

## **How to Manage Division in the Church**

### **By Bob Young**

La motivation for developing this outline was a letter received from a brother in Christ. What follows is only a brief study outline, but one can use it to organize the principle points and then add details, examples, etc. (Where the brother lives is not important—the problem exists almost everywhere.)

*“Greetings, brother, I remember you fondly and the counsel you gave me concerning division in the church. Please, I need some Bible verses that speak about division in the church and what would be the best way to restore unity.”*

#### **Recognize that division is not consistent with the purpose of God**

- God desires unity within the church, among his people, 1 Cor. 1; Eph. (esp. 4:1-16); Phil. 2:1-5
- John 17:1-23

#### **Identify the cause of the division**

- Is it personal/personalities, doctrinal, preferences?
- We must come to agreement about the cause; only then can we apply the correct verses
- “We have disagreed on the basis of personal preferences and called it doctrinal.”
- Divisions that are genuinely doctrinal will require a change of heart on the part of one or both parties
- If doctrinal agreement cannot be reached, division/separation will likely be necessary
- All other sources/causes of divisions should result in restored fellowship, Rom. 14:1ff

#### **Seek to resolve the conflict/division**

- Restoration is focused first on helping everyone walk faithfully with the Lord
- Restoration must also focus on the health of the local church
- All must maintain a proper spirit, Eph. 4:1-2; Gal. 6:1-2
- Even when disagreements are based in personal opinion, it may at times be necessary that the two parties/groups go their separate ways (Paul-Barnabas, Acts 15)
- The Bible says we must mark those who have the divisive spirit, those who cause divisions, Rom. 16:17