

3. Developing the Unity of the Team

One of the things Christ prayed, both for His disciples and also for all those who would believe, is that believers would have unity. The night before His crucifixion, Christ prayed for the disciples. Then, He prayed for all who would believe. John 17:20-23 says, “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, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

In these four verses, we see that Christ prayed four times that we would be one. In these verses, we see that:

- ♦ Christ wants us to be one as He and the Father are One
- ♦ Christ says that the only way we can be one is to be One in the Father and the Son
- ♦ Christ says that this oneness is what will cause the world to believe that the Father sent Christ
- ♦ Christ gave us His glory so that we can be one
- ♦ Christ wants us to be brought to maturity in this oneness
- ♦ Christ says that this unity is one of the things that causes us to know that the Father loves us

Before looking at these six things in more detail, we first need to distinguish between unity and uniformity. “Uniformity” means that *every person does the same thing in the same way at the same time*. A group of soldiers who are marching together are all to march exactly the same way and turn at the same time. That is uniformity. However, unity is very different. God gives each of us different gifts, different abilities, different personalities, different experiences in life, and gets us excited about serving Him in different ways. With all of these differences, when the members of a team are all yielding themselves to the Holy Spirit, these very differences make it possible for them to all glorify God, because they are working in harmony under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

First, we see that Christ wants us to be one as He and the Father are One. In Hebrews 10:9, we see that Christ said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” In John 6:38, Christ said, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” Then, in Matthew 26:39, we see the prayer of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, where we read: “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.” Christ and the Father were One because Christ did the will of the Father. In the same way, a ministry team will function in unity if the team members are committed to doing the will of the Father. A team leader will help the team develop unity as he keeps the team focused on doing the will of the Lord.

Second, we see that the only way we can be one is in the Father and in the Son. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” In order to live in the Father and in the Son, we see that we need to live our lives by faith

in the Son of God. One of the key ministries of a team leader is to help the team learn to walk by faith. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Before people became Christians, they depended on themselves and walked by sight. That is why a key part of the ministry of a team leader is to show that team how to walk by faith. Of course, this will only happen as the team leader has learned to walk by faith himself.

Third, Christ says that this oneness is what will cause the world to believe that the Father sent Christ. Conflict is the normal thing in the world. That is why the world begins to notice when a ministry team is functioning in unity. Here, we see why that unity begins to have an impact on the world. Christ says that when a ministry team, or any other group of Christians, demonstrates unity, it will cause the watching world to recognize that the Father sent Christ. When a team of three or four Christians visit a family that has not yet trusted in Christ, that family sees how those Christians relate to one another during that visit. If the family can sense the unity that the team has, the family will believe their message that the Father sent Christ.

Fourth, we see that Christ gave us His glory so that we can be one. Here, we see that unity is the supernatural result of Christ giving us His glory. Colossians 1:27 says, “To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” God wants those who are not yet Christians to have the opportunity to see the glory of Christ. That is one reason why Christ places the Holy Spirit in the lives of each Christian at the moment of salvation. As the members of a team of Christians are each yielding to the Holy Spirit, their lives and actions demonstrate the unity of the Spirit. In fact, Ephesians 4:1-3 says that as a group of Christians serves one another in humility that they will keep the unity of the Spirit. Those verses say, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Fifth, we see that Christ wants us to be brought to maturity in this oneness. Ephesians 4:15-16 explains the result as we are brought to maturity. Those verses say, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” In these verses, we see that maturity produces a unity and oneness that:

- ◆ causes us to speak the truth
- ◆ causes us to speak that truth in love
- ◆ causes us to grow up in all things into Christ, our head
- ◆ causes the body to be joined and knit together
- ◆ causes every part of the body to work effectively
- ◆ causes every part to be able to do its share
- ◆ causes growth of the body
- ◆ causes the body to continue to build itself up in love

Sixth, Christ says that this unity is one of the things that causes us to know that the Father loves us. Here, we see a key reason why it is so important to help a developing leader learn to develop

the unity of the team. It is that unity that will cause the team members to know that the Father loves them. The more each team member knows and understands the love of the Father for them, the greater the motivation that team member will have to show His thanks to the Lord by serving Him. True and effective service for Christ is the result of being motivated by the love of the Father and the love of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” The more a team understands the love of the Father and the Son, the greater that team will desire to serve Christ.

The way a team leader helps a team to develop this unity is to show by example and also teach from the Word of God that this unity is the result of learning to yield to the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16, 18, 22-23 show us that if we walk in the Spirit, and are led by the Spirit, the result will be that our lives will bear the fruit of the Spirit. A ministry team that is walking in the Spirit, and being led by the Spirit, because they are learning to yield to the Spirit moment-by-moment, will have a mighty impact for the Lord. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing team leaders learn to develop the unity of the Spirit.