

# October 2018

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## Spirit of Unity

1 Peter 3:8

*"Hold firmly that our faith is identical with that of the ancients. Deny this, and you dissolve the unity of the Church."*

*Thomas Aquinas*

Often, a life of worship is paralyzed and stunted by our inability to keep our eyes on Jesus and not on the fallen nature of ourselves and/or the world around us. Perhaps nowhere is that more evident than in the disunity that plagues so many of our congregations today. In my time as a pastor, I've had folks share with me that the reason they fell away from the church was not because of preaching preferences, time, or ability, but because they felt like the congregational in-fighting pushed them further from God. How can we idly sit by and allow this to continue? Is it possible to have a genuine heart of worship and simply ignore this disease that's tearing so many churches apart?

The answer is "no."

Peter, in his letter to the scattered church, gave specific instructions regarding the need for unity. He instructed those early believers to be like-minded (unified) and to be sympathetic, loving, and humble (1 Peter 3:8). Even with everything those early members of the Church were dealing with, the Holy Spirit encouraged Peter's hand to remind them to "stick together." That's unity. And that's what the world is desperate to see from the Church today. The lack of unity might be one of the reasons we have such a tough time living a life of worship. But, it's something we can correct – if we're willing.

### **First, we need to seek unity within ourselves.**

I once had a man ask me if I'd rather he was in church, thinking about the deer stand, or in the deer stand, thinking about church. I wanted neither. I wanted him in church, thinking about church. I wanted him to live a life of worship.

James 1:8 says that a double-minded man is unstable in everything. That is something we need fixed – NOW! Begin by asking God to unify your heart with His – that His desires might become your desires.

### **Next, we need to seek unity in our relationships.**

At home, at work, or in our community – there are always folks we just can't seem to get along with. But the words of Paul in Romans 12:18 ought to be ringing in our ears! "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." Peace is unity. If we want a life of worship, we need to seek peace in those areas of our life that we know are at war. And, it may just mean that we need to apologize. Are you willing?

### **Last, we need to seek unity in the Church.**

Folks might not know about all the good going on in our churches, but they always seem to know the dirt. Where are those that will stand and fight for the unity of believers? Jude 1:3 urges the reader to "contend for the faith," and it seems we need it just as much now as anyone ever did. God moves when His people are united with Him! Get involved in your church and be committed to the unity that we've been called to defend as men of the Body!

As a group, discuss how you and your church can seek unity.