

BOOK SUMMARY

On Loving God

Bernard of Clairvaux



BE UNITED IN CHRIST BOOK SUMMARY

Book Summary: On Loving God
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Be United in Christ

Book Summary

On Loving God

Bernard of Clairvaux

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Author

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) is respected by Protestants and Roman Catholics alike. Martin Luther considered Bernard “the greatest of all the fathers of the church after Augustine,”¹ and he was “one of Calvin’s favorite medieval writers.”² The Roman Catholic Church honors Bernard as both a “Doctor of the Church” and a saint, and the Italian poet Dante used Bernard as his guide in the *Divine Comedy* to lead him into the very presence of God (*Paradiso*, Canto 31). Nicknamed “the Honey-tongued Doctor” for his eloquence, he is widely attributed with writing the words to the classic hymn, “O Sacred Head Now Wounded.” Though less familiar today, Bernard clearly deserves to be read.

Bernard was born into a noble family in Burgundy, France, but renounced his privileged upbringing to become a monk. Just three years later he established a monastery at Clairvaux, from which he founded sixty-eight other monasteries. Bernard was one of the most influential men of his age. He rallied support for the Second Crusade, wrote the monastic rule for the Knights Templar, intervened in theological controversies, and helped resolve a disputed election for the pope. He was also a prolific and popular author. His more than 3,500 pages of writings include *The Steps of Humility and Pride* and *The Book of Consideration*, a collection of pastoral advice offered at the request of the Bishop of Rome, who had been a former student of his. Bernard died at his monastery in Clairvaux on August 20, 1153.

Overview

Bernard wrote *On Loving God* sometime between 1125–1141 in response to a request from a cardinal in Rome. “You wish me to explain for what reason and in what measure we should love God. I should say that God Himself is the motive of our love to Him, and that the measure of love due Him is to be without measure.” In other words, why should God be loved, and how much? Bernard answers that God should be loved for Himself and without limits. He explains his response in eleven chapters divided into two parts that correspond to the cardinal’s two questions.

Part 1: Why God should be loved (Chapters 1–7)

- A. God should be loved because no one is more deserving (1–6)
- B. God should be loved because no one is more rewarding (7)

Part 2: How God should be loved (Chapters 8–10)

- A. Loving self for self’s sake (8)
- B. Loving God for self’s sake (9)
- C. Loving God for God’s sake (9)
- D. Loving self for God’s sake (10)

Conclusion: The perfection of love (Chapter 11)

¹ Theo M. M. A. C. Bell, “Luther’s Reception of Bernard of Clairvaux,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 59:4 (October 1995), 267.

² Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin Student of the Church Fathers* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 115.

Part 1: Why God Should Be Loved (Chapters 1–7)

People want reasons to love God, and so Bernard offers two: “Nothing is more reasonable and nothing is more profitable.” In both cases, God Himself is the reason why He should be loved, for no one is more deserving of our love than God, and no one is more rewarding of our love than God.

God Should Be Loved Because No One Is More Deserving (1–6)

God deserves to be loved because He first loves us (1)

Ultimately, God is entitled to our love because He gave us His love. As the apostle John wrote, “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). The obligation to return God’s love is especially binding given the worth of the Lover, the unworthiness of the loved, and the extravagance of the love. “This gives Him a right to our love in return; above all, considering who He is that loves, what His loved ones are, and in what way He loves them.” When one considers the glory of God, the wretchedness of man, and the sacrifice of the Son to save sinners (Romans 5:8), it becomes undeniable that God is entirely deserving of our love. “These are the claims which God, the holy, the sovereignly great and Almighty, has upon the love of little, weak, and sinful man.”

God deserves to be loved even by non-believers (2)

Christians must love God because of Christ, but non-believers are also obligated to love God because of the “goods beyond number with which He enriches soul and body.” Of the many physical blessings God provides, Bernard mentions three. “Is it not from Him that man receives the bread which sustains, the light which enlightens him, and the air which he breathes?” These may not be the greatest of God’s material blessings, “but they are the most necessary.” Every bite, every blink, and every breath should remind a person that food, sight, breathing, and every bodily blessing are gifts from a good and gracious God who should be gratefully loved in return.

Far greater than the riches God gives the body are the spiritual riches He gives to the soul. Once again Bernard offers three examples. “For our chief goods we must look into the soul, the superior part of our being. Those goods are excellence, intelligence, and virtue.” By “excellence” Bernard means free will, which sets man above the animals. “Intelligence” is reason, by which man recognizes his superiority to the animals and that this did not come from himself. “Virtue” makes men seek the source of these blessings and, once he finds his Creator, cling to Him in love. The dignity God gives to those He made in His image deserves repayment in love.

Bernard’s point is to “prove that they who do not know Christ, even they, are sufficiently taught by the natural law, and by the gifts they possess of body and soul, to love God for God’s own sake.”

God then deserves to be loved for Himself, even based on the knowledge of the unbeliever who is ignorant of Christ. He who does not love the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and strength is without excuse, for his natural sense of justice and reason cry out from the depth of his soul that he is bound to love Him wholly who gave him everything he has.

If non-believers are obligated to love God as their Creator, how much more must believers love God as their Savior!

God deserves to be loved especially by believers (3–6)

Because the church knows Christ, she feels pangs of love for God that non-believers do not.

She sees the only-begotten Son of the Father staggering under the weight of the cross; the God of all majesty discolored by blows, covered with spit; the author of life and of glory hung upon nails, pierced with a lance and reviled, giving His dear soul for His friends. Gazing on this she feels the sword of love pierce through her heart.

