## Lesson 7: Being Led into Harmony with Our Father in Heaven and with Each Other

The dictionary defines integrity as "Uprightness of character; probity; honesty." Another meaning is "The state of being complete or undivided." To integrate is "To bring together in a whole; fit together; unify." Uprightness of character is related to fitting together the whole life of God in Christ.

God did not create a world at war with Himself and with one another. All creatures and all things that God created were unified in Him. There was one great harmonious family joyfully subject to God's wise, holy, loving authority. There were no divisions or conflicts. Adam and Eve enjoyed the unity of life in God. God had breathed His own life into them. They were both created in the image and likeness of God. Thus their nature was in harmony with God and with one another. Their unity, however, was not based on mindless instinct like the bees working in harmony in their hive.

Their unity had a moral element--love. Together they enjoyed the unity of love binding them to God and one another. Love opened their hearts to share the wholeness and completeness of God's life. In love they embraced God and one another. Love is a choice. They began life dominated by their choice to love God and one another.

Thus Adam and Eve were a harmonious couple sharing the completeness and wholeness of God. They experienced life in God's whole family in heaven and earth. They were in harmony with the Eternal and His universe.

Then sin entered. Adam and Eve were alienated from God. They gave Satan the right to dominate them. They were now divided from God and from one another. Each decided for himself what was good or bad. Adam begat offspring in his own self-centered image and likeness (Gen. 5:3). The law of selfishness and strife was deeply embedded in every human being at birth. Cain murdered his brother, Abel, over a religious argument. Violence filled the earth by Noah's day (Gen. 6:11-13). Man's thoughts were only evil continually (Gen. 6:5).

The world is still in bondage under the dominance of sin, selfishness and Satan (Eph. 2:1-3). Division and strife still plague human society. Clearly it is absolutely necessary to create a new community on earth where people experience sharing the life of holy love and completeness in Christ and in the Father. By His death and resurrection Christ has conquered sin, selfishness, Satan, death, and all things that contribute to the greedy disorder of fallen society. He is now seated at the right hand of God who "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23).

In prayers of repentance, faith and love we need to unite in embracing Christ as our Lord and our Head. We must choose repentance, faith and love expecting to be made whole again in one body in Christ.

The desperate need for unity and harmony in society based on faith and fellowship with the only true God and His Son, Jesus Christ, is obvious. Our world is groping for unity in the dark.

With an epidemic of church splits and broken homes within the Christian community the world has a right to demand that we repent and demonstrate that we are a new kind of community made whole and harmonious under the headship of our Christ.

An amazing degree of honesty, holiness, unity and love can sweep the church today. If we unite in seeking complete harmony with God in Christ we shall surely find it. God still promises to draw near to those who draw near to Him (Jas. 4:8). Just look at what happened in Canada in 1971.

A pastor named Bill McLeod led Ebenezer Baptist Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan to wholeheartedly seek the Lord in intensive united prayer for two years. He persuaded the church to clear the calendar of all other activities on Wednesday nights.

On Sunday morning he announced, "If you have to miss a service, miss Sunday morning or evening, but don't miss Wednesday night." He continued to emphasize the importance of prayer meeting until the adult attendance rose from 40 to 120 out of a congregation of 300. In addition, 40 children united in their own prayer meetings.

Then he invited his people to stay after church on Sunday evenings for a half hour of prayer. Next he started weekly cottage prayer meetings. He set up a prayer wheel and asked for people to sign up for fifteen minutes per day so that at least one person was watching in prayer around the clock. The deacons met on Saturday night for an open ended prayer meeting that began at 9:00 and lasted as long as they felt led to pray.

After two years of intensive united prayer a crusade began at Ebenezer Baptist on Wednesday, October 13, 1971 led by Ralph and Lou Sutera. The faithful gathered expecting little or no response and their doubts were confirmed when no one came forward to "get right with God" on the first night.

A breakthrough came when two brothers, Sam and Arnold Derksen, who were also deacons, ended a bitter feud that had gone on for thirteen years. For two years they had not even spoken to one another. They carefully avoided one another at church so the congregation would not find out about their conflict over the church music.

