

Jesus and the Prayer that Restores Unity

John 17:21-23 “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me,” to bring about this union, this sanctified harmony. “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

Isaiah 53:2 “For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.”

John 15:5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

Eph. 4:30 “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.”

Eph. 4:1-3 “I therefore ... beseech you,” brethren, “that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

1 Corinthians 12:25-26 “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

Luke 9:23 “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

Introduction

1 **Christ's Plea for Unity**

2 John 17:21-23 "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me,
3 and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may
4 believe that thou hast sent me," to bring about this union, this
5 sanctified harmony. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be
6 made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast
7 sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."
8

9 **Key Relationships:**

- 10 Christ Our Life (United to Christ)
- 11 Christ Our Head (United in the Church)
- 12 Christ Our Example (United to Each Other)

13

14 **Illustrations**

15 Unity illustrated in the parable of the branch and the vine.

16 Unity illustrated in the Human Body

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The Study

20 **A. Christ Our Life: United to Christ**

21 What do you learn about unity from the parable of the vine and the
22 branch?

23 *John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2
24 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every
25 branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more
26 fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken
27 unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear
28 fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye
29 abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in
30 me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me
31 ye can do nothing."

32 *2 Cor. 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
33 old things have passed away; behold all things have become new."
34

34

35 Here are some of the lessons taught by the parable of the vine and
36 the branch:

- 37 •Branches must be vitally connected to the vine (Members must be
38 vitally connected to Christ).
- 39 •Connected branches experience ongoing pruning to maximize their
40 fruit-bearing ability (Members are pruned on an ongoing basis to
41 maximize their fruit-bearing ability).
- 42 •Branches not connected to the vine wither and are eventually cut
43 away (Members who are fail to connect to Christ wither spiritually
44 and are eventually cut away).
- 45 •Branches have a common source of nourishment (Christ is the
46 common source of spiritual nourishment for the members).
- 47 •Branches produce the fruit of the vine —Concorde vines produce
48 Concorde grape-producing branches (Members produce the fruits of
49 the spirit and have characters like Jesus. Meekness, for example, is
50 one of the key proofs of being a connected branch).
- 51 •Oneness with the other branches is ongoing as a result of their
52 connection to the vine stock (Members are in oneness to each other
53 by virtue of their connection to Christ).
- 54 •Common sap from the vine brings unity in spite of diversity to the
55 branches (Common spiritual life from Christ brings unity in spite of
56 diversity to the members).
- 57 •Branches retain their individuality though they are connected to the
58 vine (Members retain their individuality though they are connected
59 to the parent stock).

60

61 This chapter [John 15] is very simple in its illustrations, and every
62 one should seek to understand its lessons. They should bear in mind
63 that the **branches in the true Vine are the believers who are**
64 **brought into oneness by being connected with the Vinestock.**
65 There must be unity in their diversity. **Individuality is preserved,**
66 for one branch cannot blend into another in the same stock; **yet**
67 **every individual branch must be in fellowship with the other** if
68 they are united to the parent stock. **If they draw nourishment from**
69 **the same source they draw nourishment from the same spirit.**
70 They **drink in the same life-giving properties. Thus unity is**
71 **preserved, and there is love one for another.** But **this does not**
72 **make the branches an identity although it constitutes them**
73 **a unity, nor does this mean uniformity in everything.**
74 **Christian unity consists in the branches being in the same**
75 **parent stock,** the vitalizing power of the Center supporting the
76 grafts that united to the Vine. Manuscript 66, 1897.26

77 "I am the true Vine," He says. **Instead of choosing the graceful**
78 **palm, the lofty cedar, or the strong oak, Jesus takes the vine**

79 **with its clinging tendrils to represent Himself.** The palm tree, the
80 cedar, and the oak stand alone. They require no support. But the vine
81 entwines about the trellis, and thus climbs heavenward. So **Christ in**
82 **His humanity was dependent upon divine power.** "I can of Mine
83 own self do nothing," He declared. John 5:30. *Desire of Ages*, p.
84 674.3

85 The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost
86 twig. So **Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to**
87 **every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no**
88 **danger that it will wither or decay.** *Desire of Ages*, p. 676.3

89 A connection with Christ means everything to us. ... We are to be
90 attached to the parent stock, and to receive nourishment from the
91 Vine. Christ is our glorified Head, and the **divine love flowing from**
92 **the heart of God, rests in Christ, and is communicated to those**
93 **who have been united to him.** This divine love entering the soul
94 inspires it with gratitude, frees it from its spiritual feebleness, from
95 pride, vanity, and selfishness, and from all that would deform the
96 Christian character. *Review and Herald*, November 17, 1891, par. 9

97 This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of
98 personal faith. **This faith must express on our part supreme**
99 **preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration.** Our will must be
100 wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and
101 honor identified with the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the
102 honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and
103 Christ accepting gratitude from us. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol.
104 5, 229.2

105 The life of the vine will be manifest in fragrant fruit on the branches.
106 "He that abideth in Me," said Jesus, "and I in him, the same bringeth
107 forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." **When we live**
108 **by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in**
109 **our lives; not one will be missing.** *Desire of Ages*, p. 676.4

110 There is a **wide difference between a pretended union and a real**
111 **connection with Christ by faith. A profession of the truth places**
112 **men in the church, but this does not prove that they have a vital**
113 **connection with the living Vine.** A rule is given by which the true
114 disciple may be distinguished from those who claim to follow Christ
115 but have not faith in Him. **The one class are fruit bearing, the**
116 **other, fruitless.** The one are often subjected to the pruning knife of
117 God that they may bring forth more fruit; the other, as withered
118 branches, are ere long to be severed from the living Vine. . . .
119 *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 228.5

120

121

123 **B. Christ Our Head: United in the Church**

124 *Ps. 133:1-3 “Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to
125 dwell together in unity! It is like precious oil upon the head running
126 down the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of
127 his garments.... For there the Lord commanded the blessing....”

