

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

17

18

19 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

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

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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,

Learn more about unity at this link on our website:

<https://www.discipleheart.com/practical-godliness/christian-unity>.

Find resources on other topics at discipleheart.com.

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

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

856

857 Final Review

858 Reviewing...

- 859 •Every body part is needed (Every member is needed).
- 860 •Every body part is important (Every member is valued).
- 861 •Every body part has a dedicated role (Every member has role to
862 play).
- 863 •Every body part is connected (Every member is connected to
864 Christ).
- 865 •Every body part depends on the blood (Every member partakes of a
866 common source of life).
- 867 •Every body part depends on the heart (Every member depends on a
868 common power).
- 869 •Every body part is sustained by food and oxygen coming from
870 outside of itself (Every member depends on spiritual food coming
871 from outside of him or her).
- 872 •Every body part obeys brain (Every member obeys Christ the head
873 of the Church).
- 874 •Physical health depends on the unity of the body parts—often as
875 part of a larger group (Spiritual and other success depends on the
876 unity of the members).
- 877 •The human body strongly responds to the pain of any entity of the
878 body (A healthy spiritual body responds to the pain of the individual
879 members).

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

76 "I am the true Vine," He says. Instead of choosing the graceful palm,
77 the lofty cedar, or the strong oak, Jesus takes the vine with its
78 clinging tendrils to represent Himself. The palm tree, the cedar, and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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800 •The human body strongly responds to the pain of any entity of the
801 body (A healthy spiritual body responds to the pain of the individual
802 members).

803

804 Unity as Demonstrated in the Vine and the Branches

805 By the figure of the vine and the branches, Christ illustrated not only
806 the relation that should exist between Him and His followers, but
807 also the union between every believer and his fellow believer. The
808 branches of the vine are related to each other; but they are not alike.
809 Each has its own individuality, which cannot be merged into that of
810 another, but all have a special connection with each other. The root
811 that supplies nourishment to one branch supplies nourishment to
812 every other branch. Each must depend alike on the vine for
813 sustenance; all must be joined to the parent stalk. The life and
814 growth and fruitfulness of each depend alike on the parent vine. In
815 obedience to the laws of nature, their common hold of the
816 true vine makes them one; in their diversity there is unity. Letter
817 112, 1907.13

818 The lesson of the vine and its branches holds a deep meaning for the
819 workers in the cause of God. Every worker is to draw his strength
820 from the same source; and while the individuality of each is to be
821 maintained, unity and harmony is to be preserved. When this spirit
822 of oneness pervades the work, our institutions throughout the world
823 will be united in their interests, while the individuality of any one
824 will not be merged into that of any other one. Letter 112, 1907.14

825 The branches of the vine cannot blend into each other; they are
826 individually separate; yet every branch must be in fellowship with
827 every other if they are united in the same parent stock. They all draw
828 nourishment from the same source; they drink in the same life-
829 giving properties. So each branch of the True Vine is separate and
830 distinct, yet all are bound together in the parent stock. There can be
831 no division. They are all linked together by his will to bear fruit
832 wherever they can find place and opportunity. But in order to do
833 this, the worker must hide self. He must not give expression to his
834 own mind and will. He is to express the mind and will of Christ. The
835 human family are dependent upon God for life and breath and
836 sustenance. God has designed the web, and all are individual threads
837 to compose the pattern. The Creator is one, and he reveals himself as
838 the great Reservoir of all that is essential for each separate life.
839 *Southern Worker*, December 17, 1907 par. 8}

840 The vine has many branches, but though all the branches are
841 different, they do not quarrel. In diversity there is unity. Letter
842 19, 1901.40

757 He is one with the Father, the cause of present truth would be a
758 power. ... But the people of God are asleep and do not see the wants
759 of the cause for this time. They do not feel the need of concentrated
760 action. Satan is ever seeking to divide the faith and hearts of God's
761 people. He well knows that union is their strength and division their
762 weakness. It is important and essential that all of Christ's followers
763 understand Satan's devices and with a united front meet his attacks
764 and vanquish him. They need to make continual efforts to press
765 together, even if it be at some sacrifice to themselves. Review and
766 Herald, vol. 3, p. 434,435