Sam had lost all hope of being reconciled to Arnold. He had begun to doubt if God ever answered prayer. However, one night Arnold went to the basement with the pastor and another deacon. Sam was asked to join them. When he asked his brother to forgive him, Arnold snapped, "It's about time!" After the pastor and deacon prayed God broke Arnold's spirit. He confessed his sins and both brothers cried with broken hearts, hugged and returned to the waiting families. Now they all shared the brothers new found unity and love. The next night the brothers sang a duet! As the news of God's powerful work of cleansing and reconciliation spread, the crowds overflowed Ebenezer Baptist and the meetings had to be moved to larger facilities and twenty churches became involved.

It was wonderful! We were all packed into the church, and no one asked whether we were Baptist, Alliance, Mennonite, or whatever. We sensed intuitively that we were all part of the same body."[1](https://www.praywithchrist.org/leaders-being-led-into-harmony#endnote)

A minister came under conviction because of his hot temper. His wife also repented. Then their daughter, who had been living a scandalous life, came to Christ. She said, "The life and attitude of my parents has changed so radically that I felt myself compelled to begin my life again with Jesus." Broken marriages were healed. Young people kicked the drug habit and were reconciled to their parents who repented of their judgmental attitudes. People returned to super markets, restaurants and hotels to pay bills they had skipped. One man drove sixty miles to confess and make restitution to an insurance company he had defrauded.

Some will ask, "Does it last?" Our unity of faith, love and obedience to the Lord must be kept alive and well daily. To keep our love for God and one another we need to establish the habit of praying together aiming to share unity and harmony with God and one another. We must also be ready for fresh experiences of repentance and renewal.

Betty and I have learned this in our marriage. When we became engaged we were in the habit of praying together aimed at keeping our unity of love with God and one another alive and well the rest of our life. First, we agreed that God must be our supreme love. "You will never be first in my life and I will never be first in your life", I told her and she fully agreed. Second, we will be lovers always.

These two commitments became like guard rails to keep us on the right path as we began sharing our journey to heaven. We had been married only a short time till we discovered how valuable our prayer habit and these guards really are. Our unity of love with God and one another was threatened when I became upset over something Betty had done. It was so trivial I have long since forgotten what it was. It was only a molehill, but it quickly grew into a mountain. I was unusually silent as we sat down for supper. Gamely she tried to start a conversation.

"Well, how did things go today?"
"OK."
"What did you do?"
"Oh, not much."
"Something's bothering you. What's wrong?"
"Nothing."
"That sure is a lot of nothing," she sighed.

I was a very private person. I was not in the habit of telling anyone what was in my heart. So I stubbornly refused to tell her what she had done to upset me. The molehill had become a mountain. Then I was embarrassed over my peevishness, but I didn't know how to bail out and save face.

So when we crawled into bed, I laid there stiff as a board. I wanted her to understand that my conscience was perfectly clear! It wasn't my fault! Maybe we would fall asleep and tomorrow this would go away.

Finally Betty could stand it no longer so she poked me in the ribs and demanded, "Are you sleeping or pretending?" My mask fell off. I rolled over and told her everything and asked her forgiveness. We forgave each other. Wept. Hugged and then slept soundly. We were back on track with hearts wide open to God and one another. We discovered that God is ready to empower us to remain united in our commitment to love Him supremely and to love one another always.

This is crucial for our integrity as children of God. Jesus gave the world the right to judge us by our love for one another:

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

**(John 13:34-35)**

### POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

* What does the word integrity mean?
* How does integrity relate to the order God created?
* How can we raise the hope and expectations of our discouraged or hardened brothers and sisters concerning Christ's standard of oneness with Himself and with each other?
* What passage of Scripture teaches us that this oneness does effect our influence and outreach in the world?
* Read Hebrews 12:14-15. Have you made every effort to be at peace with people who are cold or bitter toward you? What is a reasonable "effort"?
* You have forgiven someone, but you have reasons to wonder if you can trust them. So how should you treat them?
* Does harmony always mean agreeing with others?

### RESEARCH FOR INSTRUCTOR

* Think about the unity of life. Make a list of all the things we share with all who are born again. Start like this: the Holy Spirit dwells in each one, they profess faith in Christ, their sins are all forgiven...
* Make a list of all the things we share in unity of love. Start like this: we obey the same Father for love's sake, we can pray in one accord, our families draw close together in love for God and one another...
* Read the great love chapter. Make a list of the qualities of love. For example, love suffers long, is kind, is not puffed up with pride... Write a sentence on how each quality contributes to unity in our homes and churches.

## Endnotes

1 Erwin W. Lutzer, Flames of Freedom, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1977), 33.