

Unity – A key to experiencing God's blessing in our lives



In the book of Psalms we read,

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing –Life forevermore.” **(Psalm 133:1-3)**

- God's heart is to see our churches and homes being blessed



- Together we can achieve much. One will put a thousand to flight but two, ten thousand to flight (***Deuteronomy 32:30; Leviticus 26:8***)
- We all need one another in the Body of Christ
- **We are better together. A loving unified local network of churches can help to bring transformation to our cities**

Jesus Himself emphasised the importance of unity when He said, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, *that the world may believe that You sent Me*. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” (John 17:20-23)



- **UNITY IS CRUCIAL IN EVERY SPHERE OF LIFE**
- All successful sporting teams have invariably been characterized by the existence of great unity between the team members
- Successful businesses have also had the ability to maintain unity by creating a happy and harmonious work environment
- On the other hand political parties have lost elections because of disunity amongst its members



- A loving unified local church has the potential to make a great eternal impact on it's community as all members work together in unity and are ENCOURAGED to use their spiritual gifts



- Because of the potential of a church to help bring transformation to a community the enemy, the Devil, will continually be trying to sow strife and discord amongst it's members to undermine it's impact on the community

- Working together in unity is a great key to seeing God's blessing upon our lives, families and churches as we work together in unity to help see our communities turn to Christ
- For this reason the Devil will try and sow discord in our homes and fellowships *to stop us from experiencing God's blessings* and favour upon our lives and families
- Jesus also warned of the consequences of disunity



Jesus Himself said,

“Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.” (Matthew 12:25)



- Given the blessings that come from unity and the consequences of disunity, how important it is that each one of us has a heart to promote unity in our homes and church fellowships

In an atmosphere of love and unity;

- **We can be encouraged to become all that God has planned for our life**
- We can see God's blessing upon our lives and church fellowships as we work together. We are better together
- **We can experience God's peace and tangible presence in a greater way, and**
- We create an environment in which people can grow in their faith as they enjoy the blessings of being part of a church family

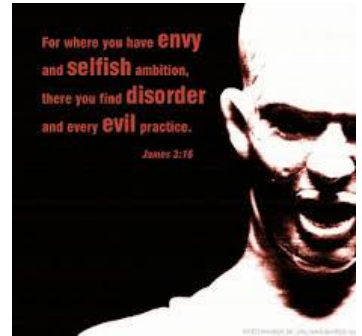


- **A chain is only as strong as it's weakest link**
- It only takes one person to create strife in our homes or church fellowships to see God's favour and blessing begin to lift of our lives
- In this teaching I will be looking at how we can both ***corporately as a church*** and ***individually*** contribute to creating an atmosphere of love and unity in our church fellowship meetings, so that we can experience God's commanded blessing upon our lives and church and homes in the days to come



I will first begin by looking at three major causes of disunity

1) When people have selfish ambition



In the book of James we read, “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” (James 3:13-16)

2) When people are easily offended by others because of a spirit of rejection

- People who suffer from rejection are invariably very defensive and contentious and often wrongly perceive that others are rejecting them

Jesus Himself said in relation to the times that we are now living in,

“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. **(Matthew 24:10-11) AND**



3) When we have undealt with issues from the past that still affect us today. (Particularly offences that relate to past experiences)

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, *and by this many become defiled;*” (Hebrews 12:14-15)



I will now share some keys as a church to seeing unity in our fellowship meetings

1. The importance of having a church of disciples who have died to self and who live for others



- A church full of converts will be more prone to having relational issues and conflict
- A convert is still easily offended and more prone to feeling rejected by others
- A disciple however has an understanding of the importance of living for others

Jesus Himself emphasised the importance of helping all believers to become disciples in His great commission when He said to His disciples,

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”

(Matthew 28:19-20)



2) Having a church community where people have a genuine love for others

- People thrive in an atmosphere of love and acceptance
- We need to continually look for the best in others and openly appreciate what others do for us in our church fellowship
- Where there is a mutual love and respect for one another we will *experience unity*, be it in our church fellowship, homes or workplaces



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another;” (Romans 12:9-10)



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“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us...”

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Jesus Himself said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” **(John 13:34-35)**



- **It is our *genuine* love for other believers that will be our greatest witness to the unsaved world**
- Loving our brothers and sisters in the Lord is a great key to promoting unity in our church meetings



3) Helping to create a culture in our church where we actively look at encouraging others

- Encouragement helps people to grow strong in their faith and to realise their full potential in life
- Encouragement helps people to feel valued and appreciated in life
- Encouragement helps to create an atmosphere of love and acceptance which is a great key to seeing unity in our homes and churches



In the book of Proverbs we read,
“A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and
a word spoken in due season, how good it is!”
(Proverbs 15:23)



In the book of Hebrews we read,
“And let us *consider one another* in order to stir
up love and good works, not forsaking the
assembling of ourselves together, as is the
manner of some, but exhorting one another,
and so much the more as you see the Day
approaching.” **(Hebrews 10:24-25) AND**

4) The importance of creating an atmosphere of true worship in our church meetings

