

Ephesians

Transformed by Grace, Empowered by Peace

Study 12

Maintaining the Unity of the Spirit

Ephesians 4:1-6

Ephesians 4:1-6

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

1. Fill in the blanks. What is Ephesians 4 about?

_____ and _____ out spiritual _____ in the church.

(Living, working, transformation)

Summary	Reference
Maintaining the Unity of the Spirit	Eph. 4:1-6
Utilizing Diversity to Build Up Unity	Eph. 4:7-16
New Life and New Integrity	Eph. 4:17-25
Overcoming Anger and Bitterness	Eph. 4:25-32

2. Comprehension question. Based on the video lecture, what are the 3 ingredients required to maintain the unity of the Spirit?

- Motivation
- Behaviour
- Foundation

Ephesians 4:1-3

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the **calling** with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to **keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace.”

3. a) Comprehension question. Based on Ephesians 4:1, what should be our motivation for unity?

We have been called.

- b) Comprehension question. Following a calling comes with a price. What price did Paul pay? (Refer to Ephesians 4:1)

Paul was imprisoned.

- c) Comprehension question. And what price did the Lord Jesus pay for unity? (Refer to Ephesians 2:14-16)

4. a) Comprehension question. Based on Ephesians 4:2, what are the behaviours that live up to our calling?

- Humility

- Gentleness

- Patience

- Bearing with one another in love

- b) Comprehension question. What is this related to?

- The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)

5. a) Comprehension question. How does the video lecture define humility?

- The humble recognition of the worth and value of other people
- To elevate God (upwards) and encourage others (outwards)

b) Comprehension question. How does CS Lewis define humility?

- Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less

6. Objective question. Based on the video lecture, how should we properly focus on others?

- A. Abandon all selfish ambition
- B. Abandon selfish ambition but does not deny that you have legitimate interests as well
- C. Look to the interests of others
- D. Look to the interests of others whom you love
- E. Don't underestimate yourself but lean towards regarding others more highly than yourself
- F. Don't overestimate yourself but lean towards regarding others more highly than yourself
- G. Take the attitude of the Lord Jesus which is to serve sacrificially

7. Comprehension question. Based on the video lecture, what is the proper perspective of who we are? Provide the Bible references.

- 1 Cor. 4:7 - Understand that our achievements and talents were all given by God and bear no personal merit
- Romans 12:3 - Understand each are given different proportions of faith hence we do not compare but seriously consider the proportion of our own faith and talents and be responsible and thankful for them and not allowed them to puff us up

8. Comprehension question. Based on the video lecture, what is gentleness/meekness?
- Gentleness of the strong, whose strength is under control - it is the quality of a strong personality who is nevertheless master of himself and the servant of others
 - Meek man thinks little of his personal claims, as the humble man of his personal merits
 - The man who is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time

9. a) Comprehension question. Based on the video lecture, what is the definition of patience?

- To endure discomfort without complaint

- b) Discussion question. Does complaining to God mean that we are not patient? (cf. Psalms 44:24, Psalms 142:2-3)

10. Churches are known to be dysfunctional due to sin. Consider the following:

- Gossip
- Self-serving church members
- Partisan spirit (favouring of certain leaders)
- Hypercritical spirit
- Power groups
- Silent and fearful majority

- a) Reflection question. Which one do you feel most affected by?

- b) Comprehension question. What is the secret formula to handle your chosen situation in church?

- Forbearance in love - Bear with one another in love.

Ephesians 3:1-2

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

11. We are called to maintain unity that has already been created. What do we have in common with other believers?

- One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father

Takeaway

A. Ephesians 4 is about Living and Working out Spiritual Transformation in the Church

B. Maintaining the Unity of the Spirit requires:

a. Motivation

i. Our calling to keep the unity

b. Behaviour

i. Humility

ii. Gentleness

iii. Patience

iv. Bearing in love

c. Foundation

i. One Body

ii. One Spirit

iii. One Hope

iv. One Lord

v. One Faith

vi. One Baptism

vii. One God and Father

Case Study

Case 1 – Disunity

Gladys Ho was active in church serving in the kitchen ministry where she was administrating the culinary activities. The team would regularly cook up a nice meal for the newcomers welcome dinner or other evangelistic events.

Tessa Lai is a rather vocal person in church and has a rather disruptive habit of passing comments on the quality of the food at these events which has caused more than the occasional complaints from the women doing the cooking to Gladys. This was done using the WhatsApp chat group. Notwithstanding, the problems this has caused, it is also true that the quality of food has recently deteriorated and the ladies doing the ministry have been discouraged and hence put in less effort.

Hence a vicious cycle of disparaging comments causing discouragement which then causes poor food which then fuels further complaints which now become legitimate.

1. What steps can Gladys take to address the situation in a manner that will preserve the unity of the body? How should she do this?
2. Tessa Lai got very upset when the issue was brought up to her and has not attended church for more than a month. Should any action be taken in the light of the passage we have just read?
3. Is this a common kind of problem in churches? Why is it so and how can we be better prepared to deal with such problems or prevent them from occurring?