

Unity in Our God **- Ron Stullenbarger -**

God wants us to have unity with fellow believers. It is in the pursuit of unity that the bonds of selfishness and pride are often broken. It is in the surrender of opinion and selfish ambition that we find the abundant life that comes through sacrificial living. And most importantly, it is in unity that Jesus is most glorified.

Jesus says in John 17:10-11, *"All things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. 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."* (All quotes NASB) 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 is for that reason that Jesus is so glorified through our unity. And it is 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 has commanded us to make disciples. And our ministry is nothing without love (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3). 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 is not a suggestion that we don't have to follow because people can be difficult. It is a command straight from God, and it is of the highest importance. Ephesians 4:1-3 says, *"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* Romans 12:16 says, *"Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation."* And 2 Corinthians 13:11 says, *"Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you."*

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