



Ephesians: Masterpiece in Progress

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“A More Perfect Union”

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Key Verses: Ephesians 4:1-16

Key Thought: A foundational way that we—the body of the Christ—are called to participate in God’s plan to head up all creation in the Christ is to guard our unity.

Points to Consider:

- Paul has proclaimed (in Ephesians 1-3) God’s plan to head up all creation in the Christ, which is even now to be inaugurated in the church. ← (See, for example, 1:20-23.)
- While chapters 1-3 present God’s plan for all of creation (and the church, in particular), Paul—in chapters 4-6—now focuses on the church’s responsibility to participate in that plan (i.e., 4:1: “to live a life worthy of the calling you have received”).
- 4:1-3: The foundational way that we are called to participate is to **guard our unity**.
- **Principles:**
 - i. We are called to guard—not create—Christian unity, and we can be enabled to do so by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. Christian unity is not uniformity; our unity is—however—derived from a few common essentials. ← (See 4:4-6 for a good list. *Confessing Jesus as “Lord” implies an attitude of sincere submission to Scripture, and “faith” implies our core beliefs, such as what are confessed in the Apostles’ Creed.)
- **Examples:** (General: Express God’s covenant faithfulness to one another.)
 - i. Embracing Other Theological Traditions and Local Churches
 - ii. Tolerating (Legitimate) Political Differences
 - iii. Investing in the Common Life of the Church
 - iv. Peace with Christian Family and Co-workers
- 4:11-16: Guarding our unity enables us to grow as the body of the Christ, which is how God is inaugurating His plan to head up all creation in Him!

Discussion Prompts:

- Unpack why—according to Paul—Christian unity is so critical.
- Where do we need to be uniform, and how can clarity on this free us for diversity?
- Can you share of when you’ve expressed—or failed to express—the virtues of 4:2-3?
- Which of the examples (above) is most challenging for you right now? Explain.
- Without undermining the point, what are limitations for examples i. and ii. (above)?