

**THE TWO KINDS OF UNITY IN THE BIBLE AND WHY WE ALL NEED BOTH - Ministry Recruitment Sunday - September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 10 a.m.**

As you can see in the title the Biblical text talks about **two ways** in which God's people are drawn together in loving unity. What isn't as obvious at a quick glance is ***one of the forms of unity is cherished while the other is almost shunned - especially by busy brothers and sisters.***

For this brief exhortation I'm going to refer to these two unities as the ***unity of affection*** and the ***unity of function.***

1) **THE UNITY OF AFFECTION**

Here is one of the most poetically beautiful descriptions of this kind of unity in the whole Bible:

**IPAD TEXT - Psalm 133:1-3 - "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! [2] It is like *the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!* [3] It is like *the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion!* For there the **LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore."****

That effusive picture of oil is the anointing of Aaron for priestly service to the Lord. Unity is **life**. Unity is like **dew** with the sun glistening on it first thing in the morning. So yes, and obviously, **“...how good it is for brothers and sisters to live in that kind of unity!”**

Of course, this kind of unity isn't **easy**. That's because unity is challenging when the people **around** me are just **like** me. But while the unity of deep affection isn't **easy**, it is **precious**. This unity of affection matters deeply because it a **fountain of life - Psalm 133:3b - “For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.” - IPAD TEXT**

Do you see it? God doesn't just **happen** to bless unity. He doesn't just say He's **happy** when people like each other. No. There's a **muscular locking of divine blessing for God's people who live in unity. Make your finger trace under these words. God has commanded - with His almighty, creational power - He has commanded life where there is unity.**

No wonder this plea for unity spills over into the New Testament with equal passion - **Ephesians 4:1-3** - **“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, [3] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”** - **IPAD TEXT**

What would you pray for if you were in prison? What would be your greatest fear? Paul's is that these newish Christians might not walk in unity. He doesn't just **ask** them to walk in unity. He **urges** them. In language much like the Psalmist (where God commands His life where there's unity) Paul says the Holy Spirit thrives and bathes and nourishes where Christians walk in unity.

But there's another type of unity praised in the New Testament. It's the **unity of function** and it doesn't always get the same press.

## 2) THE UNITY OF FUNCTION

IPAD TEXT - 1 Corinthians 12:12-20 - “For just as the body is one and has many members, and *all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.* [13] For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. [14] For the body does not consist of one member but of many. [15] If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. [16] And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. [17] If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? [18] But as it is, *God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.* [19] If all were a single member, where would the body be? [20] As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”

Paul talks about *feet, hands, ears,* and *eyes*. This is clearly a *different kind of unity*. My hands have never once stopped to tell my feet how much they love them. We’re not dealing with *affection* here. We’re dealing with *function*. We’re dealing with *activity*.

More particularly, Paul's dealing with what happens when any individual part *no longer functions in it's designed role* - **1**

**Corinthians 12:17 - "If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?" - IPAD TEXT**

Have you ever known some dear soul who, through illness or accident had a member of the body that no longer functioned - a hand or an arm or a leg or foot - that just had to be carried limply by the rest of the body? That's the picture Paul paints. He says this can and does happen in the Body of Christ.

But even this isn't the most striking part of our text. Here's the stunning conclusion - **1 Corinthians 12:27 - "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." - IPAD TEXT**

This is not a *mystical* verse. Paul isn't just saying we're all invisibly in Christ and isn't that wonderful. No. Here's what's actually going on in this verse. After just describing how the body ceases to work when all the parts of the body don't function in their roles, Paul goes on to remind us that he's not just talking about ministry recruitment in the local church. ***He's talking about the actual Body of Christ and how it functions in this world.***

There are very few things more important than this. Jesus isn't here physically right now. He's coming again - which means He's absent physically right now. ***So how does He get things done in this world right now?***

***There's only one way. You are His hands and feet and eyes and ears. The only body Jesus has to do His work in this world right now is you. And I don't think I'm as aware of that truth as I'm supposed to be.***

***Do you just pray for Jesus to do things? Or do you act like you're his hands and feet to get those things done?***

So the next time your over at L.A. Fitness working on your abs, stop and ask yourself how functionally fit you are lifting your weight in the Body of Christ. That's what you were created and redeemed for. That's the fitness that counts for eternity.