

LESSON XXVII—UNITY, AN INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION

I. Endeavoring To Keep the Unity of the Spirit In the Bonds of Peace: (Eph. 4:3).

"Endeavor demands a positive effort upon the part of each Christian to make a definite contribution toward Unity. Peace is an essential requisite of Unity. However, it is well to keep in mind that peace is not to be bought by the sacrifice of Truth or compromise with sin (Matt. 10:34).

II. The Importance of Unity Is Seen in That Depending Upon It:

1. An unobstructed plea for Unity cannot be made to the denominational world when division exists within the Church. The consistency of our plea for unity, then, depends upon our maintaining unity.
2. The strength and influence of the Church against false doctrines and sin is destroyed by a lack of peace and unity in the Church.
3. The successful accomplishment of the mission of the Church depends upon the right measure of co-operation. Division makes co-operation impossible and robs the Church of strength in fulfilling its mission.
4. Moreover, the acceptability of Christian Worship depends upon members of the Church holding the right attitude toward each other.
 - a. The power of unity in prayer (Matt. 18:19-20).
 - b. The hope of forgiveness (Matt. 6:12, 14-15).
 - c. The acceptability of our sacrifice and service depends upon our effort to be at peace with our brethren (Matt. 5:22-26).

III. Things That Destroy Unity in the Church:

1. Selfishness (Phil. 2:3-5). This attitude means a lack of love for Christ and His Cause; a headstrong desire to have our own way; a failure to regard the rights of others.
2. Speculative and hobbyistic teaching (Titus 2:7; 3:9-11; II Tim. 2:14; II Pet. 1:16 to 2:2).
3. Uncontrolled tongues (Jas. 3:5-12).
4. Peevishness - being easily provoked - love will not allow such a disposition (I Cor. 13:5).

IV. Means of Promoting Unity:

1. Generosity, self-sacrifice, willingness to give over in matters of judgment (Phil. 2:3-5; Rom. 12:3-5, 16:19).
2. Unity in Faith and Teaching - "Speak the Same Things" (I Cor. 1:10).
3. Be at peace with all men, insofar as possible (Rom. 12:18-21). Refuse to become a party to ill-feeling.

4. The characteristics of love will enforce Unity (I Cor. 13:4-7).
5. Genuine love for the Lord and His Church; refusing to allow the Body of Christ to be divided (I Cor. 1:10); "Let there be no divisions among you."

Conclusion: To preserve and promote Unity — Practice I Cor. 1:10:

1. Speak the same things.
2. Allow no divisions among you.
3. Be perfected together in the same mind and judgment.

Questions For Discussion

1. Define the word "endeavor"; what are all Christians to do?
2. What is the price sometimes paid for peace?
3. How does division "within" hamper the Church's plea for unity?
4. How does division hamper co-operation of the members of the Church?
5. What must be the attitude of members of the Church toward each other if the worship is to be acceptable?
6. Name some things that destroy the unity of the Church?
7. How may unity be promoted?
8. Give a summary of the lesson.
9. What are the three rules of I Cor. 1:10 for the promotion and preservation of unity?