

## The Demands of Unity

By Donald Townsley

The word of God pleads for unity among the people of God. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:10: *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* Jesus prayed for unity among His disciples upon the basis of the word of God: *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”* (John 17:20).

### The Unity of the Spirit Demands that Brethren Agree

The basis for unity is the word of God (John 17:20–21). All of God’s people are to walk in truth ( 2 John 4). Jesus said truth can be known: *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free...”* (John 8:32). He also said that truth can be identified: *“Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth...”* (John 17:17). The Apostle Paul said that truth can be understood: *“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is...”* (Eph. 5:17). Truth is always consistent because God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). When we know the truth, understand the truth, and walk in truth, we will *be of the same mind and the same judgment* (I Cor. 1:10) – *we will agree*. All who appeal to truth for their standard in religion will come to the *same conclusion*, when we understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17).

### Unity Demands that We Speak the Same Thing

Paul said, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Cor. 1:10). When we understand the will of God, we understand it alike (Eph. 5:17), and we are all to preach the same plan (Eph. 4:4-6).

### Unity Demands Effort

The Apostle Paul said that Christians must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit: *“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Eph. 4:3). The word “endeavor” means to give diligence; to put forth effort; to try. This means that brethren are to work at being united on truth rather than doing and teaching things that divide them. *We must all endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

### Unity Demands that Brethren Stand for the Truth

God’s people are to stand together against all evil. Paul said, *“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...”* (Eph. 6:11). In Philippians 1:27, he said: *“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;”* (NRV)

### Unity Demands Oneness

The unity of the New Testament has at its foundation the word of God (John 17:20–21). This unity eliminates all error (2 John 9–11; Rom.16:17) and prohibits division (1 Cor.1:10). Paul said in Ephesians 4:4–6: “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...*” It is the dwelling together without differences (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:16).

In conclusion, let us consider Paul’s question to the Corinthians: “*Is Christ divided?*” The answer is “*NO!*” Christ is not divided in *authority* (Eph. 4:5; Matt.28:18), in *message* (Eph.4:5; Heb.1:2), in *body* (Eph .4:4; 1:22–23) nor in *plan* (Eph.4:3–6). Let us all be alert to the difference in *Bible unity* and “*unity-in-diversity*” that is so popular among so many today. This false unity is the devil’s compromise and is destroying the church of the Lord in many places. *We must all work for the unity that is based upon the will of God.*