

The New Testament Church

Part 17: The Sin of Denominationalism

Ephesians 4:1-6

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Some estimate there are over 30,000 different denominations in so-called “Christendom” (According to *Christianity Today* there are 38,000; according to *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2001) there are 33,380 and will be 55,000 by 2025.).
2. What is a denomination?
 - A. Webster defines a denomination as a “sect,” a “party,” or a “faction.”
 - B. According to *Dictionary.com* denominationalism is a “sectarian spirit or policy; the tendency to divide into denominations or sects” (emphasis mine, cvt).
 - C. It is a distinct religious group; w/peculiar names, doctrine, organization, terms of membership, etc.
3. Anyone familiar with religion in America could probably name dozens of denominations; for example, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Catholic, Presbyterian, etc.
 - A. ****** What distinguishes Lutherans from Catholics, or Baptists from Methodists?
 - B. They differ in name, doctrine, organization, terms of membership, etc.
4. The question becomes then: “Is denominationalism approved by the Bible?”
 - A. The answer is a resounding NO!
 - B. The church in the New Testament (NT) was not a denomination.
 - C. On the contrary the NT condemns such division time and time again.
5. **3** But it is not considered “politically correct” to criticize the religion of others.
 - A. Contemporary social etiquette says we should avoid conversations about “politics or religion.”
 - B. Our legal system has laws protecting one’s right to religious freedom (which I applaud!).
 - C. But the overwhelmingly prevailing attitude in today’s society censures, castigates and punishes anyone who would criticize another person’s religion (e.g., “hate speech” laws; postmodernism).
 - D. I firmly believe we should criticize denominationalism because it involves false teachers, false teaching, and false religion. Consider: ******
 - (I) Jesus criticized other religions:
 - (a) If it’s wrong to criticize other religions then Jesus was the “chief of sinners” for He often criticized the religion of his contemporaries (Matt. 15:3-14; Matt. 23).
 - (b) His criticisms even “offended” many who heard Him (**Matt. 15:12**: “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”).
 - (c) He warned of not a few, but of “many” false prophets (Matt. 7:15) who would propagate false teachings that would “deceive many” (Matt. 24:11).
 - (d) These warnings are necessary because false teachers and religions do not advertise their true nature (**Matt. 7:15**: “...come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”).
 - (e) The Bible says to “mark”, (lit. ‘take aim at’) false teachers! **Rom. 16:17**: “...note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.”; **2 Jn.**

10-11: *“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; I I for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”*

(2) Old Testament prophets criticized other religions:

- (a) Christians who think it's wrong to criticize other religions have obviously not read and studied the Old Testament.
- (b) Did Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel think it was undignified to rebuke the false doctrines and practices of others?
- (c) Was Moses wrong by criticizing his brethren for making the “molten calf”? (Exodus 32)
- (d) Was Elijah wrong when he scathingly “mocked” (1 Kgs. 18:27) the false prophets of Baal? (1 Kgs. 18) He even “slew them”! 1 Kgs. 18:40
- (e) Was Isaiah wrong when he very purposely, pointedly and emphatically showed the foolishness of “other religions”? (Isa. 44:9-20: **v. 20:** *“A deceived heart has turned him aside; and he cannot deliver his soul...”*)
- (f) Who sent John the Baptist? God! (Jn. 1:6) What did John do when he came? He criticized and condemned the religious elite of his own generation (Matt. 3:2-12).

(3) Apostles criticized other religions:

- (a) A continuing theme in many NT epistles is the criticism of other religions. Peter warned *“there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies”* (2 Pet. 2:1).
 - (b) He reminded and warned us to beware of such false religious teachers *“lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked”* (2 Pet. 3:17).
 - (c) Paul criticized the Galatians for being so “foolish” as to be led away by “another gospel” (i.e., “another religion” if you will) (Gal. 1:6-9; 3:1).
 - (d) He warned that some religious teachers would *“cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ”* (Col. 2:8).
 - (e) Would we point an accusing finger at Peter or Paul for such criticisms?
6. Often those protesting it's wrong to criticize another's religion are the very ones whose religious teachings cannot withstand Biblical scrutiny.
- (a) Since their views and doctrines will not survive careful Scripture analysis, they cry “foul,” saying, “it is a sign of bigotry and dogmatic intolerance to criticize another's religion.”
 - (b) “It's wrong to criticize” is the last resort of a religious enthusiast whose faith is founded upon the sands of human creeds, traditions, superstitions, and self-will.
7. **4** Think about it, the Old Testament prophets, the apostles, and the Lord would not have met untimely deaths if not for their criticism of ‘other religions.’
- (a) So, when it comes to religion nobody should be above scrutiny and criticism (including ourselves!) **1 Pet. 3:15:** *“...always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...”*; too much is at stake! Matt. 7:13-14; 16:26
 - (b) How would you react to criticism? How will I receive and react to criticism?
 - (c) Will we criticize in return or will we follow the ardent plea to “search the Scriptures” to determine whether our beliefs and practices are God's way or man's way? Acts 17:11

