The Biblical Definition of "Unity"

"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are."
John 17:11

One of the visible, defining characteristics of Christians is supposed to be their unity, the evidence that Something Greater is at work providing a common identity and purpose beyond what would be normally expected. But is biblical "unity" defined the same way as the world has come to define it?

On the surface, the worldly definition of "unity" might be summarized as "we all feel the same way" about something. It's basically people that "vote" the same way on something. The basis for their unity is not necessarily individual facts or doctrine or truth, but rather the alignment of their emotions. This is not the biblical definition of "unity" and the Bible contains many examples of this kind of false, or "worldly", unity:

- The unity of Joseph's brothers when they plotted to kill him.
- The unity of Israel when they convinced Aaron to build for them a false god, the golden calf.
- The unity of the people that were afraid to take possession of the Promised Land.

- The unity of David's men who were convinced he should kill Saul in the cave because they were sure God had delivered Saul over to David.
- The unity of the Jews that stoned Stephen to death because they could no longer stand to listen to his message.

The list is quite long of biblically documented examples of the wrong kind of unity. True, biblical unity is characterized by being grounded in the knowledge of God's Truth, being in complete agreement with **HIM** in spite of what all other think or do. Unity is never identified by "who has the most votes" but by "who is with God".

- It's the unity of David against Goliath, David championing God's cause when no others would.
- It's the unity of Elijah against the 450 prophets of Baal when there seemed to be almost no one else serving the One True God.
- It's the unity of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in replying to Nebuchadnezzar, "we are not going to serve your gods" when practically everyone else did.
- It's the unity of Jesus driving the businessmen out of the temple.

An example given by Christ is that biblical unity is the image of a flock following a single shepherd, the shepherd being a repeated biblical symbol of a teacher of God's Word:

> *"I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd."*
> *John 10:16*

Another example is being individual members of the same body, all deriving our thoughts and beliefs from one mind, the mind of Christ as the head:

"As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."
—*Ephesians 4:14-15*

Unity begins by rejecting false teaching, false doctrine, and embracing God's Truth. Love is not the means to achieve unity in and of itself but the result of taking a stance one the side of God.

Paul describes this to the Philippians:

"Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"
Philippians 1:27

And further elaborates to the Corinthians:

"Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment."
1 Corinthians 1:10

The real danger to unity in the body of Christ is when it is no longer grounded in the truth and doctrine of God's Word but is guided by feelings and emotion. The world *feels* that there's nothing wrong with abortion; Christians are united with God in His abhorrence of it. The world *feels* divorce is no big deal—"everyone" does it; God hates divorce. The world *feels* the wrong way about a lot of things which, if you take God's side, will place you in the numerical minority, but the spiritual majority.

In His Love,

Servant@LogosWalk.com