767 Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious
768 action. He well knows that everything connected with heaven is in
769 perfect order, that subjection and thorough discipline mark
770 movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead
771 professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as he
772 can; therefore, he deceives even the professed people of God and
773 makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to
774 spirituality; ... I was shown that it is Satan's especial work to lead
775 men to feel that it is God's order for themselves and choose their
776 own course, independent of their brethren. *Testimonies for the*
777 *Church*, vol. 1, p. 649,450.

778 Satan is making masterly efforts to divide the flock of God. He sees
779 that there are those of different opinions, and that each is pulling in a
780 different direction. He sees that men desire to have their own way
781 and will in the place of taking the Word of God, and in humble,
782 earnest prayer searching out the cause of their differences of
783 opinion, that they may be brought into harmony. He sees their
784 determination at any cost to maintain the course of action which, if
785 continued in, will at last separate them from the body of believers.
786 Manuscript 63, 1900.2

787 The most convincing argument we can give to the world of Christ's
788 mission is to be found in perfect unity....In proportion to our unity
789 with Christ will be our power to save souls. Our High Calling, p.
790 170.4

791 Perfect oneness,—a union as close as the union existing between the
792 Father and the Son,—this is what will give success to the efforts of
793 God's workers. Review and Herald, January 27, 1903, Art. A, par.
794 15

795
796 Reviewing...

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

121 B. Christ Our Head: United in the Church

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

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

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

133 1 Cor. 12:18 “But now God has set the members, each one of them,
134 in the body just as He pleased.”

135

136 Unity in Diversity in the Human Body

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

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

139 •Every body part has a specific role (Every member has specific
140 role.).

141 •Every body part is connected (Every member is connected to
142 Christ).

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

145 •Every body part depends on the heart (Every member depends on a
146 common power).

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

150 •Every body part obeys brain (Every member obeys Christ the head
151 of the Church).

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

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

158

159 Christian unity is a mighty agency. It tells in a powerful manner that
160 those who possess it are children of God. It has an irresistible

161 influence upon the world.... We are to be one with our fellow-men
162 and with Christ, and in Christ one with God. Then of us can be
163 spoken the words, "Ye are complete in Him." {ST February 7, 1900,
164 par. 1} In the plan of redemption a place is allotted to every soul. To
165 each man is given his work. No one can be a member of
166 Christ's body and yet be inactive. Different lines of work are
167 committed to different men, according to their several ability. The
168 work of God's people may and will be varied, but one Spirit is the
169 mover in it all. All the work done for the Master is to
170 be connected with the great whole. The workers are to labor together
171 in concert, each one controlled by divine power, putting forth
172 undivided effort to draw those around them to Christ. All must move
173 like parts of well-adjusted machinery, each part dependent on the
174 other part, yet standing distinct in action. And each one is to take the
175 place assigned him and do the work appointed him. God calls upon
176 the members of His church to receive the Holy Spirit, to come
177 together in unity and brotherly sympathy, to bind their interests
178 together in love. {ST February 7, 1900, par. 2} ... All jealousy, evil
179 surmising, and evil speaking are of him, and tend to produce discord
180 and disunion. Then shall God's people be at variance with one
181 another? Shall they not be cemented together by the Holy Spirit,
182 each worker filled with love and sympathy for his fellow-worker,
183 each filling his appointment with faithful effort, seeking earnestly to
184 prepare the way of the Lord? In the general discord there should be
185 one place where harmony and unity should exist because the Bible is
186 the guide. When the principles of God's Word are followed, it
187 becomes a bright light shining in a dark place. All who build on this
188 Rock can be sure that their house will stand amid the tempest. {ST
189 February 7, 1900, par. 3} ... The Holy Spirit will work with the
190 consecrated human instrument; for this is God's purpose. ... When
191 God's people place themselves in proper relation to Him and to one
192 another, there will be a full impartation of the Holy Spirit for the
193 harmonious combination of the whole body. {ST February 7, 1900,
194 par. 5} Nothing so manifestly weakens a church as disunion and
195 strife. Nothing so wars against Christ and the truth as this
196 spirit. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?
197 let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of
198 wisdom." "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the
199 feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is
200 lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow
201 peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see
202 the Lord; looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;
203 lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby
204 many be defiled." {ST February 7, 1900, par. 6} As long as we are

