

The Marks of Spiritual Unity
Philippians 2:2B
Series: Joy and Gratitude in Christ

1. Introduction

- a. Last week we saw the motives for spiritual unity. They were:
 - i. Encouragement in Christ
 - ii. Any comfort from love
 - iii. Any participation in the Spirit
 - iv. Affection and Sympathy
 - v. Completing the Minister's joy.
- b. We spent a great deal of time discussing and looking at the various portions of Scripture which command spiritual unity among the Brethren.
- c. We affirmed that Spiritual unity does not mean compromising the Gospel or essential Christian doctrines. There can be no unity when someone is in error or promoting blasphemy.
- d. We also discussed that in matters that are not essential to the Christian faith, we are commanded to live in peace and harmony.
- e. Whenever there is disunity and discord, this is not a work of the Spirit of God but rather the work of the enemy.
 - i. We came to the conclusion that we need to be more gracious and Christ centered in living with our Christian family.
 - ii. Heaven forbid that any of us would ever be the cause of discord in the body of Christ.
- f. Today we are going to examine the marks of spiritual unity. There are 4 given but number one and four are essentially the same.

2. The first mark is being **of the same mind**

- a. The phrase literally means "to think the same thing," or "to be like-minded."
- b. We are to actively strive to achieve common understanding and genuine agreement.
- c. How are we to accomplish this? Scripture tells us:
 - i. **Romans 8:5-9** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. (6) For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (7) For the mind that is

set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (8) Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (9) You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

- ii. **Colossians 3:1-2** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (2) Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.
- iii. **Romans 12:3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

3. The second mark is maintaining ***the same love***.

- a. This means to love others equally.
- b. Emotionally this is impossible but the word for love here is—Greek ***Agapē***—self-sacrificial love.
 - i. This type of love is an act of the will and not preference or attraction. It is based on the intentional, conscious choice to seek the welfare of its object. This is why it can be commanded in Scripture.
- c. We are to be devoted to one another in brotherly love; thinking of the other first.
 - i. **Romans 12:10** Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

4. The third mark is ***being in full accord (united in spirit)***.

- a. In the Greek united – ***Sump-su-chos – (united)*** – literally means “one-souled.”
- b. This is a command to live in selfless harmony with fellow believers.
- c. Excluded are:
 - i. Personal ambition, selfishness, hatred, envy, jealousy, and the countless other evils that are the fruit of self-love.
- d. This type of unity is grounded in a deep concern for God, His word, His work, His gospel, and His people.

5. The fourth mark is being of ***one mind***.

- a. We come back with a full circle view.
- b. Unity of mind becomes Paul’s pervasive concern.

- c. This is not an intellectual unity but is best described as a Spiritual one-mindedness.
 - d. We are in a family relationship.
6. Benediction:
- a. **Colossians 3:12-15** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, (13) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (14) And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (15) And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.