

Introduction: Two competing agendas

*“Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through Me (Jesus) will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. The thief's purpose is to **steal** and **kill** and **destroy**. My purpose is to give them **a rich and satisfying life**.”*

John 10:9-10 NLT

- God's Agenda = _____ → Unstoppable!
- Satan's Agenda = _____ → Diabolical!

“Diabolical” – Extremely wicked or cruel, evil, fiendish, heinous, hellish, vile, vicious, satanic, infernal, demonic, despicable, deplorable.
(Webster's, Wiktionary)

- What would rank as diabolical in your list of evils?

1. Genocide?	6.
2. Serial killers?	7.
3. Mass murders?	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

Precepts to remember *

1. Good and evil are realities, not merely concepts or metaphors. Matthew 4
2. God is the source of all good; Satan, the author of evil. James 1, Genesis 3
3. Satan is a fallen angel who led 1/3 of the angels in a rebellion against God.
Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14
4. We are in an "invisible war" with temporal and eternal consequences. Ephesians 6
5. We face a formidable, but defeated foe. Colossians 2:15
6. We fight **from** victory, not **for** victory. 1 John 4:4
7. Ignorance of his tactics is lethal. 2 Corinthians 11:3-14

Perceptions to challenge

1. Two common errors – C.S. Lewis
2. Our view of "diabolical" vs. God's
3. A lesson from "The Screwtape Letters"

*A complete study of spiritual warfare is available in the book, Small Group DVD, or audio series, The Invisible War by Chip Ingram. Available at www.LivingontheEdge.org

A pattern to recognize

Acts 6

- The Context – _____ growth/change.
- The Complaint – _____ needs.
- The Core - differences are fertile ground for _____ when growth/change creates real or perceived unmet needs.
- The Cure – “New wine demands new wineskins.” - Jesus

Principles to practice at the first sign of disunity

1. Don't be _____; listen objectively. Acts 6:1
2. Get to the _____; refuse to blame. Acts 6:2
3. Seek outside _____; the “3rd” alternative. Acts 6:3
4. Be _____; accept that roles and priorities will always change, in healthy, growing environments. Acts 6:4
5. Refuse to _____; change means “different,” not wrong. Acts 6:5-7
6. _____; our perceived loss of “control/power”
Makes us vulnerable to divisive words and/or behavior. Acts 6:8-15

A prayer to ponder

*^{11b} “Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name—the name You gave Me—so **that they may be one** as We are One. . . . ¹⁵My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one. . . . ²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, ²¹ **that all of them may be one**, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. ²² I have given them the glory that You gave Me, **that they may be one as We are One**: ²³ I in them and You in Me. **May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.**”*

John 17:11b, 15, 20-23 (NIV)

Personal Application and Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. Is there a person or group that you need to forgive or seek forgiveness from, to answer Jesus' prayer for unity?
2. Have you subconsciously allowed “differences” in personality, gender, culture, spiritual background, or ethnicity to put up barriers in relationships or make you feel superior to those not like you?
3. In view of this prayer by Jesus, is “division and disunity” diabolical in God's eyes?
4. Could our acceptance of “moderate disunity” explain the lack of power and impact the church has in your geographical area?
5. Will you pray this week for Christ's unity within the Church, your family, and relationships?