

## We Belong to Each Other

Paul, in the first three chapters of Ephesians, explains the great foundation upon which our salvation rests—this is our “calling”—accomplished by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. We will explore these mysteries for all eternity—even the angels stand in utter amazement at the wisdom of God manifest in the Church.

Having laid that theological and spiritual foundation, the Apostle is now eager to explain to us how we live this out, how we respond to this immeasurable, unfathomable love of God. He transitions here with some very interesting language – he says we must live a life “worthy” of the calling we have received. The word worthy can mean “equal to” in the sense of two weights in a balance. Now this is truly a remarkable statement about the Christian lifestyle, that is, it must have a depth, a gravity, a significance, that is equal to the gravity of God’s saving work on our behalf!

Now Paul mentions many things in chapters 4-6 about this “weighty” Christian lifestyle: our honesty, our speech, our sexual morality, our worship, our submission to authority; but it is very instructive to notice what he mentions first of all among the important ethical areas of our lives: our unity in the Body of Christ.

### Ephesians 4:1-6

*<sup>1</sup>I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup>with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup>eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Notice three principles in this text:

#### **1. Church unity must be one of our primary objectives in life. (v.1)**

Paul was pleading with them from prison – this was extremely important – to develop, promote, and maintain the unity of the church; because through church unity (a) God is honored, (b) the saints are blessed, and (c) the non-Christians are drawn to the Lord.

#### **2. Church unity will demand radically gracious behavior from us all. (v.2)**

Look at these traits in verse 2: humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance. We are going to have to have some help from Headquarters! And this is exactly what God has done: He has given us His Spirit that we may demonstrate these virtues to one another.

#### **3. Church unity is secured by the unity of the Godhead. (vv.3-6)**

We are only “maintaining” (v.3) what has been given (vv.4-6). In verses 4-6 we see the word “one” seven times. God has firmly established us as His instruments to carry out the purposes of His will, namely, that all things will be united in Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:10) We are going to be successful! We can’t fail! Hallelujah! The big question for us is how we are going to live this out today and tomorrow, until He comes.

## Discussion Questions

- 1) Why is church unity so important to God? To the church? To the unchurched world?
- 2) What are the greatest challenges today to church unity?
- 3) What are some things every believer can do to contribute to the unity of the church?
- 4) What are some of the “cheap substitutes” we often offer to God in the place of real unity? Why should we not tolerate those?
- 5) What difference does it make for us to know that our unity in the church is secured by the unity of the Godhead?

### Digging Deeper

In studying this lesson, what action steps with what people do you need to implement in the days ahead?

Beyond these specific relationships, what can you do in your home church to promote peace and unity?

## Memory Verses

FOR THIS WEEK

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,*  
Philippians 4:19

## Resources

### HELPFUL BOOKS

[Life Together](#)

by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

[Total Church: A Radical](#)

[Reshaping around](#)

[Gospel and Community](#)

by Tim Chester and  
Steve Timmis