**Love & Power Forge Unity in the Body—Let’s Keep It!**

4 Ephesians 1-6

*1. Where is this headed?* Ephesians 4:14–16

There are several key words in the concluding section of this segment—children, tossed about, grow into Him, growth of the Body by the coordinated efforts of the various parts. Rich content there! How would you describe your state of maturity? Spiritual child, adolescent, or adult? Tossed about or stable? Growing into His character or stuck in neutral?

*2. Paul begins this segment of the letter with an exhortation, “…walk worthy of the calling…”* 4:1

In our culture, we tend to avoid direct commands, or responding to them. Paul is very direct. How do you prepare yourself to take such directness, even from Paul? How do you respond when your secular friends ask you about things Christians believe, especially when Scripture directly addresses that issue?

3. *The emphasis on unity here is overpowering. It’s not something that we normally think about or discuss.*

Clinton Arnold gives us a good summary of the construction of our unity in Christ:

Unity and “peace” are two of the central achievements of Christ through the blood he shed on the cross (2:11–22). God has created “one new man” in Christ, “thus making peace” (2:15). Christ “is our peace, who made both groups one” (2:14). God thus dwells in this new humanity by his Spirit and gives us access to the Father (2:17–18, 21–22).

In the earlier chapters, Paul says that we have, in fact, participated in the resurrection and exaltation, and are part of a new temple, indwelt by the Spirit. Those truths define our unity. If that work defines the value the Father places on our unity, then we should treasure it as well. Unity is not a fit with our culture’s “radical individualism.” How does that sort of individualism show up in your thinking? In your workplace? Among your friends? What sort of “corporate thinking” do you experience? Is there a setting where you normally find yourself more concerned about the whole rather than your part?

4. *Paul connects a set of virtues with the deepening of unity. How do you see these virtues as contributing to unity in the Body (family, etc.)?*

\* **Humility & Gentleness**, 4:2a–b (Col 3:12; Gal 5:23). “*All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble*’” (1 Pet 5:5, citing Prov 3:34).

Whom do you know who would qualify as ‘humble and gentle’? What is it about that person that makes you think of them that way? Has anyone ever told you that they think you are humble or gentle? How are those virtues supportive of Unity?

**Accepting one another in love**, “putting up with one another”, 4:2c. Describe some ways that you have sensed acceptance in this Growth Group. How might we be more transparent about our acceptance of one another? Obviously, “putting up with” is not as affirming, but how can even that build unity?

**Working diligently** to keep the unity of the Spirit. This goes against the grain as well—we might quickly recognize “avoidance of all conflict” as a cultural value, but not diligence to maintain unity. Have you noticed anyone working to preserve unity in a diligent way? Has that been evident in this GG? What issues do you wish we would address, things that might restore or deepen our unity? In the congregation?

This seems to capture his urgency: Rom. 12:18 “*If possible, on your part, live at peace with everyone*.”

5. *Paul’s list of “ones” is poetic. What do these things mean? How do they help us understand the important of our unity in God’s mind? 4:5*

One bodyOne SpiritOne hopeOne LordOne faithOne baptism

One God and Father of all

**How do these phrases clarify barriers to unity?**

Fear blocks transparency; Fear blocks vulnerability; Fear blocks generosity; Fear blocks joy

Respond to this statement: We most fully experience God’s love and power when we set aside our instincts of self-preservation and pour our lives out for the believers close at hand. Unity is then not a problem.