



All Are One In Christ Jesus

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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There are many things in this world that try to pull people apart and elevate one group above others. There are many sources of discrimination that are at work throughout this world. But, amid all of these, there is an opportunity for all people to be equal. This opportunity is in Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:26-29 says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

1) No racial barriers. No race is better than another in Christ Jesus. Even though the Bible was written during a time when slavery was practiced, those who were in Christ were equal in God's sight and had access to the same spiritual blessings as all the others. For instance, there were man-made barriers regarding Jews and Gentiles in the time the New Testament was written. However, the writers of the New Testament often demonstrated how this barrier no longer existed in Jesus Christ. Now, they were expected to all view each other as being fellow brothers and sisters of equal standing with God.

2) No cultural barriers. No culture is better than another in Christ Jesus. Although there are many things that drive wedges between people who live in different cultures, Jesus Christ breaks all of those down! For instance, one of the things that divides people is wealth. Physically, there are individuals who possess great wealth, while others are very poor. There are also differences of standing. For instance, people in one culture are often viewed as being more prestigious than others. Yet, all of these physical differences mean nothing in Christ. One example of this concerns Philemon and Onesimus. From a physical perspective, they were divided. Philemon was a slave owner and Onesimus was a slave. Yet, when Onesimus had become a Christian, Paul encouraged Philemon (who was also a Christian) to receive him, "no longer as a slave but more than a slave – a beloved brother...both in the flesh and in the Lord" (Philemon 1:16). Now, in Christ, people of all cultures are equal.

3) No gender barriers. No gender is better than another in Christ Jesus. Although there are many people who discriminate between the two genders, gender differences are irrelevant in Christ Jesus (with regard to the spiritual blessings that are available in Him). Now, there are different gender *roles* involved in serving Jesus Christ. For instance, both women and men have certain God-given responsibilities in the home and in the church. This includes the fact that God has given men the responsibility to lead in both the home and church. But, this does not mean that men are more important than women in any of these areas. Women are *not* “second class citizens” in the kingdom of God! Instead, these roles only help God accomplish His purposes for both the home and the church. And, the roles of women and men are both significant in Jesus Christ. All people (both male and female) have equal access to the blessings in Jesus Christ.

With regard to the spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ, there are no more barriers between people. Those have all been broken down by Jesus Christ. Although there will always be physical barriers that exist between people and discrimination that happens as a result, this is not the case in Jesus Christ. Involved in this equality in Jesus Christ, those who are Christians should not be involved in any kind of discriminatory actions or speech. Instead, those who are Christians must recognize that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the “power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

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