

**Private
faith
is not
Unifying
Faith**

Private faith is not unifying faith

'To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.' 2 Pet 1:1

The true faith is unifying faith that comes from God and seeks fellowship with those in Christ.

'What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.' 1 John 1:3

Private faith inhibits fellowship and discipling. From the beginning we can see that sin isolates man from God and each other. Sin separates, faith unifies. Sin means we cannot fully give ourselves over to the business of loving God and our neighbours as ourselves in a way that glorifies God as revealed by the Trinity. The faith that comes from God in Christ incorporates all His people in unity with Him.

To the degree that we exercise a private faith is to the degree that we exclude ourselves from the God ordained burden of the cross in suffering for the good of others. Private faith means hiding from the light that exposes sin. With a private faith we can blindly disconnect ourselves from the doctrine we say we believe to be true, because we have separated ourselves from those the Father has provided for our unified sanctification and service.

Unity in Christ is not symbolic but actual. Faith without community is a farce. Being united with God by faith has trinitarian implications for the unity of the church. The faith that comes from God is for a reinstated unified life in Christ as intended before man declared his independence from the Unity of God. The family of God was meant to reflect the Unity of the Trinity.

"For true doctrine is not a matter of the tongue, but of life; neither is Christian doctrine grasped only by the intellect and memory, as truth is grasped in other fields of study. Rather, doctrine is rightly received when it takes possession of the entire soul and finds a dwelling place and shelter in the most intimate affections of the heart." John Calvin. The little book on the Christian life.

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."

John 17:20-23

The real danger of private faith is that it is called faith at all.

Evidence of God's unifying grace is a compelling pursuit of a relationship with God. Unity is seen in the pursuit of His love seeking fellowship with His people. *"I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another."*

John 13:34-35

And this love for God and His people evidenced by a hunger for His word that sustains the purpose of His grace that leads to doing all things for His glory.

'And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.'

Acts 4:32

Unifying faith will be the evidence of His grace in love for one another. *'Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord.'*

Acts 11:23

Unifying grace is compelled to do His will. *'Equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.'*

Heb 13:21

Unifying faith will be evidenced by a new creation in Christ. *'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.'*

2 Cor 5:17

Unifying faith will be seen in growing in grace and the knowledge of God. *'but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.'*

2 Pet 3:18

Unifying faith will be evidence in putting others first. *'No one is to seek his own advantage, but rather that of his neighbour.'* 1 Cor 10:24

Unifying faith will be seen as the servant attitude to all. *'I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may gain more.'* 1 Cor 9:19

Unifying faith is the God enabled service to others. *'Now, brothers and sisters, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave voluntarily, begging us with much urging for the favour of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.'* 2 Cor 8:1-5

This unity cannot be true for personalised faith

Because, personalised faith is about the "ME" and about self-interest. True unifying faith is about God's desire for His glory in service to others. A personalised faith is a fleshy substitute for the faith that comes from God to live by the Spirit of oneness in the unity of Christ with the Father and the Spirit.

While unifying faith is deeply personal, because nobody can have faith for us, it is true faith because it is always a corporate expression of the life of Christ, and must be pursued by personal diligence and devotion to Christ the Lord in faithful love and service to His people.

Strictly speaking, a personalised faith in this day and age is like the Lone Ranger, who chooses to be involved according to self-interest. But True faith is always corporate, having given up the high horse that isolates our feet from the rock that is Christ, in order to serve the welfare of common people in humble obedience. A privatised faith is pride's servant that shuns the cross of daily self-sacrifice. For we are unable to love our neighbour for their good unless we first deny ourselves worldly comforts.

Unifying faith is love for others

Unifying faith is a corporate life compelled to live in the knowledge of God's love in the light of the glory of God in Christ, surrendering to the will of God in

all things concerning the Church as the body of Christ. Unifying faith is compelled by the love of Christ. 2 Cor 5:14

Unifying faith no longer lives for the darkness of the ignorance of men who are resisting obedience to God who is sovereign over all things.

The true people of unified faith are united with God in Christ, having become one life in Him by the power of the Spirit, so that the barriers of self-interest are overthrown for the benefit of serving the kingdom of God's interest in the lives of others.

Unifying faith follows the example of the crucified Christ who suffered in the world. So true faith continues to trusts in God through the suffering He allows, because He is supreme over all things as He works out their salvation in the very darkness of the world.

Unifying faith lives for the holiness of God and suffers all things in the world which is corrupted by disobedience to God. So that as the world suffers the consequences of disorder and evil, the people of faith suffer as they always trust in God and rejoice in all things, secure in the knowledge of their shared relationship with Christ and each other.

