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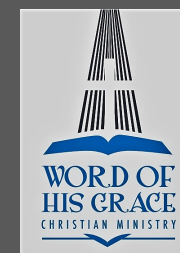
Word of His Grace  
Christian Ministry

Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ through the exposition of God's Holy Word, the Bible.

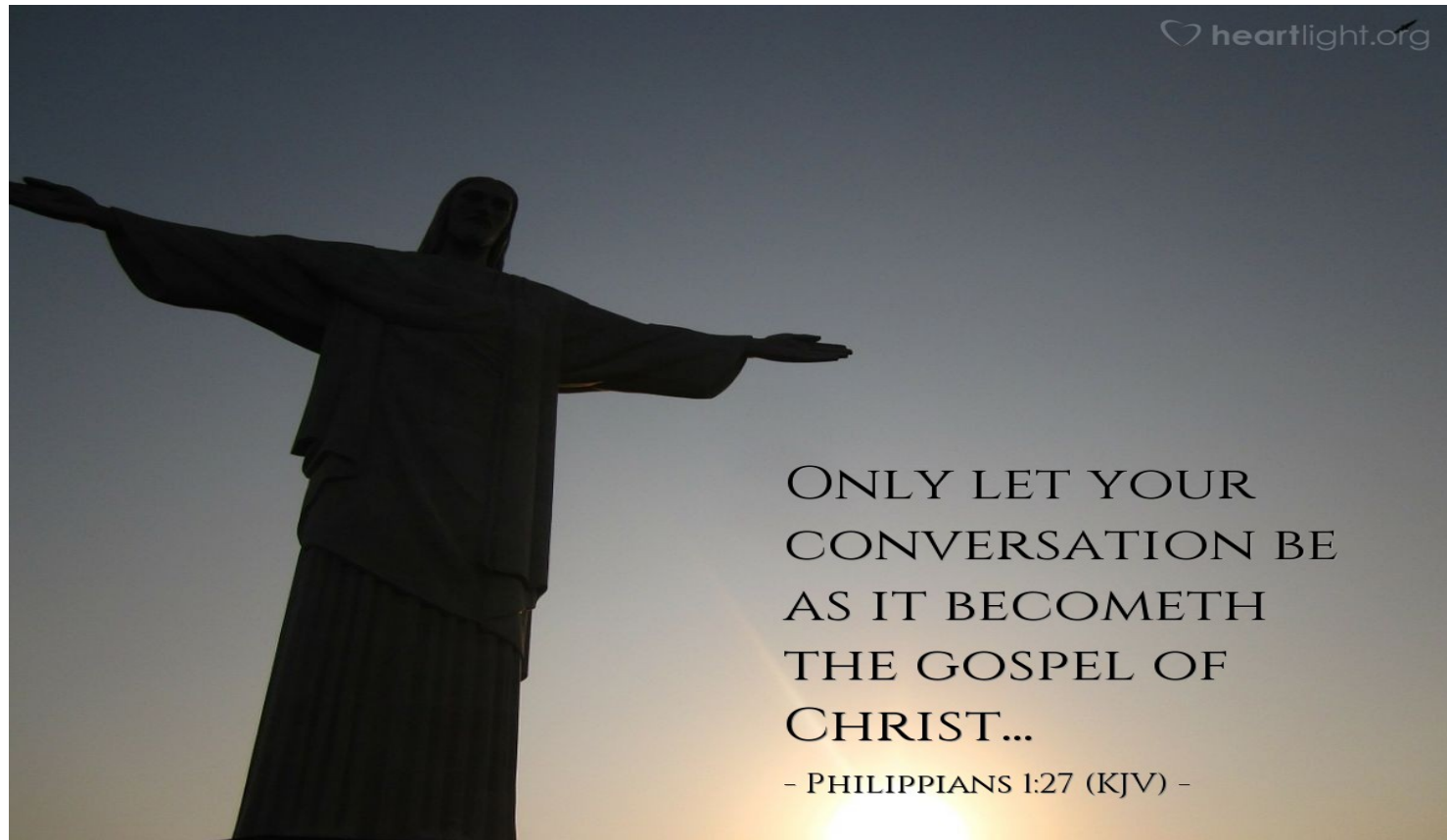
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*Christian unity* is described in the Bible as the bond of peace, which the Prince of peace gives to his Church through the Holy Spirit. In our day, we are increasingly hearing more emphasis being placed on Christian unity. Many are appealing to *John chapter 17* where Jesus prays to the Father, asking for unity among his followers. Should all Christians unite? What is the nature of true unity? Is there such a thing as false unity? Let us turn to the Scriptures for answers.

