Towards Keeping Unity: God's Gift & Our Response

A 7-Day Devotional[1]

A week of Scripture, reflection, and prayer
AIM: To know Christ more deeply, keep being filled with His Spirit &
to guard the unity of His church.

How to use this devotional

Set aside 10 to 15 minutes each day. Each day follows the same simple pattern:

1. **Pause:** quiet your heart and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you.
2. **Read:** read the Scripture passage slowly, ideally twice. Recommend: NIV, New Living Translation, New American Standard, or Amplified Bible (Use https://www.biblegateway.com/ to select and read)
3. **Reflect:** read the short devotional and sit with the questions.
4. **Pray:** use the prayer as a starting point, then keep talking with the Lord in your own words.
5. **Respond:** take one small step of obedience today.
6. **Carry:** take the verse for the day with you. Write it down, put it on your phone, or say it aloud before bed.

You may want a notebook to write down what the Lord shows you. You can also go through the week with a friend, a small group, or your family and share what you are learning.

[1] Based on message presented on October 18, 2026: *"Unity: God's Gift, Our Response"*

Day 1: Jesus prayed for you

Read: John 17:20-26

Reflect

On the night before the cross, Jesus knew what was coming. And in those final hours, He prayed. First for His disciples, and then for "those who will believe in me through their message" (17:20).

That includes you. Before you were born, before you ever heard His name, Jesus was praying about you.

And what did He ask? That we would be one, "just as you are in me and I am in you" (17:21). The unity Jesus prayed for is not a club or a committee. It is knowing God more and desiring to love as the Father and the Son have loved each other.

Unity did not begin as our idea. It began in the heart of Jesus, in prayer, and before that, in God's character, being the one who made a way for reconciliation. Before we ever try to live it out, we are invited to receive it, knowing we are prayed for and loved.

- How does it change your day to know that Jesus has prayed for you by name?
- What does Jesus' prayer show you about what matters most to Him?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You that before I knew You, You prayed for me. Thank You that You want me to know you more and share in the love You have with the Father. Help me to know that love more deeply today. Establish me in Christ that I may be one with Your people, as You asked. Amen.

Respond

Read John 17:20-23 slowly once more, and put your own name in the place of "those who will believe." Thank Him that He has not stopped praying for you (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25).

Carry: *"I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one."* (John 17:20-21)

Day 2: God made the first move

Read: Ephesians 2:1-10

Reflect

Most of the groups we belong to began with something *we* did. We filled out the application. We pledged. We signed up.

Our relationship with God began the other way around. Paul says we were "dead in our transgressions and sins" (2:1). Dead people do not apply for anything. Then come two of the most beautiful words in Scripture: **"But God."** "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ" (2:4-5).

God initiated. God loved first. God made us alive. "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (2:8).

And notice the word *us*. He made *us* alive. He raised *us* up together. Salvation is personal, but He never gives it in isolation. From the start, He was making a people.

- Where are you still trying to earn what God has already given?
- How might remembering that God made the first move change how you treat others?

Pray

Father, thank You that You came for me when I could not come to You. Thank You for Your great love and rich compassion. Free me from trying to earn Your acceptance, and teach me to rest in Your grace. Let that grace make me gracious toward others. Amen.

Respond

Write down three things God has done for you that you could never have done for yourself. Thank Him for each one.

Carry: *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."* (Ephesians 2:8)

Day 3: Brought near, made one

Read: Ephesians 2:11-22

Reflect

The Gentiles in Ephesus knew what it was to be outsiders. Paul describes them as "far away," "foreigners," and "without hope and without God in the world" (2:12). In the temple structure there was a literal wall they could not pass.

Then Jesus came. "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility" (2:14). He didn't just help two groups tolerate each other. He created "one new humanity out of the two" (2:15).

Listen to the "together" words: fellow citizens, members of God's household, joined together, built together (2:19-22). And notice that it all happens *in Christ*. We are not joined to each other first and then to Him. We are joined to Christ, and because of that, we are joined to one another.

The person you find hardest to love in the family of God was brought near by the same blood that brought you near.

- Is there a "wall" you still keep up between yourself and another believer?
- Who in your church family is different from you, and how might you see them today as a fellow member of God's household?

Pray

Jesus, You are my peace. Thank You for tearing down the walls that kept me far from God and from others. Show me any wall I have rebuilt in my heart through pride, prejudice, or old hurt. Help me to see my brothers and sisters as You see them. Amen.

Respond

Think of one believer who is different from you in age, background, or personality. Reach out to them this week with a kind word, a call, or a message.

Carry: *"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one."* (Ephesians 2:14)

Day 4: Sealed and strengthened by the Spirit

Read: Ephesians 1:13-14 and 3:14-21

Reflect

In Paul's day, a seal was a mark pressed into wax with a signet ring. It showed ownership, proved something was genuine, and kept it secure.

Paul says that when you heard the message of truth and believed, "you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit" (1:13). God has put His mark on you. You belong to Him. It is real. And it is secure "until the redemption of those who are God's possession" (1:14). The Spirit is God's down payment, His promise that He will finish what He started.

And this is not the end of the Spirit's work. In chapter 3, Paul prays that God would "strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (3:16-17). The Spirit who sealed you is the Spirit who strengthens you, from the inside out.

