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Banishing Discord among Believers



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5

6 **VISION:** To hear the midnight cry, “The bridegroom comes, go out to meet
7 Him” (Matthew 25:6) and become like Him when I see Him as He is (1 John
8 3:2).

9

10 **MISSION:** Purify myself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3), to be glad,
11 to rejoice, give honor to Christ and be ready for the marriage of the
12 Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

13

14 **VALUES:** Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), be without
15 fault before God (Revelation 14:5), be perfect even as my Father in
16 heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), wear the Lamb’s fine, clean and white
17 linen (Revelation 19:8) do righteously (1 John 3:10) and walk humbly
18 with God (Micah 6:8).

19

20 **OVERALL AIM:** Studies presented here unveil Bible knowledge to inquiring
21 minds to prompt the following inquiries: “Are our feet on the rock of
22 ages? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the Father” (John 10:30
23 in Evangelism, {Ev} 199.1)? Am I crucified with Christ (Galatians
24 2:20)?

25

26 **PURPOSE/REASON FOR/WHY**

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28 The focus here is on unity of faith in Jesus Christ!

29
30 **OBJECTIVES/WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH**

31
32 At the end of this study, the reader is equipped to self-assess his/her
33 functioning in the body of Christ and seek help, if it is indicated!

34
35 **SIGNIFICANCE: SO WHAT**

36
37 When the body attacks itself, the immune system is unresponsive. When
38 the church is rife with division, its mission lies dormant (Matthew
39 12:25 or Mark 3:25). “By contention over trivial matters, a bitter
40 spirit is cultivated” (Messages to Young People, {MYP} 453.4). “...Many
41 do not manifest patience, forbearance, forgiveness and true love! ...Are
42 we growing into His divine nature (The Adventist Home, {AH} 178.1) or
43 do we have a form of godliness without power (2 Timothy 3:5)? Failure
44 to partake and manifest the divine nature (read 2 Peter 1:4) will
45 result in a solemn entry written next to our names, which will read,
46 TEKEL: “...Weighted in the balance and found wanting” (Daniel 5:27).

47
48 **BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

49
50 “True religion ennobles the mind, refines the taste, sanctifies the
51 judgment and makes its possessor partaker of the purity and influences
52 of Heaven. It brings angels near and separates... [us] from the spirit
53 and influence of the world” (MYP 455.2). Pure religion is more than
54 mere church attendance (read Hebrews 10:25 & James 1:27). Then, what
55 is the origin of quarrels among church people? Is it not from the
56 diabolical desires that battle in the limbic system (James 4:1, NIV)?
57 This background prepared the way for the study question that follows.

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Limbic System: Brain structures wrapped around the brain stem involved in emotion, motivation and behavior.

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58 **STUDY QUESTION**

59

60 What can believers do to preserve unity of faith?

61

62 **ANSWER SOURCE: HOLY BIBLE**

63

64 1. **Believers preserve unity of faith by adopting the Christlike mindset**

65 (read Philippians 2:7-8)! "Let nothing be done through strife or
 66 vainglory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem the other better
 67 than [him or herself] (Philippians 2:3). In honor, we are to prefer
 68 one another (read Romans 12:10). We can do these things only when we
 69 partake of "The wisdom that is from above, [which] is first pure,
 70 peaceable and gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good
 71 fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). When
 72 we "...Let the peace of God rule in our hearts to.. which also [we] are
 73 called in one body..." (Colossians 3:15) to be of one mind and one
 74 mouth, having compassion and courtesy for living in peace, living in
 75 one accord and for glorifying God (read Romans 15:6, 2 Corinthians
 76 13:11, Philippians 1:27 & 2:2 and 1 Peter 3:8), then our interactions
 77 will be free of toxicities that come from un-surrendered areas of our
 78 lives where Jesus' principles are NOT enshrined and exalted.

79

80 2. **Believers preserve unity of faith by NOT speaking irrelevantly!** "[By

81 doing so, we] avoid [unprofitable, vain and] foolish questions,
 82 genealogies, contentions and strivings..." (Titus 3:9). When you
 83 encounter forensic personality types, gently remind them that "Christ
 84 is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes"
 85 (Romans 10:4). "...By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans
 86 3:20) and "The law [makes] nothing perfect..." (Hebrews 7:19), yet when
 87 Moses received it at Sinai, his face shone so that the Israelites
 88 could not look on the glory of his countenance (Exodus 34:29-30 &

