

that group of people who are trying with all their hearts to follow Christ, the one Lord. We share the hope of heaven. We study the Bible in order to obey the one faith, and we refuse to follow the teachings of men. We have obeyed Christ in the one baptism and teach it to others. We worship the one God in spirit and truth. Our lives are full of the fruit of the Spirit.

These people are the ones who have the unity of the Spirit. They speak the same things and are of the same mind and judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10). They are full of joy and peace.

Are you “*being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*”?

Questions:

- 68 T F The only unity which fulfills Ephesians 4:1-6 is unity in the one true church.
- 69 T F A person can please God without being a member of the church.
- 70. T F we must refuse to follow the teachings of men.
- 71. T F Those who have the unity of the Spirit speak the same things.
- 72. T F We must be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

If you have any questions, write them below.

Student's Name _____
Address _____

THE CHURCH IN EPHESIANS
a Correspondence Course – Nine Lessons by Paul K. Williams

Lesson 5: The Unity of the Church

Note to Student: Please read Ephesians 4 carefully before studying this lesson. Think about what you have read. Pray to God.

EPHESIANS 4 – The Unity of the Church

- I. Christians must work for unity - 4:1-3**
 - A. Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called - v.1
 - B. This requires humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance to one another in love. - v.2
 - C. The object of this walk is to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. - v.3

- II. The unity of the Spirit requires oneness in seven things - 4:4-6**
 - A. There is one body - Unity in organisation, v.4
 - B. There is one Spirit - Unity in manner of life, v.4
 - C. There is one hope - Unity in desire, v.4
 - D. There is one Lord - Unity in authority, v.5
 - E. There is one faith - Unity in message, v.5
 - F. There is one baptism - Unity in salvation, v.5
 - G. There is one God - Unity in worship, v.6

- III. This unity cannot be found in denominationalism.**
 - A. They say we can be united even if we belong to different denominations.
 - 1. They accept one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one God.

2. They deny one body, one faith, one baptism.

B. Community churches and the SCM say we can believe different things but still be united in one group.

1. They have “one body”, but

2. They deny one faith, one baptism.

IV. The unity of the Spirit requires that we all be in the one church which follows Christ, and that we work hard to follow His word in love.

I. Christians must work for unity - 4:1-3

A physical body has unity. It takes all its instructions from its head. Every part of the body is perfectly joined with all the other parts and operates together with them. This is unity.

The church is the body of Christ. It must take ALL its instructions from its head (Ephesians 1:22-23). Every member must be joined with the others, working together with them (Ephesians 4:16).

However, the members of a *physical* body do not have individual will. They naturally obey the instructions of the head. The *spiritual* body is made up of *people* who can refuse to obey the instructions of Christ. If the church of Christ is going to function as a body, the members have to *work* for unity.

On the night before Jesus was crucified he prayed: “*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*” (John 17:20-21) Jesus wants us to have the unity which He and His Father have. The body of Christ is to be ONE.

We must walk in a worthy manner - v.1

Verse 1 says: “*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.*” Verses 2 and 3 describe

more than the truth of God.

B. Community churches and the SCM say we can believe different things but still be united in one group.

Some in the denominations want those of faiths to meet together. Two examples of this are what are sometimes called “Community Churches.” Anyone who professes to be a Christian can be a member. In those churches are people who are Methodists, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, etc. They still believe as they have always believed, but they worship together with the others.

Another example of this is the SCM (Students Christian Movement) which meets in mos schools. They encourage students of all denominations to meet and worship wit them, yet one of their aims is “To foster loyalty among students to their own denominations.” (Handbook for the Students Christian Movement, p.9)

This kind of “unity” is not the unity of the Spirit, either. Though they are trying to be “one body,” it is not the body of Christ. They still deny the one faith and the one baptism. This kind of unity is from Satan, not God.

Questions:

64. T F Denominations want the unity of the Spirit.

65. T F It doesn't make any difference what church you belong to as long as we all believe in Christ.

66. T F Denominations do not have unity in the one body, one faith, and one baptism.

67. T F One of the aims of the SCM is “To foster (encourage) loyalty among students to their own denominations.”

IV. The unity of the Spirit requires that we all be in the one church which follows Christ, and that we work hard to follow His word in love.

