

Character For Unity Ephesians 4:1-3

Which Matters

Unity in religious world, or unity in local congregation?

Paul provides the keys to maintaining unity within the local congregation.

Following these keys, local congregation will be internally united in Christ - **Ephesians 4:2-3**

Gentle Humility

Thayer includes the definition "A deep sense of one's (moral) littleness."

Not weakness, strength under control.

Like a tamed horse, has power to throw off rider and trample him into the ground. Yet the horse submitted to the direction of the rider.

We humble ourselves before them and gently submit to their needs.

Sadly, too many Christians are like the Pharisee instead of the tax collector - **Luke 18:9-14**

We push others away with our arrogance and pride. Must recognize our own moral littleness.

Adopt the attitude of Paul - **Ephesians 3:8; Philippians 2:3-4**

This is especially important when we need to correct others - **Galatians 6:1**

Correction is to help others, not put them in their place, show our superiority, or vent our wrath.

Patient Forbearance

Restraint in responding to being wronged.

For congregational unity, we must deal properly with the wrongs others do.

Taking to court - **1Corinthians 6:1-8**

Not ignoring, but careful of anger and vengeance.

If someone wrongs us, we approach with gentleness. Our goal should not be to see them grovel, but to help them grow. Easier as humility reminds of our own wrongs & desire for patience.

Tolerance is to bear with one another - **1Corinthians 13:7**

This means to hold up, to strengthen and stand firm - **Galatians 6:2**

Paul seems to suggest we stick with it to help our brethren come to maturity

We work toward growing together, with separation only for extreme cases when others simply won't submit to God.

Love

As in many other lists, this is the foundation for the other characteristics.

Giving, charitable love that holds no conditions

Allows us to continue in these principles no matter how we have been treated, no matter what has been done to us or what can be done for us, no matter how others are walking.

Peace

Peace must bind us together.

This message was sent to a congregation of Jews and Gentiles in Ephesus.

Encourages them to find peace with one another in the peace Jesus had given - **Ephesians 2:11-22**

They were to work together and love one another - **Colossians 3:10-11; Galatians 3:28**

Do we have the unity God wants us to have?

Means learning to work together with people from different culture and background.

Should not market to one group but learn how to meld cultures together.

Paul considered two congregations in town, one for Jews and one for Gentiles anathema.

Divisions Will Come

Some will leave us because they are not of us. Discipline will separate others from the fold -

1Corinthians 11:18-19; 1John 2:19

Ought to be the exceptions, not the rule - **Romans 12:18**

Let us make sure we are living by these principles.

Diligent In Christ

Ephesians 4:14-16

Unity means nothing if it is not helping us grow in Christ according to His Word - **Colossians 3:16**

It is not just “getting along”, it requires each member to do the work according to ability. In this way we help one another mature in our faith and service

We can't all do the same things. We don't all have the same skill levels. However, we can all do something to help our brethren along the path to Heaven.

Edwin Crozier