

We Are Christians, But Are We Unified?

Ephesians 4:13: (NASB) *Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*



Christian unity - it has such a reassuring sound to it. To be unified in Christ is to be in a position of not merely mutual acceptance but in a position of locking arms and co-laboring for the accomplishment of something far bigger than any one of us. The problem is the reality in which we live. There are so many approaches and opinions on what Christianity is and even stands for, the idea of unity gets lost in the confusion of doctrines and denominations. Is the state of Christianity supposed to be like this? What do the Scriptures say Christian unity really is and

what should we be doing to accomplish it? When do doctrine, character and tradition belong together, and when are there legitimate reasons for such things to divide?

The cooperative effort of geese flying in v-shaped formation is a practical example of unification. The geese in the back of the formation communicate by honking and encourage the others to keep going. When a goose drops out of the v-formation it quickly discovers that it requires a great deal more effort and energy to fly.

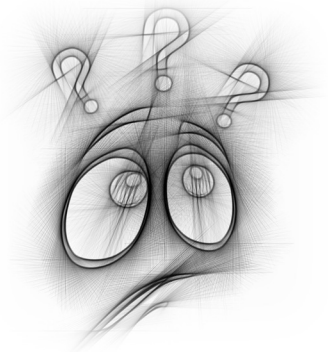
The audio clips will be referring to specific differences within Protestantism. These differences are some of the many reasons why Christians are not unified.

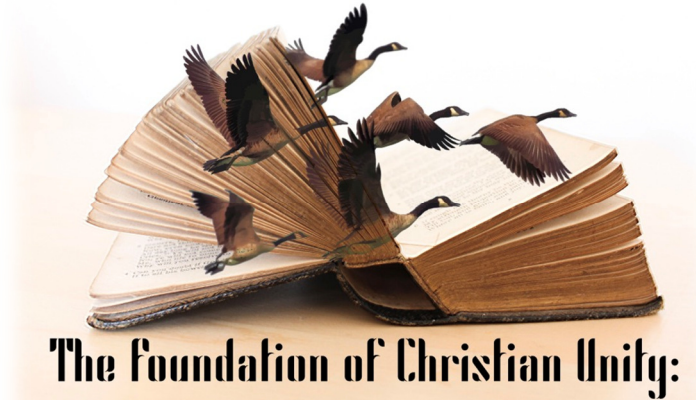
 **Church government, *What's the Difference Between Christian Denominations, Southern Seminary***

- *One of the fundamental sources of those denominational differences is the form of church government. Church government really is about who has responsibility under God to determine what is the shape of the word of God; that is, what does the word of God actually teach? What is theology - true theology? And so, these areas: theology, biblical interpretation, worship, ordinances, fellowship and governance are the areas that someone has to take authority for, and the different Protestants have had three different answers for that.*

There are differences in how church government should work. Have Christian seminaries taken on the role of "the authority," and are we supposed to go there for the truth? The question we should ask ourselves is how did they do it back in the New Testament? There were no seminaries. We are called to come into the school of Christ. Isn't everyone in the school of Christ?

Let's take a look at a scriptural foundation of what Christian unity is supposed to look like.





The foundation of Christian Unity:

There is no doubt we are called to a unified fellowship under Christ.

Jesus, on the last night of his earthly experience taught us repeatedly to be unified and serve one another:

John 13:12-17: (NASB) ¹²So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments and reclined at the table again, he said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. ¹⁶Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things; you are blessed if you do them.

Jesus was speaking to his followers about humble service.

Throughout the podcast we will be presenting several unity principles taught by Jesus on the last night before he died.

Look upon one another from the perspective of serving and then humbly serve.



Humble service is one of the principles of what true Christian unity is supposed to look like.

Service was only one part - we also need to have a significant reason for it:

John 15:12-15: (NASB) ¹²This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Jesus asked that we treat each other the way he treated us - through self-sacrifice and love.

Selfless love is the standard that elevates our lives from service to son-ship.





Service and love lead to standing apart from the world. Jesus prayed for all of his followers:

John 17:14-21: (NASB) ¹⁴I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. (To be sanctified means to be set apart for holy service.) ¹⁸As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in me through their word; ²¹that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in me and I in You, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that You sent me.



To successfully stand apart from the world, we must necessarily stand together.

The unity Jesus describes is deep and profound.
With such strong direction, why are we so confused?

Jesus' words to us truly are the foundation for the unity of all his disciples throughout all of the 2,000 years of the present age of the gospel. It is critical for us to remember that his words are only the beginning. The writings of the apostles clearly explain the challenges and pitfalls of Christian unity.