### What does the Bible say about unity within the Church?

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all *speak* the *same thing*, and that there be no *divisions* among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the *same mind* and in the *same judgment*” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

“Only let your *conversation* be as it becometh the *gospel of Christ*: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one *Spirit* with one *mind* striving together for *the faith of the gospel*” (Philippians 1:27). See also (Philippians 2:2; 1 Peter 3:8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26).

**NOTE:** True Christian unity is centered upon our understanding of the nature of salvation and teaching the same gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is taught in the New

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I have given them the  
glory that you gave me,  
that they may be one as we are  
one—I in them and you in me—  
so that they may be brought to

*complete unity*  
John 17:22-23



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Testament.

## What did Jesus specifically pray for in John 17?

“And now I am no more in the world, but *these* are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name *those* whom thou hast given me, that they may be *one*, as we are” (John 17:11).

“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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given *them*; that *they* may be one, even as we are one: 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” (John 17:21-23).

## Was Jesus’ prayer answered?

“*These* all continued with *one accord* in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14).

“And *they*, continuing *daily* with *one accord* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and *singleness of heart*, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:46-47).

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**NOTE:** Yes, Jesus' prayer for unity amongst his disciples was answered. As they journeyed beyond Jerusalem, they were accused of turning the world upside down with the message of gospel of Jesus Christ, see [Acts 8:4, 17:4-6](#).

### Did the New Testament Church ever experience division?

“And *Barnabas* determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But *Paul* thought not *good* to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the *contention* was so sharp between *them*, that they departed *asunder* one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God” ([Acts 15:37-40](#)).

“For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are *contentions* among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ *divided*? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” ([1 Corinthians 1:11-13](#)). See also ([Acts 15:1-31](#); [1 Corinthians 3:4-7, 11:17-19](#)).

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# Humility



“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be *blamed*. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the *Gentiles*: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the *circumcision*” (Galatians 2:11-12). See verses 13-14.

**NOTE:** Believers make up the body of Christ, yet due to sin, people remain flawed. As such, there were times in the early Church where honest disagreements and contentions arose. So, it is today, disagreements and challenges are to be expected.

Are there other factors that lead to disunity?

“But if ye have bitter *envying* and *strife* in your hearts, glory not, and *lie* not against the *truth*. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (James 3:14-15).

“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who *loveth* to have the *preeminence* among them, receiveth us not” (3 John 1:9).

How can individual Christians bring unity to the body of Christ?

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, *forbearing* one another in *love*; Endeavoring to keep the *unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as

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Maintain the **Unity** of the Spirit



ye are called in *one hope* of your calling; One *Lord*, one faith, one *baptism*, One *God* and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”(Ephesians 4:1-7).

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto *liberty*; only use not liberty for an occasion to the *flesh*, but by *love* serve one another” (Galatians 5:13).

**NOTE:** It is the Christian’s duty to pursue peace within the body of Christ, the Church. There may be disagreements; however, these should not overshadow our love for one another. We are to serve one another with humility of mind as we work together for God’s glory.

