

14.

Romans 16:17-23

Be United

The apostle Paul has given his original readers, and us, a powerful vision of what a fully mature believer should be striving toward (Romans 12:1-21). As Paul brings his Epistle to the Romans to a close, he concludes with one of the most important attributes of the Christlike believer (note the stated goal in Ephesians 4:13).

1. What challenges do believers face in striving to keep the behavioural doctrines of Ephesians 4:1-3?

2. Based on Romans 16:17 who should we watch out for, and then what should we do if we come across them?

3. Who are particularly susceptible to those we need to watch out for? (Rom. 16:18)

Paul warns believers about false teachers who sow discord among undiscerning believers. Rather than prizing Christian unity and the truth of God's Word they beguile weak believers by telling them what they want to hear.

4. How does Peter describe what Christian unity looks like in First Peter 3:8?

5. Does First Corinthians 1:10 mean that Christians must always agree about everything in order to achieve unity?

6. What, according to Colossians 3:14, is the single most important requirement for achieving unity within a church and what are some of the challenges in implementing it?

7. How is Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13 a simple yet, at the same time, most difficult plan for achieving true unity?

Unity is not to be confused with unison. While *unity* involves agreement, it also involves *disagreement*. In fact, *submission* is really only necessary where there is disagreement (Eph. 5:21). Of course, there are some disagreements that cannot be overlooked — but many, if not most, of the disagreements which divide churches are largely inconsequential and have more to do with personality clashes and pride.

“In essentials, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, charity.”

Amen.