



volume one

issue one

Made Perfect in One – The Importance of Unity

By: Evelyn Bonner

Ladies, scripture reveals that Jesus our Lord prayed without ceasing. Jesus, before His betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection, lifted up His eyes to heaven and began His prayer saying, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You” (John 17:1). Six times in this prayer Jesus uses the word “one” and four times the phrase “that they may be one,” all signifying unity: unity among the apostles (v.11) and unity among Christians (v.21-23). Unity—one in purpose, belief, and manner with God—is of great importance to Christian women. Our conduct in the home, in the church, and in the community will either be evidence of this unity in purpose, belief, and manner, or evidence of division. A Christian woman’s purpose must be one with God’s purpose, her trust must be in God, and her manner of life must be guided by God’s example. Consider for a moment these questions: “What is God’s purpose?”; “What does it mean to believe in God?”; and “What example has God given?” Answering these questions honestly and intelligently requires the study of God’s word—the type of sincere study that convicts a heart to action. The importance of unity is in its great gospel teaching, and the Lord’s prayer in John 17 conveys that its teaching is rooted in glorification, faith, and love.

Glorification, honor, or esteem rendered to Christ, is God’s purpose. Faith, the belief in Christ, is God’s plea. Unconditional love is God’s manner and

example. Sisters, if our aim is to be *one* just as the Godhead is *one*, our purpose must be to glorify Christ in the home, our faith must be a strong conviction for truth in the church, and our manner must be with unconditional love in the community. Understandably, unity will not be maintained with a cursory understanding and application of God’s purpose for women, especially in the current social atmosphere. Unity of the Godhead leads to the salvation of man, unity with Christ and the apostles turned the world upside down, and unity among women of God will glorify God in the home, in the church, and in the world.

Without unity, the world will neither know Christ nor have an opportunity to obey Christ, resulting in many being lost without hope. Jesus our Lord gave the words of the Father to His apostles, and they received them and were sanctified through the truth (John 17:8,19). Those who believe on Christ through the word of the apostles are sanctified by the same truth (John 17:20-21). Ladies, it is time to receive the Father’s words. It is time to unite in glorifying God within the God-given role and purpose designed from Creation with a strong conviction of the truth in love, that the world may know, without a doubt, the church that belongs to Christ (the church of Christ) is *one* with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit.

Evelyn Bonner is.....

Upcoming Ladies Event

January 21st - Ladies Day at Midtown church of Christ, Victoria, Texas

The Basis of Unity By: Avery Gerhardt

There is nothing like a group of people living together in perfect harmony, agreeing on every matter of opinion and in every issue of life, never divided, and living perfectly in sync with each other. When I say there is nothing like it, I mean that literally. No group of people ever lived or will live in perfect harmony, but we can live in unity; God commands that we do. Yet, how can people that seem so constantly and naturally divided ever be “of one mind” as Paul says in Philippians 2:2? That kind of sameness is not found in any man or group of men. It seems that we can only find unity with each other when we each first have unity with God.

How do I become unified with God? It is in no way becoming equal with God; it is actually just the opposite. We become unified with God when we subject ourselves to Him and His instruction for us. This is the opposite of what the world is telling us to do every day. We are told to take charge of our own lives, to be proud, and to know that we have every right to make our own way. Yet God’s Word teaches that those who serve and those who are humble will receive a reward far greater than any human path we can create. A person becomes a Christian and submits to the will of God because that person understands something that the world does not—that subjecting yourself to God is the only thing that can save. Unity with God also brings unity with other people who understand those same things. People that are in subjection to the same will, and who are of “the Lord’s mind,” can find the unity that is commanded of them, even in the midst of division. When we are humble, a group of people who in worldly circumstances would tear at each other and break apart can be made one by understanding that we all stand on equal ground in service to God and at the foot of the cross. The world will not understand why we seek to forgive each other, and why we show mercy and love for people that we may not always have perfect harmony with, but the Lord is glorified by unity, and so we should continue to seek it.

