

'As We Are One'

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Friday, 25 September 2009 00:00 -

Jesus declared in John 10:30 that He and the Father were "one." What does that mean? One in essence? in purpose? in character? From His other statements throughout the gospels, it's clear that He meant all of these. As Hebrews and Colossians tell us later, He is the exact image of His Father -- the high-resolution photograph of God. The "oneness" between Father and Son is as tight and intimate and united as a relationship can get.

So it's astounding later in the gospel of John when Jesus prays to His Father about His followers: "that they may be one as we are one" (17:22). In other words, Jesus asks that we would have the same kind of closeness with Him as He has with the Father. Wow.

Most Christians read this verse as a call to Christian unity. While I think that's implied and certainly a good message, I don't think it's primarily what Jesus had in mind. The focus isn't being "one" with each other; it's being "one" with Him. How? In the same way He is one with the Father -- in essence, in purpose, in character, in actions and attitudes and thoughts and feelings and everything else. (Some people may have a problem with the "one in essence" part of that last sentence, but if we're born of His Spirit, we are of the same essence just as we are of the same essence as our natural parents by being born to them physically.) This is a call to be as bonded with the Father and Son and Spirit as they are with each other.

Try to let that sink in. It has amazing implications for your life. Don't let it simply be a theory or a Christian ideal that's too high to attain. It's not meant to be a theological belief, it's meant to be an experience. Jesus wouldn't have prayed it if it wasn't possible for us. Ask for that, believe it, and experience it.