89 35); which glory was already fading (2 Corinthians 3:7). If the
 90 giving of the law at Sinai was glorious; how much more glorious is
 91 the ministration of righteousness by the Holy Spirit who gives life
 92 (2 Corinthians 3:9 & 6)? “Shouldn’t we expect far greater glory
 93 under the new way: [which is a covenant not of laws written on stone
 94 but of laws written in the limbic system, by the Holy Spirit, who]...
 95 is giving life” AND transforming us into Christ likeness with ever
 96 increasing glory (2 Corinthians 3:6, 8 & 18, New Living Translation,
 97 NLT/NIV & Hebrews 8:9-10, NIV)? “The law was our schoolmaster to
 98 bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians
 99 3:24). This is where dialogue and sharing between brethren should
 100 focus, for when Jesus is uplifted, He draws all people to God (John
 101 12:32) and into “...Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”
 102 (Ephesians 4:3). Could it be that division and strife among
 103 believers indicate that they are uplifting Jesus’ archrival?
 104

105 3. **Believers preserve unity of faith by abiding in Christ rather than**
 106 **merely being congregants (benchwarmers).** Too many Martha’s fill
 107 congregations. They are cumbered with much serving and neglect
 108 sitting at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:38-42). They pursue a law of
 109 righteousness but never attain it because they seek it as if it were
 110 by works (Romans 9:31-32). Admittedly, “We are [God’s] workmanship,
 111 created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which [He]... ordained that we
 112 should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). Moreover, “...It is lawful to
 113 do good...” (Mark 3:4) and the holy, just and good law (Romans 7:12)
 114 assures the faithful of the reward of obedience (Psalms 112:1 &
 115 Revelation 22:12), but the law is a double-edged sword. It also
 116 brings misery and death to those who fail to keep it perfectly (read
 117 Psalms 37:38 & 119:158; Proverbs 2:22; 13:15 & 11:6; Isaiah 1:28;
 118 James 2:10 & Romans 6:23). Even Paul found himself “...[self-
 119 righteous] without the law, [but] when the commandment came, sin

120 revived and [he self-reported condemnation]" (Romans 7:9). Only in
 121 Christ is there **NO** condemnation as the life-giving Spirit sets free
 122 from the power of sin that leads to death (Romans 8:1-2, NLT), when
 123 after the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit following repentance
 124 and baptism (Acts 2:38), "[God begins] a good work in [us, which He
 125 performs] ...until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). Are you
 126 cooperating with God to ensure that "...The light of the glorious
 127 gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, shine... [in your own soul]"
 128 (2 Corinthians 4:4)? Are you teaching transgressors God's ways that
 129 sinners might be converted to Christ (Psalms 51:13) or are you "A
 130 false witness, [speaking] lies and... [sowing] discord among brethren"
 131 (Proverbs 6:19)?

132
 133 4. **Believers preserve unity of faith by "...sanctification of the Spirit**
 134 **and belief of the truth"** (2 Thessalonians 2:13 & Romans 15:16).
 135 "Seeing [that we] have purified [our] souls in obeying the truth
 136 through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren..." (1 Peter
 137 1:22); "...[Then], to them that are sanctified by God the Father and
 138 preserved in Jesus Christ..." (Jude 1:1); "...To them that are sanctified
 139 in Christ Jesus [and] called to be saints..." (1 Corinthians 1:2):
 140 leave the work of accuser of the brethren to Satan (Revelation
 141 12:10). Focus your attention on the things that are true, noble,
 142 just, pure, lovely and good (Philippians 4:8). More importantly,
 143 "...Provoke [one another] unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:24)
 144 and let the Holy Spirit through God's appointed agencies of
 145 "...Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers cry aloud and
 146 spare not for the perfecting of the saints..." (Ephesians 4:11-12 &
 147 Isaiah 58:1). If we do these things, the principle of displacement
 148 will guarantee that division, strife and contention will give way to
 149 unity, love and cooperation just as the morning's darkness gives way
 150 to the light of dawn.

151 **ANSWER SOURCE: SACRED WRITINGS**

152 We are pursuing answers to the question: What can believers do to
 153 preserve unity of faith. More answers follow!

154

155 1. **Believers preserve unity of faith by embracing diversity.** Spiritual
 156 and cultural blindness lead church members into legalism that fosters
 157 a melting pot experience based on their limited culture. And a
 158 belief in uniformity is erroneously labeled Christian unity by the
 159 zealots. “[But] from the endless variety of plants and flowers, we
 160 may learn an important lesson. All blossoms are not the same in form
 161 or color. Some possess healing virtues; [while others] are always
 162 fragrant. [Yet], there are professing Christians who think it [is]
 163 their duty to make every other Christian like themselves. This is
 164 man’s plan, not the plan of God. In the church of God there is room
 165 for characters as varied as are the flowers in a garden. In [God’s]
 166 spiritual garden there are many varieties of flowers” (Our High
 167 Calling, {OHC} 254.5). All of us must mature into the consciousness
 168 that “...Acceptance of ...truth of heavenly origin brings the mind into
 169 subjection to Christ..., [not subjection to each other and that] the
 170 health of the soul, which comes from receiving and following...
 171 principles [of truth are] revealed in words and works of
 172 righteousness. ...[This type of obedience, faith and fruit bearing] is
 173 not the faith [that] believes in mind controlling mind till one
 174 person acts out the will of another. [Some] church members having
 175 confidence in this science may be called sound in faith, but it is
 176 not the faith of Jesus Christ” (Mind, Character and Personality,
 177 Volume 2, {2MCP} 710.3). Steadfastly resist this emerging imbecility
 178 and religious slavery that is being peddled among some church
 179 leadership. “...Earnestly [contending] for the faith that was once
 180 delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3).