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”

Psalm 133:1

Wisdom of Unity By: Ann Armstrong

Are you a “true yokefellow”? In Philippians 4, Paul requested an unnamed “true yokefellow” to assist two women, who for unknown reasons were at odds with each other in some sort of dispute, to agree with one another and unite in the common cause of the Lord. Paul asks the yokefellow to assist Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

How do we reunite and put aside our differences? Regardless of what differences we have, if we refocus on Christ and look to Him, we once again can contend at each other’s side for the cause of Christ. So let each of us put aside our differences and do what Philippians 4:4 tell us to do: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” And just in case you missed it, Paul says it twice: “I will say again, Rejoice!”

Word Study By: Courtney Westbrook

The word “unity” is found 2 times in the King James Version of the New Testament. The Greek word is defined as “a state of being undivided; having oneness; a condition of harmony,”^[1] or “the bringing together of separate or fragmented parts into a unified whole” (DBT).^[2] The two passages of scripture where this word is found are Ephesians 4 verse 3 and 13. However, the concept of unity or oneness is found throughout scripture and relates to various topics including: God’s ultimate purpose for his church (Eph. 1:9-10), a reflection of the Godhead (John 17:11), marriage and fellowship of the church (Eph. 5:31-32), and a common faith or commitment to one another (Psalm 133:1, Heb. 10:24-25, and Phil. 1:27). The concept of unity is prominent throughout scripture and gives us reason to place this topic as a priority for our personal study and strive toward it in every aspect of our lives.

^[1] Chris Church, “Unity,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1639.

^[2] Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

How Youth Can Inspire Unity in the Church By: Branna May

“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth” (Ecc. 12:1). These words, penned by Solomon, mean to remember God in everything you do, even as a youth. As a youth, we can create unity in the church by encouraging others in our actions and words.

As youth, we can sing and encourage others to put their heart in to worship. Leading by our example is a good way to show others unity in our worship. When people around us hear us singing, they will more than likely join in too.

Talking with and taking care of older women in our congregation can also create unity because we get to know them better and they get to know us better. We can find good friends and role models in the older women of the church.

Lastly, we can create unity by encouraging other kids to participate in youth events such as Pew Packers, devotionals, reading scripture to people in the church, and even Bible class. Encouraging other kids will help them become involved and want to do more for the church.

Unity is an important thing to have in a church. Even in our youth, we have the responsibility of creating unity and taking care of our church.

Getting to Know – Joyce Taylor (an Elder's Wife) By: Carol Tisdale

Joyce Taylor, born and reared on a farm in Oklahoma, married Marion Taylor at age 18. She worked at an advertising company in Oklahoma City while Marion attended telegraph school, which prepared him to work several years for the Frisco Railroad. After six months of marriage, Joyce made the greatest decision of her life. She became a Christian.

Joyce and Marion moved to Austin with their three children in 1959 and became members of the Ford Village congregation, which later became Southwest. A couple of years later, a thrilling change came to Joyce's life when she learned at an OB appointment that the baby she was carrying was actually two babies. The excitement was in fact so intense that it sent her into labor and she delivered twin baby girls on that very day!

For 47 years, Joyce was an elder's wife. When asked what it meant to be an elder's wife, she stated “being an elder's wife meant simply being what God would want *any* Christian wife, mother, and woman to be.” She tried her very best to be a help to her husband in any way she could. She learned to listen when he needed to talk, and she learned the importance of keeping what he shared with her in strict confidence.

Joyce has witnessed sweet unity within the Southwest congregation during a few serious, sad, and disappointing occasions. She saw the elders remain faithful, strong, and in one accord, and the response from members of the congregation was supportive and steadfast.

Quoting 1 Corinthians 1:10, Joyce points out that we are to “be joined together in the same mind and the same judgment” and that “to achieve the unity that is shown to us in the Word of God, we need to be willing to be considerate of all others when it comes to opinions, ideas, and suggestions.”