Using language from the Song of Solomon, Bernard encourages Christians to meditate on Christ's crucifixion as a way to foster intimacy with God. Solomon's bride prepared her chamber to attract her groom, and the church, the bride of Christ, should do the same. "If we desire that Christ should come to us and abide in us, we must fill our hearts full of the thoughts of His death and resurrection and of the faithful recollection of the mercy and the power of which by them He has given us proof."

Not everyone, though, finds the cross of Christ comforting. "It is impossible ... to labor for this world's riches and also to delight in the cross of our Savior Jesus Christ, at the same time to desire and labor for earthly things and to taste the sweetness of our Lord." Those who truly value the gospel, however, will long to love better the God who loves them so well. In love, the Father sent His one and only Son (John 3:16). In love, the Son "poured out His soul unto death" (Isaiah 53:12). In love, the Spirit teaches what the Son taught (John 14:26). "Hereby we see that God loves us, and loves us with His whole being. For the blessed Trinity altogether loves us, if we dare to say this of the infinite, incomprehensible being who is one and indivisible."

"All that has been said proves most clearly the duty of loving God, and His claim upon our love." The non-believer should love God because he knows "that to Him who created him, he owes himself entirely." The believer lies under an even heavier obligation to love, for he knows the God of the gospel. "I know that God made me without any merit of mine, that He satisfies all my wants, comforts me with pity, and governs me with attentive care. Not only so, but I know, besides, that He is my redeemer, the author of my eternal salvation, my treasure and my glory."

Bernard eloquently summarizes his argument thus far:

For all of this, what shall I give to the Lord? Both reason and the law of nature bind me fast to give myself undividedly to Him from whom I possess all that I have, and to devote my entire being to the love of Him. And faith reveals to me that I am constrained to love Him more than myself. I owe to His gracious generosity not only all I am, but moreover the gift of Himself. But let us consider the time before the day of Christian faith had come, before God had put on our flesh and died upon the cross, gone down into Hell and ascended to the Father, that is, before the fullness of His love for us had shone forth. Long before Christ, man had been commanded to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength, that is, with his whole being, with all the love of which he is capable, as a creature blessed with intelligence and will. Could it be unjust of God to claim for Himself His own creation and His gifts? Why should not the creation love God who made it, having received the power to love? Why should it not love Him with all its powers, if it is only by God that it possesses any? Consider, too, that man has not only been called into being out of nothing, without any previous claim, but also that he has been so called to be raised to high dignity. Thus, we should see more clearly our obligation to love Him wholly, and His right to our love.

Moreover, when man had sunk to the level of the beasts that perish, did God not intervene to reinstate and save him? Is not this the marvel of His goodness and His mercy? For by sin we had fallen from the dignity of our creation to become beasts like the ox that eats grass and has not the light of reason. If I owe my whole self to my creator, what do I not owe to my redeemer, and to such a redeemer! It was a far less work to create than to redeem, for God had but to speak the word and all things were made. But to repair the fall of that, which one word had created, what wonders did He have to perform, what cruelties, no, what humiliations, did He have to suffer! What, therefore, shall I give to the Lord for all that He has done for me! By creating, He gave me to myself; but He restored me to myself when He gave Himself to me. First given and then restored, I doubly owe myself to Him. But what do I owe to God for the gift of Himself? If I gave Him my whole being a thousand times over, what would that be in comparison of God?

Bernard concludes this section on the particular obligation of believers to love God with a call for Christians to wholeheartedly love Him for His own sake and without limits.

Confess that God deserves to be greatly loved, or rather that He should be loved beyond measure. He was the first to love, He so great and we so little. He loves us to excess, just as we are and without any claim whatsoever on our side. This is why the rightful measure of our love to God is to exceed all measure, for God, the object of our love, being infinite, how can we weigh or measure what we owe to Him in love? Moreover, our love is not a free offering. It is the payment of a debt. Besides, it is the I Am, eternal and immense, the Divine Love, God, whose greatness has no limits nor His wisdom bounds, who is the “Peace which passes all understanding.” Since it is such a God who loves us, is it possible for us to say we will love Him so much and no more?

God Should Be Loved because No One Is More Rewarding (7)

The preceding sections established that everyone is obligated to love God. Now, Bernard explains why even though “we must love God independently of all reward, we shall nonetheless be rewarded for having loved Him.” Pure love is focused on the object of one’s affections, not on any benefits one might receive. Yet it is this purity of love that the beloved feels compelled to reward. Thus, “true love seeks no reward, but it merits one,” and the proper reward of true love is the beloved itself. Therefore, it is critical that people set God foremost in their affections because, in the end, every other desired object proves elusive, unsatisfying, and temporary.

Tragically, most men squander their lives, vainly pursuing things that cannot satisfy. They “consume their life in useless efforts and arrive at no perfect happiness, for they are in love with created things, not with the Creator, and they try them, one and then another, before they dream of trying the Lord that made them all.” Those who do manage to gain what they seek inevitably find it disappointing, for the world cannot satisfy the soul. “If we were to see a starving man inhaling with wide open mouth, drinking long gulps of wind to quench his thirst, we should say, ‘Poor fool!’ So it is with those who seek to satisfy the soul with worldly goods.”

God in His Word tries to spare people such endless, fruitless striving, for the only thing that will satisfy the soul is God Himself. God alone is deserving of man’s love, and God Himself is the priceless reward that He gives to those who love Him. “He is generous to those who call upon Him, but He can give nothing better than Himself. He Himself is the end goal of our merits and our reward. He is the food of holy souls, the ransom of those that are yet in captivity. If the Lord is good to the soul that seeks Him, what is He to the soul which has found Him?”

Part 2: How God Should Be Loved (Chapters 8–10)

In Part One, Bernard explained *why* God should be loved: No one is more deserving and no one is more rewarding. Now in Part Two, Bernard describes *how* God should be loved: selflessly and without limit. Bernard describes four steps by which sinners progress in their love for God.

