

UNITY BASED ON THE BIBLE ONLY

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Imagine a world where all people who believed in Jesus were *“together and had all things in common”* (Acts 2:44-46). Imagine a community where rather than having fifty churches there was only one (John 17:10-21). Imagine a Christian family completely united religiously based upon what The Lord says (1Cor. 4:6), where all family members attended the same congregation and agreed on the doctrine taught therein (Acts 2:32, 46).

Religious Unity is a Prominent Bible Theme

Jesus prayed for unity in one of His last prayers while living on Earth. Notice His words in John 17:20-23. *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one...that they also may be one in Us... that they may be one just as We are one... that they may be made perfect in one.**”*

The Apostle Paul pleaded for unity. *“Now I **plead** with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **all speak the same thing**, and that there **be no divisions among you**, but that you **be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment**”* (1 Corinthians 1:10).

The first church that ever existed enjoyed perfect unity. *“Now all who believed **were together, and had all things in common**”* (Acts 2:44). *“...Continuing daily **with one accord**”* (Acts 2:46). *“Now the multitude of those who believed were of **one heart and one soul... they had all things in common**”* (Acts 4:32).

Yet, religious unity is not what we see when we look around us! We see hundreds of religious groups all claiming to follow the same Bible! Since *“God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints”* (1 Cor.

14:33), **something has gone terribly wrong!** A commonly held, mistaken belief is that God approves of all this religious division and is not really concerned about it. The scriptures listed earlier in this article (and many others that we could add) teach otherwise! **God is NOT pleased with religious division.** *“But God composed the body... that there should be no schism (division) in the body”* (1 Cor. 12:25-26). He desires unity based on what He has revealed to us in His word. *“The secret things belong to the Lord our God. But those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, **that we may do all the words of this law**”* (Deut. 29:29).

Ephesians 4:3-6 is a discussion by the Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, on the subject of spiritual unity. Verse three says that we are to: *“endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”*. To further discuss this theme of unity, Paul tells us precisely why we, as Christians, are to walk in unity. (Because) *“There is **one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called in **one hope** of your calling; **one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Let us look more closely at the seven things that all Christians have in common.

One Body: The Bible teaches plainly that the one body referred to in this text is **the church**; the Lord's body, made up of God's called out people (Isaiah 2:2-4; Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Romans 12:4-5; Colossians 1:18; Colossians 3:15). The Bible also clearly tells us that the Head of the “one body” is, Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:10; 2:19).

One Spirit: The one Spirit is the Holy Spirit, which is given to those who obey the gospel (see Acts 2:38). Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians 12:13 *“... by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”*

One Hope: The one hope of our calling as Christians is the hope given by obedience to the gospel. The hope of the Christian is eternal life with Jesus in that glorious place called Heaven. The Christian has *“Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (Col. 1:27-28).

One Lord: The word translated “Lord” in this verse is *“kurios.”* It means one who is supreme in authority. **We are united in Jesus because we are all under the same authoritative Lord.** In Matthew 16:16 when Peter proclaimed that Jesus was *“the Christ, the Son of the living God”*, he was showing the authority of Jesus. Then, Jesus Himself tells us that: *“All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth”* (Matthew 28:18).

One Faith: When Paul tells us of the one faith he is speaking of the one system of belief. There are 39 references to **“the faith”** in the English translation of the N.T. (see Jude 3). While the world tells us there are many “faiths”, the Bible says that we are to be united on the one system of faith designed and established by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

One Baptism: The one baptism that unites all Christians is the baptism in water for the remission of one's sins at which time he is saved and added to the church (See Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,47; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27).

One God: *“The Lord your God is one God; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength”* (Mark 12:30). *“You shall have no other gods before Me”* (Exodus 20:3).

It is the desire of the Grant County church of Christ that we all be united in the Lord. However, this unity must be based upon *“those things which are revealed.”* Man-made innovations and additions to the word are the things that usually divide us. Let us ever strive to *“keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Eph. 4:3). Let us say boldly with Micaiah the prophet, *“What the Lord says to me, that I will speak”* (1 Kings 22:14). This simple solution would solve many of the problems caused by religious division!