

Unity

Make Every Effort

Living for Jesus means living in *unity* (Ephesians 4:1-6). Unity is not based on who we are or what we do, nor is it based on a code, cause, political platform, or preference. Unity is based on the salvation we have received through Jesus, that we bear His name and are a part of His family. And because of this reality, unity is not something we create. It is something we maintain and guard so that we do not lose it. And unity is not uniformity, nor is it an enemy of diversity. Rather, unity *in Christ* celebrates our differences, and it welcomes all regardless of their background, abilities, giftings, or history. He is the unity in our diversity. Unity fights against selfishness and is protected by humility, gentleness, patience, and loving endurance. The world will know that we are Jesus followers by our love for one another and our unity.

GET THINGS STARTED

Living in a manner worthy of our calling in Jesus is tied to *unity* in all things. And by our love for another, the world knows that we are His disciples. If these things are true, then what causes divisiveness and disunity within the church and between fellow followers of Jesus? Especially for Christians, what is at the root of disunity in the heart and mind?

GO DEEPER

1. From Ephesians 4:1-3 and John 17:20-21, how is unity within the church connected to being a witness for Jesus in the world? How does *loving one another* impact those around us, in John 13:34-35?
2. According to Ephesians 4:3, unity is not something we create but something we keep or maintain. So how is unity established, (or upon whom is it established) and how do we protect it? What are the biggest threats to unity, especially between believers in Jesus?
3. How does Ephesians 4:4-13 show that unity is not uniformity nor the enemy of diversity? What does it look like to possibly maintain unity while disagreeing on an issue or decision?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. With whom are you experiencing disunity right now? What does it look like to *make every effort* to keep the unity of the Holy Spirit? How might forgiveness and/or reconciliation enter the picture within the relationship in pursuit of unity? What can you own and take responsibility for in your own heart? What is God possibly asking you to do?
2. Who in your sphere of influence have you not handled with humility, gentleness, patience, and loving endurance? How has the tone or manner of your communication possibly undermined unity, even if you were fighting for righteousness? What steps do you need to take to bring healing?

PRACTICE IT NOW

As a group, take time to pray for unity to arise within you and within the church. Ask God to show you where disunity has been sown (whether intentionally or unintentionally) and ask Him to show you how to begin the process of forgiveness and restoration. Ask God also to show you how to love one another well as a witness to the world, and how to take steps towards protecting the unity that already exists in your relationships and within the church.