Loving self for self's sake (8)

Loving God is the first and great commandment (Matthew 22:37–38), for the supreme object of every creature's affection should be its Creator. "But nature is too soft and weak for such a commandment. She must begin by loving herself. This is the love which is fleshly, with which man loves himself first and above all." Sinners are naturally selfish and self-absorbed. They love and prioritize themselves, not God or others. Yet from this wretched starting point, God begins to shift man's focus, first from himself to others and then to God.

Bernard compares self-love to a river which, when it rises too high, floods the surrounding land. To prevent this destructive overflow, God gives the command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39). This command functions as a dam against excessive self-indulgence, for it forces a person to love others at the same level as they love themselves. Or to use another analogy, the second great commandment ensures that all boats rise with the same tide, for as one's ego rises so must one's esteem for others. "Such, O man, is the just limit imposed upon you ... that you not be carried away by your selfishness to your destruction, leaving your nature at the mercy of your soul's enemies, that is, of your passions."

However, "it is not possible to love our neighbor as we should, except in God." Therefore, God uses man's frailty and drive for self-preservation to awaken in him an awareness of God and the early stirrings of a selfish love for Him.

That we might not attribute anything to ourselves, God, in the depths of His wisdom and love, made us subject to tribulation. Being feeble and needy, we are forced to turn to God, and being saved by Him we render glory to His name. These are His own words: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15). In this way man, by nature animal and fleshly, with no love but for himself, is brought through self-love to love God, realizing that all his ability, at any rate for good, he has from God, and without Him he is able to do nothing.

God uses man's own selfishness and neediness to turn his heart first to loving Him and then to loving Him more purely.

Loving God for self's sake and loving God for God's sake (9)

Bernard presents the second and third steps to loving God in the same chapter, for they are closely connected. Loving oneself leads to loving God, because He is gracious to sustain and deliver even non-believers. Experiencing the reality of God as provider and protector, people begin to love Him, but only selfishly. The second stage is characterized by a self-serving love in which people only love God for what He gives them and does for them. It is loving God, but only for self's sake.

However, as God repeatedly and graciously proves Himself to be a loving Father who remains faithful even when people are faithless, they begin to love God for who He is rather than simply for what He does. People ascend to the third step when they adore God for His character and not just His blessings, when they appreciate His goodness and not just His gifts. Greed is replaced by gratitude, and people love God for His sake rather than for theirs. As Bernard explains:

First, then, man has some love for God for his own sake, not for God's. It is already something to feel the limits of his own capacity, to know what he cannot do without the help of God, and to keep right with Him who sustains his life and strength.... Let the frequency of trials bring us often to the feet of God, surely it is impossible, but we must begin to know Him, and, knowing Him, must come to discern His sweetness. It soon follows that we are brought to love Him rightly, far more for the sweetness and beauty that we find in Him than for our own self-interest.

As love for God grows, so does one's love for one's neighbor. "It is easy enough to obey the command and love our neighbor as ourself, for if we love God truly, we love all that is His." Thus, obeying the first great commandment more fully enables one to obey the second commandment more faithfully, for loving God more is the way to love others more.

Loving self for God's sake (10)

The fourth and final step in loving God is to love Him so completely that one loves oneself only for His sake. Selfishness is transformed to selflessness in the wholehearted devotion to God. "Happy is he who can rise to the fourth degree of love, and loves himself only for God's sake." Losing oneself for God's sake is no sacrifice or hardship but is rather the only path to satisfaction and fulfillment. "Holy and happy is he who but once, for but one moment, has felt something like this in his mortal life. For this is no human happiness, it is life eternal to lose oneself, as if one were empty of self, as if one did not exist."

As Jesus taught and modeled, the full and blessed life is lived in complete submission to the will of God. It is only when people are freed from self that they can find fullness of joy in God.

We read in the holy Scripture that God has made all things for Himself (Proverbs 16:4). His creatures are therefore bound to conform themselves, at least in some measure, to the mind of their Maker. We ought to offer ourselves entirely to Him, studying only His good pleasure, not our own. We shall find happiness much less in seeking our own advantage than in the accomplishment of His will in us, according as we daily pray: "Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Oh, pure and holy love! Most sweet and blessed affection! Oh, complete submission of an unselfish soul, most perfect in that there is no thought of self, most sweet and tender in that the soul's whole feeling is divine! To attain to this is for the soul to be made divine, as a small drop of water appears lost if mixed with wine, taking its taste and color. As it is, when plunged into a furnace, a bar of iron seems to lose its nature and assume that of fire. Or, as it is when the air, filled with the sun's beams, seems rather to become light than to be illuminated. So it is with the natural life of the saints. They seem to melt and pass away into the will of God. For if anything merely human remained in man, how then should God be all in all? It is not that human nature will be destroyed, but that it will attain another beauty, a higher power and glory.

Conclusion: The Perfection of Love (Chapter 11)

Maintaining such selfless love for God is impossible so long as the physical body's cares, pains, and lusts distract the soul from focusing entirely on God.

Until death be wholly swallowed up in victory, until the glory of eternity shall have spread throughout every corner of the domain of night, and the clarity of heavenly light shine even in our bodies, until then our souls can never cast themselves into God, and wholly give themselves to Him.... Till the restoration of our bodies, our souls can never be swallowed up in God, which is their absolute perfection.

However, when God restores the earth and gives His saints their glorified, resurrection bodies, then their souls will enter into the satisfying, fulfilling love for God that will characterize eternity. Then "our soul will easily attain to this perfect love when neither the burden nor the temptations of this body oppress her. Then she will spring unhindered to her joy in the Lord" (10).

At the wedding feast of the Lamb, Christ will lovingly embrace His bride, the church, and she will rejoice selflessly and everlastingly in the loving presence of God who is love.

