

SPIRITUAL UNITY: GOD'S PLAN & HUMAN ENDEAVOR

God's concept of spiritual unity is very different from what is so often seen in the doings of humans. Men seem to think the uniting of disparate religious parties is good enough while God's intention for man in religious, spiritual, matters is oneness—the same oneness seen in his Son's relationship to him, the Father (John 17:20-21).

Yes, this is a large order. So large, in fact, that it is unattainable by human scheme or means. Thus, if it is to be had at all, if humans are to even strive for it, they must rely on God to lead the way.

This God has provided for us as outlined in Paul's letter to the Christians of Ephesus. It is a divinely crafted platform consisting of seven divinely established planks each of which is unique, essential, and singular. These are the seven: "There is **one body** and **one Spirit**, just as you were called in **one hope** of your calling; **one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God** and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6, emphasis added).

As noted, this platform is God's plan. It is what he has provided as a means of establishing all mankind in a unifying relationship, not only with him, but also a leveling one for humans with one another.

But, if this is God's plan for unifying mankind, there is also another, second, party whose participation is essential to making God's part work. Just who would that be? The human element, we ourselves, who must seek God, and who are responsible for working toward the unity he requires.

This is the realm of human attitude, the willingness to surrender our thinking and submit to God's. What it takes to get this done is revealed also in Chapter 4 of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, 1-3. This is, in fact, the preamble to the seven point plan that follows. Paul wrote, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all **lowliness** and **gentleness**, with **longsuffering, bearing with one another in love**, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (emphasis added).

Clearly, even attempting to achieve the oneness God intends requires work; we must endeavor. And what we must work at is developing the character traits listed in this passage so that the seven planks are set in our minds in order to achieve the unity God desires. —Jerry F. Bassett
(Next, we will examine each of the seven "planks" of God's plan.)