

Promoting Church Unity *(Are we ready to live for Christ?)*

A Life Goal: (Unity in the Church)

The importance of a church having a good reputation is based on its pastor, leaders and members being biblically literate, Scripture cannot be compromised, the church must live out the truth of the Scriptures that we claim to love so deeply. This action of building a reputation must start with sound doctrine. All must desire to seek God's truth as outlined in Scripture. Members acting on God's truth will promote church unity and effectiveness.

What is the importance of a churches reputation in regards to it's mission?

What was true in the Corinthian church was the fact that they had a shallow understanding of the Scriptures, and we shouldn't be surprised that this fact is true in our day and this comes from the fact that we live in an era of cultural religion that values tolerance above truth. The reigning cliché of our day is “we must not be judgmental.” In this context, judging means believing that something is ultimately true and drawing a conclusion that other facts are false. When people hold foggy, subjective notions of right and wrong, they are more likely to fall prey to unbiblical ideas.

We see that Paul opened his letter to the Corinthians by urging them to be united, stating that he had received a report about petty factions within the church. The Corinthians main problem wasn't a misunderstanding of salvation but rather factions in the church favoring one leader over another. This occurred because churches in this era often had a stream of messengers visiting them. Sometimes these visiting messengers presented differing messages. Paul emphasized that a renewed focus solely on Christ and His message was the solution to their problems. Paul's standard for unity was the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Focusing on Christ and His purpose helps take the focus off individual believers own preferences and desires. (How was Paul going to do this)

This would be accomplished not by a clever sales pitch based on human wisdom but that the people must be open to the Spirit's teaching again. By dividing into factions, the believers in Corinth were acting as worldly rather than spiritual people. They needed to realize that they were God's sanctuary (Where God's Spirit dwells, pg. 17)) and that God would judge the way they built on the foundation of faith in Christ. (Read verse 10) Paul's exhortation consisted of four related expressions of agreement:

1. Members needed to say the same thing.
2. Have no divisions.
3. Be unified around the same understanding.
4. Be united in the same conviction.

We promote our churches' unity when we reject efforts to divide us and focus on having the same frame of mind and purpose.

Now Paul digs deep into the source of the problem. At this point we bring in the study questions to set the foundation of faith in Christ that will promote church unity. (Read 1 Cor. 1:21-25)

Q. How did unbelieving Jews and Gentiles respond to the message of Christ crucified? (1 Cor.1:23)

A. **Unbelieving Jews stumbled over the crucifixion; unbelieving Gentiles considered it foolish.**

God's Son becoming a human and dying on a cross for sins of humanity sounded foolish to the Greeks. Moreover, the idea of Jesus' resurrection from the dead seemed ridiculous to them.

(Elaborate in detail from pg.16,17,18)

(Read 1 Cor. 1:26-31)

Q. In whom alone can Christians appropriately boast? (1 Cor. 1:31)

A. *Christians should boast only in the Lord.*

Paul's aim was to show that we can only boast in the Lord. We cannot boast in anything we have been given, If we are to boast, we must boast of the Giver. The solution is to focus exclusively on God's work in our lives and not on our status in the world.

(Elaborate in detail from pg. 19)

Q. What did Paul say God would do to those who ruin or pollute the church? (1 Cor. 3:17)

A. *God will ruin them.*

The church belongs to God. We must do nothing to compromise a church's unity and effectiveness.

These questions show us the importance of searching the Scriptures for God's answers.

(Elaborate in detail pg. 20)

The authority behind the apostles's appeal came from the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only One--then and now--who can establish that spiritual bond among believers. You see its all about the Scriptures, if we do not search the Scriptures how are we to know about the authority of Jesus Christ.

Corinthian Church

Agreement

Salvation
Meeting together

Problems

Didn't Think They Had Any

Paul arrives on scene

Plan of Action

Proclaims Sound Doctrine
Depend on the Holy Spirit
Focus Solely On Christ
Say Same Thing
No Divisions
Unified Around Same Understanding
Same Conviction
Do Nothing That Would Ruin God's Sanctuary

Problems identified

Factions In The Church
Poor Leadership
Outside Influences
Biblically Illiterate