From there comes gratification that is never satisfied; desire which is unquenchable, yet most calm and peaceful—the eternal and incomparable desire to possess, which arises from no want. From there comes that intoxication without excess, which comes from the enjoyment, not of wine, but of God and His truth. The soul has reached forever the fourth degree of love, when she loves only God, and loves Him supremely. She loves God for no gain, but for Himself alone, so that He is her reward, the eternal reward of those who love Him, and shall love Him forever.

Appraisal

Loving God is the principal command in the Bible. God commanded Israel to "love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Jesus affirmed that this wholehearted love for God was the great and foremost commandment on which all the Law and the Prophets hang (Matthew 22:37–38). Loving God is essential to inheriting eternal life (Luke 10:25–27), and indeed, loving God is the essence of eternal life. Bernard of Clairvaux's *On Loving God* directs our affections back to their proper place. He reminds us, first of all, why God should be loved, for there is no other so deserving or rewarding of our love. God Himself is both the motivation and the reward for our love.

Bernard also shows us how to love God by describing the steps our affections should take as we seek to love Him more fully. We are born loving ourselves for our own sake, but when our feebleness and frailty make us cry out to God and He answers, then we begin to love Him, but only for our own sake. God's faithfulness and graciousness eventually soften our hearts to love Him for His sake. We come to love God because He is good and not just because He gives good gifts. Eventually, Christians will come to love Him so completely that they love themselves only for His sake. By reminding us of the priority of loving God and showing us the path to loving God, *On Loving God* offers a much needed resource to help us love the LORD our God with more of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Connection to Be United in Christ

Love is central to the Christian life. When asked what was necessary to inherit eternal life, Jesus answered, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself’” (Luke 10:27). The essence of obeying God is loving Him and loving others (Matthew 22:37–40; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18). Given the way Christ consistently connects these two commandments, it is clear that a crucial way God wants us to love Him is by loving others. However, the only way to love others more is to love God more. Sinners are hard to love, but God is not, and as we grow in our love for God, we grow in our love for others. As we love God more, we become more loving like God, our commitment to obey God increases, and our desire to love what God loves deepens. So the key to loving others is not their loveliness but God’s. The secret to loving unlovely people is to be so enamored with God’s loveliness that we gladly love them for His sake. Therefore, by growing in our love for God we will grow in our desire and ability to Be United in Christ.

Key Quotations

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| <p>“You wish me to explain for what reason and in what measure we should love God. I should say that God Himself is the motive of our love to Him, and that the measure of love due Him is to be without measure.” (1)</p> |
| <p>“Two things there are that move us to love God for Himself: nothing is more reasonable and nothing is more profitable.” (1)</p> |
| <p>“God gave Himself to us in spite of our unworthiness, and, being God, what could He give us of greater worth than Himself?” (1)</p> |
| <p>“If we desire that Christ should come to us and abide in us, we must fill our hearts full of the thoughts of His death and resurrection and of the faithful recollection of the mercy and the power of which by them He has given us proof.” (3)</p> |
| <p>“It is impossible, poor slaves, to labor for this world’s riches and also to delight in the cross of our Savior Jesus Christ, at the same time to desire and labor for earthly things and to taste the sweetness of our Lord.” (4)</p> |
| <p>“I know that God made me without any merit of mine, that He satisfies all my wants, comforts me with pity, and governs me with attentive care ... I know, besides, that He is my redeemer, the author of my eternal salvation, my treasure and my glory.” (5)</p> |
| <p>“Both reason and the law of nature bind me fast to give myself undividedly to Him from whom I possess all that I have, and to devote my entire being to the love of Him. And faith reveals to me that I am constrained to love Him more than myself ... I owe to His gracious generosity not only all I am, but moreover the gift of Himself.” (5)</p> |
| <p>“Why should not the creation love God who made it, having received the power to love? Why should it not love Him with all its powers, if it is only by God that it possesses any?” (5)</p> |
| <p>“What, therefore, shall I give to the Lord for all that He has done for me! By creating, He gave me to myself, but He restored me to myself when He gave Himself to me. First given and then restored, I doubly owe myself to Him. But what do I owe to God for the gift of Himself? If I gave Him my whole being a thousand times over, what would that be in comparison of God?” (5)</p> |
| <p>“If the Lord is good to the soul that seeks Him, what is He to the soul which has found Him?” (7)</p> |
| <p>“But in order that love for our neighbor be entirely right, God must have His part in it. It is not possible to love our neighbor as we should, except in God.” (8)</p> |
| <p>“Let the frequency of trials bring us often to the feet of God ... we must begin to know Him, and, knowing Him, must come to discern His sweetness. It soon follows that we are brought to love Him rightly, far more for the sweetness and beauty that we find in Him than for our own self-interest.” (9)</p> |
| <p>“It is easy enough to obey the command and love our neighbor as ourself, for if we love God truly, we love all that is His.” (9)</p> |

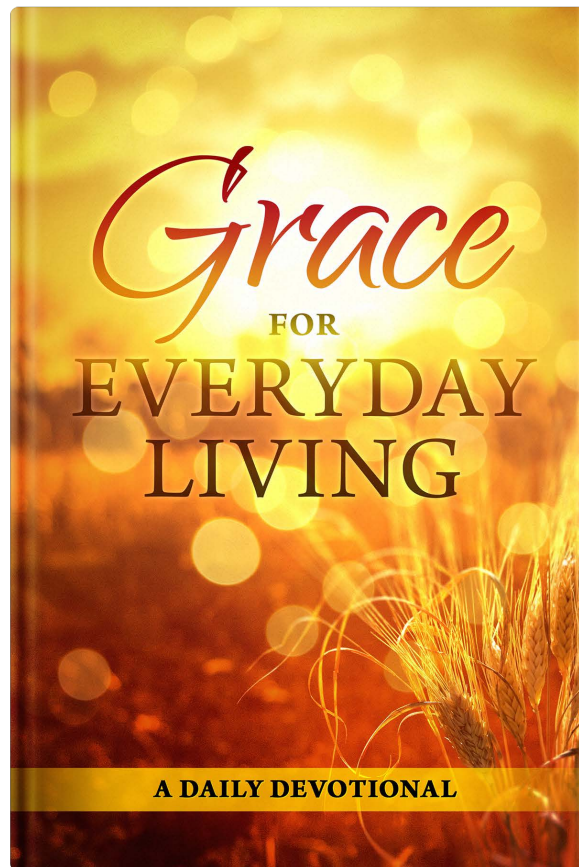
Key Bible Passages (ESV)

