

WHO AM I?

Ephesians

LIVE IN UNITY

INTRODUCTION

Ephesians 2:11-22

The unity of the body of Christ between Jews and Gentiles refers to the oneness and solidarity of believers in Jesus Christ, regardless of their racial or ethnic background. This unity is rooted in the fact that all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are part of the same spiritual family, the Church.

Throughout the New Testament, the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ is a central theme. In the Old Testament, God had chosen the nation of Israel to be His special people and had given them a unique set of laws and practices. However, with the coming of Jesus, the barrier between Jews and Gentiles was broken down. In Ephesians 2:14, Paul writes, "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility." This means that through faith in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to God and are brought into the same spiritual family.

The unity of Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ is not simply an abstract concept but has practical implications for how believers treat one another. For example, in Romans 15:7, Paul writes, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." This means that believers are called to put aside any racial or ethnic differences and to show love and hospitality towards one another.

In short, the unity of the body of Christ between Jews and Gentiles is a central aspect of Christian belief and practice. It is based on the shared experience of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and being part of the same spiritual family. It requires believers to put aside any racial or ethnic differences and to show love and hospitality towards one another. Ultimately, the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ serves as a witness to the world, demonstrating the gospel's transformative power and the love of God.

OPEN IT

1. What is a time when you were at odds with another group of people? (Think schools competing)

READ IT

Ephesians 2:11-22

EXPLORE IT

2. At one time, you were separated from whom? (2:12)
3. When you were separated, how much hope did you have? (2:12)
4. How were you brought near to Christ? (2:13)
5. Who is our peace? Who is responsible for breaking down our walls? (2:14)
6. Through Jesus, we have access to whom? (2:18)
7. Who is the cornerstone of our faith? (2:20)

APPLY IT

I have trouble remembering what it was like before I was a dad, before I was married, and before I was a Pastor. That is what Paul is writing here in Ephesians. He wants the believers who are reading this letter to remember what it was like to be someone who was not following Jesus. More than that, someone who did not know anything about the real God or the future hope of the Messiah.

How would you explain each of these terms in Ephesians 2?

8. Separated from Christ

9. Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel

10. Strangers to the covenants of promise

11. Having no hope

12. Without God in the world

“Two stories in the Bible evoke strong feelings in me every time I read them. One is the story of Joseph and his brothers. The other is Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son. The reason that these stories often cause tears to well up in my eyes is that they are stories of reconciled relationships.

When Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, treats them kindly, and forgives them for the terrible thing that they had done in selling him into slavery, it is a moving testimony to the power of reconciled relationships. Later, when their father has died, the brothers fear that Joseph would inflict revenge that he had been withholding. But Joseph wept and treated them kindly because he recognized God’s sovereign purpose in what had happened.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the young man impudently rejected the love of his father and chose instead the company of his fast-living, fickle friends. The father’s broken heart longed for the return of his wayward son. When he finally saw him coming in the distance, the father felt compassion for him, ran to him, embraced him, kissed him, and joyously welcomed him back into the family. That powerful story shows the tremendous joy both of reconciled human relationships and also of sinners being reconciled to the heavenly Father.”¹

Paul describes in these verses of chapter 2 how two groups of people, one being called the circumcised and the other uncircumcised, needed to realize that because of the blood shed by the Anointed One, they were now able to be one body. It no longer mattered where you were from, what language you spoke, or who your parents were, you could have the same Spirit dwelling within you.

In the next couple of questions, we will go on a quest to understand Ephesians 2:11-22 a little more by looking at numerous scriptures.

13. God chose Israel and gave them promises like no other people in the world.

Write out: Isaiah 43:1

Write out: Genesis 17:7

¹ Cole, S. (2007). Lesson 17: Reconciled relationships (Ephesians 2:14-18). Lesson 17: Reconciled Relationships (Ephesians 2:14-18) | Bible.org. Retrieved January 2, 2023, from <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-17-reconciled-relationships-ephesians-214-18>

Write out: Romans 9:4–5

Read: Deuteronomy 14:2 | Exodus 6:7

14. However, God is clear that Gentiles (uncircumcised or not Jewish) also have the same path to salvation as the Jews do.

Write out: Ephesians 3:6

Write out: Romans 3:29

Write out: Isaiah 42:6

- 15. Do you have a personal relationship with the Father because you have trusted in the blood of His Son, Jesus, to cover all of your sins? (See Ephesians 2:4–5, Colossians 1:14, John 14:16–17, John 14:19, Philippians 3:20–21)**

If you answer yes to this question, move to question 16. If you are not sure what to put down or you put no for your answer, talk with your small group leader for more information.

Jonah was a great example of someone who did not want Gentiles to follow God's way. Jonah couldn't stand the people of Nineveh and did not want to go to Nineveh because he knew that the people there were wicked, and he did not want to see them repent and be forgiven by God. He believed they deserved to be punished rather than given a chance to change their ways. In the end, even though Jonah went kicking and screaming (or via a large fish), God did accomplish what He set out to do; save the nation of Nineveh (at least for that particular generation).

- 16. Why do you shy away from sharing the Gospel at times? *Spend some serious time thinking about this before writing something.* Think about what is blocking you from talking with your brother, your neighbor, your co-worker, your boss, your mother, or your good friend that you go bowling with. What stops you from sharing the one thing that truly could help your relationship with this person?**