715 the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth."
716 *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 190.4
717
718 5. What is Satan's special object?
719 Proverbs 6:16 "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are
720 an abomination unto him: A false witness that speaketh lies, and he
721 that soweth discord among brethren."
722
723 It is Satan's special work to divide hearts, that the influence,
724 strength, and labor, of God's servants may be kept among
725 unconsecrated Sabbath-keepers, and precious time be occupied to
726 settle little differences, which should be spent in proclaiming to
727 unbelievers the truth. *Spiritual Gifts* vol. 4b, p. 58.3
728 Satan understands this prayer better than do the members of
729 churches and the heads of families. He does not want the people of
730 God to understand it, lest they should see the advantage God has
731 bestowed on them, and know the day of their visitation. He would
732 keep them in discord and strife over little misunderstandings and
733 little differences, which, dwelt upon, grow into variance and hatred.
734 He knows that if he can keep them thus, they will present before the
735 world a showing exactly the opposite of that which God desires
736 them to present. *Review and Herald*, January 27, 1903, Art. A, par.
737 12
738 Let us make Christ's prayer the rule of our life, that we may form
739 characters that will reveal to the world the power of the grace of
740 God. Let there be less talk about petty differences, and a more
741 diligent study of what the prayer of Christ means to those who
742 believe on his name. We are to pray for union, and then live in such
743 a way that God can answer our prayers. *Review and Herald*, January
744 27, 1903, Art. A, par. 14
745 "As we near the close of time, Satan comes down with great power,
746 knowing that his time is short. Especially will his power be
747 exercised upon the remnant. He will war against them and seek
748 to divide and scatter them, that they may grow weak and be
749 overthrown. The people of God should move understandingly, and
750 should be united in their efforts. They should be of the same mind,
751 of the same judgment; then their efforts will not be scattered, but
752 will tell forcibly in the upbuilding of the cause of present truth.
753 Order must be observed, and there must be union in maintaining
754 order, or Satan will take advantage. Letter 32a-1892.9
755 If all who have an influence felt the necessity of co-operation, and
756 would seek to answer the prayer of Christ, that they may be one as

672 conversion and sanctification of those who hear and accept it.
673 *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 359.1

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

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

693 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
694 that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions
695 among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same
696 mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). The truth will
697 have the same molding influence upon hearts whatever their
698 nationalities. Every human heart that accepts the truth will bow to
699 the majesty of its sway, and when Christ is abiding in the heart by
700 faith they will be of one mind, for Christ is not divided. They will be
701 strong in His strength, happy and united in His peace. The truth is
702 the same in its subduing power upon all hearts. It will refine and
703 ennoble the character of the receiver *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15,
704 p. 362.2

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

710 "Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The
711 scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit
712 of all the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God's family in
713 the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition.
714 He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as