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| <p>“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” (Deuteronomy 6:4–5)</p> |
| <p>“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12–13)</p> |
| <p>“Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God.” (Joshua 23:11)</p> |
| <p>“Love the LORD, all you His saints! The LORD preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride.” (Psalm 31:23)</p> |
| <p>“And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’” (Matthew 22:37–40)</p> |
| <p>“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)</p> |
| <p>“Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’” (John 14:23)</p> |
| <p>“But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)</p> |
| <p>“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38–39)</p> |
| <p>“For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)</p> |
| <p>“If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!” (1 Corinthians 16:22)</p> |
| <p>“Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.” (1 Peter 1:8)</p> |
| <p>“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” (1 John 3:1a)</p> |
| <p>“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.... In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:7–11)</p> |
| <p>“We love because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)</p> |

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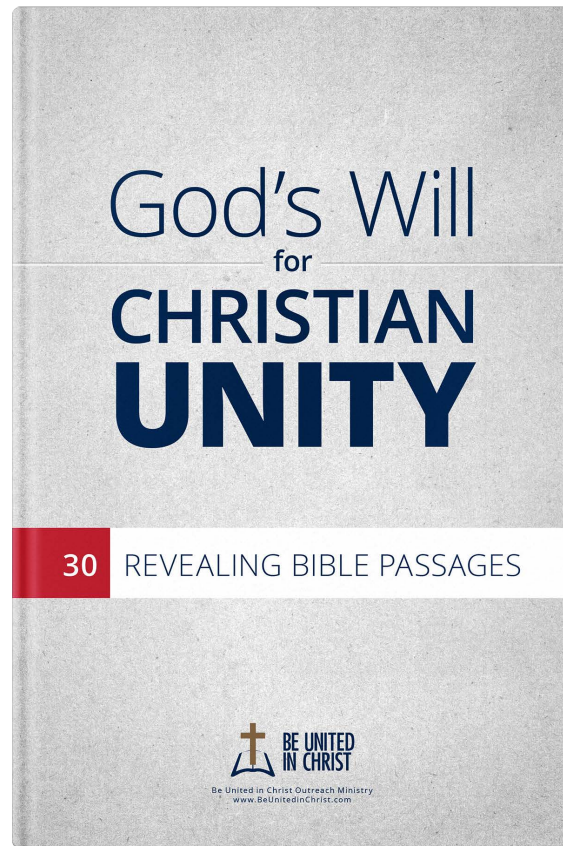
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BELIEVE IN GOD? READY TO DO HIS WILL?

The theme of Christian unity is found throughout the Bible. *God's Will for Christian Unity* clearly reveals, in thirty Bible passages, our Lord's passion and instruction on the meaning, importance, and manifestation of Christian unity. Understanding this collection of Bible passages will help you to know how you should think, feel, and act in relation to other believers in accordance with God's will.

Our Premium Collection of books may be purchased from the Be United in Christ Outreach Ministry at www.beunitedinchrist.com.



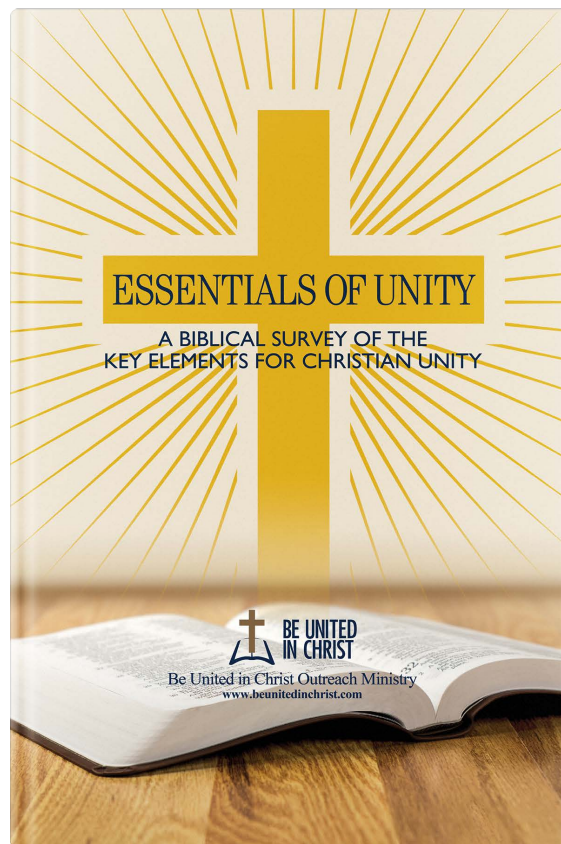
**BE UNITED
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UNITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR GOD'S PEOPLE.

The Be United in Christ Outreach Ministry has written *Essentials of Unity* from a great sense of conviction ... to better understand God's will for the unity of His people, how He achieves it, and what He asks of each of us in preserving it. *Essentials of Unity* explains significant Biblical themes for understanding Christian unity and how these Biblical themes connect to one another in the storyline of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

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FEEL THE PASSION OF CHRIST FOR UNITY.

