

Ephesians

Transformed by Grace, Empowered by Peace

Study 13

Diversity Towards Unity

Ephesians 4:7-16

Ephesians 4:7-10 (NIV)

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says:

“When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people.”

(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

1) Objective question. Choose the most appropriate answer. What was the main point of Paul’s explanation that Christ ascended on high?

- A. It describes God’s triumphal ascension to his throne after defeating his enemies. Paul probably adapts this psalm (Psalm 68:18) to show that Christ, as the ultimate victor, is able to give gifts (the leaders of v. 11) to the church.
- B. Paul is in his own world, simply writing confusing things.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 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.

2) a) Discussion question. Which part of the passage indicates unity and which part indicates diversity?

b) Fill in the Blanks. According to the video lecture slide “Principle vital in showing intervention of God”, fill in the areas where we have unity and which areas we have diversity.

UNITY	AREAS OF UNITY
Ephesians 4:1-6	
Ephesians 4:12-16	
DIVERSITY	AREAS OF DIVERSITY
Ephesians 4:7-11	

c) Fill in the Blanks. According to the video lecture slides on Spiritual gifts, fill in the following.

i) What are Spiritual gifts according to Tim Keller?

Spiritual gifts are	
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ii) What are the three criteria listed for the spiritual gifts to meet the needs of building the community?

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Background information

“I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And that which I can do by God’s grace, I will do.” D.L. Moody

“God gave me a gift not for me but for you and God gave you a gift not for you, but for me. If you don’t use your gift, you are depriving me; and if I don’t use my gift, I am robbing you.” Rick Warren.

iii) Read the background information above. What are the two practical implications and scriptural basis mentioned in the video lecture?

iv) According to the video lecture, why do we have to serve with a church?

The Removal of hostility caused by sin and creation one new man expresses	
Sin is about alienation and its reversal must be demonstrated in	
Proof of our transformation	

v) What's the difference between a gift and an office?

Gift	Office

vi) Discussion question. Based on Dr. Peter's lecture, there are the Twelve Apostles and the church planters (apostoloi) mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8:23. Can there still be the office of apostles today?

Ephesians 4:14-16 (NIV)

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. 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. 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.

3) a) Reflection question. When the word “mature believer” is mentioned, does anyone come to mind? Please describe what that person is like.

b) Reflection question. When the word “immature believer” is mentioned, does anyone come to mind? Please describe what that person is like

c) Discussion question. Describe the following based on experience: i) Someone who says truth without love ii) Someone who “loves” without truth iii) Someone who says the truth with love

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE VARIED

1 Cor 12:8-10	Ephesians 4	1 Cor 12:28	Romans 12:6-8	1 Peter 4:11	1 Cor 7:7
Utterance wisdom	Apostle	Apostle	Leader	Speak	Marriage
Utterance knowledge	Prophet	Prophet	Prophecy	Service	Celibacy
Faith	Evangelist	Teacher	Teaching		
Gifts of Healing	Pastor-Teacher	Miracles	Exhortation		
Miracles		Healing	Giving		
Prophecy		Helping	Mercy		
Discernment					
Tongues		Administration	Service		
Interpretation		Tongues			

- A. Affinity: Do you have a burden interest of desire to do a certain kind of ministry
- B. Ability: Do you have what it takes to meet the need. Do you feel like you need to get some training? Do you have the spiritual ability to do it at this time?
- C. Opportunity: Are there others willing to work with you?
- D. Reflect and research: Recheck the need, your support, and the ability to pay the cost.

d) Reflection question. There are many gifts including those not mentioned in this table. What do you think yours are?

Takeaway

In Ephesians 4:7-16, apostle Paul tells the Ephesian church that each of them is given gifts to be used to build each other up to the glory of God.

Case Study

Case 1 – Diversity Towards Unity

Tai Chee Man goes to Third Baptist Church, attends weekly bible study, joins a Lifegroup, and only helps out in church occasionally when he feels like it. The church has only two pastors for a congregation of 700 people. He thinks that the pastor's prayer is more powerful than his own prayer so he often asks the pastors to pray in any gathering or visitation.

When invited to join a mission trip, he says he won't go unless the pastors also go. When he saw that none of the pastors went and he criticized them for being not missional. The pastors also visit the sickly once every two weeks to pray for them, he thinks this isn't enough, they should visit and pray for them at least twice a week.

He thinks that it's a pastor's duty to minister to the poor and needy, if there is a difficult person who is also struggling with financial difficulty, they should be referred to the pastor. He also thinks that the pastors are not visiting the Lifegroup often enough and should drop by his Lifegroup so they can provide some teachings and answer the hard questions his group faces from the sermons. There are 50 Lifegroups in his church. He thinks that the pastor's sermons are not good enough and should be improved. He often sends videos of other preachers he likes to the pastors' WhatsApp so that they can both learn from these international preachers.

Chee Man thinks that the pastor's wives are not doing enough, they only serve in one ministry, don't smile often enough in the church, not very friendly. They should open their house and be hospitable to anyone whether church members or strangers. That is something they should do as pastor's wives.

1) a) Discussion question. What aspects of today's passage do you think that Chee Man has missed?

b) Discussion question. What are tasks that lay members can also do?

c) Discussion question. What do you think is an appropriate pastor-to-laymen ratio? (eg. one pastor for every 500 members? 50 members?)

d) Discussion question. What do you think is an appropriate serving congregation (giver) to non-serving congregation (receiver) ratio?

Case 2 – Diversity Towards Unity

A life group leader has started teaching his members that everyone who is baptized in the Holy Spirit must speak in tongues otherwise they are not filled with the Spirit and live a weakened, ineffective spiritual life. This is at odds with the doctrinal stand of the church but his life group is the largest in the church.

2) a) Discussion question. How should the leaders deal with this?

b) Reflection question. You are one of the members of the Lifegroup, what would you do as a lay member?

c) Reflection question. Do you know where your church stands on this?

Case 3 – Excerpt from "A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society" by Eugene H. Peterson

There are Christians, of course, who never put their names down on a membership list; there are Christians who refuse to respond to the call to worship each Sunday; there are Christians who say, "I love God but I hate the church." But they are members all the same, whether they

like it or not, whether they acknowledge it or not. For God never makes private, secret salvation deals with people. His relationships with us are personal, true; intimate, yes; but private, no. We are a family in Christ. When we become Christians, we are among brothers and sisters in faith. No Christian is an only child.

But of course, the fact that we are a family of faith does not mean we are one big happy family. The people we encounter as brothers and sisters in faith are not always nice people. They do not stop being sinners the moment they begin believing in Christ. They don't suddenly metamorphose into brilliant conversationalists, exciting companions and glowing inspirations. Some of them are cranky, some of them dull and others (if the truth must be spoken) a drag. But at the same time our Lord tells us that they are brothers and sisters in faith. If God is my Father, then this is my family.

3) Discussion question. What do you think of this excerpt?