



5/25/26

I love the reminder that "Unity is not sameness. It's an agreement of purpose." What's our agreed purpose for relational oneness? Glorify our Lord Jesus Christ. As we do that, unity is not a chore but a joy. I pray we will all be able to celebrate that unity in our homes... one degree of glory to the next.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 John 2:28-3:6

Last week we learned that spiritual oneness starts with Jesus. And now I see that relational oneness starts with Jesus as well. Truly, the thing that changes me so that my closest relationships can be unified does not happen in my own strength. The thing that changes me is humbly fixing my eyes on Jesus so that He can make me more like Him. What does 1 John teach me about relational oneness?

1 John 2:28-29 ~ "And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him."

And now... considering all that the Father loves and all the ways we can be deceived... abide in Him. Dwell with Him. Be in relationship with Him... for a purpose... SO THAT when He comes for us, we can be confident and unashamed. What would take away my confidence and make me ashamed when Jesus comes? Lack of relationship with Him. If I spend all my time here on earth saying, "I'm too busy to spend time with the Lord. I've got too many other priorities", when He finally comes to take me home, I think I would be embarrassed before Him.

But I pray that not wanting to be ashamed is not my biggest motivation for abiding in Him. That's kind of the low bar. Abiding in Him is actually the best place to be. It's where I see my need for Him and His faithfulness to help me. It's where I rest in Him. It's where I get to be in deep, intimate relationship with Him. And yes, that grows my confidence so that I get more

and more excited to think about getting to finally hear His voice, not just in my heart, but actually with my ears!

What's the outward evidence that I'm abiding in Him? I'm becoming more and more righteous... like He is. My behavior is heading in the direction of His righteousness... loving what He loves and hating what He hates... both in attitude and action. That's how it becomes clear that I've been born of Him.

How does this impact relational oneness? My righteousness or lack of it affects how I treat others. The more righteous I become, the more I'm able to treat others with the same tender care Jesus has for me.

1 John 3:1-3 ~ "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure."

"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." Why is that such a picture of His love? Because Romans 5 says I was a weak, ungodly, sinning, enemy of God when Jesus gave Himself for me. His love for me is not conditional. It is not dependent on me loving Him. He loved me first. My response to Him is to love Him, but I didn't cause Him to love me. I can't earn His love.

How does that impact relational oneness? My motivation to pursue unity with others is His love for me, filling me. How great is that love? So great that to the world, it doesn't make sense. Even though my prayer is to abide in Him and grow in righteousness, the world will see it and not know what to do with it. In fact, 1 Peter 4:3-4 says that the world doesn't understand why I'm practicing righteousness and not passions of the flesh, and they mock me for it. They don't respect me. They think I'm missing out. But I know Jesus! I get to be in relationship with Him, and that is greater than anything the world has to offer.

I'm His child right now. Someday He's going to take me home. I don't see Him now, so I walk by faith and not by sight. This is the cool thing, "When He appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is." What makes me like Jesus? Seeing Him as He is. Seeing Him for who He is. This side of heaven, I have the promise from 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 that as I turn to the Lord and behold His glory as much as I can, He changes me from one degree of glory to the other. Right now, I can't see Him in ALL His glory, but someday I will. When I do, I will be fully restored to a holy life with no ounce of sin in my life. That's all it takes... seeing Him.

How does that impact relational oneness? The more I'm like Jesus, the more I love others. The more I'm like Jesus, the more I don't retaliate or threaten (1 Peter 2:23). The more I'm like Jesus, the more I'm filled with joy. A joyful, loving, forgiving heart brings peace to relationships.

What do I need to do? Put all my hope in Him and His promises. That's how my righteousness, my love, and my joy become more and more pure. It is not in muscling it. It's in putting my hope, my confident expectation in Jesus.

So... I need to abide in Him, keep my eyes on Him, and hope in Him. He's at the center of everything. As I keep Him at the center, I will be able to care for others more genuinely, just as Jesus genuinely cares for us.

1 John 3:4-6 ~ "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him."

What is a total obstacle to relational oneness? Sin. Why? Sin destroys. No matter how it starts out, sin is about gratifying self, and that never goes well. Making a practice of sin... that is, continuing it as a way of life... is also completely against the law of God. What is the greatest commandment? Love God and love others. Making a practice of sin is making the choice not to love. Let me not be fooled. The world's call for me to love myself is to tell me to love others less. If Jesus had loved Himself the way the world calls me to love myself, He never would have died for me.

Jesus came to take away sin. Why? Because sin destroys. He has no sin in Him. He hates sin. He died because of sin. I cannot abide in Him and at the same time, make a practice of sin. To continue in sin is to deny Christ. This is destructive to my relationship with others and with Him.

Some people will use the argument that they have freedom in Christ. But our freedom is never that we have liberty to sin. 1 Peter 2:16 says, "Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God." And Galatians 5:13 says, "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." The more I'm abiding in the Lord, the more I'm keeping my eyes on Him, the more I'm putting my hope in Him, the more I will run from sin and everything that goes against Jesus. With all that He's done for me, why would I choose to embrace the things that put Him on the cross?

O Lord, please help me to keep You at the center of my life. Please help me to be repulsed by the sin that wants to wage war on my soul. Help me not to be an expert of other people's sin. Help me not even to be an expert of my sin! Please help me to be an expert of knowing You and putting all my hope in You... celebrating Your love and mercy. I am Your child because You love me. Let that be what motivates my life. When I copy paste the verses, I go back and change all the lower-case h's to "H". If I counted right, that's 18 times I had to capitalize an "h" in 8 verses, not to mention the times it specifically uses His name. This tells me something important... The Lord is the key to all God wants for me. I'm not the center. My husband is not

*the center. No human is the center. Jesus is the center. O Lord, let this be my focus... Jesus.
Let me abide in You, see You, and put all my hope in You. Amen.*