128 *Eph. 4:15,16“...but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all
129 things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole
130 body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies,
131 according to the effective working by which every part does its
132 share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

133 *Eph. 4:30 “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of
134 His bones.”

135 1 Cor. 12:18 “But now God has set the members, each one of them,
136 in the body just as He pleased.”

137

138 Unity in Diversity in the Human Body

139 •Every body part is needed (Every member is needed).

140 •Every body part is important (Every member is valued).

141 •Every body part has a specific role (Every member has specific
142 role.).

143 •Every body part is connected (Every member is connected to
144 Christ).

145 •Every body part depends on the blood (Every member partakes of a
146 common source of life).

147 •Every body part depends on the heart (Every member depends on a
148 common power).

149 •Every body part is sustained by food and oxygen coming from
150 outside of itself (Every member depends on spiritual food coming
151 from outside of him or her).

152 •Every body part obeys brain (Every member obeys Christ the head
153 of the Church).

154 •Physical health depends on the harmony of the body parts—often
155 as part of a larger group (Spiritual and other success depends on the
156 unity of the members).

157 •The human body strongly responds to the pain of any entity of the
158 body (A healthy spiritual body responds to the pain of the individual
159 members).

160

161 **Christian unity is a mighty agency. It tells in a powerful manner**
162 **that those who possess it are children of God. It has an**
163 **irresistible influence upon the world....** We are to be one with our
164 fellow-men and with Christ, and in Christ one with God. Then of us
165 can be spoken the words, "Ye are complete in Him." {ST February
166 7, 1900, par. 1} In the plan of redemption a place is allotted to every
167 soul. To each man is given his work. No one can be a member of
168 Christ's body and yet be inactive. Different lines of work are
169 committed to different men, according to their several ability. **The**
170 **work of God's people may and will be varied, but one Spirit is**
171 **the mover in it all.** All the work done for the Master is to
172 be connected with the great whole. **The workers are to labor**
173 **together in concert, each one controlled by divine power, putting**
174 **forth undivided effort to draw those around them to Christ.** All
175 must move like parts of well-adjusted machinery, **each part**
176 **dependent on the other part, yet standing distinct in action.** And
177 each one is to take the place assigned him and do the work
178 appointed him. God calls upon the members of His church to receive
179 the Holy Spirit, **to come together in unity and brotherly**
180 **sympathy, to bind their interests together in love.** {ST February
181 7, 1900, par. 2} ... **All jealousy, evil surmising, and evil speaking**
182 **are of him, and tend to produce discord and disunion. Then**
183 **shall God's people be at variance with one another?** Shall they
184 not be cemented together by the Holy Spirit, each worker filled with
185 love and sympathy for his fellow-worker, each filling his
186 appointment with faithful effort, seeking earnestly to prepare the
187 way of the Lord? **In the general discord there should be one place**
188 **where harmony and unity should exist because the Bible is the**
189 **guide.** When the principles of God's Word are followed, it becomes
190 a bright light shining in a dark place. All who build on this Rock can
191 be sure that their house will stand amid the tempest. {ST February 7,
192 1900, par. 3} ... **The Holy Spirit will work with the consecrated**
193 **human instrument; for this is God's purpose.** ... When God's
194 people place themselves in proper relation to Him and to one
195 another, there will be a full impartation of the Holy Spirit for the
196 harmonious combination of the whole body. {ST February 7, 1900,
197 par. 5} **Nothing so manifestly weakens a church as disunion and**
198 **strife.** Nothing so wars against Christ and the truth as this
199 spirit. **Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among**
200 **you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with**
201 **meekness of wisdom.**" "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang
202 down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet,
203 lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be
204 healed. **Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which**

205 **no man shall see the Lord;** looking diligently lest any man fail of
206 the grace of God; **lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble**
207 **you, and thereby many be defiled.”** {ST February 7, 1900, par. 6}
208 **As long as we are in this world we must be linked with one**
209 **another. Humanity is interlaced and interwoven with humanity.**
210 **As Christians we are members of one another.** ... In helplessness
211 and disappointment **we are fighting the battles of life, and the**
212 **Lord designs us, as His sons and daughters, whom He calls His**
213 **friends, to help one another.** This is to be a part of our practical
214 Christian work. Who is my neighbor? Read and understand. {ST
215 February 7, 1900, par. 7} **We can be united with one another only**
216 **as we are united with Christ.** ... Our life should be bound up with
217 His life. We should draw constantly from Him, partaking of the
218 living bread which came down from heaven, drinking from a
219 fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasure. **When**
220 **this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in**
221 **his life a freshness, a simplicity, a humility, a meekness and**
222 **lowliness of heart, that show all with whom he associates that he**
223 **has been with Jesus and learned of Him.** {ST February 7, 1900,
224 par. 8} ... Truth, with its divine power and influence, takes
225 possession of us, **making of believers one harmonious whole, of**
226 **which Christ is seen to be the soul.** Every element is working in
227 right lines. Every worker who fills his appointed place is helping to
228 uplift the cross of Calvary. {ST February 7, 1900, par. 9} **This is the**
229 **unity God requires in His service. When God’s chosen people**
230 **are of one mind, barriers of selfishness will disappear as by**
231 **magic, and many, many more souls will be converted because of**
232 **the unity which exists among believers.** There is one body and one
233 spirit. Those who have been building territorial lines of distinction,
234 barriers of color and caste, might better take these down much faster
235 than they put them up. {ST February 7, 1900, par. 10} **He in whose**
236 **heart Christ abides recognizes Christ abiding in the heart of his**
237 **brother. Christ never wars against Christ. Christ never exerts**
238 **an influence against Christ. Christians are to do their work,**
239 **whatever it may be, in the unity of the Spirit, for the perfecting**
240 **of the whole body.** The church is to be purified, refined, ennobled.
241 The members are to cast from their hearts the idols which have
242 hindered their advancement in spirituality. **By the influence of the**
243 **Spirit, the most discordant may be brought into harmony.**
244 Unselfishness is to bind God’s people together with firm, tender
245 bonds. **There is a vast power in the church when the energies of**
246 **the members are under the control of the Spirit, gathering good**
247 **from every source, educating, training, and disciplining self.**
248 Thus is presented to God a powerful organization, through which He

