**Union Life Study**

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Introduction: “God showed up!” “Come Holy Spirit.” “We should all try to be like Jesus.” “When I walked though that trial, Jesus was right there next to me.” “Lord, reach down from the balconies of heaven and touch us.” “Lord would you give me some more patience?”

Is something a bit “off” in these statements?? Yes, from a U. Life perspective...

-Words matter…they reflect and reveal one’s understanding.

-Words reveal the level of revelation and theological framework/worldview/”glasses.”

-Words should reflect accurate Biblical truth and not oppose it

-“You have to live with the burden of your own insights.” Pastor E. Murdoch

-Period of several years of study, research and prayer. Not arrived, but…

I. Where Is God? Theology 101

1. Ps. 139:7-10 God is EVERYWHERE. Could David ever get out of His presence?
2. Matt. 6:9, God is in HEAVEN – “Our father who art IN HEAVEN”
3. Matt. 18:19,20 God is AMONG us when we gather or “in our midst”
4. Matt. 28:19,20 God is WITH us/you all...
5. John 17:23a God is IN us (disciples)
6. Colossians 1:25-27 God is IN me (MOST helpful in my mind)

Think in terms of concentric circles. Which is most meaningful and helpful?

We can read this and acknowledge with our mind, “Yes, OK, He’s in me,” and then live as though He’s as far away as the “balconies of heaven.”

Or, we can think and live with an entirely different, deeper understanding/revelation…

II. YOU carry the very presence of God IN YOU wherever you go.

1. Home, work, car, recreation, etc.
2. He’s not just next to you or with you….He’s actually inside of you.
3. We are human containers of the very life of Jesus.
4. 2 Cor. 4:7, “But we have this treasure IN earthen vessels…”

III. But…We’re Also IN Him!

1. So, where am I?
2. Our new spiritual address is, “IN Christ.”
3. Eph. 1, 2 = 19 times “IN Him / IN Christ.”
4. Eph. 1-3 and Colossians 1,2 then…Eph. 4-6 and Col. 3,4. Union life first, then action.

IV. THIS is Union Life – I’m IN Him AND He is IN me – Both. But, not like water in a bottle.

1. Sponge in water Poker in the fire Tea bag in the hot water

V. Why Is This Important?

A. It’s THE key to victorious Christian living.

B. God doesn’t intend for you or expect you to live the Christian life.

-We read the gospels and try hard to be like what we read. We fail so we try harder.

-Grunting tree branch?

C. Without “seeing” this, we strive to handle what life throws at us.

-It’s us trying hard to be good Christians and live a successful Christian life.

-It’s us trying hard to resist temptation and us trying hard to be like Jesus.

D. There is only ONE life that has ever been lived that was pleasing to God – Where is that life?

-IN me and I’m IN that life – mystical union.

-Husband/wife – mystical union…always.

E. So, I never encourage believers to TRY to be like Jesus!

-In fact, “STOP trying to be a good Christian!” Huh?

-“Stop trying to make God happy with you by what you do.”

-Jesus simply wants to re-live His life through you – it’s not striving, it abiding.

VI. The Gospel Shift – Don’t miss this because it’s HUGE!

1. John 14-17 – A HUGE shift takes place in these Chapters

-Up to this point – “Follow me.”

-Jesus called His disciples to follow Him actually/physically and, spiritually.

-BUT…the terminology and spiritual concept SHIFTS massively never to go back.

B. John 14 – Jesus’ union with the father, vs. 9-11. Our union with them, vs. 17b, 20.

C. John 15 – The branch abiding/remaining in the trunk of the tree, vs. 1-7.

D. John 16 – The promise of the Holy Spirit – Spirit of God, Spirit of Jesus.

E. John 17 – Jesus high priestly prayer, vs. 21, 23.

VII. Detrimental Terminology.

A. Anything that suggests God’s presence is NOT here, now…IN us. (See Intro.)

B. Illustrations: Radio, Michael Jordon, Divine Pharmacist.

C. Group meetings – START with, “He’s HERE!” Individual – START with, “He’s my LIFE!”

“THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS NOT MY RESPONSIBILITY, IT’S MY RESPONSE TO HIS ABILITY”