8. 5 Purpose and spirit of criticism:

- (1) It's all about motive! Ezek. 33:7-9; **Jude 3**: "...stoutly defend the truth that God gave once for all to his people to keep without change..." (NLT)

Matt. 23:37-39: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate..."

Jude 23: "but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh."

Gal. 4:11: "I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain."

- (2) The wise person is not so foolish as to reject such criticism but receives it and take it to heart:

Prov. 15:32: "He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, but he who heeds rebuke gets understanding."

Gal. 4:16: "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

Psa. 141:5: "Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; it shall be as excellent oil; let my head not refuse it."

9. With these thoughts in mind let's consider some NT principles "denominationalism" violates. We offer this in the spirit, not of condemnation, but of helping others see their error and correct it before it is eternally too late.

- A. This is not about whether or not we (i.e., *church of Christ*) is the one true church; that's a lesson I'll get to in the near future.
- B. This is simply about "What saith the Scripture"! Is denominationalism God's way or man's way? **6**

II. DISCUSSION:

Denominationalism violates the NT principle that...

- I. **7** Jesus built only one church: Matt. 16:18

- A. No clearer doctrine is taught in the NT than the fact that there is only "one body" and "one faith" (Eph. 4:4-6).

(1) The "one body" is Christ's church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18: "And He is the head of the body, the church...") built by Jesus (Matt. 16:18), not men (Heb. 8:1-2).

(2) The church is a spiritual house made up of Christians who are "living stones" (1 Pet. 2:5), citizens of God's kingdom (Col. 1:13), saints of God (Col. 1:2).

(3) People who are "born [again] of water and the Spirit" into God's family (Jn. 3:5; Eph. 2:19).

- B. Christ's church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20), not upon the sands of denominational creeds, catechisms and traditions.

- C. **8** Jesus is the "chief cornerstone" of His church (1 Pet. 2:6-7; 1 Cor. 3:11), its only head (Eph. 1:22) and foundation (1 Cor. 3:11) and "all authority" in heaven and in earth rests in Him (Matt. 28:18-20). This leaves no room for Popes, Presidents, councils, conventions or so-called "latter-day prophets."

(1) Jesus built the church according to the divine pattern God gave Him (**Heb. 8:1-2**: "a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.").

- (2) Thus, a house (church) built by any other (e.g., Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Joseph Smith, Ellen White, Mary Baker Eddy, the Popes of Rome, the Watchtower Society, etc.) is not recognized by the Lord: “*Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it*” (Psa. 127:1).
- D. Jesus condemned the religious sects of His day and this criticism is thoroughly applicable to the denominationalism of today (Mk. 7:6-9, 13: v. 8: “*For laying aside the commandment of God...; v. 13: “making the word of God of no effect through your traditions...*”) even though it offended them (**Matt. 15:13-14**: “*But He answered and said, ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.’*”).

Denominationalism violates the NT principle of...

2. 9 No divisions among you: 1 Cor. 1:10-13

- A. Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for their division (aka sectarianism) which is the very basis of all denominationalism:

1 Cor. 1:10-13: “*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’ 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*”

- B. In fact, the inspired apostle described such behavior with this scathing language: **1 Cor. 3:3**: “*For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal...?*”; Rom. 8:7
- (1) In Galatians 5:20 Paul includes, “*factions, divisions, parties*” (ASV), the sins at the heart of denominationalism, among “*the works of the flesh*” which will cause a person to “*not inherit the kingdom of God.*” (v. 21)
- (2) But, amazingly, our “politically correct” modern society exalts and extols the ‘virtues’ of denominationalism while the Bible condemns it!

Denominationalism violates...

3. 10 Jesus’ prayer for unity: Jn. 17:20-21

- A. On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prayed for the disciples (Jn. 17).
- B. Note a portion of our Lord’s prayer:

Jn. 17:20-21: “*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...*”

- C. By praying for the unity of believers, Jesus revealed two critical truths: 1) Unity is possible, and 2) unity is desired by God (i.e., unity is according to God’s purpose!).
- (1) Denominationalism (sectarianism) doesn’t promote unity it promotes division, yea it celebrates division!
- (a) That puts it directly against Jesus and His prayer!
- (b) That makes it “anti-God”!
- (2) **11** Note how Jesus said we will become believers “*through their word,*” i.e., through the

word of the apostles as they were guided “into all truth” by “the Spirit of truth” (Jn. 16:13).