249 can work for the conversion of sinners. Thus heaven and earth
250 are connected, and all the divine agencies co-operate with human
251 instrumentalities. {ST February 7, 1900, par. 11}

252 (Christ) **engages to come into the midst of his church, and to**
253 **honor their prayers and decision by the manifestation of his**
254 **grace and power.** They are members of his mystical body. Christ
255 expects that man will be partaker of his divine nature while in the
256 world, and thus convey a large amount of glory from earth to
257 heaven. *Review and Herald*, December 11, 1888

258 God hath His servants,—his church, established in the earth,
259 **composed of many members, but of one body; that in every part**
260 **of the work one part must work as connected with another part,**
261 and that with another part, and with another part, and these are
262 **joined together by the golden links of Heaven, and there are to**
263 **be no kings here in their midst at all.** {Ms43c-1901.10}

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265

266 **C. Christ Our Example: United to Each Other**

267 Col. 4:13 “But above all these things put on love, which is the bond
268 of perfection... called in one body.”

269 *1 John 2:10 “Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there
270 is nothing in him to make him stumble.”

271

272 What do we learn about unity from the relationship of Christ and
273 His Father?

274 *John 17:21 “...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me,
275 and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may
276 believe that You sent Me.”

277

278

279 *Unity in diversity among God’s children—the manifestation of
280 love and forbearance in spite of differences of disposition—this
281 is the testimony that God sent His son into the world to save
282 sinners. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of
283 the majesty and virtue of Christ. *Sons and Daughters of God*, p.
284 286

285 **True religion unites hearts, not only with Christ, but with one**
286 **another, in a most tender union.** When we know what it means to
287 be thus united with Christ, and with our brethren, a fragrant
288 influence will attend our work wherever we go. *Gospel Workers*, p.
289 483

290 ***As living branches of the True Vine, all will be united to Christ,**
291 **the living head. Christ will abide in every heart, guiding,**
292 **comforting, sanctifying, and presenting to the world the unity of**
293 **the followers of Jesus, thus bearing testimony that the heavenly**
294 **credentials are supplied to the remnant church. In the oneness of**
295 **Christ's church it will be proven that God sent His only-begotten**
296 **Son into the world.... Satan is determined that...oneness shall not**
297 **be; for it is the strongest witness that can be borne that God**
298 **gave his Son to reconcile the world to heaven. But the union for**
299 **which Christ prayed must exist among God's people before he**
300 **can bestow on the church the enlargement and power that he**
301 **longs to bestow on it. *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 386**

302 ***When the laborers have an abiding Christ in their own souls, when**
303 **all selfishness is dead, when there is no rivalry, no strife for the**
304 **supremacy, when oneness exists, when they sanctify themselves,**
305 **so that love for one another is seen and felt, then the showers of**
306 **the grace of the Holy Spirit will just as surely come upon them**
307 **as that God's promise will never fail in one jot or tittle. But when**
308 **the work of others is discounted, that the workers may show**
309 **their own superiority, they prove that their own work does not**
310 **bear the signature it should. God cannot bless them. *Selected***
311 ***Messages* vol. 1, p. 175**

312

313 **What do we learn about unity in the early church?**

314 Acts 2:1 "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all
315 **with one accord in one place."**

316 What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of
317 Pentecost? The **glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the**
318 **uttermost parts of the inhabited world.** As the disciples
319 proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the
320 power of this message. The **church beheld converts flocking to**
321 **her from all directions.** Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners
322 united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who
323 had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its
324 champions. ... **Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of**
325 **divine love and benevolence.** One interest prevailed; one subject of
326 emulation swallowed up all others. The **ambition of the believers**
327 **was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for**
328 **the enlargement of His kingdom. *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 48.1**

329 The **differences that now exist among Christians did not exist in**
330 **the days of Christ or His apostles. When the gospel was**
331 **preached after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, union**
332 **prevailed; the believers were all of one heart and one mind. ...**

333 Through the divine illumination and sanctification of the Spirit the
334 believers were perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the
335 same judgment. **This was and always will be the fruit that is**
336 **borne under the influence of the Holy Spirit.** *Manuscript*
337 *Releases*, vol. 14, p. 176.2

338 After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the disciples went forth to
339 proclaim a living Saviour, their one desire was the salvation of
340 souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of communion with saints.
341 **They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any**
342 **sacrifice for the truth's sake. In their daily association with one**
343 **another, they revealed the love that Christ had enjoined upon**
344 **them.** By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love
345 in other hearts. *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 547.3

