

# Grace Living: The Mystery of Oneness

by Ken Grief

In the heart of God, before the foundation of the world, there resided a mystery that would be revealed in the ages to come. This was the mystery of oneness. This mystery would clarify God's purpose for creating man, for his redemption and future glory. When God created Adam, He created him with the intention of oneness or union with Himself. If Adam had chosen to eat of the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden, then He would have experienced divine union with God. Adam enjoyed fellowship with God, but he did not experience oneness with Him, for he didn't possess the nature or the life of God living in him, even though this was God's ultimate intention for him. Some may ask the question at this juncture; if Adam didn't possess the life of God in him, then what died after he took of the forbidden tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? It is true that he died spiritually that day, however, what died was the spirit of innocence, not the Spirit of God in him. Unfortunately, Adam now inherited from Satan, the tempter, a depraved (or fallen) nature that would indwell in him defining his identity as a sinner. In this condition mankind would be forever separated from God, and from the oneness that God had purposed for him before the foundation of the world. Allow me to pause for a moment and say, that there is no greater tragedy in the entire universe, than to be separated from our creator God. He created man for the purpose of union, so that we could receive and express His life throughout the universe for all eternity.

The principal of oneness has been illustrated throughout scripture beginning with God Himself. I have often thought, how can God be one and yet be three at the same time? It was in the nature of God's oneness that His perfections (attributes) were manifested. The perfections of God describe equally the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God the Father was expressed in His love (John 3:16), and giving good gifts (James 1:17). God the Son was expressed in His suffering (Mark 8:31), and upholding all things (Heb 1:3). God the Holy Spirit was expressed in His work of regenerating the sinner (Titus 3:5), and His work of sanctifying the saint (Rom 15:16). The Apostle Paul described the oneness of God dwelling in Christ as the Godhead. **Col 2:9 "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"**. Hidden within the very personage of God Himself was a mystery that would eventually be revealed in the church of which believers would be recipients and participants. The principle of oneness that we observe dwelling in the Godhead serves as a shadow of the oneness that God desires for His church. This was a mystery that was hidden in God to the Old covenant saints under law (Eph 3: 4-5, 9-11), but has now been revealed to the church under grace.

Jesus was a living illustration of oneness as He lived out His earthly life. He said in John 10:30 **"I and the Father are one"**. Also in John 14:9 He said **"He who has seen me has seen the Father"**. Jesus always lived in absolute dependence on the Father. Please note the following:

- **John 5:19 > "I say to you the Son can do nothing of Himself"**
- **John 5:30 > "I do not seek my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me"**

- ***John 14: 10 > Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does the works.***

Jesus modeled the oneness that God desires for every believer. This was affirmed by His prayer in John 17:20-23 *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word; that they all may be one, as You Father are in me, and I in You; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that You sent me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one, just as we are one, I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them as You have loved Me”*. It seems obvious that the pre-eminent intention God had for us before the foundation of the world, was that we would walk in oneness with Him throughout this life and in the ages to come.

Before we can truly experience our walk of oneness, it is imperative that we realize that our union with God is a living reality, and not just a theological position. Many times throughout the New Testament, the scriptures speak of us being in Christ, and His being in us. This is a basic fact with which most Christians would agree. However; how to live out this union of oneness is often debatable and sometimes in a contentious matter. There are two primary positions commonly espoused. The first says that the individual believer attempts to live a disciplined obedient life with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. This is much like it was in the Old Testament when the Holy Spirit would come upon a person when they needed power or strength which they did not possess. This is the most popular teaching by far; yet it remains a horrible failure on two fronts. One is that it leaves most Christians living a life of constant struggle, and all too often defeated. Secondly, it separates us from experiencing our oneness in our abiding relationship with Christ. Religion keeps man separated from God, while true Biblical teaching emphasizes our union or oneness with God. Satan’s greatest and sole objective is to keep us separated from God. The other position which is far less popular; is that the Christian should not attempt to live life from his own resources, but simply allow the indwelling Christ to live His life through the believer. When this is present, then the reality of the mystery of oneness is manifested. This is what the Apostle Paul referred to in Gal 2:20 when he said “it is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me”. As the believer allows Christ to live His life in him and through him and as him, the walk of oneness will often be evident to the believer as well as many of those around him. The reality of our union with Him is what defines our new identity. We are no longer sinners separated from God by virtue of a depraved Adamic nature, but now we have been given a new nature (2 Pet 1:4). Our new identity is that of a new creation (creature) 2 Cor 5:17. We are the redeemed saints of God, and we possess all of the fullness of God within us (Col 2:9-10). Thus the believer no longer views Christ just as his savior but recognizes Him to be his very life (Col 3:4). With this understanding we acknowledge that Christ did not come to suffer, die and resurrect for us, just so that we can have our sins forgiven, and eventually live in a glorious heaven, even though these things are true. The reason for His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension was so that we could

