

UNEXPECTED UNITY

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Doesn't the concept of unity sound amazing? Even if a little unrealistic? With all the little opportunities to divide, all the injustice still breathing and cresting over every horizon, it often feels like a lost cause. But what if we fostered it and fought for it a little? What would it take to establish the linking of arms in a world still broken and groaning under the weight of dark realities?

I saw unity once when I wasn't expecting it.

A couple of years ago, we decided to climb Mount Quandry as a family. My husband is an enneagram 7 (we'll circle back on this some day, but some of you instantly get it. Pray for me.) It started out easy, and then... it wasn't. I can remember visualizing the next rock formation we'd identify, and then urge our feet forward for that next 20 feet. Little goals at a time, a little progress at a time, that finally resulted in a summit.

You guys, it was breathtaking beauty. The compulsion to worship was unfathomable. There's plenty to say about the cost and the risk required for reward, but that's not even what surprised me the most.

What surprised me was the palatable unity. There was a niche group of us who had never met, never laid eyes on one another, with a shocking age range, who called various continents "home,"-- and for that day, we were FOR each other. Certainly not because we were all alike, and I'm positive that there was not a deficit of demands and differences, problems and pain on that trail. We were not a special group of problem-free people who jump up and start walking together. But there was zero animosity, antagonism, rude behavior or divisiveness. Zero.

So... why?

Why were we doing community so well up there? I think it might have been this: **we were on mission. On that trail, everyone was spending themselves to summit.** We all had a common purpose. Our end-goal was the same. So we were mostly indifferent to our differences.

And I'm pretty sure that's a really close parallel to how we are expected to live as followers of Jesus. Unity is forged when our eyes are fixed the same savior. When we surrender our hearts to the truth about who Jesus is, who we are, and what is coming -- it changes everything. This is a blink of an eye life. **Eternal stuff matters, not much else should have sovereignty to divide.** This does not mean we should not speak up when we see someone placing their feet on shaky ground. It doesn't mean we won't argue, and it won't mean we endorse what is wrong at the cost of what is right. It does mean, we keep the big things big and the little things little.

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" — Psalm 133:1

Here's the thing — if we do not have a common mission, we cannot have unity. If our hope is in different places, we aren't running toward the same summit. What do I believe about who Jesus is? Answer that question and you will know who your people are. You will rally for them, run to them, and dismiss irrelevant differences.

And you know what happens next? You become an *aroma of salvation*. You point to something we are all asking for... belonging somewhere. Invited to be who you were made to be, living in the middle of the greatest story of all time. You become a life-giver, and our family grows.

So what summit are you climbing toward?