

Unity.

Behold,
how good
and how
pleasant
it is for brethren
to dwell together in unity!

Psalm 133:1



Our belief system.

**Our belief system can be
illustrated in layers like an onion.
In the middle are the absolutes
which are vital, and for the true
Christian there must be consensus.**

Ephesians 4:3-6.

*Make every effort to keep the
unity of the Spirit through the bond
of peace.*

*There is one body and one Spirit, just
as you were called to one hope when
you were called; one Lord, one faith,
one baptism; one God and Father of
all, who is over all and through all
and in all.*



Our belief system.

**From these absolutes we then
make certain deductions.**

**These form the second layer of
our belief system.**

2 Peter 3:15-16.

*Bear in mind that our Lord's
patience means salvation, just as
our dear brother Paul also wrote
you with the wisdom that God gave
him. He writes the same way in all
his letters, speaking in them of these
matters. His letters contain some
things that are hard to understand,
which ignorant and unstable people
distort, as they do the other
Scriptures, to their own destruction.*

DEDUCTIONS

ABSOLUTES

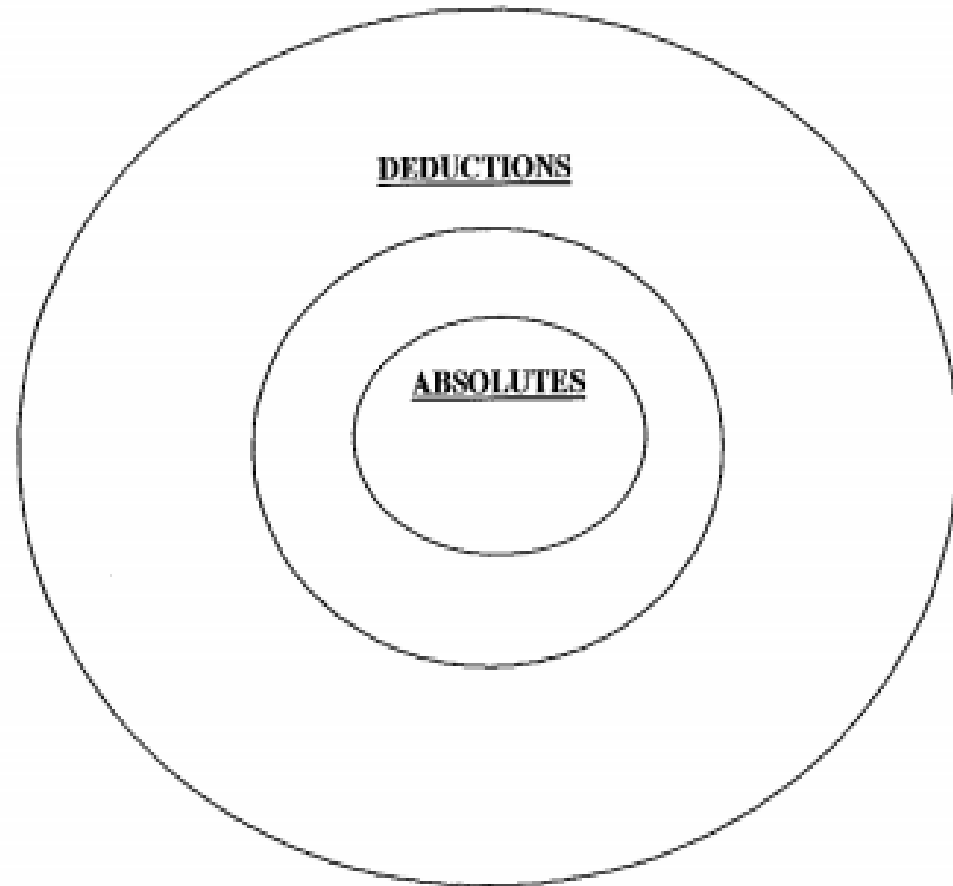


Our belief system.

The outer layer of our belief system is shaped by our cultural settings, traditions, preferences, feelings and opinions. It is this area that is the cause of much division in the body of Christ.

PERSONAL
PREFERENCES

SUBJECTIVE
OPINIONS



Unity.

If you don't think that unity is vital, consider this.

❖ **Jesus prayed for unity.**

John 17:11 & 20-23.

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one....

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.

May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 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.

Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Unity.

