

STUDY GUIDE # 5 – Living In Christian Unity

Ephesians 4

¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men and women." ⁹(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions^[a]? ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. ¹⁷So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. ²⁰You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. ²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What exhortations are given to believers in this chapter?
- What does it mean/look like to be a part of one body ... to live together in unity?

STUDY NOTES

- Vs. 1 urges believers to live a life worthy of the calling we have received – that calling of being claimed by God and commissioned to share the message of grace available to everyone through Christ.
- Vs. 2 lists four specific characteristics of a person who is "*worthy of the calling*" --- **HUMBLE, GENTLE, PATIENT, LOVING**
- The next section, starting with verse 4 talks about Christian unity. But this unity doesn't mean uniformity or conformity. Paul goes on to talk about how God has given each of us unique gifts. When together we use the gifts we've been given we build up Christ's body.
- Beginning with vs. 17, Paul makes it clear that people should be able to see a difference between Christians and non-Christians because of the way Christians live.
- In Vs. 18 Paul describes non-Christians or ungodly people as having a condition called the *hardening of their hearts*.
- In the final portion of this Scripture, Paul calls his readers to put off the old self. The old self refers to our life before Christ. He calls Christians to put on the new clothing of faith.