

The Power of Unity

By Bob Young

...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17:21-23).

I have a question: What is the greatest power to help unsaved persons make a decision for Jesus Christ? It is not the gospel, although the “good news” message of Jesus is essential. It is not prayer, though prayer is important and God’s people ought always to pray for the salvation of souls. It is not good deeds, though our deeds allow other people to see God and indicate a fruitful relationship with God. It is not good behavior, though Christ commands us to be obedient. The greatest power God's children have over darkness is unity. Throughout his ministry (especially as recounted in John’s Gospel) and in his Gethsemane prayer, Jesus talked a lot about his oneness with the Father and the importance of unity in the body of Christ. This may be the most difficult command Jesus gave to the church, because it gets to one of the most evil and difficult to control aspects of our human nature—our desire for independence.

Today God's Spirit is convicting more and more of his children with regard to the lack of unity within his church. God is connecting people and groups that were formerly alienated. God is providing the power and insights for unity. There is much work to be done. The walls of division and competition within the church are a stench in God's nostrils. He sees the competition and the pride of ownership and weeps for the lost who cannot come to Him because they cannot see him in the church which God intended to declare the wisdom of God. When the church is one, unbelievers see that Jesus was sent by God. They also learn of God’s love for them. These are like supernatural keys that unlock heaven. These keys are in the hand of Christ's church.

Where the church is unified, there is power. Scripture says five will chase 100, and 100 will chase 10,000 (Lev. 26:8). There is a dynamic multiplication in unity. The church is a hundred times more effective when it is unified. Imagine what God could do with a unified church.

Jesus prayed that we all might be one, as the Father and he are one. He wanted the same love God has for Jesus to be in each of us. When this love is in us, we are drawn to each other with a common mission—the commission. The walls fall down. The independent spirit is broken. Competition is destroyed. Satan's accusations are thwarted. Our love for each other is manifest to the world around us. Lost souls seek this love that is so foreign to them.

Are you contributing to an independent spirit within his body? Are you seeking to break down walls of competition among Christians, congregations, and ethnic groups? Until we walk in the spirit of unity, we will hinder those in whom God has reserved a place in heaven. Pray for the unity of the church.