

John 17:20-23 (NIV)

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

An Issue of the Head

John 17:20-23

“Whose idea was it anyway?”

The high school chemistry teacher bellowed out, partly in surprise but more in panic, “Whose idea was this experiment?” All the boys just looked at each other and shifted their eyes as if to pass the blame. The unauthorized little experiment had erupted from the lab sink, sending kids scurrying away, and foul smelling foam into the air and onto the desks. The culprits experiment misfired. However, the teacher blamed a junior standing in the aisle. He didn't have a clue, but he got a bad grade and a reprimand.

Reflection

The idea for biblical unity was not created by one “culprit” or by a group of theologians attempting to solve biblical problems. We can't claim it, nor shift credit to some earthly figure. No, the idea was God's.

When we pursue biblical unity, our goal is to be Christians who accept each others' differences, but join in truth. Jesus said, “I want all of them to be one with each other, just as I am one with you, Father, and you are one with me.” (John 17:21) Along with the idea, we are equipped with the power and plan. The power is the Holy Spirit, enabling us to live obediently. The plan comes with directions in a “how-to” manual. Paul exhorts us to affirm each other as better than ourselves, accepting one another, playing as a unified team. If we use our heads, we'll listen to our coach. He wrote the play-book, he gifted the players, and he will have the victory.

We should not be preoccupied with a man's denominational label, nor do we wish to see all church distinctives disappear. We are committed to reach beyond labels and enter relationships with each other based on our common faith in Christ.

Accountability and Application

What position do you see yourself playing on the Lord's team? In what specific ways will you head toward biblical unity? What changes will you have to make in your thoughts and actions?

Prayer: Lord, let me improve my serve and begin to view those with different opinions as important players on the same team. Show me where I've been self-righteous and judgmental, and help me to pursue unity.