346

347 **What is the result of unity?**

348 **When God's people place themselves in proper relation to Him**
349 **and to one another, there will be a full impartation of the Holy**
350 **Spirit** for the harmonious combination of the whole body. *Signs of*
351 *the Times* February 7, 1900 Par. 5

352 When God's chosen people are of one mind, **barriers of selfishness**
353 **will disappear as by magic, and many, many more souls will be**
354 **converted** because of the unity which exists among believers. *Signs*
355 *of the Times* February 7, 1900 Par. 10

356 **When we bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives**
357 **into harmony with His work, the Spirit that fell on the disciples**
358 **on the Day of Pentecost will fall on us.** *Counsels to the Church*, p.
359 66.3

360 Is Christ divided?—No. **Christ abiding in the soul will not quarrel**
361 **with Christ in another soul.** We must learn to bear with the
362 peculiarities of those around us. If our will is under the control of
363 Christ's will, how can we be at variance with our brethren? **If we are**
364 **at variance, we may know that it is because self needs to be**
365 **crucified. He whom Christ makes free is free indeed.** We are not
366 complete in Christ unless we love one another as Christ has loved
367 us. *This Day With God*, p. 262

368 **He in whose heart Christ abides recognizes Christ abiding in the**
369 **heart of his brother. Christ never wars against Christ.** Christ
370 never exerts an influence against Christ. **Christians are to do their**
371 **work, whatever it may be, in the unity of the Spirit, for the**
372 **perfecting of the whole body.** The church is to be purified, refined,
373 ennobled. The members are to cast from their hearts the idols which
374 have hindered their advancement in spirituality. **By the influence of**

375 **the Spirit, the most discordant may be brought into harmony.**
376 Unselfishness is to bind God's people together with firm, tender
377 bonds. **There is a vast power in the church when the energies of**
378 **the members are under the control of the Spirit, gathering good**
379 **from every source, educating, training, and disciplining self.**
380 Thus is presented to God a powerful organization, through which He
381 can work for the conversion of sinners. Thus heaven and earth are
382 connected, and all the divine agencies co-operate with human
383 instrumentalities. *Signs of the Times*, February 7, 1900 Par. 11}

384

385 **But discord gradually came. It continues in our day!**

386 James 3:16 "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and
387 every evil thing are there."

388 James 4:1 "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do
389 they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your
390 members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and
391 cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you
392 do not ask."

393

394 **Gradually a change came. The believers began to look for**
395 **defects in others. Dwelling upon mistakes, giving place to unkind**
396 **criticism, they lost sight of the Saviour and His love.** They
397 became **more strict in regard to outward ceremonies**, more
398 particular about the theory than the practice of the faith. **In their**
399 **zeal to condemn others, they overlooked their own errors.** They
400 lost the brotherly love that Christ had enjoined, and, **saddest of all,**
401 **they were unconscious of their loss.** They did not realize that
402 happiness and joy were going out of their lives and that, having shut
403 the love of God out of their hearts, they would soon walk in
404 darkness. *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 548.1

405 *The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is
406 separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to
407 one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family
408 is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to
409 overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but
410 union with Christ. *Adventist Home*, p. 179

411 The cause of divisions or discord in the church is separation from
412 Christ. The secret of unity is union with Christ. Christ is the great
413 center. We shall approach one another just in proportion as we
414 approach the center. United with Christ, we shall surely be united
415 with our brethren in the faith. *Paulsen Collection*, p. 153

416

417 **What are the consequences of disunity?**

418 A **sleepy**, Christless church, **quarreling** and **surmising evil**, will
419 have no reward, and **need look for no revival, unless its members**
420 **repent**, and do the first works. *Review and Herald*, June 26, 1888
421 Par. 9}

422 **Many who profess to gather with Christ are scattering from**
423 **Him. This is why the church is so weak. Many indulge freely in**
424 **criticism and accusing.** By giving expression to suspicion,
425 jealousy, and discontent, they yield themselves as instruments to
426 Satan. Before they realize what they are doing, the adversary has
427 through them accomplished his purpose. The impression of evil has
428 been made, the shadow has been cast, the arrows of Satan have
429 found their mark. **Distrust, unbelief, and downright infidelity**
430 **have fastened upon those who otherwise might have accepted**
431 **Christ. Meanwhile the workers for Satan look complacently**
432 **upon those whom they have driven to skepticism, and who are**
433 **now hardened against reproof and entreaty. They flatter**
434 **themselves that in comparison with these souls they are virtuous**
435 **and righteous. They do not realize that these sad wrecks of**
436 **character are the work of their own unbridled tongues and**
437 **rebellious hearts. It is through their influence that these tempted**
438 **ones have fallen.** *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 340.3}

439 There is **no more effectual hindrance to growth in grace than this**
440 **disposition to criticize and condemn others.** We have in our
441 experience **seen this accusing spirit gradually enter the hearts of**
442 **church-members until it had leavened nearly the entire church,**
443 and the result was that little of real godliness or of the spirit of
444 Christ remained.--HS 212, 213. *Pastoral Ministry*, p. 268.3

445 **Envy, evil surmising, backbiting, and faultfinding,--let these not**
446 **be named among Christ's disciples. These things are the cause of**
447 **the present feebleness of the church.** We have a perfect Pattern,
448 even the life of Christ. It is to be our eager desire to do as he has
449 done, to live as he lived, that others, by seeing our good works, may
450 be led to glorify God. *Review and Herald*, May 10, 1906 par. 13

451 **One great reason why our brethren and sisters have no more**
452 **confidence toward God in prayer, is, that nearly all neglect to**
453 **follow the words of Jesus in preserving harmony between**
454 **brethren. They allow various wrongs to exist with members of**
455 **the church, which create bitter envy and strife; and while these**
456 **differences exist, God neither hears nor answers their prayers,** and
457 darkness comes over the mind, because they have neglected the duty
458 so plainly pointed out by our Redeemer. *Review and Herald*, April
459 15, 1880, par. 9.

