

The Church v2

Lesson 14
The Unity of The Church

The Church v2

1. What is the church?
2. The nature of the universal church
3. The nature of a local church
4. Unreliable sources of religious authority
5. The only source of Divine authority today
6. How to establish Divine authority
7. Things that are expedient

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The Church v2

8. Respecting the silence of the Scriptures
9. The organization of a local church
10. The work of a local church
11. Independence autonomy and cooperation of local churches
12. Institutionalism
13. The social gospel
14. The unity of the church

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The Social Gospel

1. What is the social gospel?
2. Examples of the social gospel
3. Why is the social gospel wrong?
4. Christians should be together socially

4

Introduction

- The night before Jesus died for our sins, He prayed that present and future believers in Him would be unified as He and His Father are unified
- This unity of believers would provide encouragement for the world to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, Divine in nature and sent by the Father into the world to save sinners

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Introduction

- In spite of Jesus' prayer for unity, we see most of those who call themselves Christians are divided into conflicting groups of local churches differing in beliefs and practices yet claiming to be unified
- We also see many divisions among local churches of Christ yet many of them claiming unity in spite of divisions

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Introduction

- This type of unity is patterned after denominations – let us agree to disagree to have unity
- Division is also promoted when preachers and elders fail to teach and stand openly for the truth on various subjects like marriage, divorce and remarriage or the work of the church

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Jesus Prays For Himself

- Jesus, the night before He died, prayed first for Himself, asking the Father to glorify (highly honor and exalt) Him with the glory that He had before Creation
- Jesus does not pray selfishly but prays that the Father glorify Him so that He will glorify the Father
- Jesus is perfectly unified with the Father always seeking to accomplish His will

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Jesus Prays For Himself

Joh 17:1 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,

Joh 17:2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

Joh 17:3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

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Jesus' Disciples Are A Gift From His Father

Joh 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

Joh 6:45 "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

10

Eternal Life Means A Constant Intimate Relationship With God

1Jn 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1Jn 2:4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

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Eternal Life Means A Constant Intimate Relationship With God

1Jn 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

1Jn 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

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Jesus Prays For Himself

Joh 17:4 "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

Joh 17:5 "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

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The Father Has Given Jesus All Authority

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Mat 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Mat 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

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Jesus Prays For The Unity of His Apostles

Joh 17:6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

Joh 17:7 "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You;

Joh 17:8 for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.

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Jesus Prays For The Unity of His Apostles

Joh 17:11 "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.

Joh 17:12 "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

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Jesus Prays For The Unity of His Apostles

Joh 17:14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Joh 17:15 "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one

Joh 17:16 "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

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Jesus Prays For The Unity of His Apostles

Joh 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Joh 17:18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

Joh 17:19 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

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Jesus Prays For The Unity of His Apostles

Joh 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Joh 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

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Jesus Prays For The Unity of All Who Will Believe Through Their Word

Joh 17:20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

Joh 17:21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

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Jesus Prays For The Unity of All Who Will Believe Through Their Word

Joh 17:22 "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

Joh 17:23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

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Jesus Prays For The Unity of All Who Will Believe Through Their Word

Joh 17:24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Joh 17:25 "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me;

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Jesus Prays For The Unity of All Who Will Believe Through Their Word

Joh 17:26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

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Unity Is Based On The Apostles' Teaching Resulting In The Same Beliefs and Practices

Act 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."

Act 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

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Unity Is Based On The Apostles' Teaching Resulting In The Same Beliefs and Practices

Act 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

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Unity Is Based On The Apostles' Teaching Resulting In The Same Beliefs and Practices

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Gal 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

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Unity Is Based On The Apostles' Teaching Resulting In The Same Beliefs and Practices

1Co 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

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Unity Is Based On The Apostles' Teaching Resulting In The Same Beliefs and Practices

Joh 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Joh 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

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Unity Is Based On The Apostles' Teaching Resulting In The Same Beliefs and Practices

Eph 3:3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

Eph 3:4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

Eph 3:5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

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The Unity of The Church

1. Jesus prays for unity

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Jesus Prays For Unity

1. Jesus prays for Himself
2. Jesus prays for the unity of His apostles
3. Jesus prays for the unity of all who will believe through their word

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The Nature of Unity

- Jesus prayed that His followers would be unified, one, just as He and the Father are one
- He and the Father are perfectly unified in purpose and practice
- In contrast to a compromised unity of contradictory teachings and practices, we are to be unified on the apostles' teaching in belief and practice

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Jesus' Followers Are To Be Unified As The Father and Jesus Are Unified

Joh 17:20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

Joh 17:21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

33

Jesus' Followers Are To Be Unified As The Father and Jesus Are Unified

Joh 17:22 "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

Joh 17:23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

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Jesus' Followers Are To Be Unified In Belief and Practice On The Apostle's Teaching

Act 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

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Jesus' Followers Are To Be Unified In Belief and Practice On The Apostle's Teaching

1Co 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1Co 1:11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.