181

182 2. **Believers preserve unity of faith by being agents of peace.** "The
 183 path of the upright is the path of peace. It is so plain that the
 184 humble, God-fearing [person] can walk in it without stumbling and
 185 without making crooked paths [because "{God} leads the humble in
 186 doing right, teaching them His way" (Psalms 25:9, NLT)]. The path of
 187 righteousness is a narrow path [and people] of different temperaments
 188 can walk side by side if they but follow the Captain of their
 189 salvation" (2MCP 501.1). "Let there be peace in the home and there
 190 will be peace in the church. This precious experience brought into
 191 the church will be the means of creating a kindly affection one for
 192 another [and not only will] quarrels ...cease, [but also] true
 193 Christian courtesy will be seen among church members" (2MCP 503.1).
 194 But far too many church members invest effort in things of minor
 195 importance while neglecting more serious matters. This practice is
 196 affectionately known as *Majoring in Minors and Minorin in Majors.*
 197 "...When those who believe in Christ are laborers together with God,
 198 ...the little things which some are ever harping upon, which are not
 199 authoritatively settled by the Word of God, will not be magnified
 200 into important matters" (2MCP 499.1). We do well to learn from
 201 Jesus. "In His treatment of Thomas, Jesus gave a lesson for His
 202 followers. His example shows how we should treat those whose faith
 203 is weak and who make their doubts prominent. Jesus did not overwhelm
 204 Thomas with reproach, nor did He enter into controversy with him. He
 205 revealed Himself to the doubting one. Thomas had been most
 206 unreasonable in dictating the conditions of his faith, but Jesus, by
 207 His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers.
 208 Unbelief is seldom overcome by controversy. It is rather put upon
 209 self-defense and finds new support and excuse. But let Jesus, in His
 210 love and mercy, be revealed as the crucified Savior and from many
 211 once unwilling lips will be heard the acknowledgment of Thomas, 'My
 212 Lord and my God'" (John 20:27-28 in 2MCP 499.2).

213 3. **Believers preserve unity of faith by living circumspectly.** “Harsh,
 214 angry words are not of heavenly origin. Scolding and fretting never
 215 help; they stir up the worst feelings of the human heart” (2MCP
 216 501.2). “Let us now bring all the beauty, love and kindness... into
 217 our life. Let us be thoughtful, grateful, patient and forbearing...
 218 with one another” (2MCP 503.3). “...If mistakes are made, let there be
 219 a readiness to correct them and let us avoid everything that is
 220 likely to create... strife; for there is a heaven before us and among
 221 its inhabitants there will be no strife” (2MCP 503.4). “I must grow
 222 in grace... to give moral power to all my actions. ...I must guard my
 223 spirit, my actions [and] my words. I must give time to personal
 224 culture, to training and educating myself in right principles. I
 225 must be an example to others. I must meditate upon the word of God
 226 night and day and bring it into my practical life. The sword of the
 227 Spirit, which is the word of God, is the only sword which I can
 228 safely use” (AH 180.2). “[Has] the Lord God given [you] the tongue
 229 of the learned that [you] know how to speak...” (Isaiah 50:4) or are
 230 you among “...The workers of iniquity who whet their tongue like a
 231 sword and... shoot... bitter words... at the perfect...” (Psalms 64:2-4)?

232
 233 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS: This study examined unity of faith in Jesus
 234 Christ. The question that focused the study asked: What can believers
 235 do to preserve unity of faith? In our study, we uncovered seven
 236 principles: 1) Adopting the Christlike mindset; 2) Not speaking
 237 irrelevantly; 3) Abiding in Christ rather than being a mere congregant,
 238 4) Experiencing sanctification of the Spirit by belief of the truth, 5)
 239 Embracing unity in diversity instead of uniformity; 6) Being an agent
 240 of peace and 7) Living circumspectly. Does your lifestyle include
 241 these and other divine principles of unity of faith in Christ Jesus?
 242 Because it is of little redeeming value to engage in Bible study merely
 243 for information, subsequent paragraphs follow that make a practical
 244 application of the truths set forth here.

