



Ronald Reagan once said, “The nations of the United Nations aren’t united.” You don’t need him to tell you that because there is more than sufficient evidence to justify his conclusion.

Jesus prayed for His followers: “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:15). Perhaps this prayer has been answered. The world knows! Christianity is, after all, the largest religion in the world with 2.1 billion people or 33% of the world’s population. (Islam is next with 1.3 billion people or 21% of the world’s population). But is there really unity among Christians?

There are 4 major groups of Christians (listed in decreasing order): Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican. They are sometimes divided into “wings”: conservative, mainline, or liberal. Distinctions are made based on theological beliefs like Calvinism or Arminianism. And then there are the multitude of denominations—635 in the USA and over 9000 around the world!

In *Mere Christianity* C.S. Lewis wrote, “Our divisions should never be discussed except in the presence of those who have already come to believe that there is one God and that Jesus Christ is his only Son.” Why? Because these believers are in the best position to understand that unity is not the same thing as uniformity—that there can be diversity in our unity. What does biblical unity look like?

1. Read Colossians 3:1-4. What are some of the essentials that unite Christians around the world?
2. Read Colossians 3:5-10. What common theme do you notice in these verses?  
Now read the next verse (3:11). What is source of unity? What is the connection with the previous verses?
3. Read Colossians 3:12-14. What common theme do you notice in these verses? What are the similarities and differences with the previous section? How is unity achieved?
4. Read Ephesians 2:14-18. There has never been a greater barrier than the one that divided Jews and Gentiles. How was that wall torn down?
5. Read Colossians 3:15-17. What steps can we personally take to experience biblical unity? What one thing will you do to connect (or re-connect) with another believer this week?

*“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.  
There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called  
—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all,  
who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:3-6)*

## COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips.

9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## EPHESIANS 2:14-18

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,

16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.