

Unity of Faith and Understanding

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

1 John 1:7

Unity

Unique trait of God's Children

- Apostle John linked:
 - personal endeavor of faith (“we walk in the light”)
 - to both the Word (“as he is in the light”)
 - and to life and unity in the Congregation (“fellowship one with another”)
 - wherein “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin”

Unity

Personal Endeavor in Faith

- What is the status of my own relationship to God and His Kingdom?
 - Personal Faith
 - Word of God
 - Kingdom of God
 - here on earth
 - one saving faith

Unity

Personal Endeavor in Faith

- Apostle John wrote:
- “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Revelation 21:3
- One must also believe, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, that it is united in body, Spirit, the hope of salvation and faith. Ephesians 4:4, 5

Unity

Personal Endeavor in Faith

- Christ exhorted
- “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” Matthew 6:33”
- The Standard of Truth to which we must go back to compare all doctrine and thought is the Word of God for it is unchanging. Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh, is “the same yesterday and today and forever.” Hebrews 13:8 The Word is eternal truth and as such does not change with the times or norms of society.

Threats to Unity

- “Adversary the Devil”
- History shows that our “adversary the devil” 1 Peter 5:8 works diligently to destroy our unity and peace by causing division. If discontent over the understandings or decisions of God’s kingdom continue long enough heresy can be the result.

Threats to Unity

- Desire for Change and Choice - a common cause for disunity and eventually heresy.
- We live in a time that emphasizes individuality and personal freedoms, one result of which is the thought that each individual has the right to define their own concept of right and wrong regardless of the teaching of God's Word and kingdom.
 - TV
 - Birth control issues
 - Cosmetics
 - Divorce

Threats to Unity

- Danger of Carnal Mindedness
 - Apostle James writes:
 - “every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:13. 14
 - The fall of Adam and Eve - Satan posed the question, “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

Threats to Unity

- Satan promised a level of knowledge and understanding equal to God. Eve and then Adam ate of the tree and the Fall of Man into unbelief was accomplished. Throughout time the enemy has worked in the same way and with the same results. Carnal mindedness is the application of human reason to spiritual issues with no regard to the Word of God or teachings of the Holy Spirit within the congregation.

Threats to Unity

- What happens when carnal mindedness prevails in a congregation?
 - Examples from Scripture:
 - Corinth
 - evaluating servants gifts
 - eating meats sacrificed to idols
 - moral laxity
 - confusion concerning resurrection of the dead
 - abuses during celebration of the Lord's Holy Supper

Threats to Unity

- Rome
 - dissension between Jewish and Gentile believers concerning eating of meat.
 - Paul reminded the Roman believers, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”
- Example from North America - heresy of the 1970's:
 - Carnal reasoning prevailed
 - birth control
 - movies

Threats to Unity

- TV in the home
- believers courting unbelievers
- sports
- fornication
- and generally seeing how far one could go and still be considered “in faith”.
- Many fell away into sins of the flesh.
- Others fell into self-righteousness or law-mindedness.

Remaining in Unity of Faith and Understanding

- Personal watching and soul care. Make new promises to be faithful to Him who has called us.
- “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Rev. 2:29
- It is the house of God, the church of the living God, that is the pillar and ground of truth, and not our individual conscience, the norms of society or our own opinions.
- “Finally, my brethren be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”