In John 17:20–23, Jesus prayed for His disciples to be one ... united with Him and each other. In His prayer, we hear the passion of Jesus Christ for the union of His people to God and to one another. *One: The Passion and Prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ* was written to help God's people understand the nature of this unity as well as how it is to be accomplished in the body of Christ.

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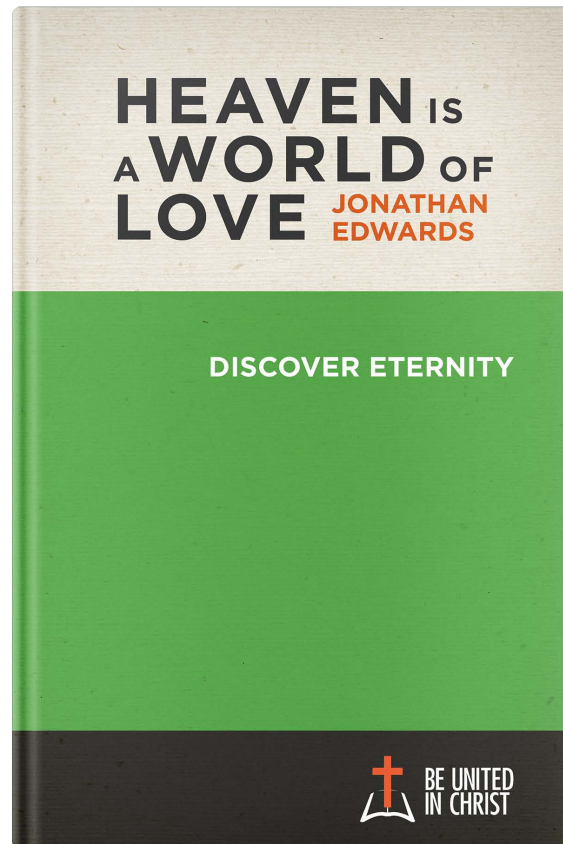
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HOW WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

In the history of Christianity, no one has written as vividly on the subjects of Heaven and Hell as Jonathan Edwards. *Heaven Is a World of Love* combines Edwards' most powerful sermons and presents them in modern-day language. Be encouraged with the hope of Heaven, sobered by the horrors of Hell, and assured that you can spend eternity enjoying God's love.

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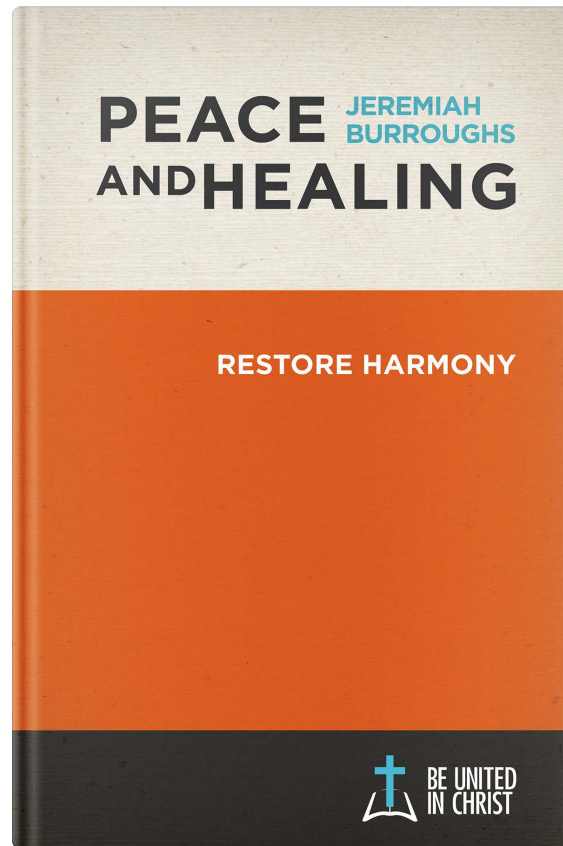


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BRING HARMONY TO YOUR CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

What if your church could be conflict-free? Drawn from the wisdom of respected Puritan preacher Jeremiah Burroughs, *Peace and Healing* reveals the sources and dangers of conflict within God's family and recommends God's solutions. Get to the root of disunity and bring love and harmony to the most important relationships in your life.

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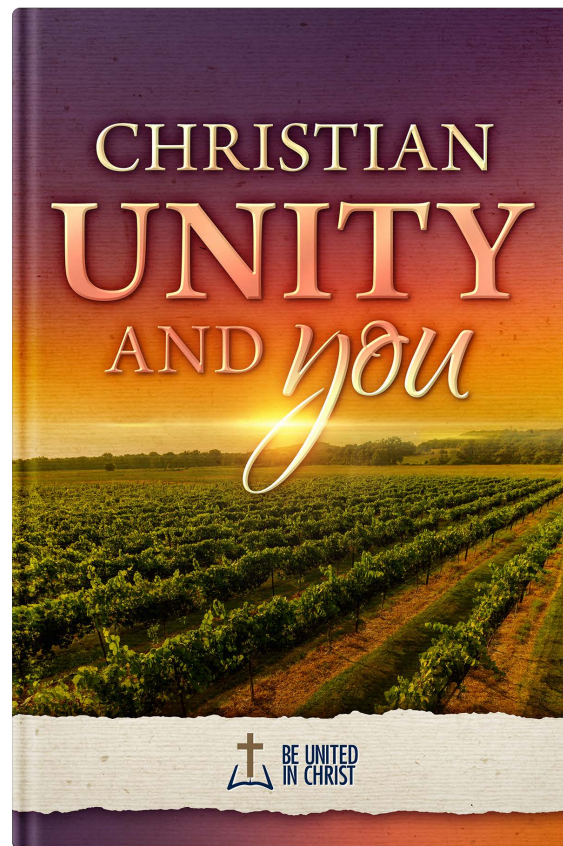


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YOU CAN LOVE LIKE JESUS.