be joined unto Him in eternal oneness. Our hope is not fixed on a theological position, but our hope is fixed on the Christ who lives in us (Col 1:27).

We have considered the principle of oneness as it pertains to the Godhead, and the individual believer; however, we must not neglect to investigate how this principle of oneness is revealed in the church corporately. The Apostle Paul on several occasions referred to the church as being **one** body. In Romans 12:5 he speaks of the church as being **one** body in Christ. Jesus prayed to the father in John 17:20-23, that all who would believe on Him would be **one** with Him, and **one** with another. This fosters a problem for us, as to how we explain the fragmentation that is so prevalent in cultural Christianity. I believe it would be advantageous for us to remember that the church, as taught in scriptures, is not an organization, religious institution, or denomination. When the church is defined and functions as such, the principle of oneness is negated, and the spirit of sectarianism prevails. The basis of our oneness is not in us all believing the same thing, but all of us believing in the same Person. It was in the divine purpose of God, before the foundation of the world, that He would birth to Himself a body which would be called the Church (Col 1:18). His church would comprise both Jew and Gentile. These two groups would consolidate as **one** body in Christ (1Cor 12:13). This was another part of the mystery of oneness that was hidden to the Old Covenant believers (Eph 3:2-6, 9-11). When the church experiences the oneness of God corporately, it impacts the world but also ministers to principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph 3:10). Many have concluded that the church is simply a local assembly of believers. It is true that the church may be expressed in many different places and diversity of ministries, however, let us be clear that there is **only one church**. Any attempt to divide the church would be to divide the body of Christ. This is what happened in the church at Corinth and the Apostle Paul rebuked them for their carnality (1Cor 3:3-4). God used the union of marriage to illustrate for us the mystery of oneness as it relates to Christ and His church.

*Eph 5:31-32 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become **one** flesh. This is a great **mystery** but I speak concerning Christ and the church".*

Now I would like to consider, for just a moment, the effects of oneness on the believer and all of creation, in the future. It is important for us to realize that the purposes of God were in Christ before the foundation of the world. He predestined that these purposes would be accomplished in His appointed time. So we may ask again what are the purposes of God? To answer that, we must first agree that all things in heaven and on earth were created by Christ and for Christ, and that He is the head of the church and is pre-eminent in all things (Col 1:16-18). Unfortunately, since the sin of Adam all of creation has been, in a sense, separated from God and awaits for its redemption with groaning (Rom 8:22-23) We have witnessed rebellion, separation, and death throughout the whole creation since the fall, but here is the **GOOD NEWS**. At God's appointed time in the future, He will bring all things in heaven and in earth together as **one in Christ**.

Eph 1:9-10 *“Having made known to us **the mystery** of His will, according to His good pleasure which He **purposed in Himself**; that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together **in one** all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth **in Him**”.*

The principle of oneness is paramount with God, for He says in Eph 4:4 *“There is **one** body and **one** Spirit, just as you were called in **one** hope of your calling: **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism; **one** God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, **and in you all**”.*

### **SUMMARY:**

1. God is one and His oneness is expressed in His perfections.
2. We are one with God and He is one with us.
3. The Church is one with Christ and one with each other.
4. In the future all of creation will be one in Christ.