

BEN WASHINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study Series – Part 2

“I am a Church Member”

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I AM A CHURCH MEMBER



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I WILL BE A UNIFYING CHURCH MEMBER

Biblical Principle

God expects every believer to make every effort to promote and maintain the unity of the church.

Biblical Passage in Focus

Ephesians 4:1-16

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Ephesians 4:1-16

1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4. [There is] one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6. One God and Father of all, who [is] above all, and through all, and in you all. 7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

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Ephesians 4:1-16

10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14. That we [henceforth] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [even] Christ: 16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

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Life Impact and Lesson Goals

This lesson is designed to help us understand church membership in relationship to unity within the body life of the church by:

- Examining the biblical concept and nature of Christianity unity
 - Examining the role of the Godhead in Christian unity
- Examining the role and responsibility of Christians as unifiers
- Examining the various ways of maintaining unity in the church

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Chapter Highlights

The world will know whether or not we are Christians by the way we who are believers act toward one another!

God demands that as members of the church **WE BECOME A UNIFYING PRESENCE!**

Unity is vital to the health of the church.

Gossip “idle talk”...is a divisive act in the church.

Don't be a SOURCE of gossip

Don't be a SEEKER of gossip

Don't be a SPREADER of gossip.

Unity in the church will not happen if the members have “unforgiving hearts”

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Lesson Outline

Every Member is a **Unifier** (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Every Member is **United** (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Every Member is **Unifying** (Ephesians 4:7-16)

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The video clip from the movie, "Coach Carter" illustrates oneness and what it means to be a team. They were willing to help Cruse out because they saw themselves as a team of one. And this is the attitude that Christians must possess. Vance Havener once said, "Christians, like snowflakes are frail, but when they stick together they can stop traffic." The church is more than a team; it's a family, and she will succeed at all she sets out to accomplish, if every member sticks together and walk together in oneness/unity.

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There is nothing that the church couldn't do, if every member possessed the attitude that if one member of the family struggles, the whole family struggles and if one member of the family triumphs, the whole family triumphs. And this is the focus of our next lesson in Thom S. Rainer's book, I AM A Church Member. In chapter two, Rainer highlights that biblically; every member has a responsibility to be a **Unifying Member**. In fact, the biblical principle of lesson two is thusly; God expects every believer to make every effort to promote and maintain the unity of the church. And this is the message of Ephesians 4:1-16.

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Lesson Historical Setting

The purpose of the book of Ephesians is to disclose God's eternal purpose of uniting and reconciling all things in and through Christ on earth and in heaven. One of the centralizing theological themes of Ephesians is that through Christ, God is building himself one spiritual community comprised of Jews and Gentiles past, present and future. Ephesians is divided into major sections. Chapters 1-3 describe the Wealth of the Believer and chapters 4-5 describe the Walk of the Believer. Chapters 1-3 deal with our Doctrine and chapters 4-5 deals with our Duty. Chapter 4:1 marks the shift from Principle to Practice.

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Lesson Historical Setting

Chapters 1-3 address our Positional Unity in Christ and chapters 4-5 addresses our Practical Unity in Christ. Chapter 4:1-16 exhorts believers to WALK as ONE in CHRIST. Since believers are one in Christ, Paul exhorts believers to make every effort to maintain the unity of the church. Hence Paul implies that every member of the church is called to promote and maintain the unity of the church. For this to happen, every member must commit himself or herself to being a Unifying Church Member. A unifying church member is one who sees him or herself as a **Unifier, United and Unifying.**

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Every Member is a Unifier (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Ephesians 4:1-3 marks the transition from Positional Unity to Practical Unity. Now that Paul has explained our positional unity in Christ, he exhorts us to practice unity. A unifier is one who practices unity and verses 1-3 clearly teaches that every member is called in Christ to practice unity. Note three things about being a Unifier.

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Every member is Called to be a Unifier- (v.1)

Verse 1 exhorts believers to walk worthy of the calling by which they have been called. The Greek word translated “worthy” axios, carries the root idea of weight. This is where we get our English word, “axiom”, which means “to be of equal weight.” In an equation the axiom indicates doing something to each side of the equation so it remains right. Paul is saying that believers should try to live equal to the great blessings described in Chapters 1-3. To walk in unity and oneness is to walk in a manner consistent with the blessings of salvation. The call to salvation is a call to solidarity. And Paul makes it clear that every believer is called to walk in unity or called to practice unity.

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In Christ believers are called to be Unifiers. The Greek word for called means to be invited. Believers who have been invited to embrace the salvation of God in Christ are commanded to walk in a manner that is in keeping with the call of salvation. When we embraced the call to salvation it was also a calling to walk in unity. To walk in disunity or promote disunity is to reject your calling in Christ and walk in an ungodly manner. Godly living requires believers to be Unifiers. As believers we aren't called to be bond breakers. We aren't called to sow discord within the body of Christ. Rather as believers, we are called to be at peace and do our best to live peaceably with all men, but especially with members of the household of faith. Peacemakers are Unifiers.

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Every member is to possess the Character of a Unifier- (v.2)

Verse 1 describes what we are called to be unifiers, but verse 2 describes how we are to do the work of a unifier and the character needed to do so. Paul highlights the character of a unifier. A unifier exercises lowliness or humility. The word lowliness carries the idea of having a sober and low opinion of oneself. Gentleness is power under control. (Matthew 11:29). Long suffering is long tempered. Forebearing is the ability to endure discomfort without fighting back.

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Every member is Charged to be a Unifier- (v.3)

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Every Member is United (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Every member is United in God the Spirit- (v.4)

Every member is United in God the Son- (v.5)

Every member is United in God the Father- (v.6)

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Every Member is Unifying (Ephesians 4:7-11)

Every member Unifies the Body through their **Spiritual Gift** - (vv.7-14)

The **Grounds** for our **Gifts** - (vv.7-11)

The **Goal** of our **Gifts** - (vv. 12-16)

Every member **Unifies the Body** through Sincere **Grace** - (v.15)

Every member **Unifies the Body** through Shared **Generosity** - (v. 16)

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Questions?