- (a) The “all truth” is found only in God’s word (Jn. 17:17; Jude 3) not in the creeds of denominations.
- (b) Religious division (denominationalism) occurs when men elevate their doctrines to the level of the inspired word (or even above it!).
- (c) Unity can only be achieved as men go back to the Bible alone, speaking where it speaks, and remaining silent where it is silent (1 Pet. 4:11).
- (d) Christians can only be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10) when each of us, with humility and determination, abide in Christ’s doctrine (2 Jn. 9-11) revealed in the Bible and reject all denominational doctrines, creeds, and catechisms.

Denominationalism violates...

4. **12** God’s plan for unity: Eph. 4:1-6

A. In Ephesians 4 Paul reveals God’s plan for unity:

Eph. 4:1-6: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

- B. First, unity between one Christian and another is impossible unless each of us is walking “worthy of the calling in which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love...” (v. 1)(A largely forgotten, or ignored, aspect of unity!).
- C. Second, unity is something we must consciously and zealously work at! **Eph. 4:3:** “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” On “endeavoring”:
 - (1) Strong: “to use speed, i.e., to make effort, be prompt or earnest.”
 - (2) Thayer: “to exert oneself.”
 - (3) Vine: “to be zealous.”
- D. Third, unity is not based on human wisdom or on human schemes, but upon God’s word.
 - (1) Notice Paul said it is “unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3).
 - (2) This is so, because true unity is based on what the Holy Spirit revealed in God’s Word.
- E. Note the seven one’s Paul lists: “one body,” “one Spirit,” “one hope,” “one Lord,” “one faith,” “one baptism,” and “one God.”
 - (1) Denominationalism teaches the exact opposite of God’s plan for unity!
 - (2) For example, they teach not “one body” but that there are “many bodies.”
 - (3) They teach not that there is “one faith,” but that there are “many faiths.”
 - (4) Such teachings may satisfy the “politically correct” world we live in, but these teachings are opposed to God’s revealed will.
- F. I would challenge anyone, including myself, to question the church of which they are a member:
 - (1) Is it a denomination?

- (2) If so, reject it and its doctrines, creeds, and catechisms, because it is a violation of God's plan for unity!

STOP

Denominationalism violates everything the Bible teaches about...

5. **13** The establishment of the church:

A. When: ~33 AD

- (1) Church yet in the future while Jesus on the earth: Matt. 16:18
- (2) Church to be established "*in the latter days*" (i.e., "*last days*"): Isa. 2:2-4; Heb. 1:1-2
- (3) Peter associates the events of Acts 2 with "*the last days*." (Acts 2:16-17)
- (4) For the first time in the Bible the church is spoken of as being in existence is in Acts 2 (Acts 2:47).

B. **14** Where: Jerusalem

- (1) Prophecy identifies Jerusalem as place where the church established: Isa. 2:2-4: "*For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*"
- (2) Coming of God's kingdom (i.e., church) associated with coming of Holy Spirit: Mk. 9:1
- (3) Apostle promised the Holy Spirit: Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13
- (4) Apostles told to remain in Jerusalem to wait until they "*are endued with power from on high*": **Lk. 24:49:** "...I send the Promise of My Father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."; which is baptism of the Holy Spirit: **Acts 1:8:** "...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..."
- (5) We find all of this unfolding in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ: **Acts 2:1-4:** "...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit..." (v. 47)

C. **15** Who: Jesus Christ

- (1) The church was according prophecy (Isa. 2:2-4) per God's eternal purpose: Eph. 3:10-12
- (2) Jesus promised to build His church: Matt. 16:18
- (3) He built it by purchasing it with His own blood: Acts 20:28
- (4) He built it (i.e., established it) on the first Pentecost after His death, burial and resurrection: Acts 2:47 (first converts added to the church!).
- (5) The church is built by the Divine not by humans: Heb. 8:1-2

D. **16** What: the church is "*the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man*" (Heb. 8:2); therefore, it designated by names chosen by the Lord, not by men.

