



-- **Big Idea: Divisiveness has no place in the church of Jesus Christ.**

### 1.) Divisiveness is **PETTY** (v. 9).

-- Even in the first century church, people fought and divided over issues that were foolish, unprofitable, and worthless.

#### -- **The Big Picture of Unity in the Church (Ephesians 3:10).**

-- The church of Jesus Christ is called by God to become a new community in Christ that is radically united in Him and by Him (Ephesians 4:1-2).

-- In v. 9, Paul warns against the divisiveness brought about by **SMALL-MINDED** arguments in the church.

#### -- **Necessary Struggle vs. Foolish Controversy:**

1.) *Is the true gospel at stake?*

2.) *Is the glory of God at stake?*

-- It is never right or wise to violate the **PRIMARY** purpose of unity for **SECONDARY** issues, opinions, or agendas.

#### -- **Application Questions:**

1.) *Am I fighting to advance the glory of God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Or am I fighting for something less than that?*

2.) *Am I a big picture believer, or do I major on the minutia? Am I as passionate about unity in the church as Jesus is?*

-- The church is meant by God to be the place on earth where petty disagreements are overcome and pushed aside for the greater glory of God.

### 2.) Divisiveness **PROHIBITED** (v. 10).

-- Divisiveness must be dealt with deliberately and decisively (Mat.18:15-17).

-- When divisive people begin dividing the church, we are charged to lead them through the redemptive process of **CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

-- *How do you respond when someone approaches you with a foolish or worthless controversy?*

-- *Are you building up the church of Christ by building up the people in it, or are you tearing it down by tearing them apart?*

### 3.) Divisiveness is **PERILOUS** (v. 11).

- Divisiveness is perilous because it is **DESTRUCTIVE** (Luke 11:17, Galatians 5:15).
- Divisiveness is perilous because God **DETESTS** it (Proverbs 6:16-19).
- Divisiveness is perilous because it reveals a soul in **PERIL**
  - If unity in the church is not a priority in your heart, then you do not have the heart of God.
  - The **CHURCH** exists as a unity (Ephesians 2:13-16).
    - At the very root of the church is reconciliation between radically different people.
    - Anyone who would understand the cross of Christ must esteem the paramount importance of oneness in the church.
  - **GOD** exists as a unity (John 17:20-21).
- An entrenched spirit of divisiveness indicates a soul separated from the heart of God and a life operating outside the lordship of Christ.

### Application

#### 1.) Heed the **WARNING**

#### 2.) Have nothing to do with **DIVISIVENESS**

#### 3.) Strive for unity **RIGHT-HERE**

- Unity in the church is of paramount importance to God (Ephesians 4:3, Psalm 133:1).
- Since God is adamant about unity, it must be of paramount importance to us as well.