The only unity which fulfills what Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:1-6 is the unity in the one true church. We must all be members of that one body,

This worship must be “**in spirit and truth**”. (John 4:24 This worship is revealed in the New Testament and is unlike the worship of the Old Testament. That worship was fleshly, consisting of animal sacrifices and other fleshly ordinances. That worship was in type, not in truth, with the sacrifices and feast days foreshadowing the true worship of the New Testament. We now have that spiritual and true worship revealed by the apostles of Jesus Christ. If we worship the one God we must worship Him in spirit and truth. We must not add to that worship. It must be that which God has given.

Questions:

- 59. T F It is right to worship many gods.
- 60. T F It is right to worship the ancestors.
- 61. T F Some people worship money.
- 62. T F We must worship the one God in spirit and truth.
- 63. T F New Testament worship is different from the worship given in the Old Testament.

III. This unity cannot be found in denominationalism.

The unity of the Spirit requires us to be united in the one body, the one Spirit, the one hope, the one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, and the one God and Father. As you can see, that is not denominationalism. Though the denominations talk about unity, they do not strive for the unity of the Spirit.

A. They say we can be united even if we belong to different denominations.

You know what denominations say, “It doesn’t make any difference what church you belong to as long as we all believe in Christ.” If Paul wrote the truth that statement is a lie. Denominational people seem to accept one Spirit, one hope, one Lord (even though they do not truly obey Him), and one God (even though they add to the worship He has given). But it is easy to see that they deny there is one body, one faith, and one baptism. They simply do not believe what Paul has written in Ephesians. They will not submit to the authority of Jesus Christ. They love their denominations

that walk.

Before we can be expected to live this difficult life, we must understand the calling with which we have been called. Paul has described us as “fellow-citizens,” “saints,” and “members of God’s household.” (2:19) Our calling as *citizens* is to service in the kingdom; as *saints* it is to holy living and dedication to God’s service; and as *members of God’s household* it is to the love and loyalty of children.

If we understand who we are—to what we have been called—we will be willing to use all our strength to walk in the way which is worthy of that calling.

This walk requires humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance to one another in love - v.2



“*with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.*” It requires *humility* because we do not deserve our salvation. The pride of life is a work of the flesh (1 John 2:16). Only the poor in spirit have the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3).

It requires *gentleness* because we do not want to cause our brother to sin by our rude manner. When Paul gave instructions to Timothy he wrote, “*a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.*” (2 Timothy 2:24-25)

It requires *patience* because people require long training to be what God wants them to be. Those who are born again are not born mature adults. As in the physical world, they are little children. And like physical children, they require time for growth. Peter wrote: “*as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*” (1 Peter 2:2) We have to be patient and wait for the growth.

“*Forbearance*” means that we must bear the weaknesses and sins of others, even when they sin against us. We do this because of our love for them.

The purpose of this walk is unity.

“*Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*” (v.3) The phrase, “*being diligent,*” means that we have to work hard at this job without giving up.

We must work to keep “*the unity of the Spirit.*” This is not the unity of keeping man’s traditions; it is the unity attained when we all keep the commands of the Holy Spirit. It is the unity commanded by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:10. “*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*” The thing that binds us together is our love of peace—the peace of being one in Christ and of being at peace with God.

Questions:

1. 1 Corinthians 12:27 says that you are _____ individually in the body of Christ.
2. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says that we are all _____ into Christ’s body.
3. From WHOM must the body of Christ take instructions? _____
4. T F Jesus wants us to have the unity which He and the Father have.
5. T F We have been called to be citizens of Satan’s kingdom.
6. T F Saints are to live holy lives.
7. T F Christians are members of God’s household.
8. T F God expects us to live in a way which is worthy of our calling.
9. T F The pride of life is a fruit of the Spirit.
10. T F The poor in spirit have the kingdom of heaven.
11. T F The man of God must correct people “with gentleness”.
12. T F When one becomes a Christian he is full grown.
13. T F We must bear the weaknesses and sins of others.

put one into the kingdom of God. Denominations are full of people who think they are saved but are not—because they have not obeyed the word of Christ concerning baptism.

