# THE ONE SPIRIT

***"Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?"***
***—GALATIANS 3:3***

The bigger problem Paul addresses in his Epistles lay not with those who were as yet unsaved, but with those who were already in Christ and trying to attain their goal of pleasing God by human effort rather than by the working of the Holy Spirit.

It is this temptation that remains a real one today and one that must be resisted and spurned. Any addition to Christ is by definition a subtraction from Him for any needed addition can only be a reflection of a sense of His insufficiency. The problem is that when we attach any addition to faith in Christ as necessary for effective Christian living, the addition often becomes the means whereby our Christianity is defined.

Christ plus circumcision is a dead issue to most of us today, but Christ plus a certain mode of baptism is not; Christ plus speaking in tongues is not; Christ plus a right understanding of election is not; Christ plus a particular doctrine of the church is not. The problem is that whatever we add to Christ becomes our defining point. Although we claim to be "all in one in Christ", our fellowship with one another is based on our common agreement about the 'additions' to faith in Christ that we see as necessary.

Some believers meet as ‘Baptists’, their name defining common ground regarding the essential nature of a certain mode of baptism. Some people meet as ‘Pentecostals’ defining their common ground relating to events on the Day of Pentecost, and some meet as ‘Congregationalists’ or ‘Presbyterians’, defining their common ground as a view of church government. It is not that any of these things are unimportant as each of them are very important, which is why they take on such significance for some Christians. Scripture does not address these issues and we have to know how to respond rightly to them.

The point is that the real problem arises when the issues that make us distinct from one another become our defining point and thus contain the latent inherent danger of taking priority in our identity. These issues then become more fought over than those that make us distinct from the world. Paul writes, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13). And this needs to be our defining point – one Spirit and one body which is Christ Himself.

***PRAYER: Lord, may I keep my focus on You alone as the all encompassing defining factor of my faith and my life.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: In my effort to please God have I added to Christ in any way?***