- (1) Belongs to the Lord: Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28
- (2) "*church of God*": 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1
- (3) "*churches of Christ*": Rom. 16:16
- (4) Recall church was built by Christ and was purchased with His precious blood: Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28

E. ** Contrast the establishment of the NT church vs. denominations:

Church (What)	Time (When)	Place (Where)	Founder (Who)
Roman Catholic	607 AD	Rome	Boniface III
Episcopal	1520 AD	England	Henry VIII
Presbyterian	1536 AD	Switzerland	John Calvin
Baptist	1607 AD	Holland	John Smythe
Methodist	1739 AD	England	John Wesley
Mormon	1830 AD	America	Joseph Smith
Adventist	1830 AD	America	William Miller
Jehovah's Witness	1872 AD	America	Charles T. Russell

- (1) Any "church" established at any other time than ~33 AD cannot be the "one body" of which the NT speaks.
- (2) Any "church" established at any other place than Jerusalem cannot be the "one body" of which the NT speaks.
- (3) Any "church" established by any other person than Jesus Christ cannot be the "one body" of which the NT speaks.
- (4) Any "church" known by any other designation than those given the "one body" in the NT cannot be the Lord's church.

F. Again, compare NT church with denominations in table.

6. **17** Denominationalism is unnecessary:

A. Denominations in general, and Catholicism and Protestantism in particular, are unnecessary institutions.

- (1) First, if they were essential, they would be found in the Bible and Christ would have told us how to create them, sustain them, and support them; that He did none of these shows they are not required for man's salvation.
- (2) Second, not one spiritual blessing is in any denominational body that cannot be received outside it; there is no eternal benefit claimed by any denomination that cannot be obtained in Christ, whether or not one ever heard of any denomination (Eph. 1:3, 22-23).
- (3) Third, consider Paul, Peter, John and the other apostles: What denomination(s) did they belong to? Was Paul a Methodist, Presbyterian or Baptist? Ditto for Peter, John, etc. No denomination today could claim any of them because they were simply members of the church built by Jesus!

B. **18** **Denominational membership unnecessary:**

- (1) If we lived and died as faithful Christians, what would we lack if we never became a member of a Protestant or Catholic denomination?
- (2) If we are saved by Christ's blood by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-10) and live a life dedicated to the Lord (Col. 1:21-23), what do we lack if we never join a Baptist or Lutheran church?
- (3) If we are born of water and of the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-5), and we grow up in Christ through the Word (1 Pet. 2:2), of what are we deprived if we never become a Methodist or a Mormon?
- (4) If we believe on Jesus (Jn. 3:16), confess Him as Lord (Rom. 10:10), and serve Him faithfully (Rev. 2:10), what do we miss if we never learned of the existence of the Presbyterian or Pentecostal church?

- (5) If it is possible to be saved and cleansed by Christ's blood through the washing of water by the word (Eph. 5:26); if it is possible to be baptized by one Spirit into Christ's "one body" (Eph. 4:4) and to serve the Lord therein all of one's life (1 Cor. 12:13), and go to heaven at death (Eph. 5:23), denominationalism is unnecessary!

C. 19 Membership in Christ's church is necessary:

- (1) One cannot be saved outside the body, or church of Christ, for Christ "is the Savior of the body," the church (Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23).
- (2) All spiritual blessings are "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).
 - (a) Not even one spiritual blessing is outside of Christ.
 - (b) But, to be "in Christ," one must be in His "church, which is his body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18).
 - (c) Thus, to have all spiritual blessings in Christ, one must be in his body, his church.
 - (d) One may be saved by grace, be faithful unto death, and enter heaven whether or not he ever enters a denominational church, thus, denominationalism is not essential to spiritual life or salvation.
 - (e) The same, cannot be said about the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:16; 5:23, 30-32).

D. 20 Our plea:

- (1) In light of the plain truth of the Scriptures, will any claim denominations are necessary?
- (2) Will any declare the body of Christ is unimportant and unrelated to the soul's salvation and every spiritual blessing?
- (3) If not, why are so many devoted to these unnecessary, non-essential bodies and remain outside Christ's body?
- (4) If membership in the body of Christ is a Bible doctrine, why do so many of our brethren seem to be apologetic and/or ashamed of this scriptural teaching?
- (5) Why not let us simply "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11) and let those oracles make of us what they will?
- (6) Why not let us all strive to get back to true New Testament Christianity where there are neither Protestants nor Catholics, where all are simply Christians, no more and no less (Acts 11:26; no hyphenated Christians!)?
- (7) When we faithfully follow only Christ's doctrine (2 Jn. 9-11) this is what will happen!

7. 21 How do we achieve unity?

