

Is Religious Unity Possible?

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Most men say, "No." The New Testament says, "Yes." God's Word not only teaches the **possibility** of religious unity among those who have faith in Christ, it teaches the **necessity** of unity. The extensive division among religious people claiming to accept the Bible has not been **caused** by the Bible but exists **in spite of** the teaching of the Bible.

What are some of the major causes of division?

1. Following the teachings (creeds) of men (Mat. 15:9; Eph 4:14).
2. Following traditions of men (Mat. 15:6).
3. Following men (Mat. 15:13-14; 1 Cor. 1:11-13).
4. Mishandling, wresting God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:16).
5. Ignorance of God's Word (Rom. 10:2-3).
6. Pride, selfishness (3 John 9-10).
7. Liberalism (2 John 9-11).
8. Anti-ism (Mat. 15:1-2; 23:23-24).

What does the New Testament teach us about unity among those who claim to follow Christ?

1. **Jesus prayed for it** (John 17:20-21). He prayed that it might be like the unity existing between Himself and the Father. They are One in will and purpose (6:38) and in doctrine (John 7:16). Jesus prayed for a **genuine** oneness, not a superficial one that ignores differences in doctrine and purpose. Did the Lord pray for an impossibility?
2. **Jesus provided for it** (John 16:13). He sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all the Truth. The one Spirit inspired them to all speak one message. There was only one body because the one Spirit gave only one faith (Eph. 4:4-5). The different apostles did not preach different doctrines in the first century. They would not do so if they were on earth today (1 Cor. 4:17).
3. **Paul pled for unity** (1 Cor. 1:10). The Corinthian church was on the brink of division and he gave the antidote: "all speak the same thing," "be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Again, doctrinal oneness is given as the key to unity and is not only suggested; it is commanded. Did Paul plead for and command an impossibility?

The religious world is divided, not because it can't be united, but because men have not been content to honor the doctrine of the New Testament. God's judgment rests upon such (John 12:48; Gal. 1:8-9; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19).

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