205 in this world we must be linked with one another. Humanity is
206 interlaced and interwoven with humanity. As Christians we are
207 members of one another. ... In helplessness and disappointment we
208 are fighting the battles of life, and the Lord designs us, as His sons
209 and daughters, whom He calls His friends, to help one another. This
210 is to be a part of our practical Christian work. Who is my neighbor?
211 Read and understand. {ST February 7, 1900, par. 7} We can be
212 united with one another only as we are united with Christ. ... Our
213 life should be bound up with His life. We should draw constantly
214 from Him, partaking of the living bread which came down from
215 heaven, drinking from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its
216 abundant treasure. When this is in truth the experience of the
217 Christian, there is seen in his life a freshness, a simplicity, a
218 humility, a meekness and lowliness of heart, that show all with
219 whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of
220 Him. {ST February 7, 1900, par. 8} ... Truth, with its divine power
221 and influence, takes possession of us, making of believers one
222 harmonious whole, of which Christ is seen to be the soul. Every
223 element is working in right lines. Every worker who fills his
224 appointed place is helping to uplift the cross of Calvary. {ST
225 February 7, 1900, par. 9} This is the unity God requires in His
226 service. When God's chosen people are of one mind, barriers of
227 selfishness will disappear as by magic, and many, many more souls
228 will be converted because of the unity which exists among believers.
229 There is one body and one spirit. Those who have been building
230 territorial lines of distinction, barriers of color and caste, might
231 better take these down much faster than they put them up. {ST
232 February 7, 1900, par. 10} He in whose heart Christ abides
233 recognizes Christ abiding in the heart of his brother. Christ never
234 wars against Christ. Christ never exerts an influence against Christ.
235 Christians are to do their work, whatever it may be, in the unity of
236 the Spirit, for the perfecting of the whole body. The church is to be
237 purified, refined, ennobled. The members are to cast from their
238 hearts the idols which have hindered their advancement in
239 spirituality. By the influence of the Spirit, the most discordant may
240 be brought into harmony. Unselfishness is to bind God's people
241 together with firm, tender bonds. There is a vast power in the church
242 when the energies of the members are under the control of the Spirit,
243 gathering good from every source, educating, training, and
244 disciplining self. Thus is presented to God a powerful organization,
245 through which He can work for the conversion of sinners. Thus
246 heaven and earth are connected, and all the divine agencies co-
247 operate with human instrumentalities. {ST February 7, 1900, par.
248 11}

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

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

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263 C. Christ Our Example: United to Each Other

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

266 *1 John 2:10 “Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there
267 is nothing in him to make him stumble.”

268

269 What do we learn about unity from the relationship of Christ and
270 His Father?

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

274

275

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

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

285 *As living branches of the True Vine, all will be united to Christ, the
286 living head. Christ will abide in every heart, guiding, comforting,
287 sanctifying, and presenting to the world the unity of the followers of
288 Jesus, thus bearing testimony that the heavenly credentials are
289 supplied to the remnant church. In the oneness of Christ’s church it

630 go out of themselves. Live down the evil reports of those whose
631 tongues are set on fire of hell. If you stop to dispute, you will but
632 open the way for further abuse. Often difficulties may be healed by
633 silence. Let the evil talker alone. Go about your own work as one
634 who has a sacred trust to fulfil. When you are criticised, move on as
635 one who hears not. Your heart may be wounded: nevertheless, do
636 not allow yourself to be turned aside from your work. Give your
637 time and attention to matters of eternal interest. *Central Advance*,
638 April 8, 1903, Art. A, par. 2

639

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

641 Matt. 5:44 “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that
642 curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which
643 despitefully use you, and persecute you;”

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

646

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

648 Matt. 7:1-5 “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what
649 judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you
650 use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the
651 speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your
652 own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the
653 speck from your eye’; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye?
654 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then
655 you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

656

657 4. Should there be unity between people of different nationalities
658 and cultures?

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

662 1 Corinthians 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of
663 our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there
664 be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together
665 in the same mind and in the same judgment."

666

667 This idea that French must stand French, and the Germans stand
668 Germans, and thus the nationalities stand apart in their
669 independence, is a device of the devil. It is the truth alone that saves
670 the nationalities. The truth proves its power. It comes from God and
671 it is His own Spirit in its agency which renders it effectual in the

588 servants will speak the same things. The Lord will co-operate with
589 His servants. All will pray understandingly the prayer that Christ
590 taught His servants: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth,
591 as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol.
592 8, p. 251.1

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

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

609 If there have been difficulties, . . . if envy, malice, bitterness, evil
610 surmisings, have existed, confess these sins, not in a general way,
611 but go to your brethren and sisters personally. Be definite. If you
612 have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as
613 though you were the chief offender. Take them by the hand, let your
614 heart soften under the influence of the Spirit of God, and say, "Will
615 you forgive me? I have not felt right toward you. I want to make
616 right every wrong, that naught may stand registered against me in
617 the books of heaven. I must have a clean record." Who, think you,
618 would withstand such a movement as this? *Our High Calling*, p.
619 370.3

620

621 How do we apply this on a practical basis?

622 1. How should we respond to criticism?