- God inhabits the praises of His people
- Worship helps us to connect with the heart of God and to gain His love and compassion for others
- True worshipers will invariably have God's love and concern for others. A great key to unity



This is why Jesus said to the Samaritan women,
“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the
true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit
and truth; for the Father is seeking such to
worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who
worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
(John 4:23-24)



King David wrote,

**“Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall
give you the desires of your heart.”**

(Psalm 37:4)



So finally how can we individually grow in Christlike character AND become people who help to promote unity in our homes and church fellowship

1) That we continually choose to esteem others better than ourselves

- This is a great key to dying to self and to crucifying any selfish ambition in our life. As Christians we have been called to lay down our lives for others
- Problems always occur when we begin to think too much about what we want in life



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

(Philippians 2:3)



2) That we are continually quick to forgive those who hurt us

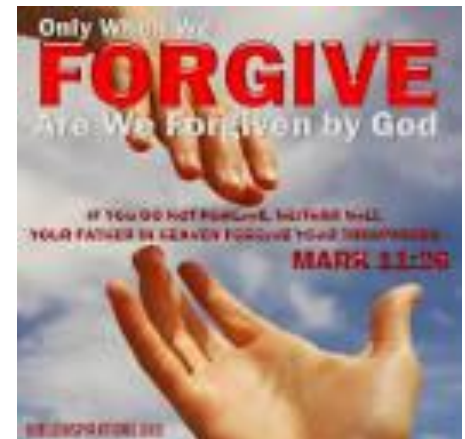


- We will be given many opportunities to be offended in life. We are all imperfect people
- We must simply refuse to take on offences and be always quick to forgive others
- As Christians when we choose to forgive others the Holy Spirit will give us the ability to do so



This is why Jesus Himself said,

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25-26)



3) That we once and for all let go of our past disappointments, failures and hurts

- Continually dwelling on the past will negatively affect our ability to contribute to the development of healthy Christian community
- The enemy will continually work on magnifying the issues of the past to try and cause us to react in a way that can cause strife
- This is why we must choose to let the past go



This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,
“Not that I have already attained, or am
already perfected; but I press on, that I may
lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also
laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count
myself to have apprehended; **but one thing I**
do, *forgetting* those things which are behind
and reaching forward to those things which
are ahead, I press toward the
goal for the prize of the upward
call of God in Christ Jesus.”
(Philippians 3:12-14)



4) We must refuse to engage in gossip and the slander of others

- Gossiping about others has the potential to cause great contention and divisions within a church fellowship
- No one likes to be spoken of negatively behind their backs
- We must simply refuse to engage in gossip when others are looking at doing so. We must simply close the door to disunity by refusing to gossip about or to slander others



In the book of Proverbs we read,
“A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer
separates the best of friends.” **(Proverbs 16:28)**

“Where there is no wood, the fire goes out;
And where there is no talebearers, strife
ceases.” **(Proverbs 26:20)**



5) Continually renewing our mind with the word of God so that we develop Kingdom thinking

- Consistently meditating on the word of God will help us to develop a right thought life
- We need to allow the word of God to go from our head to our heart
- The more we saturate ourselves with the word of God the more Christlike we will become in the way that we relate to others



- Particularly given the fact that the ways of the world are now so different to the ways of God, more than ever before we need to be spending quality time in God's word so that we continually love and respect others in a way that the bible instructs us to do so

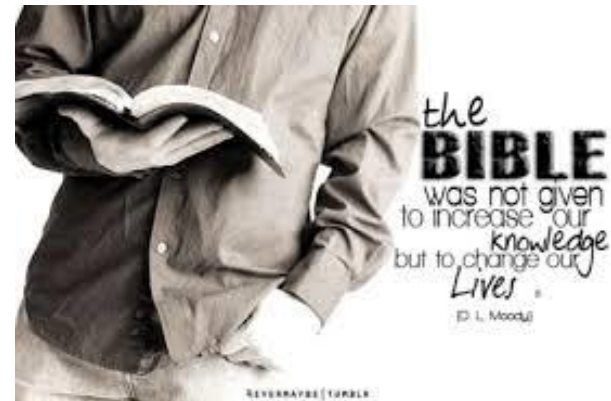
- The Apostle Paul wrote about the perilous times that we are now living in where people would be “unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,” **(2 Timothy 3:3)**



For this reason the Apostle Paul also wrote,

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)



- Being both hearers and doers of God's word will help us to live in a way where we promote unity wherever we are



In the book of Joshua we read,

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)

In the book of Psalms we read,

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:9-11)



AND

6) Continually choosing to walk in the Spirit

- Being continually filled with the Holy Spirit empowers us to more easily walk in the Spirit
- We must simply continually choose to say no to reacting in the flesh when relating to others and simply chose to walk in the Spirit and in love towards others
- When we learn to walk in the Spirit we will help to promote unity in our homes and church meetings



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

(Galatians 5:14-16)



The Apostle Paul also wrote,

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,” (Ephesians 5:18)



“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

- **It is so important that we learn to continually walk in the Spirit as believers**

**I will finish with the words of the Apostle Paul,
“Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete.
Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in
peace; and the God of love and peace will be
with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11)**

