

Ephesians 4:1-16

Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

BIG IDEA

Living out the calling Christ gives you builds others up.

Discussion Questions

1. Get to know each other by saying names while playing "Never Have I Ever"

Here's how to play:

- Everyone holds up 10 fingers.
- One person says, "never have I ever ____" (something they have never done yet assumes most people have done... i.e. Scott might say "played a game of football").
- Anyone in the circle who HAS done that thing puts a finger down.
- Once your fingers are all down, you are OUT! Last person with any fingers up wins!
- Keep going around the circle until someone wins. And keep repeating names as well!

Leader Tip: Take some sweeeeet time letting the kids get comfortable, laugh, joke, and get to know each other better. Once the game (or any other game/activity you might like better) is done, spend some time setting expectations for the year. For example, confidentiality, inclusion, bringing bibles, etc.

2. **Have everyone take their phones out (if they have one) and look through their camera roll or their social media feeds from the last couple of months. After a minute, tell them to put their phones away and answer the following questions:**
 1. **What was a great thing that happened in your life since April?**
 2. **What was a hard thing that happened in your life since April?**

Leader Tip: Set it up so that the person who is about to share prays over the person who just shared. Maybe a prayer of thanksgiving for the good thing? Maybe a prayer of hope or healing for the hard thing? Tonight, you can begin establishing a culture of empathy and care in your group! **If your students do not have phones or you have established a “no phone during cell group” policy, you can do this without their phones.*

3. **Read Ephesians 4:1-6. Spend a moment discussing the significance of Paul referring to himself as a prisoner. How might we be called to live in this same way?**

Theological Thought: By referring to himself as the Lord's "prisoner" again (3:1), Paul reminded his readers of his authority to urge ("implore") them to live this way. Though seated "in the heavenly places *in* Christ," he was also seated in a prison because of his witness *for* Christ. He was in prison because he had followed God's will faithfully.

4. **What word is repeated over and over in the second half of verses 1-6? Why? How can we as a cell group learn from what Paul is saying about oneness?**
5. **Read verses 11-13. Do we fit into any of those categories? Why or why not? In verse 13, What does Paul say is our ultimate goal? How can this group make that a goal for us this year?**

Theological Thought: God is not trying to produce successful Christian business people who can impress the world with their money and influence. He is not trying to fashion successful church leaders who can influence people with their organizational and administrative skills. Nor is He trying to fashion great orators who can move people with persuasive words. He wants to reproduce in His followers the character of His son—His love, His kindness, His compassion, His holiness, His humility, His unselfishness, His servant attitude, His willingness to suffer wrongfully, His ability to forgive, and so much more that characterized His life on earth.

6. **Read verses 14-16. What are some examples of “winds of doctrine,” “human cunning,” or “deceitful schemes” around us today that are easy to become entrapped by?**

Leader Tip: Be discerning in this time- you are the authority! Make sure that they don't go political, judgmental, or ever heretical. Boldly and lovingly guide them to see what is truly from the enemy.

7. **If our only goal this whole year was to carry out verse 15 as a group, what might that look like?**
8. **Take time to pray over the unity of your cell group this year.**