-6). This plan is based

upon a right attitude (v. 1-3) and a right platform (v. 4-6).

Second, it has a divine provision that must be accepted (4:8-11). Jesus provided male leadership in the church to carry out his plan for unity.

Third, it has a divine purpose that must be fulfilled (4:12-16). The purpose for the unity of the Spirit is growth and work.

Seven Ones	Reference	Unity
Body	Romans 12:4-5	Membership
Spirit	John 16:13	Communication
Hope	1 Peter 1:4	Aspiration
Lord	Matthew 28:18	Authority
Faith	Jude 3	Teaching
Baptism	Galatians 3:27	Entrance
God	1 Corinthians 8:6	Origin

When God's people are following the divine plan, and the divine provision, they will fulfill the divine purpose. Let's now consider these three divine things in more detail so that we can better understand how to be unified in the Lord's church.

When Paul writes about the divine plan for unity, he begins in 4:1-6 by mentioning the right attitude and the right platform for unity. First, there is the right walk that

must be made by each Christian to live worthily of the gospel (v. 1). Second, there is the right attitude that is made up of lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing, and love which each Christian must have (v. 2). Third, there is the right effort of diligence that must be put forth by each Christian to keep the unity of the Spirit (v. 3). Fourth, there is the right doctrine set forth in the New Testament that must be followed by each Christian in order to have unity (vv. 4-6): one body (church), one Spirit (Holy Spirit), one hope (of heaven), one Lord (Jesus Christ), one faith (NT teaching), one baptism (water baptism for the remission of sins), and one God (the Father).

Next, Paul writes about the right provision that Jesus put in place for the unity of his church (vv. 7-11). Before Jesus returned to heaven, he put in place male leadership to guide and govern his church and bring it to unity. He set in place apostles and prophets who would reveal the unifying word of God, he set in place evangelists who would preach the unifying word of God, and he set in place pastors (elders) and teachers who would lead with the unifying word of God.

Finally, Paul closes his discussion of