

IT'S NOT COMPLICATED

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Ephesians 4:1-6, John 17:20-23

We make life, love, relationships, work, and even play, much too complicated. When we were young it was much simpler. As children, we weren't concerned with what life would bring. We lived in the moment and loved unconditionally. Yes, we fussed and fought but when it was over, it was over. Now that we are older, we struggle to make sense of life. We even try to make sense of this new life in Christ and worry about how we are going to fulfill what God has called us to. It is not complicated.

In the word, Paul gave us doctrine. He wrote, we are blessed with everything in Christ Jesus, which makes us wealthy. He wanted us to understand how we should walk as wealthy people. He tells us how to behave. The Christian life is based on power. What you believe determines how you are going to behave. You just can't settle for some relationships. When you understand that you are the head and not the tail then you know that you are reaping what God has for you and taking back what the devil stole from you. You ought to live a life worthy of all that God has done for you. God has given us a wonderful calling in Christ Jesus. We have a responsibility to live worthy of that calling. The word worthy means to be of equal weight. We have to live a life that is worthy of our calling. We sing a song that says, we are walking in authority but what does our lifestyle say? Does your lifestyle match up with your confession?

Paul talks about living in harmony and unity. Paul says that it is urgent that we begin to live the way God wants us to live. As the body of Christ on earth, we represent Him. The people in our lives need to know what unity looks like. Whatever you were looking for in Christ, the people in the world are looking for it. They won't believe it exists on earth unless we show it to them. Paul understood that we need to start with our relationships. This is where we have the most difficulty. This is the greatest need in the church and in the world. We call ourselves Christians but there is so much competition and pettiness between us. Why would Paul have us begin with our relationships?

We are struggling with our marriages and our children because we don't understand what we are doing. We are making it too complicated but it is not. God said that we are one in Christ. We ought to keep the unity of the Spirit with the bond of peace. We are not to manufacture the gift of peace we are just to maintain it. It is not complicated because Jesus prayed for our unity. Unity is not our natural gifting hence we analyze how it should be done. However, there was a plan laid out for us. Unless you have a relationship with Christ, you cannot have relationship with others. There is violence in the schools and streets because there is no Christ there. Even here in church, you want to leave Christ outside. How will people know that Christ is who he says he is and he has come? It is the Holy Spirit that makes us one. The Holy Spirit has us loving others who don't like us.

There is one faith and one baptism. We are not just members of a church but also brothers and sisters. We are intimately and internally connected. God is just calling us to maintain that connection by living out unity in our lives. Paul said we ought to be humble in our daily walk. We ought to put Christ first, others second, and ourselves last. That goes completely against the grain of our current outlook. We are insecure. We are so disillusioned by our place in the body that we think it will not matter if we don't fill our roles because we don't understand our purpose.

You may have been hurt in the past, but so have we all. We all have problems. The truth of the matter is that we waste anger. You are angry because someone didn't speak to you. However, you are not angry about the senseless killing in Darfur and the war that is still going on. You are not angry about the children in our communities and surrounding communities being raped and/or killed. You are not angry that our children aren't passing the CRCT test. However, you get mad when someone sits in your seat. The next time you become offended because someone has hurt you, you must ask yourself if it is important enough for you to be angry. We make loving one another more difficult than it is. God said, be patient, which means longsuffering. The moment someone offends us we want to cut them off.

Relationships are difficult. At some point in the relationship, you are going to get on one other's nerves. You have to be patient and work out the difficulties. It takes love to be patient. **I Corinthians 13:4-7** Ask yourself, "Is this relationship worth fighting for? Is this relationship important?" If it is, you have to learn how to fight for it. You have to learn how not to take things so personally. Peacemakers tell the truth and then deal with it. Lets help each other through our issues and support each other so that the world will know that Christ came.

Peace

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