

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

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UNITY

John Edwards

The word “unity” suggests oneness. One of the great pleas of the Bible is the plea for unity among God’s people.

UNITY WAS A SONG OF DAVID. Psalm 133 is a song of unity. These sentiments swelled the bosom of Israel’s sweet singer: *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”* (v. 1). As *“the precious ointment upon the head”*, unity perfumes the church and sweetens the atmosphere like the precious oil *“that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard.”* As *“the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion”*, unity will make the church a center of fragrance and fount of blessing.

UNITY WAS THE PRAYER OF JESUS. The Lord’s prayer in John 17 was an ardent petition for unity. The prayer of Christ in six words: *“That they all may be one...”* (v. 21). These words ought to touch the heart of *“he that soweth discord among brethren”* (Prov. 6:19). The reason the Lord demands unity is *“...that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”* (Jn. 17:21). Denominationalism is a mockery of the Lord’s prayer!

UNITY WAS THE SPIRIT

OF THE EARLY CHURCH. Acts 4:32 records, *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul...”* There is great need for brethren today to be of one heart and soul! This oneness contributed to the remarkable growth of the church — *“the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly”* (Acts 6:7). Church growth is an achievement of unity!

UNITY WAS THE PLEA OF THE APOSTLE PAUL. Perhaps no plea was as close to Paul’s heart as the plea for unity. *“Be of the same mind one toward another...”* (Rom. 12:16). *“...that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Cor. 1:10). *“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Eph. 4:3). *“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind”* (Phil. 2:2). May Paul’s plea be our practice!

For unity to exist among the Lord’s people, we must *“walk by the same rule”* (Phil. 3:16), *“speak as the oracles of God”* (1 Pet. 4:11) and *“do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”* (Col. 3:17). Let Christians be one!

ADMONITIONS FOR CHRISTIANS

John Edwards

1 Corinthians 16:13 says, *“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”* This verse contains four admonitions for Christians:

WATCH YE. The Lord’s people have always been called upon to be on the look out. There are a number of things a Christian must watch. We must watch and be ready for the second coming of Christ (Mk. 13:35-37), watch for those we might teach (Jn. 4:35), watch our temper, tongue, and the like.

STAND FAST IN THE FAITH. Christians must learn to take a stand. Paul wrote, *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”* (Eph. 6:11). The essentials to standing are found in the armour of a Christian (Eph. 6:13-14). Are you willing to stand up and be counted?

QUIT YOU LIKE MEN. To play the man is the idea of this passage. We need to grow up and act like men. This requires putting away childish things (1 Cor. 13:11). Paul urged the Corinthians, *“be not children... but be men”* (1 Cor. 14:20).

BE STRONG. Christianity is not for weaklings! God charged

Joshua to be strong as he assumed the leadership of Israel (Josh. 1:6-9). Paul commanded, *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord...”* (Eph. 6:10). How strong are you?

SPIRITUAL SHALT NOT’S *John Edwards*

God’s law has always consisted of *“shalt”* and *“shalt not”*. This was the case with Adam and Eve in the beginning (Gen. 2:16-17). Let’s explore some *“shalt not’s”* of the word of God.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN. Taking the name of God in vain is a spiritual shalt not. Exodus 20:7 says, *“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”* We must respect the name of God! The name of God is excellent (Ps. 8:1), to be praised (Ps. 99:3), holy and reverend (Ps. 111:9). To use euphemisms such as “golly”, “gosh” and “gee” and OMG abbreviation for “O my God” (as on social

media or in text messages) is taking the Lord’s name in vain!

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY. In a day when sexual intercourse with someone other than one’s lawful spouse is rampant, we need to know that God said, *“Thou shalt not commit adultery”* (Ex. 20:14). In Old Testament times, the sin of adultery brought the death penalty (Lev. 20:10). The Bible says, *“But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul”* (Prov. 6:32). Surely, it is not worth losing your soul over!

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS. Bearing false witness is the deliberate, willful giving of false, misleading or incomplete testimony. Such is to lie. Exodus 20:16 records, *“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”* One of the sins that crucified Christ was the sin of bearing false witness (Mt. 26:59). The wise man stated, *“A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish”* (Prov. 19:9). We must tell the truth, the whole truth,

and nothing but the truth at all times and at all costs!

THOU SHALT NOT LIE WITH MANKIND, AS WITH WOMANKIND. There is no such thing as gender-neutral in the Scriptures. One is either mankind or womankind, and that from birth. Leviticus 18:22 teaches, *“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination”* (Lev. 18:22). Under the law of Moses, the homosexual and lesbian were put to death (Lev. 20:13). The penalty for violating this spiritual shalt not today is *“that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

THOU SHALT NOT MUZZLE THE OX. Deuteronomy 25:4 commands, *“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.”* God took care of the oxen as they were allowed to partake of the fruits of their labor. *“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel”* (1 Cor. 9:14).

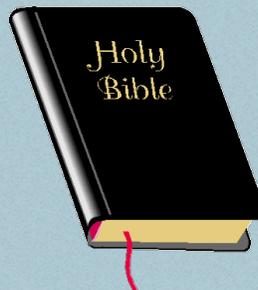
When God says *“not”*, we must say *“no.”*

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