

## The authority of Christ's word is the basis for unity among His followers

One of the most obvious things in the New Testament is that Jesus desired that those who profess to be His followers should be unified in their faith and practice (Jn. 17:20,21). But it is equally obvious that the world of so-called “Christendom” is not unified today. There are literally hundreds of different groups of congregations, each with distinctive doctrines that set them apart from all others. These disagreements over even the fundamentals of the faith cannot be pleasing to Jesus Christ. But what can be done about it? What kind of unity would the Lord have us pursue?

Some try to achieve unity by simply saying that the differences are not important. This approach basically says that there is room in the Lord's church for people to believe whatever they feel like believing, even on the most important subjects. But while “agreeing to disagree” produces union, it does not produce the kind of unity that the Lord desires. Truth is not simply anything we want it to be. It makes a significant difference what we believe and practice (1 Tim. 4:1,2; 2 Tim. 4:3,4; etc.), and the differences that divide “Christendom” cannot be ignored.

In Jesus' prayer for His disciples, He prayed that they might be “sanctified,” or “made distinctive,” by the truth: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (Jn. 17:17). This is the only worthy way to gather the Lord's people together and make them distinctive. ***The authority of Christ's word is the basis for unity among His followers.*** We need to diligently and reverently submit all of our differences to Christ's teaching and seek to reach a common understanding of what His will is. This is hard, time-consuming work, but the results are worth it.

If we individually grow closer to God, based upon the truth of His word, we will obviously be growing closer to one another in the process. Among human beings, it doesn't matter so much who is right — it only matters what is right. Whatever the differences may be, the main thing that we must decide is what the Lord's will is. When we discover His will and do it, we will enjoy among ourselves the kind of unity that Jesus prayed for. Throughout the coming week, therefore, let's consider the importance of growing in unity by growing in the truth. In all things, our goal should be to grow toward “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

### Monday: Romans 16:16

**Key Idea:** In the New Testament, congregations were simply the “churches of Christ.”

**Questions for Family Growth:** What things would have to be true in order for a congregation to be “of Christ”? In the New Testament, were there any denominational groups that held to different doctrines and practices?

**Wisdom for the Day:** Proverbs 27:5.

## Tuesday: 1 Timothy 4:1,2

**Key Idea:** It was predicted in the New Testament that some would depart from the faith.

**Questions for Family Growth:** What is “the faith” that is spoken of in this text? What does it mean to “depart” from the faith? If an individual departs from the faith, is he still “of Christ”? What about a congregation? What did Jesus say to the church in Ephesus in [Rev. 2:5](#)?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 27:6](#).

## Wednesday: John 17:20,21

**Key Idea:** Jesus prayed for unity among those who would profess to be His followers.

**Questions for Family Growth:** According to [v.21](#), what is one important reason why Jesus desired unity among His followers? Back in [v.17](#), what did Jesus pray that His followers might be “sanctified” in? In this context, what does it mean to be “sanctified”?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 27:7](#).

## Thursday: 1 Corinthians 1:10

**Key Idea:** We ought to seek agreement and strive for a unity that is based upon God’s truth.

**Questions for Family Growth:** What apparently was the situation in the church in Corinth? Consider [vv.11-13](#). What is the appeal that Paul made to the members of the congregation in [v.10](#)? In our congregations today, how can we “be united in the same mind and the same judgment”?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 27:8](#).

## Friday: Colossians 3:17

**Key Idea:** Our aim ought to be that we will do everything by the Lord’s authority.

**Questions for Family Growth:** What does it mean to do something “in the name of the Lord Jesus”? If we strive to do everything in the Lord’s name, how does that produce unity among Christians? What is said about unity in [Eph. 4:1-6](#)?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 27:9](#).

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