

March 3/4, 2001

The Truth About Our Life in Christ

A Study in the Book of Ephesians

One in the Spirit

Ephesians 4:1-6

Study Questions

Opening Discussion

1. Have you ever been in a church where there was significant disunity? Share that experience. How did the disunity affect your own spiritual growth? How did it affect the church's ability to accomplish the mission?
2. How should disagreements be handled in order to address areas that might need to change and still maintain the unity of the church?
3. What should be our relationship with other churches in our city? Who should we partner with and to what extent do we partner with them?

Bible Study

1. Read Ephesians 4:1-6
2. The word "therefore" in verse 1 refers to what we've studied in chapters 1-3. Summarize what you've learned in those chapters.
3. Based on the truth of chapters 1-3, Paul entreats (begs, pleads) believers to "walk in a manner worthy" of our calling. The word "worthy" means to balance the scale. In other words, to live in such a way that it balances the scale with who we are in Christ from the first three chapters.

In practical terms, what does it mean to walk worthy of our calling?

4. Verse 3 states that we are to work very hard to guard the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Compare those words with Jesus' words in John 13:34,35 and 17:11. What is unity? How important is unity? Why?
5. Paul indicates that unity flows from godly character. Godly character is defined by five terms in this passage. Define and discuss each term. What do these character qualities look like fleshed out in body life?

Humility

Gentleness

Patience

Showing Forbearance

Love

6. In chapters 1-3 we've seen a significant emphasis on the Trinity. Here, in this discussion of unity, we again see an emphasis on the Trinity. How does this relate to Jesus' words in John 17:11?
7. Verses 4-6 give the theological backbone to unity. Paul makes 7 "one" statements organized around the three persons of the Trinity.

One body and one SPIRIT
Called in one hope, one LORD (Jesus), one faith, one baptism
One GOD and FATHER

Working backwards, the Father creates one family (3:14-15); the Son creates one hope, one faith, one baptism; and the Spirit brings us together, then, in one body (1:23).

Paul's "one statements" reflect the truth we've studied in chapters 1-3. Is it possible to trust Jesus as Savior and be exempt from the position in Christ revealed in the first three chapters?

If all these "one statements" are true of all believers, why is the church so fractured in our city and around the world? Do you think we really understand the "what and why" of our unity in the universal church today?

Application

1. On a scale of 1-5 rate how you think you measure up with the 5 character qualities mentioned in verse 2. How would the people who know you best rate you in these areas?
2. As a group, list three practical things you can do to be "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
3. In very practical terms, what can you do to encourage the "one church" in our community to be unified in a way that's pleasing to God?