

# THE HEART OF THE MATTER



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OUR PURPOSE: To be a community of believers where, no matter who you are, you can experience life change through Jesus Christ.

## True UNITY depends on our HEARTS

*8 Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, 9 yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— 10 I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. 11 (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) 12 I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. 13 I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, 14 but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.*

—Philemon 1:8-14 (ESV)

### 1. Unity requires more than OUTWARD behavior

### 2. Unity is first and foremost a HEART issue

*7 You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 8 “ ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 9 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”*

—Matthew 15:7-9 (ESV)

### 3. Unity AMONG us depends on unity WITHIN us

*8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.*

—1 Peter 4:8 (ESV)

*“Where love abounds, offenses are frequently overlooked and quickly forgotten.”*

— ESV Study Bible

*4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;*

—1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (ESV)

*31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

—Ephesians 4:31-32 (ESV)