A. Not through human schemes:

- (1) In our lessons on church history we saw over and over again that the church has divided many, many times since the first century.
- (2) Division has become so commonplace that there are now over 30,000 different denominations in Christendom.
- (3) Any man, with even an ounce of godly character, would view that situation and be brokenhearted and yearn to restore unity among believers.
- (4) Over the years many ecumenical movements have arisen based on human wisdom and plans.

- (a) However, such movements are doomed to failure because they all essentially boil down to, “We will agree to disagree.”
- (b) Such plans are doomed to failure because, “*the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*” (Jer. 10:23; cf. Prov. 14:12)
- B. The only real way to achieve unity must be based on the simple principle of “*If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God*” (1 Pet. 4:11).
 - (1) Recall what Paul said in **1 Corinthians 1:10**: “*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*”
 - (2) How in the world can we ever hope to fulfill that admonition? 1 Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17
 - (a) In other words, our opinions (yours and mine!) do not matter.
 - (b) What matters is “*what saith the scriptures*” (Rom. 4:3).
 - (c) Everything we teach and practice must be according to God’s word and in submission to its authority (Jn. 17:17; 14:15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:17; Jude 3; 1 Cor. 4:6).
 - (3) Unfortunately, the vast majority of people claiming to be Christians will not accept God’s word as the final word! **Isa. 8:20**: “*To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*”

8. **22** Practical examples:

- A. First, let’s look at an example pertaining to worship.
 - (1) In the NT the type of music Christians are to use in worship is specified as singing, “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” (Eph. 5:19).
 - (2) In fact, all ten passages in the NT mentioning music limit it to singing, not playing an instrument (e.g., Col. 3:16, etc.).
 - (3) But, most denominations have “added” instrumental music.
 - (4) Recall the Bible says, “*If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God*” (1 Pet. 4:11).
 - (a) If we are going to abide by that scriptural principle, will we “add” instrumental music to the worship?
 - (b) To “add” instrumental music is going beyond what is found in the “*doctrine of Christ*” and “*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.*” (2 Jn. 9)
 - (c) If one is truly interested in maintaining unity they will “*abide in the doctrine of Christ*”!
 - (d) When it comes to music in worship they will “*speak as the oracles of God*” rather than substituting human reasoning and opinions by “adding” instrumental music.
 - (e) Who causes division by insisting on instrumental music?
 - (f) Are these matters just trivial? Be careful! Lev. 10:1-2; Num. 20:7-12; 1 Cor. 10:11
- B. **23** Let’s consider another example concerning God’s terms of forgiveness.
 - (1) Jesus said, “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved...*” (Mk. 16:16).
 - (2) Many denominations teach that one does not have to be baptized in order to be saved.

- (3) But, what did Jesus say? If one truly *“speaks as the oracles of God”* what will they teach concerning baptism and salvation?
- (4) If one desires unity and to abide in *“the doctrine of Christ”* will they teach the opposite of what Jesus said? NO!
- (5) Surely the answers to these question are obvious to anyone truly respecting God’s word.

III. CONCLUSION: 24

1. Denominationalism manifests the spirit of division!
 - A. Paul labeled such a spirit as being *“carnal and behaving like mere men”* (1 Cor. 3:3).
 - B. Possessing a *“carnal mind”* makes us an enemy of God! **Rom. 8:7-8:** *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”*
2. Denominationalism demonstrates a factious spirit and is thus one of *“the works of the flesh”* and *“those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Gal. 5:19-21).
3. 25 Denominationalism is diametrically opposed to:
 - A. Jesus’ prayer for unity (Jn. 17:20-21),
 - B. Paul’s plea for unity (1 Cor. 1:10-13),
 - C. God’s plan for unity (Eph. 4:1-6).
4. Those caught up in it, condoning it, promoting it, or celebrating it:
 - A. Are transgressing and not abiding in the *“doctrine of Christ”* and thus do *“not have God”* (2 Jn. 9).
 - B. They *“will not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Ga. 5:21).
 - C. Despite their claims *“Lord, Lord, have we not...done many wonders in Your name?”* (Matt. 7:22) They will be lost! Jesus will *“declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”* (Matt. 7:23)
5. I say these things not to gloat, belittle or condemn, but to admonish those caught up in this error to reject it! 1 Tim. 2:4
6. There is a way out of the division of denominationalism!
 - A. **The way to unity is simple: Let us reject all denominational doctrines, creeds, and catechisms and *“speak as the oracles of God”* and *“abide in the doctrine of Christ.”*
 - B. Come, join with us as we seek to achieve this vital goal.

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