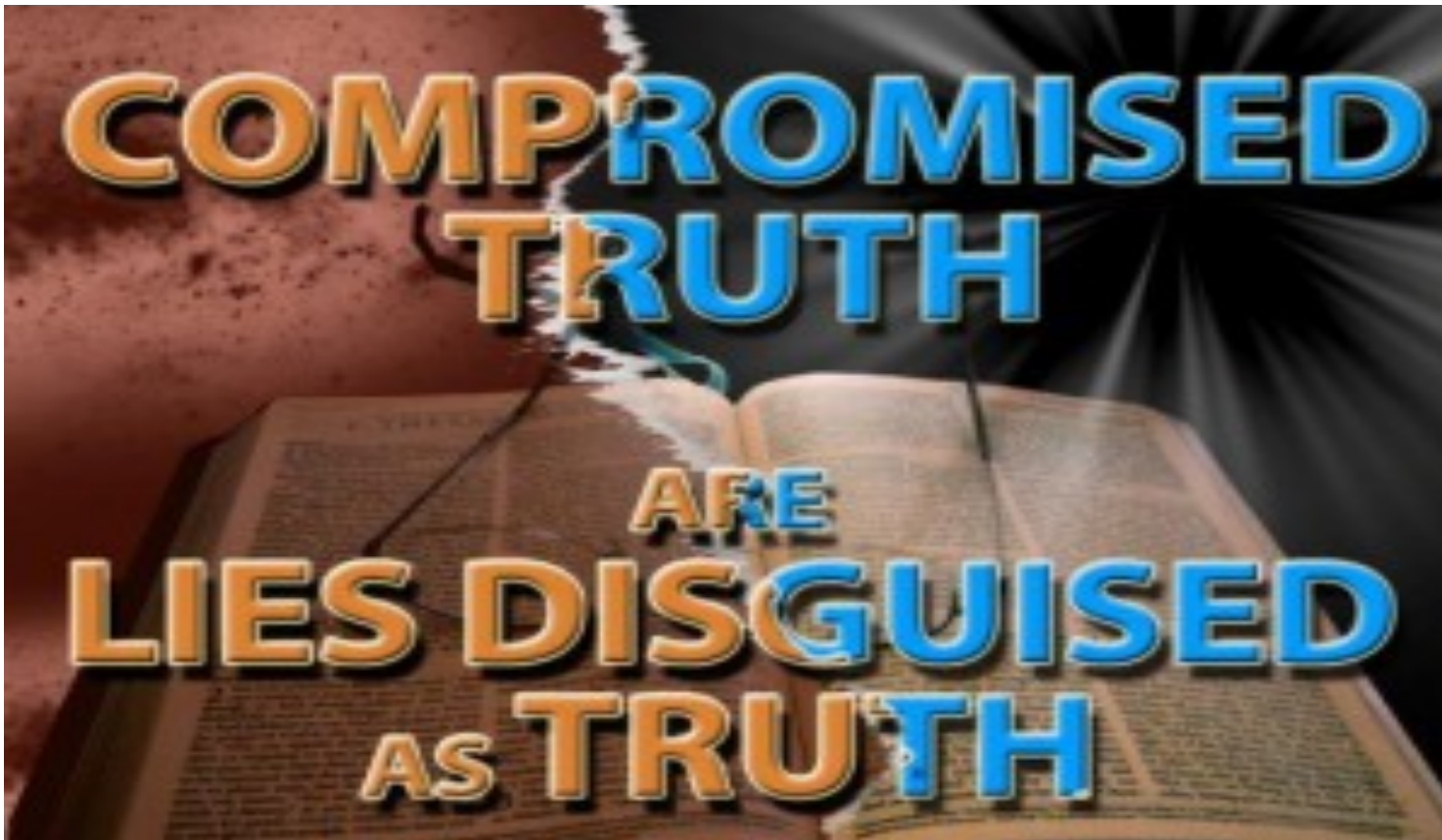
### Is there a biblical case for separation?

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to *obey God* rather than *men*” (Acts 5:29). See also Daniel 3:10-12; Acts 20:17, 27-30; Revelation 2:6, 13-16; John 17:17; Deuteronomy 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19; & compare Ezekiel 4:1-5 with 2 Kings 17:33).

“But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to *hearken* unto you *more* than unto God, *judge ye*” (Acts 4:19).

**NOTE:** Sadly, as history shows, some conflicts arise when men introduce practices, traditions, or extra biblical

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writings that overshadow, undermine, and contradict the Holy Scriptures.

Are there times when Christians must withstand the tide of unhealthy compromises?

“Holding fast the faithful *word* as he hath been taught, that he may be able by *sound doctrine* both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). See also (Romans 16:17, 2 Timothy 4:3, Titus 2:1, 2 Timothy 3:15-17).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of *doctrine*, by the *sleight of men*, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the *truth in love*, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even *Christ*: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the *edifying of itself in love*” (Ephesians 4:14-16).

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of *men*” (Mark 7:7).

“For the time will come when they will not *endure sound doctrine*; but after their own *lusts* shall they heap to themselves *teachers*, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3).

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**BEWARE  
FALSE PROPHETS**



**NOTE:** Distinctions need to be made between those essential and nonessential teachings. The divinity of Christ, salvation by God's grace – through faith – in Jesus Christ alone, the resurrection of Christ, the gospel, the authority of the Scriptures, etc. Nonessentials would be styles of music, traditions, holidays, how often to celebrate the Lord's Supper, dietary laws, etc. Convictions, beliefs, and preferences contribute to disunity.

Did Jesus and the apostles anticipate waves of apostasy?

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in *sheep's clothing*, but *inwardly* they are ravening *wolves*” (Matthew 7:15).

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in *among* you, not sparing the flock. Also of your *own selves* shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to *draw away* disciples after *them*” (Acts 20:29-30).

“And that because of *false brethren* unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into *bondage*” (Galatians 2:4).

How should we handle nonessentials?

“So then every one of us shall give account of *himself* to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a *stumblingblock* or an

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# Contend For The Faith

Jude 1:3

occasion to fall in his brother's way" ([Romans 14:12-13](#)).

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most *holy faith, praying* in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the *love of God*, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" ([Jude 1:20-21](#)).

## How should we handle essentials?

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you *that ye should earnestly contend for the faith* which was once *delivered* unto the saints" ([Jude 1:3](#)).

## So, what is true unity based on?

"Sanctify them through thy truth: *thy word is truth*" ([John 17:17](#)). See also [verse 19](#).

**NOTE:** Despite disagreements and differences, there exists a unity of the Spirit, based on love and truth. Any movement, group, or church that denies the essential truths of Scripture and the gospel of Jesus Christ is in all actuality, promoting false unity.