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Jesus' Followers Are To Be Unified In Belief
and Practice On The Apostle's Teaching

1Co 1:12 Now I mean this, that each one of
you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of
Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

1Co 1:13 Has Christ been divided? Paul
was not crucified for you, was he? Or were
you baptized in the name of Paul?

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Jesus' Followers Are To Be Unified In Belief
and Practice On The Apostle's Teaching

1Co 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have
figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for
your sakes, so that in us you may learn not
to exceed what is written, so that no one of
you will become arrogant in behalf of one
against the other.

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Jesus' Followers Are To Be Unified In Belief
and Practice On The Apostle's Teaching

2Jn 1:9 Anyone who goes too far and does
not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not
have God; the one who abides in the
teaching, he has both the Father and the
Son.

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Jesus' Followers Are To Be Unified In Belief
and Practice On The Apostle's Teaching

2Jn 1:10 If anyone comes to you and does
not bring this teaching, do not receive him
into your house, and do not give him a
greeting;

2Jn 1:11 for the one who gives him a
greeting participates in his evil deeds.

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Jesus' Followers Are To Be Unified In Belief
and Practice On The Apostle's Teaching

1Pe 2:1 Therefore, putting aside all malice
and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and
all slander,

1Pe 2:2 like newborn babies, long for the
pure milk of the word, so that by it you may
grow in respect to salvation,

1Pe 2:3 if you have tasted the kindness of
the Lord.

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The Standard of Unity Is The
Apostles Teaching

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting
themselves to the apostles' teaching and to
fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to
prayer.

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The Standard of Unity Is The Apostles Teaching

2Ti 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2Ti 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

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Seven Ones of Unity

Eph 4:4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Eph 4:6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

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One Body

Eph 1:22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

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One Spirit

Eph 3:3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

Eph 3:4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

Eph 3:5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

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One Spirit

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

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One Spirit

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1Jn 4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

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One Hope

1Ti 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,

1Jn 3:1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

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One Hope

1Jn 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

1Jn 3:3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

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One Hope

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

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One Hope

1Pe 1:4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

1Pe 1:5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

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One Lord

Act 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."

Luk 6:46 "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

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One Faith

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer

Gal 1:23 but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."

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One Faith

Jud 1:3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

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One Faith

Jud 1:4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

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One Baptism

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

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One God and Father of All

1Co 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.

1Co 8:5 For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords,

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One God and Father of All

1Co 8:6 yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.

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The Unity of The Church

1. Jesus prays for unity
2. The nature of unity
3. The standard of unity

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

- We study these first because often they are overlooked at the expense of following certain principles of unity
- To follow principles of unity without these attitudes is sinful
- To emphasize these attitudes without Biblical principles for unity is also sinful

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

Eph 4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Eph 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,

Eph 4:3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

1Jn 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

1Jn 4:19 We love, because He first loved us.

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

1Jn 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

1Jn 4:21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

Col 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

Col 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Col 3:14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

Col 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

Col 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

1Co 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

1Co 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1Co 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

1Co 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁶⁹

Attitudes Needed For Unity

Php 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

Php 2:4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Php 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

Php 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Php 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Php 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

Act 17:11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

2Co 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

2Ti 4:1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2Ti 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

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Attitudes Needed For Unity

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

2Ti 4:4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

2Ti 4:5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

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Christians Must First Be Unified With God By Grace Through Obedient Faith

- Each Christian must seek to be unified with God by His grace (unmerited favor) through obedient faith
- We are not perfectly unified with God based on flawless obedience
- But, by His grace, as we submit to His Word, including His terms of forgiveness, we can be unified with Him and one another

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Christians Must First Be Unified With God By Grace Through Obedient Faith

1Jn 1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--

1Jn 1:2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

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Christians Must First Be Unified With God By Grace Through Obedient Faith

1Jn 1:3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1Jn 1:4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

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Christians Must First Be Unified With God By Grace Through Obedient Faith

1Jn 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

1Jn 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

1Jn 1:7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

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Christians Must First Be Unified With God By Grace Through Obedient Faith

1Jn 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1Jn 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

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Christians Must First Be Unified With God By Grace Through Obedient Faith

1Jn 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

1Jn 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

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There Is No Centralized Human Authority To Enforce Church Unity

- Many churches are bodies of local churches unified by centralized earthly authorities like the Roman Catholic Pope
- But, the New Testament is clear, there is no centralized earthly authority to enforce the unity of local churches
- Jesus as Head of His one church rules through the apostles' teaching as each Christian obeys with each local church independently guided by that teaching

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There Is No Centralized Human Authority To Enforce Church Unity

Act 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

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There Is No Centralized Human Authority To Enforce Church Unity

2Th 2:15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

2Pe 1:12 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.

