

Ephesians
More than a Makeover
God's Glory And Our Unity
Ephesians 4:1-7

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Nov. 24, 2024

I. God Calls Us To Make Unity A Priority

Ephesians 4:3 "...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

NIV "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit..."

NASB "...being diligent to preserve the unity..."

It doesn't matter how much of the Bible you know - if you don't have the same top priority that God has of eagerly maintaining the unity of the family of God, then you'll jeopardize or even destroy the testimony we're supposed to have to a lost and dying world that would cause them to listen to the glorious message of the Gospel we proclaim.

Keep in mind that God's not asking us to start something or create something that He left undone. He's commanding us to keep it alive. Don't let it die and don't be the one who kills it over something you think is more important.

II. God Calls Us To Work On What Jesus Has Already Done

Jesus didn't just die to save individual sinners. **Ephesians 2:13-19** tells us that He died to make unity a reality!

Ephesians 2:16 "... thereby killing the hostility."

Paul uses violent terms to talk about what Jesus did on the cross to make this unity a reality. He had to kill hostility on the cross for us. It took a fight to bring this family of God together and it'll take real struggle and effort to keep it together.

It's a fight worth fighting and what He calls us to do will never exceed what He's already done to put it in place.

Jesus said that the greatest apologetic to the reality of how the Gospel changes people forever would be how we love each other even when we differ with one another over so many different convictions and preferences.

In fact, of everything He could have said to His disciples in His final sermon in the upper room, He chose to talk about this.

John 13:35 "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

III. God Calls Us To Keep Working On Something That The World Cannot Ignore – Unity In The Midst Of Diversity

This passage in **Ephesians** is all about biblical unity, not uniformity. Cults insist on uniformity and get it done with powerful personality, guilt, or intimidation, but Christians are called to strive for unity and we do it by the power of God's Spirit in us.

Unity comes from within and is a work of God's Spirit and God's grace while uniformity is the result of pressure from the outside which is what any cult can do.

Ephesians 4:4-6 "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

The entire Trinity is wrapped up in those three verses as he exults in what God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit has done in every one of us that makes us the same!

Then he rolls right out of all that oneness and sameness into highlighting how Jesus has made us different which is what he's doing in **v. 7** and that's why it begins with the word "but."

Ephesians 4:7 "But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."

Paul's highlighting how Christ gives every believer a different measure of grace or gifting to serve God in the family of God so that we're not all going to see things the same way or have the same priorities about what should be done first.

IV. God Tells Us What It Takes To Keep This Unity Alive

Ephesians 4:2 "...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love..."

A. Cultivate Humility In The Midst Of Your Strong Convictions

Ephesians 4:2 "...with all humility..."

It doesn't matter how much you know, how much you can do, or how gifted you are to do it, if you don't go into it with all humility you'll do more harm than good.

Please study, pray, investigate, think hard, and come to a strong personal conviction about any number of issues, but then hold that conviction with a hand of humility and a heart of love that is keeping two things humbly in mind:

#1 - I could be wrong.

#2 - God could actually lead other believers who love Jesus as much as I do—if not more—to think and choose differently.

B. Recognize That Your Strength Becomes Destructive Unless It's Harnessed With Meekness

Ephesians 4:2 "... and gentleness..."

This passage is talking about strongly gifted people that God gave to the Church, but that strength has to be a strength under control, not out of control!

This is an age-old struggle for as long as the Church has been alive in our world. The tragedy of Christians attacking each other in past few years is not a new thing.

“No wild beasts are as dangerous to man as Christians are to each other.”

~ Julian, *Against the Galileans*

The Greek word for “gentleness” or “meekness” in **v. 2** refers to a powerful animal – like an ox or a stallion – that has been trained and domesticated so that it’s now under control instead of out of control. Being under control is useful and being out of control is destructive in animals and people!

Galatians 5:14-15 “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.”

There’s always been the very real and tragic possibility that Christians would actually bite and devour each other! Paul says, “Watch out! Don’t do it!”

C. Be Passionate But Patient With Other People Who Don’t See Things The Way You Do

Ephesians 4:2 “... with patience, bearing with one another in love...”

The Greeks have more than one word for “patient.” Paul used the Greek word “makrathumia” that was focused exclusively on being patient with people.

In **v. 2** he’s not talking about bearing one another’s burdens. He’s talking about something even harder. He’s talking about when other people are the burden you’re called to bear.