245 **DISCUSSION: WHAT DO THESE THINGS MEAN?**

246

247 **“Satan is constantly seeking to cause distrust, alienation and malice**
 248 **among God's people.** We shall be often tempted to feel that our rights
 249 are invaded when there is no real cause for such feelings.
 250 Contentions, strife and lawsuits between brethren are a disgrace to the
 251 cause of truth” (2MCP 497.3). “The special, deceptive work of Satan
 252 has been to provoke controversies that there might be strivings about
 253 words to no profit. He well knows that this will occupy the mind and
 254 the time. It raises the combativeness and quenches the spirit of
 255 conviction in the minds of many, drawing them into diversity of
 256 opinions, accusation and prejudice, which closes the door to the truth”
 257 (2MCP 498.2). Is this what you want as your legacy to the Christian
 258 community? How do you want to be remembered after your expiration if
 259 the our Lord further delays His coming?

260

261 **“The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is**
 262 **separation from Christ.** To come near to Christ is to come near to one
 263 another. [This fulfills Jesus’ prayer in which He asked the Father
 264 that His disciples may be one as God and Jesus is one, John 17:11].
 265 The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not
 266 diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome
 267 difficulties--though there will be much of this to do--but union with
 268 Christ” (2MCP 501.4). “God is the embodiment of benevolence, mercy and love. Those
 269 who are truly connected with Him cannot be at variance with one another. His Spirit ruling in the
 270 heart will create harmony, love and unity [and by love will all humanity know that we are Jesus’
 271 disciples (John 13:35)]. The opposite of this is seen among the children of
 272 Satan. It is [Satan’s] work to stir up envy, strife and jealousy.
 273 ...Professed followers of Christ, What fruit do you bear” (2MCP 497.1)?
 274 Whose disciples are you? Who is your master?

275 **CONCLUSIONS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

276

277 **“Controversy is unprofitable.** Christ never entered into it” (2MCP
 278 499.4). “Differences of opinion will always exist, for every mind is
 279 not constituted to run in the same channel [so while you are careful
 280 not to be homogenized into any particular culture, also respect the
 281 capacity of others to think and act differently]. Hereditary and
 282 cultivated tendencies have to be guarded, lest they create
 283 controversies over minor matters. Christ's workers must draw together
 284 in tender sympathy and love. Let not anyone think it a virtue to
 285 maintain his own notions and suppose s/he is the only one to whom the
 286 Lord has given discernment and intuition. Christian charity covers a
 287 multitude of things which one may regard as defects in another. There
 288 is need of much love and far less criticism. When the Holy Spirit is
 289 manifestly working in the hearts of ministers and helpers they will
 290 reveal the tenderness and love of Christ” (2MCP 504.1).

291

292 **“[Our warfare is] not against flesh and blood but against**
 293 **principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this**
 294 **world, against spiritual wickedness in high places** (Ephesians 6:12).
 295 “...Evil angels in the form of believers will work in our ranks to bring
 296 in a strong spirit of unbelief. ...These powers of evil will assemble in
 297 our meetings, not to receive a blessing, but to counterwork the
 298 influences of the Spirit of God. Take up no remark that they may make,
 299 but repeat the rich promises of God... We are never to [repeat] words
 300 that human lips may speak to confirm the evil angels in their work, but
 301 we should repeat the words of Christ” (2MCP 504.3). ‘It is written’ is
 302 the weapon used by the world's Redeemer (Luke 4:12). “...Keep close to
 303 the Word [of God and] let... the Lord Jesus and His messengers... testify
 304 [for] we know that their testimony is true” (2MCP 499.4).

305 **CALL TO ACTION: WHAT SHALL WE DO?**

306 **“...Open the windows of the heart heavenward and close them earthward.**
 307 [“...His divine power has granted unto us all things that pertain to life
 308 and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own
 309 glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3)]. “[Then], set your affections on
 310 things above not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1). [By doing
 311 so], The spirit of love and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will
 312 bind heart to heart...; [thus, we]... will NOT let controversy arise over
 313 trifles” (2MCP, 498.5). “...[Let us be] consecrated to the work of the
 314 Master; ...every hand... engaged in service, everyone... standing at his [or
 315 her] post of duty, working with heart and soul as a missionary of the
 316 cross of Christ, ...[receiving] ...directions from Christ and... [devoting]
 317 no time [to] contention or strife” (2MCP 498.4). Soldiers of Christ
 318 arise and put on your armory. “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not
 319 war after the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,
 320 [that is, physical, but rather spiritual and] mighty through God to the
 321 pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high
 322 thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into
 323 captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians
 324 10:3-5). “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's
 325 ideal for His children; godliness, godlikeness, is the goal to be
 326 reached” (Education {Ed} 18.3). Aim high fellow child of God and
 327 “...Press toward to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in
 328 Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).