Baptism, What's the Difference Between Christian Denominations, Southern Seminary

- *Another fundamental source of difference between Protestant denominations has to do with who are the proper subjects of baptism. And most of the early Protestants believed, as the Roman Catholic Church believes, that infants should be baptized. That it's part of God's command. That Christian parents should have their children baptized in the church, and therefore that they should become church members through baptism. But even from the earliest days of Protestantism there were some that disagreed with that, who held that the Scriptures do not teach the baptism of infants, but rather teach that baptism is for those who profess their faith, so "believer's baptism" is what this is traditionally called.*

We believe the Scriptures emphatically teach that baptism is a believer's representation of their dedication to a life of sacrifice.

For more on this topic, please search our archives for Episode #1061 "How Many Baptisms are There?"

Where destruction is the motive, unity is dangerous. — Ravi Zacharias

THE PROTECTION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY:



Jesus foretold what would soon happen to his flock:

Matthew 7:13,15-16: (NASB) ¹³Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁵Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?

We do not want to be unified with those who are set out for the destruction of Christianity. *You will know them by their fruits.* We need to look at what are fruits of spirituality and what are fruits of humanness. Often the two are confused.



Beware of those who would come among us to feed upon us to our destruction.

Many have had their money, hope and faith taken from them because they are shattered from being mistreated in the name of Christ.

Not all danger to the unity of true Christianity comes from those who seek to destroy:

Romans 16:17-18: (NASB) ¹⁷Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. ¹⁸For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances - They are coming in to take advantage. They are selfish. Their smooth and flattering speech deceives innocent hearts. They want to milk Jesus' followers for all they are worth. Selfishness can wreak havoc with Christian principles.

Along these same lines, we also have the challenge of those who deceive through profound words and reasoning:

Colossians 2:8: (NASB) *See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.*

Beware of those who use Christianity as a cover for their own ego and gain.





Then there are those who will and have undermined the very fabric of genuine Christianity:

2 Peter 2:1-2: (NASB) *¹But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. ²Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;*

In their arrogance they bring in *destructive heresies*. Many doctrines were brought in from paganism to draw people in so the masses could be manipulated. Philosophies of the Dark Ages were brought forward, such as "indulgences" where people paid for previously-committed sins. Also, the concept of eternal torment (hell) was brought forward.

For more on this topic, please search our archives for episodes 1021, 1024 and 1027: "Is the Hell of Christian Tradition Taught in the Bible?" (Parts I, II and III)

We must beware of those who bring in destructive heresies that contradict the fabric of Christianity.

Beware of and stay away from pagan doctrines that have crept into the faith.



Do not bring the baggage of paganism into Christianity. The two do not belong together.

Finally, after dealing with the wolves in sheep's clothing, the selfish, the smart and the arrogant, we need to focus on being Christlike:

Ephesians 5:3-4,6-8: (NASB) *³But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting (such as off-color jokes), which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks... ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.*

Immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you - We must look in the mirror and ask, "Do we have these things come up in conversations about us?" If so, when the Scripture says, it is not *proper among saints*, it means it should not be found among us. Everyone who is a true Christian and follower of Christ is called a saint.

Beware of the simple temptation of low standards. This is just as insidious as following a false teacher.



In the face of all the traps we need to watch out for, what are the things we can do to build unity?

We are fortunate the Scriptures give us long lists of practices and principles to apply to the development of pure and lasting Christian unity. With the foundation Jesus gave us and applying the knowledge of surrounding pitfalls as we discussed previously, we can now earnestly go to the work of being unified.

"Christian unity" is not necessarily "people unity." It is not finding the lowest common denominator so we can all agree; it is finding the highest common denominator which we are all supposed to follow.



Signs and gifts, *What's the Difference Between Christian Denominations,* *Southern Seminary*

- *Another important source of difference among Protestants over the last 100 years has to do with the nature of the supernatural gifts - the extraordinary gifts or the sign gifts: speaking in tongues or working of miracles and the like. Protestants traditionally, with Catholics, have held that these were gifts given by Christ to the apostles, generally, and the Apostolic Age in order for the establishment of the Scriptures and of the church of Jesus Christ, but which he then no longer bestowed because the church and the word of God were established. In the early 20th century a number of Protestants began to look for a renewal of these extraordinary gifts in the church. And as several different episodes occurred in the first 10 years of the 20th century in America in which people experienced what they believe was speaking in tongues of one sort or another and they believed were gifts of healing and gifts of working miracles. And this began what we now call the Pentecostal movement.*

We agree that signs and gifts were only for a period of time to jumpstart Christianity.

How do we react when someone believes they are speaking in tongues? How can we be unified if we believe according to Scripture that it is not a spiritual gift and it is gibberish? There is a fundamental difference.