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

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

627

628 Do not go out of your way to call your enemy to account. His words
629 of censure and malice are like sparks which, if not blown upon, will

290 will be proven that God sent His only-begotten Son into the
291 world. . . . Satan is determined that . . . oneness shall not be; for it is the
292 strongest witness that can be borne that God gave his Son to
293 reconcile the world to heaven. But the union for which Christ prayed
294 must exist among God's people before he can bestow on the church
295 the enlargement and power that he longs to bestow on it. *Selected*
296 *Messages*, vol. 1, p. 386

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

307

308 What do we learn about unity in the early church?

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

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

324 The differences that now exist among Christians did not exist in the
325 days of Christ or His apostles. When the gospel was preached after
326 the resurrection and ascension of Christ, union prevailed; the
327 believers were all of one heart and one mind. . . . Through the divine
328 illumination and sanctification of the Spirit the believers were
329 perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same
330 judgment. This was and always will be the fruit that is borne under
331 the influence of the Holy Spirit. *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p.
332 176.2

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

341
342 What is the result of unity?

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

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

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

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

362 He in whose heart Christ abides recognizes Christ abiding in the
363 heart of his brother. Christ never wars against Christ. Christ never
364 exerts an influence against Christ. Christians are to do their work,
365 whatever it may be, in the unity of the Spirit, for the perfecting of
366 the whole body. The church is to be purified, refined, ennobled. The
367 members are to cast from their hearts the idols which have hindered
368 their advancement in spirituality. By the influence of the Spirit, the
369 most discordant may be brought into harmony. Unselfishness is to
370 bind God's people together with firm, tender bonds. There is a vast
371 power in the church when the energies of the members are under the
372 control of the Spirit, gathering good from every source, educating,
373 training, and disciplining self. Thus is presented to God a powerful
374 organization, through which He can work for the conversion of
375 sinners. Thus heaven and earth are connected, and all the divine

546

547 What should we do to overcome disunity?

548 Php 1:9 "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and
549 more in knowledge and all discernment...."

550 Luke 5:23,24 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there
551 remember that your brother has something against you, leave your
552 gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to
553 your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

554 Matt. 18:15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell
555 him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have
556 gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or
557 two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word
558 may be established.

559

560 The promise is made on condition that the united prayers of God's
561 people are offered, and in answer to these prayers there may be
562 expected a power greater than that which comes in answer to private
563 prayer. The power given will be proportionate to the unity of the
564 members and their love for God and for one another. *Central*
565 *Advance*, February 25, 1903, par. 2

566 No one lives to himself. In God's work each one is assigned a post
567 of duty. The union of all strengthens the work of each. As the faith
568 and unity and love of the church grow stronger, their circle of
569 influence enlarges, and ever they are to reach to the farthest limit of
570 this influence constantly extending the triumphs of the cross. ... God
571 calls upon His people, many of whom are but half awake, to arouse,
572 and engage in earnest labor, praying for strength for service.
573 Workers are needed. Receive the Holy Spirit, and your efforts will
574 be successful. Christ's presence is what gives power. Let all strife
575 and dissension cease. Let love and unity prevail. Let God's people
576 move under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If they will give
577 themselves wholly to Him, He will restore to them the strength they
578 have lost by division. *Central Advance*, February 25, 1903, par. 3,7

579 The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When
580 this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every
581 believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and
582 strife. Those who have not been living in Christian fellowship will
583 draw close to one another. One member working in right lines will
584 lead other members to unite with him in making intercession for the
585 revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be no confusion, because all
586 will be in harmony with the mind of the Spirit. The barriers
587 separating believer from believer will be broken down, and God's