❖ Jesus died to bring unity.

John 11:49-52.

Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish. He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.

...it is better for you that
one man
should die for
the people, not that the
whole nation
should perish. **John 11:50**

Unity.

❖ Jesus said this about unity.

Mark 3:24-25.

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.



There is a unity to be kept.

❖ Ephesians 4:1-6.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

What all believers have in common

One body — the fellowship of believers

Ephesians
4:4-6

One Spirit — the Holy Spirit

The Seven
Ones

One hope — the hope of a future home in heaven

One Lord — Christ, whose blood provides salvation

One faith — the requirement for commitment to Christ

One baptism — the sign of entry into the church

One God — our Father who keeps us for all eternity

To keep unity, sometimes compromises must be made.

We don't need to compromise our principles, but our opinions.

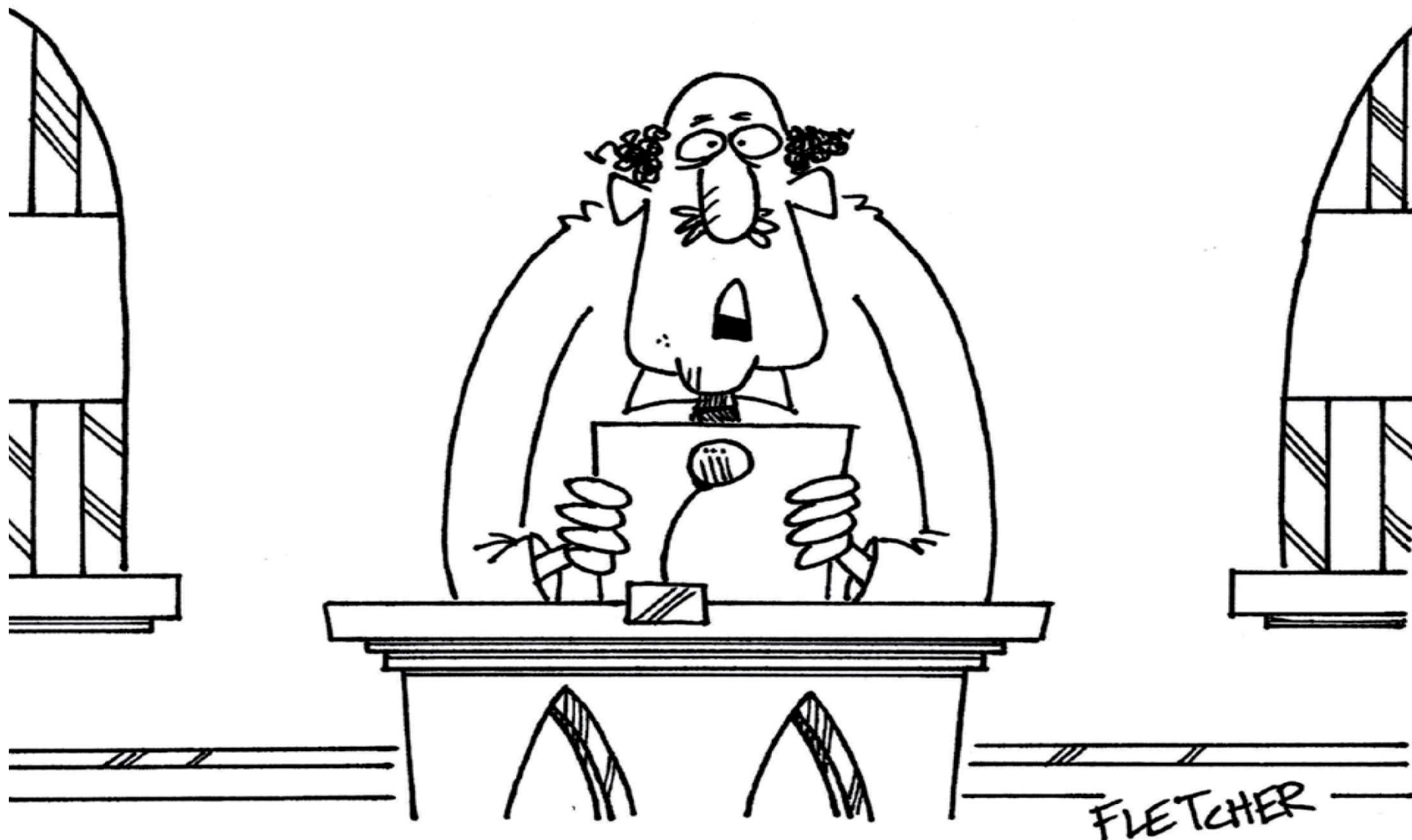
Some examples.

