

Sunday, November 6, 2011

UNITY #1—LIVING IN HARMONY

Galatians 5:15—"If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other."

Romans 12:16—"...live in harmony with one another."

Paul: "stop condemning one another and start accepting one another."

#1—Hold back judgment on disputable matters. (Romans 14:1)

We are not supposed to judge someone for their opinions on disputable matters.

If Scripture does not speak clearly on an issue, it's because God has given us freedom to choose in this area.

#2—Avoid looking down on those who don't share your convictions. (Romans 14:2-4)

We dare not look down on someone God has accepted!

Paul: "I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle...I am less than the least of all God's people...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst!"

#3—Realize that you must live for the Lord alone. (Romans 14:5-12)

We are not here for the purpose of exercising our 'freedoms'—or for the purpose of adhering to strict religious convictions. We are here to live for the Lord!

Paul: "We make it our goal to please GOD!"
"Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God!"

#4—Make sure you don't put obstacles in the way of others. (Romans 14:13-18)

It's true that in Christ we have been set free from the law and legalism—however, we must not flaunt this freedom in the face of others who are weak in the faith.

AND...those who have strong convictions about disputable matters are not to beat others over the head with those convictions.

If anyone believes something is wrong—then it IS wrong for them—even if it may be something that God's Word doesn't explicitly forbid! IT IS A SIN TO VIOLATE OUR CONSCIENCE!

Paul: "Everything that does not come from faith is sin!" (vs. 23)

I Corinthians 8:13—"If what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall."

"The greatness of our lives is often determined by the size of the obstacles we have had to overcome!"

#5—Only do what leads to peace and mutual edification. (Romans 14:19-21)

Romans 12:18—"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone!"

Will we be a builder or a wrecker?

#6—Never publicize your personal convictions. (Romans 14:22,23)

They're personal—keep them personal!!

#7—Yield personal preferences for the common good. (Romans 15:1-7)

We shouldn't insist on always doing things OUR way!

We can't be self-centered if we expect to live in unity!

When love prevails among believers, especially in times of strong disagreement, it presents to the world an indisputable mark of true followers of Jesus Christ!