A family doesn't need to be perfect; it just needs to be united. — Unknown

THE BUILDING OF CHRISTIAN UNITY:



We must realize that although Peter and Paul did not work together side-by-side, they did clearly work for the same cause and ultimate goal:

2 Peter 3:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him (Peter is saying Paul's words were from God, not his own), wrote to you, ¹⁶as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. ¹⁷You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness.



Rejoice in the **FACT** that Jesus' apostles and the leaders of the early church faced the same kind of challenges and issues and stood together for the cause of Christ.

Theme text context - How to be unified:

Ephesians 4:1-6: (NASB) ¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Be the example you want to follow. **YOU** walk the walk, **YOU** display humility, **YOU** preserve the unity of the spirit. Why? Because there is only one true calling to Christ.



Continuing the theme context:

Ephesians 4:11-16: (NASB) ¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers - were given to us to build Christian unity. Our contribution must be toward the spiritual body of Christ and not a denomination.



The format for establishing true unity was set right at the beginning. True Christian leadership began with the Apostles and was funneled through the ecclesia, that is the church.

Our belief is we should do things the way they were done in the early church.

¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Our purpose is to cause the growth of the body by teamwork and working as a body in a unified effect under the headship of Jesus Christ.

We are to be unified in the Spirit of God, under the direction of competent and spiritual teachers (appointed in accordance with scriptural concepts) focused on God's truth, to all grow into contributing members of ONE body.





Assuming we follow the clear guidelines that we have in place, what other challenges might we face?

Even with all of these scriptural advantages in place, there is always another challenge and always another layer of complexity to overcome. You might say it gets personal now as our next issues have to do with our own issues and weaknesses regarding how we see and interpret scriptural principles.

Christian unity is built on God's Holy Spirit, not earthly things.

Nationality and language, *What's the Difference Between Christian Denominations, Southern Seminary*

- *One of the enduring sources of differences among Protestants is based upon the nationality and language. And this is natural, it's been this way at least since the third century, that as churches grew up, as people became believers, they tended to organize themselves into groups of churches is based upon the natural identities that they had of language and society and politics. And in the 16th and 17th centuries as Protestantism became so prominent in many parts of Europe, many of these Protestant churches became state churches. And so, the Lutheran Church was the state church of Germany. Anglicanism the Church of England - the State Church of England. Now these churches sometimes had other little differences but as they immigrated to the New World, to North America in particular, they retained their identities.*

The different nationalities and languages created barriers and when the people immigrated to the new world, they kept the nationality and language barriers because there was a comfort level in them.

Should Christianity ever be a state religion? Jesus said, "I am not of this world." He called us to a calling that is not of this world.



Last week we had some contractors working at our house, and they were from Moldova. One of the men shared with me that he lives in Massachusetts and he goes to a church that has 3,000 people. He showed me a picture of all the kids on stage. He said they were all a Russian-based congregation and have the common bond of language. Sometimes we do have the commonality that helps us to grow, but the body of Christ is made up of many nationalities.

In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity. — Anne Baxter



The Enhancing of Christian Unity:

Being legitimately called to Christ does not mean we are freed from our preconceived prejudices:

Ephesians 2:13-16: (NASB) ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall (the Jews and the Gentiles became Christian and Jesus broke down the dividing wall), ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in himself he might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross (the blood and sacrifice of Jesus), by it having put to death the enmity.

Whatever our barriers are, we are not capable on our own to break them down.

We come to Christ as we are but cannot stay that way. We must claim his sacrifice to help us be lifted out of our earthly enmities to become pliable enough to fit into the body of Christ.

We come to Christ as we are, but we bring a lot of baggage with us. Sometimes in our Christian environment we can feel bad about the baggage others have, and we may want to make a place for it. We cannot do that, but we can encourage them to grow.

Because of our preconceived notions, we practice our Christianity in ways that are contradictory:

Romans 14:2-8: (NASB) ²One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. ³The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. ⁴Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. ⁷For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Live your convictions being sure they are not conveniences. Appreciate the convictions of others with the same respect that you have given to your own. Your brother is God's.





This is about our personal relationships with God. We are not referring to doctrinal issues. *Doctrine does separate and it is supposed to.* We must have high standards of Christian doctrine. We cannot overlook fundamental erroneous doctrines such as eternal torment, speaking in tongues and faith healing.

Finally, let's recognize those things that may feel as strong as our convictions but in most cases are merely fleshly thoughts and desires:

1 Corinthians 3:1-7: (NASB) ¹*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? ⁴For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not mere men? ⁵What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.*

Paul was lecturing them in his unifying letter. His purpose was to bring their standard up.

