

Spiritual Maturity (8)

Ponder: Working Toward Unity

Scripture: “till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13, NKJV).

King David wrote long ages ago, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity!” (Psa. 133:1). Jesus, the “Son of David,” prayed for those who believe in Him through the word of the apostles, “that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You . . . I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one . . .” (John 17:20-23).

Note the connection between unity and spiritual maturity. “The unity of the faith” is characteristic of a “perfect (not flawless, but mature/complete) man” (Eph. 4:13), and Jesus prayed that believers would “be made perfect (mature/complete) in one” (John 17:23).

Spiritually immature people find unity difficult for several reasons. Let’s look at two. First, the unity Jesus wants requires us to believe and obey the word of His apostles (John 17:20). Immature people prefer to believe and do whatever they think is right. Back in the days of the judges, “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Jud. 17:6). As a result, Israel’s spiritual condition took a nosedive! We should expect nothing better today when we put our own think-so above God’s say-so!

Second, immature people tend to give their loyalty to mere men rather than to God. Perhaps it is a favorite preacher, or it could be the person who baptized them. Some of the Corinthian brethren fell short in this way. Paul lamented that he had to deal with them not as mature Christians, but as “babes in Christ . . . For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and other, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?” (1 Cor. 3:1-4). Such misplaced loyalty might also be to a college professor, a journal editor, or any number of others. It lends itself to rivalry (think of little boys boasting, “My dad can whip your dad!”), resulting in division.

Let us find satisfaction in believing and obeying God’s word. Let our loyalty be to God. Such is the path of spiritual maturity and the unity for which Jesus prayed.

Song: “Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus”

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to become spiritually mature, and to treasure unity as You do. Humble us to be obedient to Your will, and let our loyalty be to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.