460 Satan is ... constantly at work to prevent this harmony and union,
461 that in witnessing the bickerings, strifes, and dissension, unbelievers
462 shall become disgusted with Christianity and fastened in unbelief
463 and infidelity. God is dishonored by those who profess the truth
464 while they are at variance with one another. *Manuscript Releases*,
465 vol. 12, p. 293.4

466 **The world is looking with gratification at the disunion amongst**
467 **Christians. Infidelity is well pleased.** God calls for a change
468 among His people. **Union with Christ and with one another is our**
469 **only safety in these last days. Let us not make it possible for**
470 **Satan to point to our church members, saying: "Behold how**
471 **these people, standing under the banner of Christ, hate one**
472 **another.** We have nothing to fear from them while they spend more
473 strength fighting one another than in warfare with my forces."
474 *Counsels to the Church*, p. 43.2

475 Divisions in the church dishonor the religion of Christ before the
476 world and give occasion to the enemies of truth to justify their
477 course. Paul's instructions were not written alone for the church in
478 his day. God designed that they should be sent down to us. What are
479 we doing to preserve **unity** in the bonds of peace? *Testimonies for*
480 *the Church*, vol. 5, p. 239.2

481 **It is the purpose of God that His children shall blend in unity.**
482 Do they not expect to live together in the same heaven? **Is Christ**
483 **divided against Himself? Will He give His people success before**
484 **they sweep away the rubbish of evil surmising and discord,**
485 **before the laborers, with unity of purpose, devote heart and**
486 **mind and strength to the work so holy in God's sight?** Union
487 brings strength; disunion, weakness. United with one another,
488 working together in harmony for the salvation of men, we shall
489 indeed be "laborers together with God." **Those who refuse to work**
490 **in harmony greatly dishonor God.** The enemy of souls delights to
491 see them working at cross purposes with one another. **Such ones**
492 **need to cultivate brotherly love and tenderness of heart.** If they
493 could draw aside the curtain veiling the future and see the result of
494 their disunion they would surely be led to repent. *Counsels to the*
495 *Church*, p. 43.1

496

497 **What should we do to avoid disunity?**

498 Rom. 12:18 "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live
499 peaceably with all men."

500 1 Cor. 1:10 "Now I plead with you ... that there be no divisions
501 among you."

502 John 17:21 "...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me,
503 and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may
504 believe that You sent Me."

505

506 The Bible sets before us a model church. They are to be
507 in unity with each other, and with God. **When believers are united**
508 **in Christ the living vine, the result is that they are one with**
509 **Christ, full of sympathy and tenderness and love.** *Selected*
510 *Messages*, vol. 3, p. 18

511

512 **I urge our people to cease their criticism and evil speaking, and**
513 **go to God in earnest prayer, asking him to help them to help the**
514 **erring. Let them link up with one another and with Christ.** Let
515 them study the seventeenth of John, and **learn how to pray and**
516 **how to live the prayer of Christ.** He is the Comforter. He will
517 abide in their hearts, making their joy full. His words will be to them
518 as the bread of life, and in the strength thus gained they will be
519 enabled to develop characters that will be an honor to God. **Perfect**
520 **Christian fellowship will exist among them. There will be seen in**
521 **their lives the fruit that always appears as the result of**
522 **obedience to the truth. ... Perfect oneness,—a union as close as**
523 **the union existing between the Father and the Son,—this is what**
524 **will give success to the efforts of God's workers.** *Review and*
525 *Herald*, January 27, 1903

526 Satan works to make the prayer of Christ of none effect. He makes
527 continual efforts to create bitterness and discord; for **where there is**
528 **unity there is strength, a oneness which all the powers of hell**
529 **cannot break. All who shall aid the enemies of God by bringing**
530 **weakness and sorrow and discouragement upon any of God's**
531 **people, through their own perverse ways and tempers, are**
532 **working directly against the prayer of Christ.** *Testimonies for the*
533 *Church*, vol. 6, p. 151.2

534 **An earnest effort should be made in every church to put away**
535 **evilspeaking and a censorious spirit as among the sins**
536 **productive of the greatest evils in the church.** Severity and
537 faultfinding must be rebuked as the workings of Satan. Mutual love
538 and confidence must be encouraged and strengthened in the
539 members of the church. Let all, in the fear of God and with love to
540 their brethren, close their ears to gossip and censure. Direct the
541 talebearer to the teachings of God's word. Bid him obey the
542 Scriptures and carry his complaints directly to those whom he thinks
543 in error. **This united action would bring a flood of light into the**
544 **church and close the door to a flood of evil. Thus God would be**

545 **glorified, and many souls would be saved.** *Testimonies for the*
546 *Church*, vol. 5, p. 609.3

547 **He in whose heart Christ abides recognizes Christ abiding in the**
548 **heart of his brother. Christ never wars against Christ.** Christ
549 never exerts an influence against Christ. **Christians are to do their**
550 **work, whatever it may be, in the unity of the Spirit,** for the
551 perfecting of the whole body. *My Life Today*, p. 276.5

552 **The success of our work depends upon our love to God and our**
553 **love to our fellowmen.** When there is harmonious action among the
554 individual members of the church, **when there is love and**
555 **confidence manifested by brother to brother, there will be**
556 **proportionate force and power in our work for the salvation of**
557 **men.** Oh, how greatly we need a moral renovation! Without the faith
558 that works by love, you can do nothing. May the Lord give you
559 hearts to receive this testimony. *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 188.1

560

561 **What should we do to overcome disunity?**

562 Php 1:9 “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and
563 more in knowledge and all discernment....”

564 Luke 5:23,24 “Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there
565 remember that your brother has something against you, leave your
566 gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to
567 your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

568 Matt. 18:15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell
569 him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have
570 gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or
571 two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word
572 may be established.

