

# Threats to Unity

## Factions, Pride, Misplaced Loyalty

How to recognize and resist division?

**“I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to agree together, to end your divisions, and to be united by the same mind and purpose. For members of Chloe’s household have made it clear to me, my brothers and sisters, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each of you is saying, “I am with Paul,” or “I am with Apollos,” or “I am with Cephas,” or “I am with Christ.” Is Christ divided? Paul wasn’t crucified for you, was he? Or were you in fact baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name! (I also baptized the household of Stephanus. Otherwise, I do not remember whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel – and not with clever speech, so that the cross of Christ would not become useless.” (1 Corinthians 1:10-17)**

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# From the Mind of Christ...

## What is True Religion?

***“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”*** Matt. 22:37-39

***“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”***  
Matt. 28:18-20

# Focusing on the King's Perspective

A mission from our King... (Matt. 22:37-40; 28:19-20)

1. *Love the Lord with all your heart* (Worship – Matt. 4:10).
2. *Love your neighbor as yourself* (Service - Eph. 4:12)
3. *Go and make disciples* (Evangelism – Acts 1:8).
4. *Baptize them* (Fellowship; Covenant Unity – Eph. 4:1-6)
5. *Teach them to obey* (Discipleship – Col. 1:28)

*“We proclaim Him by instructing and teaching all people with all wisdom so that we may present every person mature in Christ.”*

*Colossians 1:28*

# How the Early Church Responded

A foundational pattern for every church. Acts 2:40-47

***“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine (DISCIPLESHIP) and fellowship (FELLOWSHIP), in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (WORSHIP).” v. 42***

***“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need (SERVICE).” v. 44-45***

***“For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.” 1 Corinthians 3:9-10***

***We trust the Lord that you are putting into practice the things we taught you. 2 Thessalonians 3:4***

# The Heart of the Christian Gospel

Establish a covenant relationship with God (Hebrews 8)

**John 17:3** *"Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*

## *How to be Right with God...*

*"If anyone says 'I love God' and yet hates his fellow Christian, he is a liar because the one who does not love his fellow Christian whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And the commandment we have from Him is this: that the one who loves God should love his fellow Christian too. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been fathered by God, and everyone who loves the Father loves the child fathered by Him. By this we know that we love the children of God: whenever we love God and obey His commandments. For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments. And His commandments do not weigh us down, because everyone who has been fathered by God overcomes the world."*

*1 John 4:20 – 5:4*

# Division Example (1)

## The Arian Controversy, Council of Nicaea (235 AD)

Topic	Arian View	Nicene/Athanasius View
Nature of the Son	Created being, not eternal	Uncreated, co-eternal with the Father
Divinity of Christ	Divine in a subordinate, lesser sense	Fully divine, equal in essence to the Father
Essence (ousia)	Heteroousios – of different essence	Homoousios – of same essence
Soteriology	Christ reveals God but cannot fully save	Only God can save; Christ must be God
Scriptural Use	Emphasized Proverbs 8:22 (“created”)	Emphasized John 1:1 (“the Word was God”)

# Division Example (2)

## The Purpose Driven Church Controversy (21<sup>st</sup> Century)

Aspect	Purpose Driven Model	New Testament Model
Leadership	Senior pastor-led, CEO model	Plurality of elders and deacons
Emphasis	Programs and growth metrics	Spiritual maturity and faithfulness
Audience Focus	Seeker-sensitive, felt needs	God-centered, edification of saints
Preaching Style	Topical, purpose-driven	Expository, doctrinal
Church Life	Programmatic, campaign-based	Relational, organic
Governance	Staff-led, goal-oriented teams	Congregational involvement and accountability