The Lord’s Prayer for Unity
John 17:20-21

Introduction:
A. Chapter 17 is truly the Lord’s prayer.
   1. The Lord did not pray the so-called “Lord’s Prayer,” but he did this one.
   2. In this prayer the Lord prayed that his disciples be kept (v.15), sanctified (v. 17) and united.
   3. This prayer was prayer just before entering the garden to betrayed of Judas.
   4. This prayer tells how badly Jesus wants unity among his followers.
B. In this lesson, we will notice three things about the unity for which Jesus so fervently prayed.

Discussion:
I. The Parties to this Unity (vv. 20-23)
A. The Father and the Son.
   1. Any unity without these as parties is not what Christ prayed for.
   2. Reconciliation to of man starts with reconciliation to God (Eph. 2:16)
B. The apostles and all other believers.
   1. The apostles taught directly by the Holy Spirit (14:26)
   2. The rest of us are taught by their word (17:20)
C. Fellowship with the Father, Son and Apostles cannot be while walking in darkness (1 John 1:3-6)

II. The Importance of this Unity (vv. 21-23)
A. Helps to convince the world that Jesus came from God (v. 21)
   1. There is ample proof in the Scriptures of this truth (cf. John 20:30-31)
   2. But, a divided church keeps people searching and seeing this truth.
B. Helps convince the world of the genuineness of Christian love (vv. 23-26)

III. The Alternatives to this Unity.
A. Divisions, factions and strife.
   1. Caused by bad attitudes (cf. Eph. 4:1-3; Phil. 4:2; Rom. 12:16; Tit. 3:10)
   2. Caused by false doctrines (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Tim. 6:3,4)
   3. Caused by misplaced loyalties (1 Cor. 1:10-15; 3:3-8).
   4. Denominationalism is the end results.
B. Unity in diversity
   1. Addresses only the attitude problems – i.e., attitudes toward each other.
   2. Ignores the doctrinal problems – things that affect our fellowship with God (cf. 2 John 9-11)
   3. Glosses over division without addressing or correcting its causes.
   4. Exchanges conviction for convenience.
   5. Emphasizes only one part of the Lord’s prayer and ignores basis of unity (“one in us,” “truth.”)

Conclusion:
A. Let us maintain the unity for which Jesus prayed.
   1. By maintaining the attitudes that the Bible teaches us to have.
   2. By abiding in the doctrine of Christ – accept not other.
   3. By being loyal to Christ rather than any man.
B. Let us reject both divisions and “unity in diversity” for the unity that is in God and His Son.
   1. By going back of all denominational creeds and doctrines to just the Bible.
   2. By speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where it is silent.