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There Is No Centralized Human Authority To Enforce Church Unity

2Pe 1:13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

2Pe 1:14 knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

2Pe 1:15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

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There Is No Centralized Human Authority To Enforce Church Unity

Act 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

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We Must Seek To Live Consistently With What We Believe His Word Teaches

Php 3:12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Php 3:13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

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We Must Seek To Live Consistently With What We Believe His Word Teaches

Php 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Php 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

Php 3:16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

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We Must Seek To Live Consistently With What We Believe His Word Teaches

Act 18:24 Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.

Act 18:25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

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We Must Seek To Live Consistently With What We Believe His Word Teaches

Act 18:26 and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

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We Must Seek To Live Consistently With What We Believe His Word Teaches

Act 18:27 And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,

Act 18:28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

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The Unity of The Church

1. Jesus prays for unity
2. The nature of unity
3. The standard of unity
4. Attitudes needed for unity
5. Principles needed for unity

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Principles Needed For Unity

1. Christians must first be unified with God by grace through obedient faith
2. There is no centralized human authority to enforce church unity
3. We must seek to live consistently with what we believe His word teaches

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Study and Teach With Patience and Love Allowing Others To Grow

Eph 4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Eph 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,

Eph 4:3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

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Distinguish Between Sinful and Righteous Division

- Many times some spread division in local churches for unrighteous reasons such as promoting false teachings, gathering a following for themselves, promoting opinions as truth and being impatient in teaching others the truth
- When we differ on essential matters after much study, especially in matters we must agree with as a local church, then we must divide in order to stay unified with God

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Division Is Sinful When Promoting False Teachings

Rom 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

Rom 16:18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

95

Division Is Sinful To Create Followers of Men

Act 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Act 20:29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

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Division Is Sinful To Creates Followers of Men

Act 20:30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Act 20:31 "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

97

Division Is Sinful When Promoting Opinions As Essential Truth

Rom 14:1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.

Rom 14:2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.

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Division Is Sinful When Promoting Opinions As Essential Truth

Rom 14:3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

Rom 14:4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

99

Division Is Sinful When Promoting Opinions As Essential Truth

Rom 14:5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

Rom 14:6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

100

Division Is Sinful When Promoting Opinions As Essential Truth

Rom 14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this-- not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

Rom 14:14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

101

Division Is Sinful When Promoting Opinions As Essential Truth

Rom 14:15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

Rom 14:20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

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Division Is Sinful When Promoting Opinions As Essential Truth

Rom 14:21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.

Rom 14:22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

103

Division Is Sinful When Promoting Opinions As Essential Truth

Rom 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

104

Division Is Sinful When Not Patiently Teaching The Truth

Heb 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

105

Division Is Sinful When Not Patiently Teaching The Truth

Heb 5:13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

106

Division Is Righteous After Patient Study To Uphold Truth and Stand Against Error

1Co 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

107

Division Is Righteous After Patient Study To Uphold Truth and Stand Against Error

1Co 11:18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.

1Co 11:19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

108

Division Is Righteous After Patient Study To Uphold Truth and Stand Against Error

Gal 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

Gal 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Gal 5:2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.

109

Division Is Righteous After Patient Study To Uphold Truth and Stand Against Error

Gal 5:3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

Gal 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

110

Universal Church Unity Does Not Depend On All Local Churches Being Unified

Rev 3:1 "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

Rev 3:2 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.

111

Universal Church Unity Does Not Depend On All Local Churches Being Unified

Rev 3:3 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

Rev 3:4 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

112

Universal Church Unity Does Not Depend On All Local Churches Being Unified

Rev 3:5 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Rev 3:6 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

113

Principles Needed For Unity

1. Christians must first be unified with God by grace through obedient faith
2. There is no centralized human authority to enforce church unity
3. We must seek to live consistently with what we believe His word teaches
4. Study and teach with patience and love allowing others to grow

114

Principles Needed For Unity

5. Distinguish between sinful and righteous division
6. Universal church unity does not depend on all local churches being unified

115

Unity Results In Following The Apostles' Teaching and Love

Joh 17:20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

Joh 17:21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

116

Unity Results In Following The Apostles' Teaching and Love

Joh 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Joh 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

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Unity Results In Following The Apostles' Teaching and Love

Act 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."

Act 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

118

Unity Results In Following The Apostles' Teaching and Love

Act 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

119

Unity Results In Following The Apostles' Teaching and Love

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Act 2:44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

Act 2:45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

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Unity Results In Following The Apostles' Teaching and Love

Act 2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

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The Unity of The Church

1. Jesus prays for unity
2. The nature of unity
3. The standard of unity
4. Attitudes needed for unity
5. Principles needed for unity
6. Results of unity

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