573

574 **The promise is made on condition that the united prayers of**
575 **God’s people are offered, and in answer to these prayers there**
576 **may be expected a power greater than that which comes in**
577 **answer to private prayer. The power given will be proportionate**
578 **to the unity of the members and their love for God and for one**
579 **another.** *Central Advance*, February 25, 1903, par. 2

580 No one lives to himself. In God’s work each one is assigned a post
581 of duty. **The union of all strengthens the work of each. As the**
582 **faith and unity and love of the church grow stronger, their circle**
583 **of influence enlarges,** and ever they are to reach to the farthest limit
584 of this influence constantly extending the triumphs of the cross. ...
585 God calls upon His people, many of whom are but half awake, to
586 arouse, and engage in earnest labor, praying for strength for service.

587 Workers are needed. **Receive the Holy Spirit, and your efforts will**
588 **be successful. Christ's presence is what gives power. Let all**
589 **strife and dissension cease. Let love and unity prevail.** Let God's
590 people move under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. **If they will give**
591 **themselves wholly to Him, He will restore to them the strength**
592 **they have lost by division.** *Central Advance*, February 25, 1903,
593 par. 3,7

594 **The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place.**
595 **When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate**
596 **every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of**
597 **discord and strife.** Those who have not been living in Christian
598 fellowship will draw close to one another. **One member working in**
599 **right lines will lead other members to unite with him in making**
600 **intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be**
601 **no confusion, because all will be in harmony with the mind of**
602 **the Spirit. The barriers separating believer from believer will be**
603 **broken down, and God's servants will speak the same things.**
604 The Lord will co-operate with His servants. All will pray
605 understandingly the prayer that Christ taught His servants: "Thy
606 kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."
607 Matthew 6:10. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 251.1

608 It is never difficult to do what we love to do, but to take a course
609 directly against our inclinations is lifting a cross. **Christ prayed**
610 **that His disciples might be one as He was one with the Father.**
611 **This unity is the credentials of Christ to the world that God sent**
612 **Him.** When self-will is renounced in reference to matters there will
613 be a union of believers with Christ. This all should pray for and
614 work for determinedly, thus answering as far as possible the prayer
615 of Christ for unity in His church. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5,
616 p. 94.1

617 One great reason why our brethren and sisters have no more
618 confidence toward God in prayer, is, that **nearly all neglect to**
619 **follow the words of Jesus in preserving harmony between**
620 **brethren.** They allow various wrongs to exist with members of the
621 church, **which create bitter envy and strife; and while these**
622 **differences exist, God neither hears nor answers their prayers,**
623 and darkness comes over the mind, because they have neglected the
624 duty so plainly pointed out by our Redeemer. *Review and Herald*,
625 April 15, 1880 par. 9

626 If there have been difficulties, . . . if envy, malice, bitterness, evil
627 surmisings, have existed, confess these sins, not in a general way,
628 but go to your brethren and sisters personally. **Be definite. If you**
629 **have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as**

630 **though you were the chief offender. Take them by the hand, let**
631 **your heart soften under the influence of the Spirit of God, and**
632 **say, "Will you forgive me? I have not felt right toward you. I want**
633 **to make right every wrong, that naught may stand registered against**
634 **me in the books of heaven. I must have a clean record." Who, think**
635 **you, would withstand such a movement as this? *Our High Calling,***
636 **p. 370.3**

637

638 **How do we apply this on a practical basis?**

639 1. How should we respond to criticism?

640 Prov. 15:1 "A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs
641 up anger."

642 Tit.3:2 "to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all
643 humility to all men."

644

645 **Do not go out of your way to call your enemy to account. His**
646 **words of censure and malice are like sparks which, if not blown**
647 **upon, will go out of themselves.** Live down the evil reports of those
648 whose tongues are set on fire of hell. **If you stop to dispute, you**
649 **will but open the way for further abuse.** Often difficulties may be
650 healed by silence. Let the evil talker alone. Go about your own work
651 as one who has a sacred trust to fulfil. **When you are criticised,**
652 **move on as one who hears not.** Your heart may be wounded:
653 nevertheless, do not allow yourself to be turned aside from your
654 work. Give your time and attention to matters of eternal interest.
655 *Central Advance*, April 8, 1903, Art. A, par. 2

656

657 2. How should we treat those who are unkind to us?

658 Matt. 5:44 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that
659 curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which
660 despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

661 Rom. 12:20 "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give
662 him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

663

664 3. What if we see something that is wrong? Should we be silent?

665 Matt. 7:1-5 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what
666 judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you
667 use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the
668 speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your
669 own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the
670 speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye?"

671 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then
672 you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

673

674 4. Should there be unity between people of different nationalities
675 and cultures?

676 Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond
677 nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ
678 Jesus."

679 1 Corinthians 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of
680 our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there
681 be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together
682 in the same mind and in the same judgment."

