**BARRIERS TO UNITY**

**John 17:20 – 23**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. There can be **NO** doubt God Expects for brethren to dwell in unity (Psa 133:1; 1 Cor 1:10).

2. If [we] intend to please Him, [we] must seek for the unity God Desires us to have.

 A. Nevertheless, [we] need to seek unity the way God Instructs us to achieve it.

3. God does **NOT** approve of all unity, just for the sake of unity.

 A. His Instructions are for brethren to withdraw themselves from certain ones (2 Cor 6:17).

 1. Fellowship can**NOT** continue with those refusing to repent (1 Cor 5:1-5).

 2. Must withdraw from those who do **NOT** love and practice the truth (1 Tim 6:5).

 3. Withdraw from those teaching contrary to sound doctrine (Rom 16:17, 18; Tit 1:9).

 4. Do **NOT** fellowship with those who practice works of darkness (Eph 5:11).

4. To have the unity Jesus PRAYED for, [we] must remove [any] barriers standing in the way.

 A. In order to remove them, [we] must recognize them, first.

**BODY:**

**1. NOT ACCEPTING THE SCRIPTURES**

 A. When MAN refuses to accept the Scriptures as God’s Divine Word, a barrier is erected.

 1. The BIBLE is the ALL-INSPIRED Word of God (2 Tim 3:16, 17; 2 Pet 1:3, 21).

 B. If MAN refuses to accept this as true, this leaves us with **NO** absolute standard of right and wrong. He becomes a law unto himself lending to confusion verses unity (Am 3:3).

**2. NOT KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES**

 A. Many accepting the Bible as God’s Divine Word do **NOT** know [it] as they should.

 1. [We] must have the same standard (and know it), in order to have unity.

 B. Search the Scriptures to rightly divide the TRUTH (Jn 5:39; 8:32; 2 Tim 2:15).

**3. NOT RESPECTING THE SCRIPTURES**

 A. When speaking of respecting the Scriptures, one must recognize authority (Col 3:17).

 1. To do something “in the name of the Lord” means to do as the Lord has authorized.

 B. To be approved of God, MAN must do His Will (Mt 7:21 – 23).

 1. One can**NOT** ignore God’s Commands and still have unity.

**4. NOT OBEYING THE SCRIPTURES**

 A. Our love for the Lord is seen in whether [we] OBEY the Scriptures (Jn 14:15; 15:14).

 B. Salvation comes from OBEDIENCE to the Scriptures (Heb 5:8, 9).

 1. It is imperative, if [we] are to be united, to do the things the Lord has said (Lk 6:46).

 C. We can**NOT** reject the Scriptures in any way without setting up barriers to unity.

1. This is true because unity is found when man is united with God by OBEDIENCE.

 A. OBEDIENCE to the Scriptures is what unifies.

**5. NOT DEMANDING THAT OTHERS FOLLOW THE SCRIPTURES**

 A. For unity to be as God says, it is **NOT** enough for some to OBEY while others do **NOT**.

 1. Everyone must OBEY (2 The 3:7; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 4:7.

 B. The Scriptures are “…the power of God unto salvation…” (Rom 1:16).

 1. **BUT**, notice to whom this applies: [ONLY] to those who BELIEVE.

 A. To “BELIEVE” is to OBEY (Jas 2:18).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Unity is to be sought after by every child of God (Heb 8:5).

 A. To reach this goal, [we] dare **NOT** erect (self-initiate/establish) barriers.