- ❖ The starting time of the services.
- ❖ The types of songs we sing, hymns or choruses, old or new, or combinations.

Is what we want and prefer foremost or do we consider the preferences and feelings of others?

In 1917 when the Russian revolution was rocking the streets of Petrograd, the Russian Orthodox Church was in a conference just blocks away from the fighting, they were in a heated debate about what colour robes the priests should wear.





" ... and the church unity workshop has been postponed until the deacons can agree on the date, time, and color of the participant's name tags."

Truth cannot be sacrificed for a superficial unity.

Titus 1:7-11.

Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless... He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach, and that for the sake of dishonest gain.

Unity must be based on the absolute truths of God's Word.

Amos 3:3.

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

There is a false unity that is promoted that says we must join hands and stand with other faiths, that we all serve the same God, this is not true Biblical unity but uniformity and it sets the stage for the Anti-Christ and a "One World Religion"

Action must be taken against those who cause division.

Romans 16:17-18.

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned.

Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites.

By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.

Titus 3:9-11.

But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Proverbs 22:10.

Remove the mocker and conflict disappears; judgment and shame also stop.

There is a unity to be attained.

❖ Ephesians 4:11-16.

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Do we all need to go to the same big church?

Francis Chan June 22, 2017.

Bestselling author Francis Chan recently exposed his heart to Facebook employees at Facebook HQ California, detailing why he left the helm of his thriving megachurch in California seven years ago.

Cornerstone Church in Simi Valley, California, was drawing around 5,000 people and growing in 2010. But Chan felt the megachurch he founded was not as God intended it to be.

"I got frustrated at a point, just biblically," Chan said during a talk at the Facebook headquarters in California last Thursday.

“According to the Bible, every single one of these people has a supernatural gift that's meant to be used for the body. And I'm like 5,000 people show up every week to hear my gift, see my gift. That's a lot of waste. Then I started thinking how much does it cost to run this thing? Millions of dollars! So I'm wasting the human resource of these people that according to Scripture have a miraculous gift that they could contribute to the body but they're just sitting there quietly. ... They just sit there and listen to me."

Unity.

Moreover, he felt the church wasn't following God's command to love one another, attendees would simply greet each other for 30 seconds and mainly hang out in cliques once a week.

I was like, 'God, you wanted a church that was known for their love. You wanted a group of people where everyone was expressing their gifts. ... We're a body. I'm one member, maybe I'm the mouth. But if the mouth is the only thing that's working and ... I'm trying to drag the rest of the body along, chewing on the carpet ..."

His decision in 2010 to leave Cornerstone — which he started in his living room — came as a shock to many, including fellow evangelical pastors. In his announcement to the congregation at that time, he said he had been feeling a restlessness and stirring to let go of the megachurch and take on a new adventure.

Unity.

In his talk at Facebook last week, he offered more details about why he made that decision to leave, including a desire to get away from the pride he began to feel as his book, *Crazy Love*, became a bestseller and as he became a popular sought-after speaker.

"I freaked out during that time in my life," Chan recalled. "The pride ... [going to] a conference and seeing my face on a magazine ... and hearing whispers ... and walking in the room and actually liking it."

At one point, Chan felt convicted and realized he became everything he didn't want to be.

"Everything you (God) said you hated, that's me right now," he realized. "I gotta get out of here. I'm losing my soul."



If you really want to experience God,
go and make disciples.

Francis Chan

Unity.

❖ In essentials: Unity

❖ In non-essentials : Liberty

❖ In all things: Love

❖ **Most division is caused by the non-essential category.**

- Style of worship (songs, instruments etc)
- Length of service
- Care of children (Children must be entertained) Francis Chan
- and the list goes on.

Even more destructive to the Church than disloyal members who leave over trivialities are those who try destroy the Church.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17.

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

Disunity at Corinth.

Division is a sign of immaturity.

1 Corinthians 3:1-7.

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly, mere infants in Christ.

I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe, as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.

So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

Unity.