683

684 **This idea that French must stand French, and the Germans**
685 **stand Germans, and thus the nationalities stand apart in their**
686 **independence, is a device of the devil.** It is the truth alone that
687 saves the nationalities. The truth proves its power. It comes from
688 God and it is His own Spirit in its agency which renders it effectual
689 in the conversion and sanctification of those who hear and accept it.
690 *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 359.1

691 **Christ in men unites them on one grand platform, preparing for**
692 **the uniting in one family in heaven.** It is the truth that makes men
693 one, and removes national prejudice. **God forbid that any one of us**
694 **will plan and devise to keep up separate interests.** Nothing but
695 the quick and powerful word of God, working in the heart of His
696 delegated messengers to give the knowledge of the glory of Christ,
697 can gain victorious results, which are essential for the blending of
698 hearts and minds that they may be of the same judgment, speaking
699 the same things. *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 359.2

700 We have only one model to imitate, and that is Christ. Then we shall
701 all be in perfect harmony; nationalities will blend in Jesus Christ,
702 having the same mind, the same judgment, speaking the same
703 things, and with one mouth glorifying God. This is the work the
704 world's Redeemer is to do for us. **If we accept the truth as it is in**
705 **Jesus, national prejudices and jealousies will be broken down,**
706 **and the spirit of truth will blend hearts in one. We will love as**
707 **brethren; we will esteem others better than ourselves; we will be**
708 **kind and courteous, meek and lowly, easy to be entreated, full of**
709 **mercy and good fruit.** *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 361.2

710 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
711 that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions
712 among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same

713 mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10). **The truth**
714 **will have the same molding influence upon hearts whatever their**
715 **nationalities. Every human heart that accepts the truth will bow**
716 **to the majesty of its sway, and when Christ is abiding in the**
717 **heart by faith they will be of one mind, for Christ is not divided.**
718 They will be strong in His strength, happy and united in His peace.
719 The truth is the same in its subduing power upon all hearts. It will
720 refine and ennoble the character of the receiver *Manuscript*
721 *Releases*, vol. 15, p. 362.2

722 "I warn you, brethren and sisters, **not to build up a wall of**
723 **partition between different nationalities. On the contrary, seek**
724 **to break it down wherever it exists.** We should endeavor to bring
725 all into the harmony that there is in Jesus, laboring for the one
726 object, the salvation of our fellow men." *Counsels to the Church*, p.
727 288.3

728 "**Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed.**
729 The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national
730 benefit of all the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God's
731 family in the world. But **Christ came to break down every wall of**
732 **partition.** He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as
733 unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh
734 the earth." *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 190.4

735

736 5. What is Satan's special object?

737 Proverbs 6:16 "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are
738 an abomination unto him: A false witness that speaketh lies, and he
739 that soweth discord among brethren."

740

741 It is Satan's **special work to divide hearts, that the influence,**
742 **strength, and labor, of God's servants may be kept among**
743 **unconsecrated Sabbath-keepers, and precious time be occupied**
744 **to settle little differences, which should be spent in proclaiming**
745 **to unbelievers the truth.** *Spiritual Gifts* vol. 4b, p. 58.3

746 Satan understands this prayer better than do the members of
747 churches and the heads of families. He does not want the people
748 of God to understand it, lest they should see the advantage God
749 has bestowed on them, and know the day of their visitation. He
750 would keep them in discord and strife over little misunderstandings
751 and little differences, which, dwelt upon, grow into variance and
752 hatred. He knows that if he can keep them thus, they will present
753 before the world a showing exactly the opposite of that which God

754 desires them to present. *Review and Herald*, January 27, 1903, Art.
755 A, par. 12

756 Let us make Christ's prayer the rule of our life, that we may form
757 characters that will reveal to the world the power of the grace of
758 God. **Let there be less talk about petty differences, and a more**
759 **diligent study of what the prayer of Christ means to those who**
760 **believe on his name.** We are to pray for union, and then live in such
761 a way that God can answer our prayers. *Review and Herald*, January
762 27, 1903, Art. A, par. 14

763 "As we near the close of time, Satan comes down with great power,
764 knowing that his time is short. **Especially will his power be**
765 **exercised upon the remnant. He will war against them and seek**
766 **to divide and scatter them, that they may grow weak and be**
767 **overthrown.** The people of God should move understandingly, and
768 **should be united in their efforts.** They should be of the same mind,
769 of the same judgment; then their efforts will not be scattered, but
770 will tell forcibly in the upbuilding of the cause of present truth.
771 **Order must be observed, and there must be union in**
772 **maintaining order, or Satan will take advantage.** Letter 32a-
773 1892.9

774 **If all who have an influence felt the necessity of co-operation,**
775 **and would seek to answer the prayer of Christ, that they may be**
776 **one as He is one with the Father, the cause of present truth**
777 **would be a power.** ... But the people of God are asleep and do not
778 see the wants of the cause for this time. They do not feel the need of
779 concentrated action. **Satan is ever seeking to divide the faith and**
780 **hearts of God's people. He well knows that union is their**
781 **strength and division their weakness.** It is important and essential
782 that all of Christ's followers understand Satan's devices and with a
783 united front meet his attacks and vanquish him. They need to make
784 continual efforts to press together, even if it be at some sacrifice to
785 themselves. *Review and Herald*, vol. 3, p. 434,435

786 **Satan well knows that success can only attend order and**
787 **harmonious action.** He well knows that everything connected with
788 heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and thorough discipline
789 mark movements of the angelic host. **It is his studied effort to lead**
790 **professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as**
791 **he can;** therefore, he deceives even the professed people of God and
792 **makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to**
793 **spirituality;** ... I was shown that it is Satan's especial work to lead
794 men to feel that it is God's order for themselves and choose their
795 own course, independent of their brethren. *Testimonies for the*
796 *Church*, vol. 1, p. 649,450.