Unifying faith looks forward to the day of the Lord when the faithful will be finally liberated into the perfection of God. And the rebellious with suffer the final judgement of Christ in eternal torment, being forever cut off from the presence of our God of light and love

Therefore, true faith lives the unified life of Christ

'let's consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.'

Heb 10:24-25

Unifying faith is answerable to the whole body of Christ.

'For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or

free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one part, but many.' 1 Cor 12:12-14

Unifying faith takes care to support the spiritual life of others.

'But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.' Heb 3:13

'Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.' Gal 6:1

'Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.' 1 Tim 5:20

Unifying faith from God serves the body of Christ with the gifts He provides.

'Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.' 1 Cor 12:4-7

Unifying faith is dependent on the church for mutual spiritual growth and service.

'But now there are many parts, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again, the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 1 Co 12:20-21

Unifying faith is committed to meeting the daily needs of others in Christ.

'Whoever has worldly goods and sees his brother or sister in need, and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God remain in him?' 1 John 3:17

Unifying faith is committed to making and training disciples of Christ.

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matt 28:19-20

Unifying faith will confess sins to one another and pray for one another.

'Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much.'
James 5:16

Unifying faith is effectual in producing the desired result of salvation because God cannot be denied.

"I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances."
Ezek 36:27

*"I will **put** My laws into **their** minds, And write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, And they shall be My people."*
Heb 8:10

Unifying faith is led by the Spirit in order to fulfill the law of God.

'So that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.'
Rom 8:4

Unifying faith seeks to fulfil the law of God thus proving to be God's children.

'For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.'
Rom 8:14

'Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.'
Gal 5:16

Unifying faith will put on the life of Christ.

'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.'
Rom 13:14

Unifying faith means regards the fleshly body to be holy temples of God.

'Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God,'
1 Cor 6:19

Unifying faith is compelled by the love of Christ.

'For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.'
2 Cor 5:14

Unifying faith no longer lives for self but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

'and He died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf.' 2 Cor 5: 15

Unifying faith means being the possession of God.

'You are not your own' 1 Cor 6:19

'You are A CHOSEN PEOPLE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;' 1 Pet 2:9

Unifying faith is bought with the price of the blood of Christ.

'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us— for it is written: "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"' Gal 3:13

'For you have been bought for a price: therefore glorify God in your body.' 1 Cor 6:20

Unifying faith goes on seeking, asking and knocking for the reality of the kingdom of God.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness." Matt 6:33

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Matt 7:7

Unifying faith shows evidence of God working on the inside, to will and do for His good pleasure.

'For it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure.' Phil 2:13

Unifying faith abides in Christ and produces the fruit of His life.

"I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Unifying faith lives the crucified life of Christ.

'Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.'

Rom 6:6

'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.'

Gal 2:20

Unifying faith carries a personal cross of self-sacrifice to self-interests, in order to carry out the will of God.

'He was saying to them all, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, this is the one who will save it."

Luke 9:23-24

Unifying faith is dead to the attractions and desires of the world.

'Far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.'

Gal 6:14

'You have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world.'

Col 2:20

'Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

1 John 2:15

Unified faith endures all things for Christ and His Church.

'in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in difficulties, in beatings, in imprisonments, in mob attacks, in labours, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, and in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; as unknown and yet well known, as dying and yet behold, we are alive; as punished and yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things.'

2 Cor 6:4-10

'And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.' Rom 8:17

'I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.'

2 Tim 2:10

Unifying faith walks as Jesus walked. *'The one who says that he remains in Him ought, himself also, walk just as He walked.'*

1 John 2:6

'Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.'

Col 2:6

Unifying faith is committed to living by every word that comes from the mouth of God as recorded in the Bible. *"It is written: 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT COMES OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"* Matt 4:4

Private faith is not biblical Unifying faith. Unfortunately, we all have some degree of private faith which we must purge from our life.

The solution for the private faith is to put on Christ

'For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ.'

Gal 3:27

'That, in reference to your former way of life, you are to rid yourselves of the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you are to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.'

Eph 4:22-24

'Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let's rid ourselves of the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let's behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and debauchery, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.'

Rom 13:11-14

'But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, so that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then, let's not sleep as others do, but let's be alert and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk, get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let's be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you also are doing.'

1 Thess 5:5-11

'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), as you try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.'

Eph 5:8-9

'Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

....but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.'

Ephesians 4:1-7,13,15-18

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me." John 17:20-23

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