

ONE

PART TWO: DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED FOES

Last week we learned that unity can change communities. However, with the highly polarized nature of the world, and the inclusive nature of Christianity, unity sounds nearly impossible. The key to achieving this is found in Ephesians 4:2 where Paul says to “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”

BIG IDEA: Unity begins with bearing with one another in love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Dave mentioned people who you have to love but are great at disrupting your peace. Do you have anyone in your life that you have to “bear” with in love? Almost as if you have to grit your teeth and bear with them, when they are around?
2. [With your Bible or Bible App, read John 15:1-4.](#)

¹ “I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ³ You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

[John 15:1-4 \(NLT\)](#)

3. Have you ever seen a branch thrive when it is disconnected from the tree or the vine?
4. Similarly, a Christian that is separated from the Jesus is unable to thrive. How do you stay connected to Jesus?
5. [With your Bible or Bible App, read John 15:5-8.](#)

⁵ “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

[John 15:5-8 \(NLT\)](#)

6. In what way does Jesus say that we show ourselves to be His disciples?
7. Does every branch grow the exact same direction on a tree?
8. If every branch grows the exact same direction how could that positively or negatively impact the fruit? Another way of asking this is if you are in a canoe and everyone rows on the side, how likely is your canoe to reach its destination? Finally, how does that translate to a group of people who are diverse in opinions?
9. [With your Bible or Bible App, read John 15:9-17.](#)

⁹ “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! ¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. ¹⁶ You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce

lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other. [John 15:9-17 \(NLT\)](#)

10. Jesus uses the same analogy for the third time but replaces the metaphorical words like vine and branch with the real meaning that he wants to convey: He says remain in my love instead of remaining in the vine. With that in mind, answer these questions:
 - a. How do we remain in His love? Verse 10
 - b. What are His commands? Verse 12
 - c. What is this entire parable about?
11. Who is someone that the world has convinced you to hate? How can this group help you keep His command to love?

MOVING FORWARD

Paul said to “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” This is the way that we navigate division, this is how we are able to be united. Just as the father loved Jesus, Jesus loved us, and we can love one another.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:4-6