Imagine how the world could be transformed if Christians loved each other the way Jesus asked them to. Jesus' life is the greatest example of love that the world has ever seen. He told His disciples to love one another as He loved them. When believers live in visible love and unity as Christ lived—unity based on Biblical truth—we will begin to experience a taste of what Heaven will be like.

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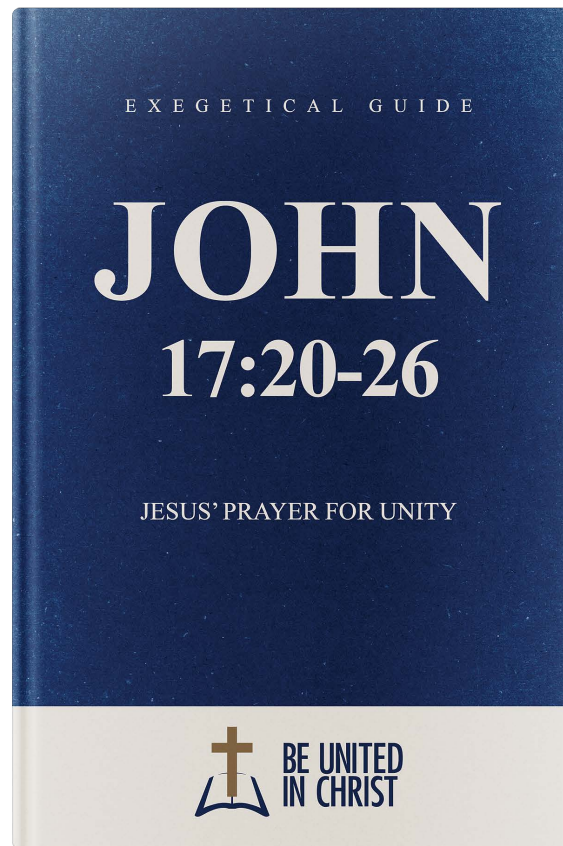


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LEARN WHAT JESUS PRAYED FOR YOU.

In the hours just before He was crucified, Jesus prayed for you. But what did He pray? And why does it matter? With the *John 17:20–26* Exegetical Guide, you will see through Jesus' eyes and be moved by what He prayed for you at this critical time. You will find where you belong. And your desire to draw closer to God and to other believers will grow as you read this inspiring guide.

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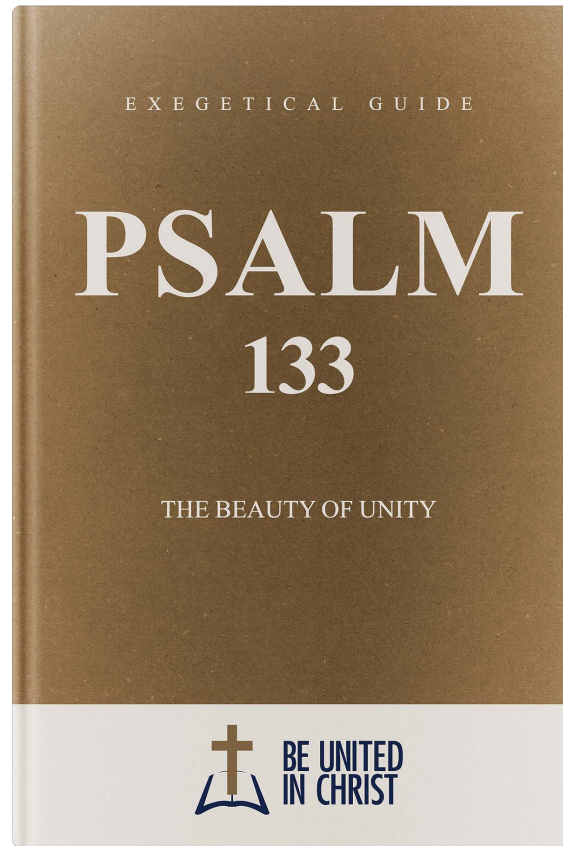


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DEVELOP A RICH CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

Blessing. Peace. Eternal life. How can you experience them for yourself? Explore *Psalm 133* and learn King David's song of the goodness and pleasantness of God's children living in harmony. You will discover that unity is not only God's desire but also His design to lead you into the satisfying life He desires for you to experience.

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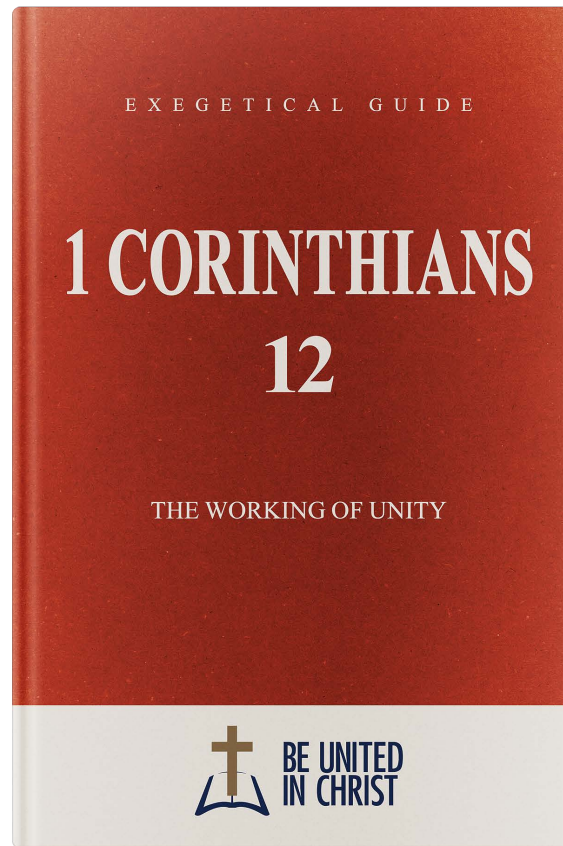


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UNCOVER YOUR PURPOSE IN GOD'S PLAN.

