

Let Us Keep the Unity of the Spirit
(Ephesians 4:1-3)

Introduction:

1. This morning we showed from the Scriptures [the Old Testament, John 17, and the New Testament] that "God's people are to be united."
2. According to Ephesians 4:3, we are to "endeavor" to keep the unity of the Spirit.
3. In our lesson we are pointing out some things [positive and negative] that will help us fulfill this responsibility.
4. To keep the unity of the Spirit, . . .

Discussion:

- I. WE MUST AVOID THINGS THAT ARE HINDRANCES TO UNITY
 - A. Exalting people over Christ is a hindrance to unity.
 1. This practice was found in the church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:11-12).
 2. The result was strife and division (1 Corinthians 3:3-4).
 3. 1 Corinthians 4:6 shows us how to avoid this problem.
 - B. Murmuring is a hindrance to unity.
 1. The church in Jerusalem displayed a beautiful spirit of unity (Acts 2:44, 46).
 2. Later, murmuring threatened to destroy that church's unity (Acts 6:1).
 3. Philippians 2:14 shows us how to avoid this problem.
 - C. Earthly wisdom is a hindrance to unity.
 1. We read about the effects of earthly wisdom in James 3:14-16.
 2. We must pursue heavenly wisdom as described in James 3:17-18.
 - D. Loving to have preeminence is a hindrance to unity.
 1. This problem is mentioned in 3 John 9-10.
 2. To avoid this problem, we must:
 - a. remember that Christ has all preeminence in the church (Colossians 1:18)
 - b. follow the instructions given in Philippians 2:3-4.
 - E. On the positive side, to keep the unity of the Spirit, . . .
- II. WE MUST PURSUE THINGS THAT PROMOTE UNITY
 - A. Love promotes unity.
 1. True Christian love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
 2. (1 Corinthians 16:14) *"Let all your things be done with charity."*
 3. Colossians 3:14 teaches us to *"put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."*
 - B. Practicing the Golden Rule promotes unity (Matthew 7:12).
 - C. The right kind of speech promotes unity (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6; Proverbs 25:11).

Conclusion:

1. In Ephesians 4:3 we are instructed to "endeavor" to keep the unity of the Spirit.
2. May God help us:
 - a. to avoid things that are hindrances to unity
 - b. to pursue those things that promote and maintain unity.