

Help Your Children Celebrate Biblical Diversity and Unity

I. We're commanded to be unified in our submission to God's Truth.

- Psalm 133:1-3; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; I Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 4:2; John 17:20-22; Ephesians 4; I Corinthians 12; Philippians 1:27
- The world calls us to unity. "Unity" as they define it means that we all accept each other as we are. We allow each other to live however we want to live, and we don't bother each other concerning our differences. Unless of course you're different because you refuse to accept that we can all just do whatever we want. Then, you're wrong and are to be rejected.
- But God sets a clear expectation for our unity. Jesus said that we are to be one *as He and the Father are one*. The implications of that are massive. Philippians calls us to be unified *in the Gospel*. I Corinthians 12 revealed that we are to be unified *in the Spirit*. Ephesians 4 demands that we be unified *in Christ*.
- There is no unity that glorifies God outside of God. The second half of Ephesians 4 was full of commands to put off the old man — which are the sinful behaviors that run contrary to God's character.
- True, Christ-honoring unity will only be achieved as we all submit to God and His revealed Word. As we know Him and believe Him and obey Him, we will be unified.

II. We're allowed to be diverse in our *application* of God's Truth as long as the application submits to God's Truth.

- Biblical diversity allows us to apply Truth in different ways. The Truth never changes, God's expectation for holiness never changes, God's standard of righteousness never changes, God's commands stand in every situation, and we are always required to interpret Scripture by Scripture, not by our opinions, experiences, or feelings.
- So, what does this look like? Well, we already saw some examples. Pastors, evangelists, and apostles, were all charged with very similar responsibilities. They were called by God to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Apostles did so by laying the necessary authorial foundation stones for the church and equipping pastors. Evangelists were those who focused their ministry specifically on heralding the Gospel, and pastors preached truth and equipped the saints by engaging in the broader care of souls.
- Some individuals glorify God by exercising their gift of service while others glorify God by using their gift of teaching. Are those who teach required to serve and are those who serve expected to teach? Yes, but their unique gifting focuses how they teach and serve.
- Diversity is like a tool box. All of the tools were designed to make a car function as it was designed to function, but each of them address a different part of the vehicle. In the same way, every believer has been called by God to unify in the task of helping other believers function the way they were designed to function in Christ. That requires evangelists and preachers and teachers and parents and friends and other disciplers who aren't all going to speak the exact same words, but who are going to apply God's Truth to the body of Christ so that it's strengthened and built up in love.
- When it's working correctly, all of those people will be thinking God's thoughts after Him, and speaking as He would speak, and acting as He would act, but it will be different because each moment calls for a different emphasis.

- When you surrender to God's Truth and submit to His Word, you're still going to live your life differently than I will. That's not a license to sin, it's just a reality that you wear different clothes and live in a different house and adopt different traditions and speak with a different language and emphasize different aspects of being a child of God than I normally do. You will also emphasize necessary biblical truth while I tend to emphasize others. They won't contradict, but they also will be different.
- This should be the goal for our families as well. You shouldn't want everyone to dress identically and provide scripts for every family member so that you all talk identically. You may not have unity in your preferred sports teams, music styles, clothing choices, or food preferences, but you absolutely must be unified in Christ. If you are believers, then you are in Christ, and it's impossible for people who are all in Christ not to be unified on that front.

I. We are not allowed to be unified if we are not unified in our submission to God's Truth.

- II Corinthians 6:14-18
- Truth trumps unity. Truth trumps diversity. Truth demands disunity in the case of sinful diversity.
- I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this point because we're going to talk about it in much more detail later, but — suffice it to say — if we are unified in Christ, how could we be unified with that which He rejects?
- We must not embrace unity for the sake of unity. There must be a Christ-honoring center to our unification.
- We must not reject diversity simply because someone else is different than we are. As long as our differences are equally Christ-honoring, then that should enhance our unity.

Love.
Parent.

... a part of the Evermind Ministries family.