All of us want to belong, to feel connected, to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. For the Christian, these desires find their fulfillment in Christ and in the life He has designed for His church. The *1 Corinthians 12* Exegetical Guide will show you how God intends to fulfill your deep need to belong. You have a reserved position in His plan. You have a unique place, and you have a vital role.

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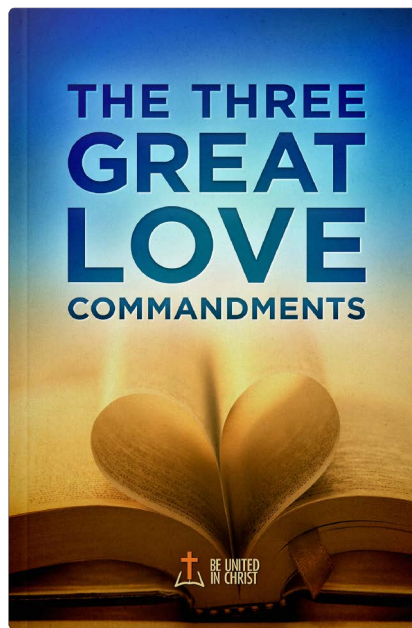


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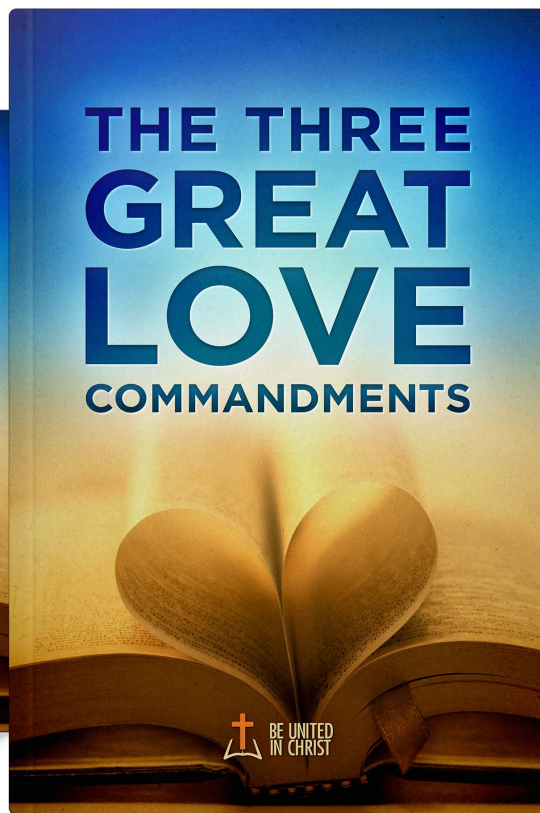
A **THIRD** GREAT LOVE COMMANDMENT.

Within every human heart is the desire to be loved and to show love. It is the mark of God on our lives—a God who embodies love, who IS love, according to the Bible. In His Word, God gives us three great commandments, rules for operating in love with Him, with others, and with our Christian family. These commands should provide the foundation for everything we say and do.

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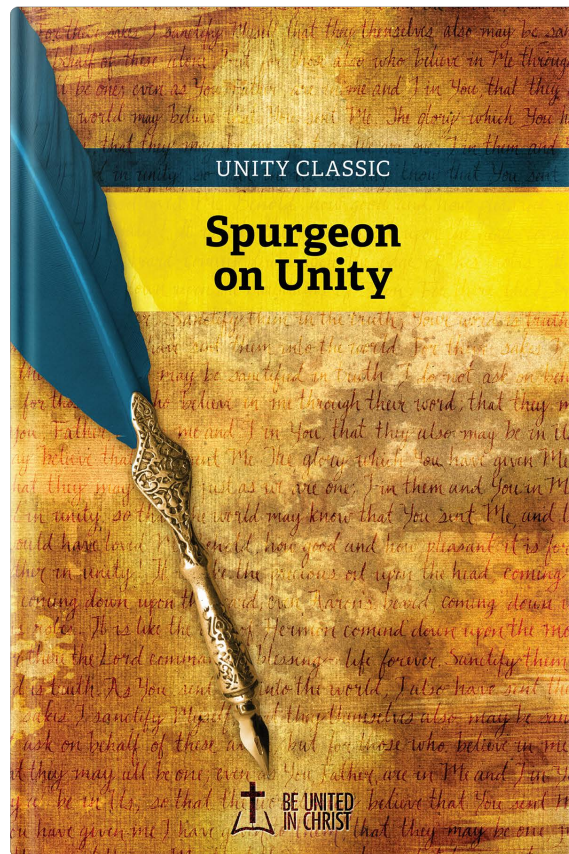
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ENJOY THE LIFE CHRIST INTENDS FOR YOU.

The most prominent preacher of the 19th century, Charles Spurgeon pastored the world's largest mega-church and spoke to millions. Considered one of the greatest preachers in church history, his messages are as inspiring today as when they were first preached. *Spurgeon On Unity* lets you slip into the pew of this "Prince of Preachers" as he applies God's Word to one of your greatest needs.

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The desire of the Be United in Christ Outreach Ministry is to glorify our Lord by helping our brothers and sisters in Christ to have a better understanding of our Lord's passion and prayer for His people to "Be United in Christ."

Please join us in the Be United in Christ Outreach Ministry as we await the glorious return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



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