1 Corinthians 3:9-17.

For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it.

But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved, even though only as one escaping through the flames.

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

Unity.

The Church at Corinth had plenty of spiritual gifts but they were spiritually immature.

1 Corinthians 1:5-13.

For in him you have been enriched in every way, with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge, God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you.

Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Unity.

1 Corinthians 1:5-13 (continued)

My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Spiritual gifts are not a sign of maturity or character that is why people must be proved and not just be given a ministry because they have a gift.

1 Timothy 3:8-10.

In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

Unity in the local Church.

Ron Edmondson.

One disappointment I have had in ministry is watching people come to church, get excited for a time, then disappear. You spend energy and heart on people, grow to love them and get excited about them, and suddenly they are nowhere to be found.

The biggest disappointment is not people who transfer to another church. I'm okay with that if it helps them better grow in their relationship with Christ. I'm talking about people who quit going to church altogether. They are in one day, out the next.

What happens to them? Why do they leave?

I've found there are often similar reasons that are repeated continuously. Perhaps you have seen this, too.

Here are 7 reasons people disappear from church:



7 reasons people disappear from church.

- **Burn out.**

These people came out of the gate too strong in the church. They showed up, got excited, and signed up for everything. They got so busy doing church they failed to enjoy being the church.

- **Injury**

People inside the church can be cruel. I hate when that happens, but it's true. These people experienced some of those people, and they couldn't move past it.

- **Distractions.**

These people got distracted by seemingly good things. They were playing travel ball, loving the fast life, travelling every weekend. Over time, their lifestyle of attending becomes the habit of not attending.

- **Life change**

These people had a lifestyle change, such as divorce or re-marriage, or they move to a new community, and never re-connect with a church.

7 reasons people disappear from church.

- **Mistakes**

These people messed up! They made a mistake that may be public, or at least they feel that it will be known, and the place that should dispense grace appears to either refuse it or they feel that it would. Many times when a person feels that way it is more perception than reality, but the way a person feels about themselves may determine whether they remain committed to church.

- **Power struggle.**

These people had an agenda. They were pursuing an issue, or a position, and when their demands weren't met and they couldn't overpower the system, they left.

- **Lack of connection.**

These people never connected with others on a deeper level. As a result, they never felt really a “part” of the church.

The blessings of unity.

❖ Unity brings God's blessing.

Psalms 133

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe.

It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion.

For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

❖ Unity brings joy.

John 17:11-13.

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

The blessings of unity.

❖ Unity brings respect from the world.

John 17:20-21.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

❖ Unity brings church growth.

Acts 2:44-47.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Unity is only possible with humility.

Ephesians 4:2-3.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Prior to His crucifixion the disciples were arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest in the Kingdom of God . Jesus response was to wash his disciples feet. They then all deserted him and left him to face the cross on his own, but after he ascended to heaven we see a united group of believers.

Acts 2:1-4.

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

Unity is only possible with humility.

Philippians 2:1-8.

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross!

Unity.

Earliest man determined that twisting fibres together and forming a small bundle, made the 'rope' stronger yet easy to manoeuvre and splice. Simply using one strand or fibre provided virtually no strength, two fibres added more but three strands twisted together in different directions - called plaiting or braiding, proved to be much more than three times stronger than the single strand.

One word described our modern day chaos, “Independence”.

Independence says “I don’t need anybody, I don’t even need God.

The modern day anthem of the Church is “I did it my way”

But The Word of God makes it clear that we need one another.

Ecclesiastes 3:9-12. *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

Unity.

Hebrews 10:25.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much more, as you see the day approaching.



Audio (WMA) and text (PDF) ministry

FREE MINISTRY DOWNLOADS



AUTHOR: Ken Paynter

- ❑ For more ministry downloads visit:
<http://www.agfbrakpan.co.za/ministry-archives.aspx>
- ❑ For more ministry downloads by Ken Paynter visit:
<http://www.agfbrakpan.co.za/ministry-archives.aspx?speaker=Ken%20Paynter>

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

- ❑ NOTE 1: Biblical illustrations by Jim Padgett, courtesy of <http://sweetpublishing.com>
- ❑ Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the NIV:
 - THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
- ❑ Scripture quotations taken from the NASB:
 - New American Standard Bible®,
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977,
1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission. (<http://www.Lockman.org>)