

## The Basis Of Unity

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Our Lord's desire for His people was total unity. He prayed, *"I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me"* (**John 17:20-21**). We are all a part of this prayer because we have come to know Christ through the words of His apostles. In their writing, we can know the mystery of grace given to the Gentiles (**Ephesians 3:1-10**). Their words carry the authority of Christ Himself (**2 Peter 3:2**) and their work serves as the foundation of the *"household of God"* (**Ephesians 2:19-20**), Christ Himself being the chief corner stone in that structure. We are unified as one household, one building. We are not many buildings, since Christ is the corner stone of His church only. The basis of our unity is found in the words of **Ephesians 4:1-6**:

*"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."*

This passage is not mere sentiment, either. Rather than seeing unity as a vague concept, God expects it to penetrate every aspect of our lives in a practical way. Our quest for unity should come with a hefty dose of patience and humility – often lacking in much of the debating that happens between brothers and sisters in Christ. We are usually more interested in winning an argument than being truly *right* about a subject. There is to be diligence in our preservation of unity because it is so easily lost when personal allegiance or ambition interfere. Unity takes work and genuine compromise (not the compromise of the world, however, that dumbs down the gospel to the lowest common denominator). Our bond? Peace. The object of our faith? The one and only God. Notice also that there are not many bodies making up the church, but one body. There are not many hopes, but one hope. There are not many ways to get baptized, but one.

According to the above passage, true Biblical unity cannot be achieved through inclusion of all ideas and paths, but through exclusion of all that is outside of God's one will. *"What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father...If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light (practice the truth) as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another..."* (**1 John 1:3-7**). Our willingness to practice truth is the basis of both fellowship with God and each other!