

EPHESIANS 4:1-16

One Body, One Purpose

Memory Verse

"There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call."

Ephesians 4:4

Real-life Problems

Group projects often bring out the best in us, and the worst. We might be tempted to think, "If I could just do it myself, it would be so much easier and faster." However, when a teacher assigns a group project, the point is probably not just to get the work done quicker. Rather, the point of a group project is that the result is actually better when different people bring their opinions, ideas and talents together. Working in groups is hard because it exposes our weaknesses. And when we see our weaknesses, our natural response is to call out others as well. However, the Bible tells us that our weaknesses should actually emphasize others' strengths and vice versa. While we might be tempted in the Christian life to think it would be easier to just go it alone, the truth is God has called us to a group project. We are stronger together—even in weaknesses—than we could ever be alone.

The Good News

God is love and, in Christ, He has shown His love in fullness to His church. It is by this love that God has united a diverse church under one faith. Now, as that church, we display God's love to the world as we mature in Christ and build one another up by love.

I. Introduction

OPENING QUESTIONS

Idea #1: Who likes group projects? What is it about group projects that make them fun? What makes group projects challenging?

Idea #2: In your opinion, who is the greatest sports team of all time? Or, if you're not a sports fan, who would you say is the greatest musical group of all time? What makes them so great?

Idea #3: Has there ever been a time when someone helped you without you asking for it? What was that like for you?

PRAY

Open your time together in prayer.

REHEARSING THE GOSPEL

What does gospel mean?

Good news

What's the good news?

Jesus died for my sins

Why did He die for your sins?

So that I can have abundant life in relationship with Him now and forever

What is grace?

God's love for undeserving sinners

REVIEW

1) What were the two reasons Paul wrote this letter?

1) To remind the church of the power of the gospel 2) To encourage believers to live in light of their new identity as the church

2) Who was the original audience of this letter?

The church, or followers of Jesus Christ, in Ephesus

3) Where was Paul when he wrote this letter?

Paul was in prison for his work in spreading the gospel.

What's going on?

REMINDE

The love of Christ is beyond measure. However, while we will never know all of His love, God has given us the gift to know it in deeper ways. We will grow in our understanding of the love of Christ in two ways, through knowledge and experience. We should pray to God to help us with both. Also, the power of God is beyond imagination. We should boldly approach God with our prayers requests, yet we should remember that God can do more than we can even ask. So we should pray specifically and expectantly.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) As the church, we unite under one God in one faith.
- 2) As the church, we equip the saints by seeking maturity.
- 3) As the church, we build up one another in love through our gifts.

Read

Read **Ephesians 4:1-16** aloud in your group.

II. Questions for Discussion

A. WHAT?

1) According to verses 1-2, how is Paul urging the believers to walk and how does he tell them it will look to walk that way?

He is urging them to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which they have been called. They need humility, gentleness, patience, and to bear with one another in love.

2) How many "ones" can you find in verses 4-6? What are they?

Seven—1) one body, 2) one Spirit, 3) one hope, 4) one Lord, 5) one faith, 6) one baptism, 7) one God

3) In verse 11, list the five gifts given? What are their two purposes according to verse 12

Gifts—1) apostles, 2) prophets, 3) evangelists, 4) shepherds, 5) teachers

Purposes—1) to equip the saints for the work of the ministry 2) to build up the body of Christ

4) Looking at verse 14, what are the three things Paul warns that children can get carried away by?

1) Wind of doctrine, 2) human cunning, 3) craftiness in deceitful schemes

5) What are we to grow up into according to verse 15, and how are we to do it?

We are to grow up into "Him who is the head, into Christ," and we do this by speaking the truth in love.

6) What is it that makes the body grow according to verse 16?

When each part of the body is working properly by being joined and help together by every joint.

B. SO WHAT?

1) What do you think is the significance of Paul's repetition and emphasis on "one"-ness before calling the church to growth in maturity?

Paul wants to emphasize the unity of the church because—according to verse 16—if the church is not first unified, it will not work properly for the growth of its people.

2) What do you think is the benefit or reason for God giving so many different gifts to the church?

We can see in this passage that the point of God giving gifts to the church is for the building up and equipping of the church. God is calling the church to maturity. As the body of Christ, the church must consist of many different members. And as the church is going to consist of different members, it must be equipped by different gifts.

The Helium Stick Challenge

Read the instructions for the Helium Stick Challenge here: ultimatecampresource.com/team-building-activities/team-building-games-and-initiatives/helium-stick/

The objective of this challenge is for your group to work together to finish the task of lowering the stick. While it seems like a simple task at first, unless the group is working in perfect unity, the opposite will actually start happening and the stick will rise.

This is a great activity to demonstrate the power of working together that is explained in Ephesians 4:16.

The body of Christ works properly and grows in love only when every member is joined and working together. Use the helium stick challenge to demonstrate how when we work together the mission is accomplished, and when we try to work on our own, we actually go against the mission.

3) Why do you think it is easy for a young Christians to get tossed about or carried away? What does this communicate to us about the importance of community in the Christian life?

Just as with a child, a younger believer does not have enough of a foundation to stand strong against the winds and waves of culture. This is why the church is a vital part of the life of a Christian because it is through the church that we are protected in our young age and by the work of the church in our lives that we mature.

4) Why do you think it matters to speak truth in love?

Similar to what we learned about at the end of Ephesians 3, love is not just something we know about, but something we experience. The church is being built up in love. That makes love a vital part of the church. However, if the church is to be built up in maturity as well, then truth is just as vital. To protect ourselves from the waves and wind, we have to have a foundation of truth, while remembering that the world will know us by our love for one another (John 13:35).

C. NOW WHAT?

1) Consider your peers in this room, what are some of the gifts you believe God has given them? In what ways do you see them using those gifts to serve the church?

2) In what ways does this passage challenge your view of Christian community? How can our church/group begin to practice this type of community?

Answers will vary. Try to help your students get to the practical level here. Examples of this might be—praying for each other more, helping others discern their gifts and how to use them to serve, serving one another out of our gifts, studying Scripture together, etc.

3) What are some ways you can pursue the type of growth in your faith that Paul describes in this passage?

Paul connects the faith and knowledge that lead to mature manhood with the verse right before it. In verses 11-12, Paul describes all the gifts/people God gives to the church in order to equip the saints for ministry and to build up the body. So Christian growth has to involve the church and other believers. Try to help your students navigate practical ways they can pursue their church and pursue fellow believers for the sake of their growth in the faith.

Main takeaway

As the church, we unite under one God in one faith, equip the saints by seeking maturity, and build up one another in love through our gifts.

III. Closing

REMEMBERING THE GOOD NEWS

Through Christ, God united a diverse church under one faith. As the church, God has called us to grow in maturity as we seek to build one another up in love.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

God, we praise You for the gift of Your grace. Thank You for uniting us, as the church, through one faith in your Son, Jesus Christ. Father, help us to love one another with a love that builds, equips and grows. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Supporting resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) In what ways has this passage challenged you to pursue Christian community differently?
- 2) What gifts has God given you? How can you use those gifts to serve your church?
- 3) How might this passage be inviting you to love the church differently? Spend time praying for your church now.

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- 1) How would you describe your experience in Christian community in the past?
- 2) Why is Christian community so valuable in the life of a follower of Jesus?
- 3) Why do you think it is easy for a young Christians to get tossed about or carried away?
- 4) How did your view of Christian growth change after reading this passage? What does that look like in your life?