



Berean Christian Fellowship

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Unity in the Spirit

“Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

Unity is difficult. God creates each person uniquely. We all process differently what happens to us in this life. There are different ways of reacting to the terrible effects of the fallen nature and how the sin nature plays on our unique design—we are tempted differently, our thoughts react differently, and we handle our emotions differently. Yet, as Believers we are all bound together by something in common—the Spirit of God that dwells in each of us. The Spirit is ONE and the same in each of us. It is only by the Spirit that we can maintain healthy unity in our marriages, families, and in the Church—so that we *“may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us”* (John 17:21a).

Yet, while that Spirit is one and the same between us, we may be at different places in our physical and spiritual maturity, our struggles with temptations, our natural, hard-wired reaction to trials—we react differently and there can be friction between us. When Paul opposed Peter *“to his face”* (Gal. 2:11a) at Antioch, was the Spirit opposing the Spirit? No. Peter had allowed his human understanding and prejudices to get in the way of what the Spirit was teaching, and Paul convicted him. Discord comes from our human natures and not from the Spirit. There is no discord in the Spirit because *“we were all made to drink of one Spirit”* (1 Cor. 12:13). *“There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit”* (1 Cor. 12:4).

The Spirit is at work in us where we are at, sometimes dealing with the essentials, sometimes working deeper. As the Church wrote to new Believers in Antioch, *“it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you*

abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication” (Acts 15:29a). Is this all the Spirit has to teach us? No, but it was all they could bear at the time. His present work in us may be different from His work in others around us, and sometimes this may give the appearance of disunity in the Body, but the Spirit is simply feeding some of us milk and others meat (1 Cor. 3:1-3). Not that this is always an issue of maturity either, but maybe it is our present condition—just as a healthy person can eat a steak dinner heartily, but someone sick or in pain can only take simple food and a little at a time. *“One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills”* (1 Cor. 12:11). Our temptation is to try and conform everyone to fit our gifts, our maturity, our present condition—we try to make them in our image of Christ. The Spirit, however, gently molds us all to conform to the true *“image”* (Rom. 8:29a) of Jesus at a pace we each can bear.

Yet, the purpose and desire of the Spirit is the same across all Believers: greater maturity in the knowledge of God and deeper unity to Christ and His Body. Unity in the Believing marriage, family, and Body can only be maintained by submitting ourselves to the will of the Spirit which brought us into unity and oneness in Christ in the first place. As Believers, we all share *“the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit”* (2 Cor. 13:14). Our chief aim and greatest desire should not be to *“grieve”* (Eph. 4:30) or *“quench”* (1 Thess. 5:19) the Spirit’s work by our natural interactions and reactions to this life, but to submit more deeply to the Spirit and so come into greater fellowship and oneness with the Lord and one another. *“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”* (Rom. 8:14). Even so, Amen.

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