

“Returning to God in Unity”

Ephesians 4:1-6

Introduction

Many fish species swim together in groups called schools to survive. The school creates a tight formation that moves swiftly in perfect unison as if it is one larger fish. As a group, the fish are able to frighten or confuse predators, conserve energy and find food more efficiently. This natural marvel illustrates the power of unity.

Biblical unity means oneness in purpose. As believers, we are joined together as members of the body of Christ, the church (Ephesians 4:4). Each member has a distinct function, but we have only one purpose: glorify God. The church reflects the unity of God Himself, one God in three co-equal persons, distinct in function while unified in essence. God operates in unity, both within Himself and His church. Therefore, one of the greatest weapons in Satan’s arsenal is stirring up division among believers. When we are not united in purpose, we cannot work together to accomplish God’s will for us.

The problem is that people tend to destroy unity through illegitimate criteria such as race, culture, gender or status. These criteria are established by man apart from God. Our God is a God of peace who breaks down barriers (Ephesians 2:14). Instead of viewing each other through the lens of love, we allow our differences to cloud our vision, thereby denying God the opportunity to answer our prayers and manifest His power in our lives, churches, and communities. The only way to achieve unity is through the love principle, by deciding to compassionately, righteously and responsibly seek the wellbeing of others. Love is a choice. Scripture says we love one another by pursuing peace and building one another up (Romans 14:19) and that, in humility, we should consider others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). While it may not always be an easy task or happen organically, we must strive for unity and fight to preserve it.

Getting Started

1. Besides fish swimming in schools, what are other examples of unity in nature?
2. What are some reasons that people are not unified in our culture today?

Let’s Get Personal

1. How do you understand biblical unity differently in light of this message?
2. What is currently causing division in your life between yourself and someone else (family member, friend, co-worker or fellow believer)?
3. How have you been lacking in love toward other believers or unbelievers?

Take the Next Step

1. Think of two people with whom you need to build unity. In what ways can you seek to love them, pursue peace with them, and build them up this week?
2. What are ways you can begin to pray consistently for unity in your family, your church, and our nation? What are Scriptures about unity you can start to memorize?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Ephesians 4:1-6; Romans 14:1-19; Numbers 12:1-16; Psalm 133:1-3; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 2:11-20; Matthew 12:25-29; John 4:1-40; 1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 2:11-22; Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:16-17; Genesis 11:1-9; John 17:11-24; Matthew 18:18-20; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; James 2:1-13; Galatians 3:28.

Renew Your Mind

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”

Ephesians 4:4-6