This is our hope for unity. We cannot produce humility, gentleness, and patience on our own. But the God "who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" has put His power "at work within us" (3:20).

- Do you live as someone who belongs to God, secure in Him?
- Where do you most need the Spirit's strength in your inner being today?

Pray

Holy Spirit, thank You that You have sealed me as God's own. Strengthen me today in my inner being. Help me grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. Do in me what I cannot do on my own. Amen.

Respond

Pray Ephesians 3:16-19 slowly, once for yourself and once for someone in your church family by name.

Carry: *"...according to his power that is at work within us."* (Ephesians 3:20)

Day 5: Walk worthy

Read: Ephesians 4:1-7

Reflect

Chapter 4 begins with "therefore." That word is a bridge. On one side is what God has done for us in Christ and given us in the gift of His Spirit. On the other side is how we live in response.

Paul urges us, calling us alongside him, to "live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (4:1). Worthy doesn't mean earning it. It means *fitting*, like a scale in balance. Our daily lives should match who we now are: God's children, people of hope.

What does that look like? "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (4:2). Keeping unity is not a separate task added to the Christian life. It is what a worthy walk looks like.

And Paul says *keep* the unity of the Spirit (4:3). We don't build it; we guard what God has given.

Then verse 6: "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." He rules over us, so we submit. He works through us, so we cooperate. He lives in us, so we can. And the God who is in you is in them too.

- Which of these is hardest for you right now: humility, gentleness, patience, or bearing with others?
- Who is God asking you to "bear with" in love this week?

Pray

Father, thank You for calling me into Your family and giving me hope. Help my live each day to align with or fit my calling. Make me humble where I am proud, gentle where I am harsh, and patient where I am quick to react. Help me to guard the unity of your people You have given. Amen.

Respond

At the end of today, look back and ask: where did my walk fit my calling, and where did it not? Thank Him for the first and confess the second.

Carry: *"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."* (Ephesians 4:3)

Day 6: Release and make peace

Read: Ephesians 4:25-32 and Matthew 7:1-5

Reflect

Paul gets very practical. He talks about truthful speech, handling anger before the sun goes down, words that build up, and getting rid of "all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice" (4:31). And in the middle of it, he says: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed" (4:30).

When we hold grudges, gossip, or quietly avoid someone, we don't just hurt each other. We grieve the very Spirit who made us one.

Jesus adds a hard question: "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3). Before I deal with what bothers me in someone else, I let God deal with me. God sees what no one else sees: the eye roll, the silent treatment, the attitude we carry into the room.

The good news is that God made the first move toward us. "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (4:32). Because He initiated with us, we can initiate with others. "As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18).

Forgiveness is something you can give before God today, even if the other person never responds. If there has been abuse or danger, forgiving does not mean returning to harm; seek wise counsel. And if the person has passed away, you can still lay the matter down at His feet.

- Is there an attitude in me that grieves the Holy Spirit?
- Is there someone I need to forgive, or ask forgiveness from?

Pray

Lord, search my heart. Show me the plank in my own eye. I release to You the bitterness, resentment, and judgment I have been carrying. Forgive me as I forgive others. Give me wisdom, timing, and courage to take the first step toward peace. Amen.

Respond

Name one person before God. Pray for them by name and ask God to bless them. Then ask Him whether there is a step He wants you to take, and when.

Carry: *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."* (Ephesians 4:32)

Day 7: Keep in step with the Spirit

Read: Galatians 5:16-25 and Ephesians 5:15-20

Reflect

"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). To keep in step is to walk in line behind a leader, one step at a time, day after day. It is not a one-time decision but a daily posture of following.

Paul says the same thing in Ephesians 5:18: "Be filled with the Spirit." That means *keep being filled*. Yesterday's filling is not enough for today. We come back to Him again and again.

And look at what the Spirit grows in us: "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). These are the very qualities unity needs. We don't manufacture them. We ask for them, and the Spirit produces them as we yield to Him.

How do we keep in step?

- **Read the Word**, and look for Jesus in it.
- **Spend time with Him**, talking and listening.
- **Ask for His Spirit** to keep shaping you into who He wants you to be, and mean it.
- **Obey quickly** when He prompts you, and confess quickly when you've resisted.

As we "find out what pleases the Lord" (Ephesians 5:10), we come to know Him more deeply. And as each of us grows, the whole body grows, "as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16). Jesus said that when His people live as one, the world will know that the Father sent Him and loves them (John 17:23). That is our witness.

- Which of the four habits above do you most need to build into your days?
- Looking back on this week, what has God shown you about Himself, about yourself, and about His people?

Pray

Holy Spirit, fill me again today. I don't want to run ahead of You or lag behind. Teach me to keep in step with You. Produce the fruit of the Spirit in me. Make me more like Jesus, and use my life and our church family to show the world the Father's love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Respond

Choose one of the four habits and commit to it for the next 30 days. Tell a friend, so you can encourage each other.

Carry: *"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."* (Galatians 5:25)

Scripture quotations are taken mainly from the New International Version (NIV). Readers may find slight differences in wording in other translations.

Compiled by Irene Prabhu Das (October 18, 2026)