

# The Lord's Prayer for Unity

John 17:20-21

## Introduction:

- A. Chapter 17 is truly the Lord's prayer.
  - 1. The Lord did not pray the so-called "Lord's Prayer," but he did this one.
  - 2. In this prayer the Lord prayed that his disciples be kept (v.15), sanctified (v. 17) and united.
  - 3. This prayer was prayer just before entering the garden to betrayed of Judas.
  - 4. This prayer tells how badly Jesus wants unity among his followers.
- B. In this lesson, we will notice three things about the unity for which Jesus so fervently prayed.

## Discussion:

### I. The *Parties to this Unity* (vv. 20-23)

- A. The Father and the Son.
  - 1. Any unity without these as parties is not what Christ prayed for.
  - 2. Reconciliation to of man starts with reconciliation to God (Eph. 2:16)
- B. The apostles and all other believers.
  - 1. The apostles taught directly by the Holy Spirit (14:26)
  - 2. The rest of us are taught by their word (17:20)
- C. Fellowship with the Father, Son and Apostles cannot be while walking in darkness (1 John 1:3-6)

### II. The *Importance of this Unity* (vv. 21-23)

- A. Helps to convince the world that Jesus came from God (v. 21)
  - 1. There is ample proof in the Scriptures of this truth (cf. John 20:30-31)
  - 2. But, a divided church keeps people searching and seeing this truth.
- B. Helps convince the world of the genuineness of Christian love (vv. 23-26)

### III. The *Alternatives to this Unity*.

- A. Divisions, factions and strife.
  - 1. Caused by bad attitudes (cf. Eph. 4:1-3; Phil. 4:2; Rom. 12:16; Tit. 3:10)
  - 2. Caused by false doctrines (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Tim. 6:3,4)
  - 3. Caused by misplaced loyalties (1 Cor. 1:10-15; 3:3-8).
  - 4. Denominationalism is the end results.
- B. Unity in diversity
  - 1. Addresses only the attitude problems – i.e., attitudes toward each other.
  - 2. Ignores the doctrinal problems – things that affect our fellowship with God (cf. 2 John 9-11)
  - 3. Glosses over division without addressing or correcting its causes.
  - 4. Exchanges conviction for convenience.
  - 5. Emphasizes only one part of the Lord's prayer and ignores basis of unity ("one in us," "truth.")

## Conclusion:

- A. Let us maintain the unity for which Jesus prayed.
  - 1. By maintaining the attitudes that the Bible teaches us to have.
  - 2. By abiding in the doctrine of Christ – accept not other.
  - 3. By being loyal to Christ rather than any man.
- B. Let us reject both divisions and "unity in diversity" for the unity that is in God and His Son.
  - 1. By going back of all denominational creeds and doctrines to just the Bible.
  - 2. By speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where it is silent.