

## UNITY

Unity brings people together. We can also enjoy the diversity of different peoples and ideas, but God desired for us to have UNITY in Christ. The problem with celebrating diversity over unity in Christ is that it causes people to have jealousy, hatred, bigotry, racist attitudes and to treat others with in every way but with love. A great American named Martin Luther King said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." We have a responsibility to work to fulfill that dream. We can when others decide to follow Jesus and fix their minds and hearts on a character just like His.

Shortly before He went to the cross, Jesus prayed for unity among His followers: "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" ([John 17:11](#)). Later in the same prayer, Jesus asked "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. . . . 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 17:21–23](#)). Obviously, Christian unity is important to our Lord.

Jesus not only prayed for unity, but He gave the reasons that Christian unity is important: He asked that all believers may be in the Father and the Son, "so that the world may believe that you have sent me" ([John 17:21](#)). And then Jesus prayed for "complete unity" so that "the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (verse 23). When Christians are united in Christ, the world sees two things clearly: Jesus was sent by the Father, and Jesus loves His church.

In [Romans 15:5–6](#), we see another, more general reason that Christian unity is important: "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in

such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". The bottom line is God's glory. God's people should be speaking with one voice in glorifying God.

Christian unity comes with Christian maturity, and it is always something that we strive to attain. Paul instructs us to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 1:3). Helping us toward that unity are the gifts of the Spirit. God has given each Christian different gifts, and their exercise in the edification of the church leads to more and more unity. One purpose of the gifts is that "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" (Ephesians 1:13).

To promote Christian unity, God presents the church in 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 as a living body. The body has many members, each with specialized work to do, but all the parts are united in the Head of the Body, which is Christ (see Ephesians 4:15).

**Questions:**

1. Does God want the people of the world to put their diversity or differences above the unity in Christ?
2. How do we attain unity?
3. Do we each have different gifts?
4. How do these gifts bring us closer to God?

**Next Steps:** Ask your parents to share how you can appreciate the differences between all people and yet have a mind that focuses on unity.