

Can we have unity without separation?

There must be clear distinctions drawn between what is truly biblical and what is unbiblical and false teaching through integration and secular principles.

If we are going to have the mind of Christ it must be unequivocal and there can be no compromise Mark 12:24, Deut. 12:29

What you think will determine how you live. Phil 1:27

A. The Thessalonians example: Unifying activities

1. They united to Christ embraced Christian practices. 1Thess 1:2-10
2. They separated from former Pagan and Heathen practices and worship.
3. They embraced the Word.
4. Through the Holy Spirit
5. Full conviction

B. There were powerful changes.

1. They became imitators and examples.
2. Their lives changed radically, and they were different people.
3. Joy in the Spirit in affliction
4. They spread the gospel.
5. Many heard of their repentance and faith.

C. They counted the cost and it cost them.

1. Much affliction 1Thess 1:6
2. They endured and grew through persecutions, afflictions, suffering 2 Thess. 1:3-5.
3. During times of suffering: we need to insist counselees follow this example of turning to the word of God and to one another.

D. How did it affect their relationships to others who still embraced these practices?

We should understand the pressure from family, friends, Jews, economy.

E. We are going to be challenged by outside influences.

1. shaken and alarmed. 2Thess 2:2
2. Without clear and concise correction rebuke reproof and teaching, it will negatively affect the way you live. 2Thess 3:6-13

F. Paul's loving correction: Counsel unite by separating.

1. Keep away from any brother V6.
2. Take note of and have nothing to do with him V14.
3. That he may be ashamed V14
4. Self-interest V6
5. Idleness V7
6. Busybodies V11

G. Unite under the Apostles example

7. Selfless hard work ethic V10
8. Labor Toil V8
9. quietly earn your own living V12
10. Do not give up. V13

H. Example Timothy: Unity without compromise

1. Unite under the word, separate from a worldly agenda.
2. The unbeliever can, you cannot, you must turn to God's word. Separated holiness means a changed life, in the world, they are not going to change... you are! 2 Tim 3:10,14,4:5
3. Unity is not a majority: Broad way vs narrow way.
4. Unity has standards commitment and loyalty confession 1 John 1:9.

I. We are going to have to prepare our mind to face these challenges.

1. We are going to be challenged by the old man habits that we bring into our Christian life Eph. 4:17

2. We must be aware of our old man Pagan thinking we bring into our Christian life and understand it's corrupt desires will influence our thinking.
3. The scriptures: Jude 3-4
4. In our daily walk: Eph. 4:3 The 7 unities of the Spirit.
 - a) That struggles in our daily walk are somehow different than what scripture is about.
 - b) The absence of these virtues may endanger Christian unity. That is why Paul exhorts his readers to exert all their abilities to maintain this oneness in Christ that binds all believers to each other as they are bound by him and to him.
 - c) The verb (spoudazontes) suggests difficulty and a resolute determination to overcome it.
 - d) The "one Spirit" (v. 4) is the agent of unity. What Paul envisions is not "a vague spirituality or spiritual identity, but rather a profound oneness made possible by God's Spirit."

5. The local churches: How are they prepared and united? Acts 20:27-32
 - a) Forewarned of attacks to divide from within.
 - b) by Godly counsel: (See the Biblical counseling dynamic in this)
 - c) Commended to God:
 - d) The word of his grace:
 - e) Build you up:
 - f) Give you the inheritance: united as a family.

6. The world is unified under Satan's plan and following his agenda Eph. 2:2. Results in: Spiritual warfare 2 Thess. 3:1-5. How do you respond?
 - a) The character of God: God is faithful
 - b) the word of God: Draw close to his word.
 - c) the love of God: The Lord will direct your hearts to the Love of God.
 - d) The steadfastness of Christ

The worlds counsel "false teachers among you" 2 Peter 2:1-3

- a) Take you apart Secret/Private.
- b) They will teach you to deny Christ.
- c) embrace the sensual.
- d) Be successful attracting many followers.
- e) Blaspheme the truth.

- f) Charge you excessively out of their greed.
- g) Exploit you with false words.

7. Contrast with Paul's ministry 2 Cor 4:1-2

- a) Focus on God's mercy to you and never give up.
- b) Refuse disgraceful, underhanded ways.
- c) Refuse to practice cunning.
- d) Refuse to tamper with God's word.
- e) but by the open statement of the truth,
- f) we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.
Only answer to God for your counseling, he knows. 1 Cor. 4:1-5

Final thoughts:

1. If you are not repenting, you are not changing. 2 Cor.3:18
2. The Holy Spirit of God teaches the word of God to the child of God to bring about change in the life of the child of God.
3. Unity must have structure, methods, dynamics, systems, and goals. We find that in the person of Jesus Christ and the word of God.
4. Psychology has made inroads in the church, integration is trying to take over, this is not unity but a state of being multiple. *attachment*
5. 4 Truths to unite around we are: Complete Col.2:10, Authority, John 1:12, Powerful Eph. 1:19, Equipped. 2Tim 3:16

This is true of every born-again counselee you see regardless of their starting point.

The Thessalonians needed to get their relationship with Christ right, get their thinking right, get the unity in the church right.

They needed to learn how to "Think inside the book."