We enhance Christian unity by raising the standards, not lowering the standards. It is not increasing our numbers; it is about how many of us want to go higher.

Have spiritual integrity, especially when assessing your own heart and mind. Learn the difference between what looks and feels good and what is right in God's eyes and apply it.



All of this makes perfect sense. Is there anything else we need to be aware of at this end of the age?

All of these principles have applied throughout the last 2,000 years of Christian calling. However, in the end times, the Scriptures are explicit that there will be bigger and more treacherous challenges to Christian unity. What are they, and how are we supposed to be equipped to deal with them?

Unity is oneness of purpose, not sameness of persons. — Tony Evans



Why are there more issues with Christianity, and therefore with Christian unity at the end times?

Daniel 12:4: (NASB) *But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.*

Why? Because the age is ending!

 **Liberal thought, *What's the Difference Between Christian Denominations, Southern Seminary***

- *There's one other important difference among the denominations within Protestantism and that has to do with the movement that began about 130 years ago in North America known now as Protestant Liberalism. Fundamentally liberal thought put human reason in the seat of authority over Scripture. So, Scripture came under the judgment of human reason and that caused a reinterpretation of the Bible from beginning to end. And in that reinterpretation, liberal thought did away with miracles, did away with anything that seemed harsh, that seemed somehow hard to explain, that seemed like superstition, anything that was offensive to reason could not be held to be true and so by putting reason first liberal theology undid most of what the Scripture actually teaches.*

There is both good and bad that comes from opening the Scriptures. Watering down Scripture is not good. When we look more deeply into the Scriptures and find out how to put all of the clues together that were never able to be put together before - that is fulfilling Daniel's prophecy. He said *conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time*. Unsealing means some of the things in the Scriptures can now be revealed.

This next prophecy can easily be applied to the world around us as well as to the degrading of the image of Christianity:

2 Timothy 3:1-8: (NASB) *¹But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.*

²For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, (We are in a unique time when such things which were always considered ungodly are very easily attained, practiced and advertised for all the world to view. Because of this blatant deviation from humility, the trend has moved towards self as being god.)

³unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,

⁴treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (Have you



noticed the tailspin that self-control is in? Whatever I think or feel, I am entitled to!) ⁵holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these. (A semblance of "reverence." How easily our society creates causes that they hold in high esteem yet lack any sense of God, Creator of all things and rantor of free will.) ⁶For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, (Within all of these sinful activities are those who play on others' fears, superstitions and desires.) ⁷always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (Seemingly so close, yet so far away.) ⁸Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.

There is a specific danger when society has degraded so far that we would remain above the fray, but not nearly far enough above it to still be keyed into the true spirituality of the true body of Christ.



Unfortunately, prophecy tells us that the opportunity for Christian unity diminishes with time:

2 Timothy 4:3-5: (NASB) ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. ⁵But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

In the end times, the enduring of sound doctrine is falling apart. We are doing a series of podcasts on "Does the Bible Contradict Itself?" and it is amazing how many websites there are criticizing things about God. **Please search our archives for Episodes #1072 and #1076 "Does the Bible Contradict Itself?" (Parts I and II).**



Unity for the sake of appearances and the avoidance of persecution is a dangerous endeavor. Stand as Jesus stood.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-22: (NASB) *Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. -*

Christian unity is founded in Christ.

**So, we are Christians, but are we unified?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**



Join us next week for our podcast on June 17, 2019:
Ep. #1078: Is Fatherhood Still Vital?

Bonus Material

If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. — African Proverb

Beware of those who are not true to Christ:

2 Corinthians 11:12-15: (NASB) ¹²But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. ¹³For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

1 John 4:1: (NASB) *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Galatians 2:3-4: (NASB) ³But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. ⁴But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.

Galatians 5:18-21: (NASB) ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. ¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Timothy 4:1-3: (NASB) ¹But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ²by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

Jude 1:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, ¹⁵to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. ¹⁶These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.



2 Thessalonians 1:7-10: (NASB) ⁷And to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, ¹⁰when he comes to be glorified in his saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

So, what is THE gospel?

Here is THE gospel:

1 Corinthians 15:1-8: (NASB) ¹Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶After that he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; ⁷then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles; ⁸and last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me also.

Here is our obedience to THE gospel:

Romans 6:1-7: (NASB) ¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? ²May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin.

Here is how Christian unity looks:

Colossians 3:11-17: (NASB) ¹¹A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. ¹²So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31: (NASB) ²⁶For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, ²⁹so that no man may boast before God. ³⁰But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹so that, just as it is written, Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

Titus 3:9-11: (NASB) ⁹But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, ¹¹knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.