797 **Satan is making masterly efforts to divide the flock of God.** He
798 sees that there are those of different opinions, and that each is
799 pulling in a different direction. He sees that men desire to have their
800 own way and will in the place of taking the Word of God, and in
801 humble, earnest prayer searching out the cause of their differences
802 of opinion, that they may be brought into harmony. He sees their
803 determination at any cost to maintain the course of action which, if
804 continued in, will at last separate them from the body of believers.
805 Manuscript 63, 1900.2

806 **The most convincing argument we can give to the world of**
807 **Christ's mission is to be found in perfect unity....**In proportion to
808 our unity with Christ will be our power to save souls. Our High
809 Calling, p. 170.4

810 **Perfect oneness,—a union as close as the union existing between**
811 **the Father and the Son,—this is what will give success to the**
812 **efforts of God's workers.** Review and Herald, January 27, 1903,
813 Art. A, par. 15

814

815 Reviewing...

816 •Physical health depends on the unity of the body parts—often as
817 part of a larger group (Spiritual and other success depends on the
818 unity of the members).

819 •The human body strongly responds to the pain of any entity of the
820 body (A healthy spiritual body responds to the pain of the individual
821 members).

822

823 **Unity as Demonstrated in the Vine and the Branches**

824 By the figure of the vine and the branches, Christ illustrated not only
825 the relation that should exist between Him and His followers, but
826 also the union between every believer and his fellow believer. The
827 **branches of the vine are related to each other; but they are not**
828 **alike. Each has its own individuality, which cannot be merged**
829 **into that of another, but all have a special connection with each**
830 **other. The root that supplies nourishment to one branch**
831 **supplies nourishment to every other branch.** Each must depend
832 alike on the vine for sustenance; all must be joined to the parent
833 stalk. The life and growth and fruitfulness of each depend alike on
834 the parent vine. **In obedience to the laws of nature, their common**
835 **hold of the true vine makes them one; in their diversity there is**
836 **unity.** Letter 112, 1907.13

837 The lesson of the vine and its branches holds a deep meaning for the
838 workers in the cause of God. **Every worker is to draw his strength**

839 **from the same source; and while the individuality of each is to**
840 **be maintained, unity and harmony is to be preserved. When this**
841 **spirit of oneness pervades the work, our institutions throughout**
842 **the world will be united in their interests, while the individuality**
843 **of any one will not be merged into that of any other one.** Letter
844 112, 1907.14

845 **The branches of the vine cannot blend into each other; they are**
846 **individually separate; yet every branch must be in fellowship**
847 **with every other if they are united in the same parent stock.**
848 They all draw nourishment from the same source; they drink in the
849 same life-giving properties. So **each branch of the True Vine is**
850 **separate and distinct, yet all are bound together in the parent**
851 **stock. There can be no division. They are all linked together by**
852 **his will to bear fruit wherever they can find place and**
853 **opportunity. But in order to do this, the worker must hide self.**
854 **He must not give expression to his own mind and will. He is to**
855 **express the mind and will of Christ.** The human family are
856 dependent upon God for life and breath and sustenance. **God has**
857 **designed the web, and all are individual threads to compose the**
858 **pattern.** The Creator is one, and he reveals himself as the great
859 Reservoir of all that is essential for each separate life. Southern
860 Worker, December 17, 1907 par. 8}

861 **The vine has many branches, but though all the branches are**
862 **different, they do not quarrel. In diversity there is unity.** Letter
863 19, 1901.40

864 **“Press together,” is the command I hear** from the Captain of our
865 Salvation. **Press together. Where there is unity, there is strength.**
866 All who are on the Lord’s side will press together. **There is need of**
867 **perfect unity and love among believers in the truth, and**
868 **anything that leads to dissension is of the devil.** The Lord designs
869 that His people shall be one with Him as the branches are one with
870 the **vine.** Then they will be one with each other. Letter 6, 1899.9

871 The **unity** that God requires cannot be secured or maintained by any
872 human methods. But all who are united to the parent stock, as the
873 branch is united to the **vine**, will be one in Christ. The Christian who
874 lives in love and **unity** with his brethren shows to the world the
875 credentials that God sent His Son to die for the fallen race.
876 Manuscript 156, 1898.5

877

878

Final Review

879 **Reviewing...**

880 •Every body part is needed (Every member is needed).

- 881 •Every body part is important (Every member is valued).
- 882 •Every body part has a dedicated role (Every member has role to
883 play).
- 884 •Every body part is connected (Every member is connected to
885 Christ).
- 886 •Every body part depends on the blood (Every member partakes of a
887 common source of life).
- 888 •Every body part depends on the heart (Every member depends on a
889 common power).
- 890 •Every body part is sustained by food and oxygen coming from
891 outside of itself (Every member depends on spiritual food coming
892 from outside of him or her).
- 893 •Every body part obeys brain (Every member obeys Christ the head
894 of the Church).
- 895 •Physical health depends on the unity of the body parts—often as
896 part of a larger group (Spiritual and other success depends on the
897 unity of the members).
- 898 •The human body strongly responds to the pain of any entity of the
899 body (A healthy spiritual body responds to the pain of the individual
900 members).

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Read much more about unity in the writings of Ellen White at egwwritings.org. Search words such as unity, harmonious, united, individuality, diversity, uniformity, discordant, blend,

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