503 Let them link up with one another and with Christ. Let them study
504 the seventeenth of John, and learn how to pray and how to live the
505 prayer of Christ. He is the Comforter. He will abide in their hearts,
506 making their joy full. His words will be to them as the bread of life,
507 and in the strength thus gained they will be enabled to develop
508 characters that will be an honor to God. Perfect Christian fellowship
509 will exist among them. There will be seen in their lives the fruit that
510 always appears as the result of obedience to the truth. ... Perfect
511 oneness,—a union as close as the union existing between the Father
512 and the Son,—this is what will give success to the efforts of God’s
513 workers. *Review and Herald*, January 27, 1903

514 Satan works to make the prayer of Christ of none effect. He makes
515 continual efforts to create bitterness and discord; for where there is
516 unity there is strength, a oneness which all the powers of hell cannot
517 break. All who shall aid the enemies of God by bringing weakness
518 and sorrow and discouragement upon any of God’s people, through
519 their own perverse ways and tempers, are working directly against
520 the prayer of Christ. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 151.2

521 An earnest effort should be made in every church to put away
522 evilspeaking and a censorious spirit as among the sins productive of
523 the greatest evils in the church. Severity and faultfinding must be
524 rebuked as the workings of Satan. Mutual love and confidence must
525 be encouraged and strengthened in the members of the church. Let
526 all, in the fear of God and with love to their brethren, close their ears
527 to gossip and censure. Direct the talebearer to the teachings of God’s
528 word. Bid him obey the Scriptures and carry his complaints directly
529 to those whom he thinks in error. This united action would bring a
530 flood of light into the church and close the door to a flood of evil.
531 Thus God would be glorified, and many souls would be saved.
532 *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 609.3

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

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

376 agencies co-operate with human instrumentalities. *Signs of the*
377 *Times*, February 7, 1900 Par. 11 }

378

379 But discord gradually came. It continues in our day!

380 James 3:16 “For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and
381 every evil thing are there.”

382 James 4:1 “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do
383 they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your
384 members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and
385 cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you
386 do not ask.”

387

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

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

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

409

410 What are the consequences of disunity?

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

414 Many who profess to gather with Christ are scattering from Him.
415 This is why the church is so weak. Many indulge freely in criticism
416 and accusing. By giving expression to suspicion, jealousy, and
417 discontent, they yield themselves as instruments to Satan. Before

418 they realize what they are doing, the adversary has through them
419 accomplished his purpose. The impression of evil has been made,
420 the shadow has been cast, the arrows of Satan have found their
421 mark. Distrust, unbelief, and downright infidelity have fastened
422 upon those who otherwise might have accepted Christ. Meanwhile
423 the workers for Satan look complacently upon those whom they
424 have driven to skepticism, and who are now hardened against
425 reproof and entreaty. They flatter themselves that in comparison
426 with these souls they are virtuous and righteous. They do not realize
427 that these sad wrecks of character are the work of their own
428 unbridled tongues and rebellious hearts. It is through their influence
429 that these tempted ones have fallen. *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 340.3}

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

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

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

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

456 The world is looking with gratification at the disunion amongst
457 Christians. Infidelity is well pleased. God calls for a change among
458 His people. Union with Christ and with one another is our only
459 safety in these last days. Let us not make it possible for Satan to
460 point to our church members, saying: "Behold how these people,

461 standing under the banner of Christ, hate one another. We have
462 nothing to fear from them while they spend more strength fighting
463 one another than in warfare with my forces." *Counsels to the*
464 *Church*, p. 43.2

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

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

485

486 What should we do to avoid disunity?

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

489 1 Cor. 1:10 "Now I plead with you ... that there be no divisions
490 among you."

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

494

495 The Bible sets before us a model church. They are to be
496 in unity with each other, and with God. When believers are united in
497 Christ the living vine, the result is that they are one with Christ, full
498 of sympathy and tenderness and love. *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p.
499 18

500

501 I urge our people to cease their criticism and evil speaking, and go
502 to God in earnest prayer, asking him to help them to help the erring.