

1. Explain John 17:11,21 (especially “that they may be one”). Also discuss how this can be misunderstood/abused.

The phrase “that they may be one” is clarified in the rest of verse 21 and in verse 11. The comparison that Christ makes is to Himself and the Father. Our unity as believers is to be based on Christ and the Father. This is not a prayer for uniformity, seeing that the Son and the Father are not uniform. Although they are coequal, they function in different roles.

We as believers are to be unified in Christ, but like the Father and the Son, we are not to be uniform in our functions.

This is further clarified in verse 17, when Christ prays that we will be sanctified by the truth of Scripture. Our unity must be based on Christ, but also consistent with the whole counsel of God.

Most, often this passage is misunderstood in two ways:

1. The idea of uniformity. That all believers should be exactly the same in every way.
2. The idea that the basis of unity can be summed up in Christ’s saving work only. However, this concept completely leaves out verse 17, not to mention the rest of the teaching of the NT.

- The Gospel of John – Albert Barnes
- The Gospel of John – John Calvin
- The Gospel of John – J.C. Ryle
- The Ecumenical Movement Part 5: A Biblical Unity Rene Pache, BSac—V108 #431—Jul 51—301

2. Explain Romans 16:17.

Romans 16:17 Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, σκοπεῖν τοὺς τὰς διχοστασίας καὶ τὰ σκάνδαλα παρὰ τὴν διδασχὴν ἣν ὑμεῖς ἐμάθετε ποιοῦντας, καὶ ἐκκλίνετε ἀπ’ αὐτῶν·

- A. Explain “mark them”

Σκοπεῶ : To continue to regard carefully to watch to notice carefully.

In this verse this verb is a present active infinitive, which indicates a present on going action.

This gives the idea that I am to closely watch those that I think are causing divisions and offences. It comes with the idea that I am to watch closely enough so I will be prepared to respond.

B. Explain “divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine...”

διχοστασίας: Division into opposing groups, discord.

σκάνδαλα: Trap, that which or one who causes someone to sin.

These are the kind of people I am supposed to watch intently preparing how to respond to. The idea here is a person who is creating a division or sowing discord among brethren which in causing others to sin and stray from the doctrines of Scripture.

C. Explain “avoid them”

Εκκλινω: Keep away from, turn away from, cease.

In this verse this verb is an imperative, present active. This indicates that this is command and is a present on going action.

This gives me the answers as to how I am supposed to respond. My response to a person whether Christian or not, who is causing divisions or setting traps that is causing others to sin, is to avoid them, to turn away from them...to separate from them.

3. Explain 2 Thess. 3:6,15.

Right from the start Paul makes it clear that this is a command!

2 Thessalonians 3:6 Παραγγέλλομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ’ ἡμῶν.

The we are told to στέλλεσθαι (present middle infinitive): keep oneself away from some activity, purposely to avoid association with someone.

Next we told who we are to avoid association with: ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ’ ἡμῶν.

ἀτάκτως: Literally means “lazy”.

παράδοσιν: The content of traditional instruction.

This phrase is telling us that we are to avoid associating with those who are being lazy with the Scripture, specifically with doctrines taught by Paul and the apostles.

2 Thessalonians 3:15 καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐχθρὸν ἠγείσθε, ἀλλὰ νουθετεῖτε ὡς ἀδελφόν.

This verse tells us the attitude we are to have toward one whom we are avoiding. We are not to consider him an enemy and therefore treat him as one, but to admonish or teach him like a fellow Christian a brother.