

## **THE EVILS OF DISSENSION**

**One of the most important messages in the Bible is the great importance of God's people living together in harmony. Many passages address the subject, including clear warnings against causing dissension (or discord and division) among brethren. Jesus prayed for unity and harmony in the great prayer found in John 17. Paul urged harmony in Romans 12:16-18.**

**There are specific condemnations of dissension such as in Romans 13:13. Dissensions are listed among the most vile sins in Galatians 5:20. From Proverbs 6:16-19 we learn that stirring up dissension among brethren is one of the most hated actions in God's sight. In I Corinthians 1 we find Paul strongly condemning the divisions in the Corinthian church.**

**Dissension occurs when people ignore a host of clear instructions about how to treat each other. When one reads I Corinthians 13 he can see clearly that the kind of love God demands forbids one of God's people to do the kind of damage which comes from speaking evil of other Christians. There are multiple scriptures telling us how to treat each other. A few are: build up one another (Romans 14:19); encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13); be kind to one another (Eph. 4:32); show forbearance to one another (Eph. 4:2); forgive each other (Col. 3:13); be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50); regard one another as more important than oneself (Phil. 2:3). There are many other passages.**

**Dissension in a church can do massive damage. (James was *so* right when he said, "...The tongue is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body..." --James 3:6). Hostility and suspicion develop. Anger, resentment, and bitterness are common side-effects. The authority and effectiveness of the leadership is undermined. Many weaker members often become disillusioned and discouraged, sometimes to the point of falling away entirely. Even stronger members find themselves distracted from doing the work assigned to them by the Lord.**

**How are leaders to deal with dissension and divisiveness? The Bible is clear. Note these words in Titus 3:10: "Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him." Leaders of a church who fail to obey this command are not doing their job. Failure to address such problems can destroy a church. This command applies to all members. Those who refuse to isolate the sinfully divisive person are living in disobedience. Dissension is a sin which must be recognized for the danger that it presents.**