

Stop Being Divisive!

The Key Verse in This Series

“So 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.” - Ephesians 4:17

Is It Appropriate to Say “Stop It” at Times?

“Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered.” - John 6:43

“Then He said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”” - John 20:27

“Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”” - John 5:14

The Transition

- In the first three chapters Paul has taught theology. He has reminded the Ephesians that they have six benefits in Christ:

- | | | |
|------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1. Promise | 2. Partnership | 3. Pardon |
| 4. Peace | 5. Perception | 6. Power |

- For many Christians these benefits are unclaimed, unfortunately.

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” - Ephesians 4:1

- The word “then” is key; as is the phrase “live a life worthy.”

- Now Paul changes direction. *(This is common in his writings.)*

Ephesians 1-3 describes the benefits of a believer.

Ephesians 4-6 describes the responsibilities of a believer.

We should never separate doctrine and duty!

VERY IMPORTANT:

- Why does Paul encourage us to be better people?

“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” - Matthew 5:16

- God wants the world to see His church and His people as they were intended and be attracted to Him and to His Church!

The First Issue of Practical Christian Living is Unity

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” - Ephesians 4:2

- By being completely humble.** (The word “*tapeinophrosune*” means to think of yourself as poor or of low priority.)

It can be described as “conscious of your own unworthiness.”

How Can I Evaluate My Own Humility?

Consider how you “view” and treat others. Do you talk mostly about yourself? Do you see yourself as unworthy?

- By being gentle.** (The word “*prautes*” means “meekness.” It is not found in classical Greek, only in Christian writings.)

It is often defined as “power under control.” *Greatest example?*

How Do You Know If You Are Gentle?

Do you have self-control? What makes you angry: When you are mistreated or when God is mistreated? Are you a peace-maker?

Do you accept criticism without retaliation?

- By being patient.** (“*Makrothumia*” means “long-tempered.”)

You might define it as accepting negative circumstances; coping with difficult people; and accepting God’s plan for your life.

Paul is speaking particularly of coping with difficult people as he says, “*be patient, bearing with one another in love.*”

How To Evaluate Your Patience?

Would you be described as “long-tempered”? How well do you cope with “difficult people”? Have you accepted and embraced God’s plan for you?

- By making every effort to attain unity** in your relationships (and in the church).

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” v. 3

The Examples of Unity — There is one...

“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

One Body	One Spirit	One Hope	One Lord
One Faith	One Baptism	One God and Father of all	

Final Thoughts:

- Of the “big four” items above, which is most difficult for you? (Humility, gentleness, patience, an effort to keep unity)
- Remember that it is difficult to move forward in the Christian walk if these four issues aren’t resolved first.
- Are you a person that normally “unites” or “divides?”

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One _____	One _____	One _____	One _____
One _____	One _____	One _____ and Father of all	

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