

## Unity - Ron Stullenbarger -

Jesus says in John 17:20-21, *"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."*

We were created for unity with fellow believers. It's in the pursuit of unity that the bonds of selfishness and pride are often broken. It's in the surrender of opinion and selfish ambition that we find the abundant life that comes through sacrificial living. And most importantly, it's in unity that Jesus is most glorified.

Unity between two humans is only truly possible by the working of the Holy Spirit. Apart from God dwelling and transforming man, we will never be able to live sacrificially with any level of consistency. It's for that reason that Jesus is so glorified through our unity. And it's for that reason that pursuing unity between believers is of the utmost importance.

What are we declaring to the world when we bicker, slander, and give up on unity with fellow believers? Why would the lost want anything to do with a group of dramatic, hateful, judgmental, and selfish Christians? Christ has charged us with the command to be His hands and feet. He's commanded us to make disciples. And our ministry is nothing without love. When we pursue our own pride and gain over unity, we are directly disobeying the commandments of Scripture. When we allow strife and pride to place barriers between us, we hurt the cause of Christ to which we are all called.

Scripture is clear in its command to pursue unity. Unity isn't a suggestion that we don't have to adhere to because people can be difficult. It's a command straight from God, and it's of the highest importance. Ephesians 4:1-3 says, *"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* Romans 12:16 says, *"Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion."* And 2 Corinthians 13:11 says, *"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."*

We are called to be a carrier of peace. The Holy Spirit dwelling within us longs to make us a person who pursues restoration, comfort, agreement, and peace with fellow believers. He longs to fill us with love, honor, patience, and respect for the fellow believers He has placed in our midst. When we feel dissension arise within us, we choose to serve your brother or sister out of reverence for God. We choose to pursue peace at all costs. And in doing so we will bring glory to Jesus and declare to the world the wonderful transformation that comes only through salvation in Him.