What is Joyce's favorite church potluck dish? She says there are so many, but a couple of standouts are Edith's banana pudding, Sue's cobbles, and Lee's deviled eggs!! And her favorite hymn? “Above the Bright Blue” because it reminds her of the words of her Savior, “[A]nd if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself” (John 14:3).

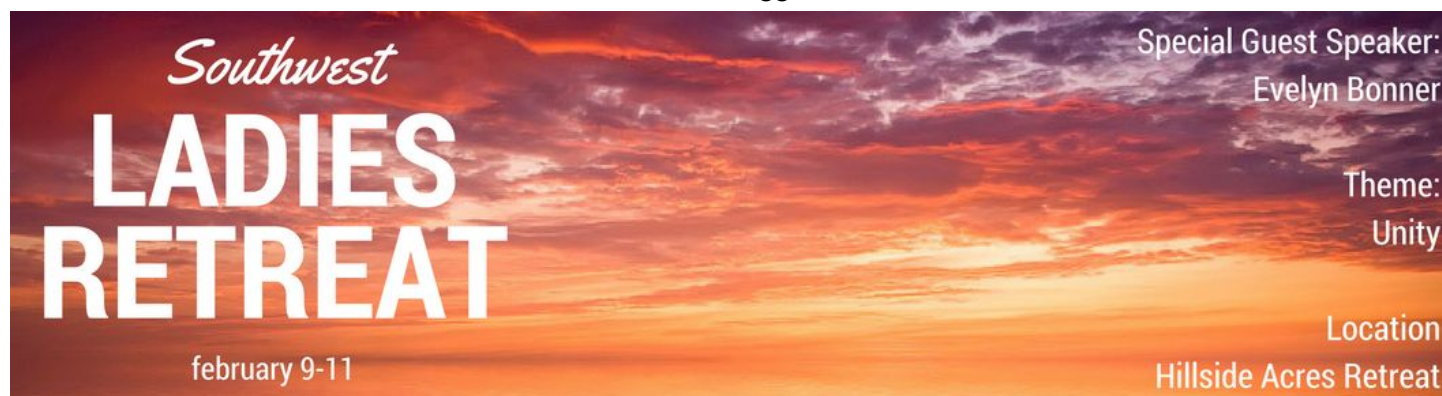


Walk in Peace and Unity By: Connie Campbell Bratcher

Christian, walk with others peaceably,
And glorify God above;
Endeavor to keep the unity...
In the bond of peace and love.
Labor for things of eternity,
Love every family member;
As you think of how God set you free...
Sweet fruit your life will render.
Of all places there should be no fights,
It is in God's family;
Our peace He purchased—Christ paid the price...
On the Cross of Calvary.
Let us love and live in harmony,
And follow our Shepherd's lead;
As we Walk in Peace and Unity...
We scatter much precious seed...

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren
to dwell together in unity!

-Psalm 133:1



Southwest
**LADIES
RETREAT**
february 9-11

Special Guest Speaker:
Evelyn Bonner

Theme:
Unity

Location
Hillside Acres Retreat

Southwest Women's Retreat

The Southwest church of Christ's women's retreat will be at the Hillside Acres Retreat located on the outskirts of Austin on February 9-11. We will be diving into scripture with Evelyn Bonner leading us to discuss this year's theme; unity. We hope to learn more about what God says about unity for each aspect of our lives. Everyone that has RSVP'd will be receiving more information regarding details. If you have any questions about this event, you can see any of the following individuals:

Gretchen Gerhardt ♦ Courtney Westbrook ♦ Gina Crouchet ♦ Avery Gerhardt ♦ Katie Pesina ♦ Lindsay Gerhardt Catherine Akin ♦ Rebecca Hatchitt ♦ Phyllis Siebert

About The Upright Woman

The Upright Woman publication is intended to educate, promote, and encourage the women of the church to strive for righteousness in every aspect of life. It is the mission of this publication to provide women an opportunity to study the word and share articles about various issues and topics to encourage us to be upright women in an upside down world. "For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face."

Psalm 11:7

We pray that with every issue and in every article all glory is given to God.