Have you obeyed Jesus in baptism? If you have not, contact us at once. We want you to be saved. We want to help you.

Questions:

49. T F Baptism is not important.
50. T F It makes no difference whether you are sprinkled or immersed in baptism.
51. Which verse says that Jesus cleansed the church by the washing of water with the word? _____
52. Which verse says that we must be born of water and the Spirit? _____
53. Which verse says that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved? _____
54. T F The one baptism is “for the forgiveness of sins.”
55. T F The one baptism puts one into Christ.
56. T F One must obey Christ in the one baptism in order to be saved.
57. T F All the denominations practice the one baptism.
58. T F No baptism saves except the one baptism.

7. There is one God—Unity in worship, v.6

Our God the Father is over all and through all and in all! All praise must go to Him. He is the One we must worship, and we must worship in the way He demands.

Idolatry did not disappear when the gospel was preached. It survives in Hinduism and in ancestor worship. Those who refuse to bow to those idols often bow to the gods of money or pleasure. God taught Israel: “*You shall have no other gods before Me.*” (Exodus 20:3) Though others have many gods, the Christian knows that there is only One. He worships the one God the Father.

- 44. T F The denominations have only one faith.
- 45. T F According to God we have the right to choose which faith we want to follow.
- 46. T F Each creed book of the denominations contains a different faith.
- 47. T F Any creed which contains more than the Bible contains too much.
- 48. T F To have the unity of the Spirit we must all follow the one faith.

6. There is one baptism–Unity in salvation, v.5

The denominations say that baptism is not important. They say baptism is sprinkling, or pouring, or immersion three times. They teach that one is saved before baptism, or they teach that the baby must be baptised. In the denominations there are many baptisms.

The word of Jesus teaches “*one baptism.*” Paul described it in Ephesians 5:26 when he wrote, “*that He might sanctify and cleanse her (the church) with the washing of water by the word.*” Jesus told Nicodemus, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*” (John 3:5) After Jesus’ resurrection He said plainly, “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*” (Mark 16:16)

the one baptism is for believers (Mark 16:16) who have repented of their sins (Acts 2:38) and have confessed their faith in Christ (Acts 8:36-38). It is immersion in water (John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:4) one time (in the likeness of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, Romans 6:4) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). It puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:27), the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13) which is the church. It is performed by the authority of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). It saves us (1 Peter 3:21). He who is not born of water and the Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:50).

The church of Christ is made up of those who have submitted to the one baptism. Any other baptism is not of God. It does not save and does not

- 14. We must work hard to _____ the _____ of the Spirit.
- 15. T F In 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul says it is right for Christians to speak things which are different from what other Christians speak.
- 16. The thing which binds us together is our love of _____ with one another and with God.

II. The unity of the Spirit requires oneness in seven things–4:4-6

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:4-6

If we have the unity of the Spirit we must be united on these seven basic things. We cannot choose to believe in two bodies or to practice many baptisms. God recognises only one of each of these things, and if we are to be united with Him we must accept that there is only one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and God. We must listen to and believe what the Spirit tells us about each of these. There is no other way to the unity of the Spirit.

Questions:

- 17. The seven basic things on which we must be united are:

- 18. There is no other way to the unity of the _____.

1. There is one body–Unity in organisation, v.4

The body is the church. “*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the*

fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22-23) God has only one church and Jesus is the head.

There are many churches which have been started by men; there is only one church which is from God. Every denomination is a separate religious body. It has its own head, headquarters, name, creed, etc. God has one body. Christ is its head and its headquarters is in heaven. It is called by His name, and its creed is the New Testament which the Holy Spirit gave to the apostles and prophets.

There can be no compromise. Either we are united in the one body, or we are separated from God! Unity of the Spirit requires that we recognise the one body, which is the church.

Questions:

19. Which verses tell us that the church is Christ’s body? _____
20. T F Each denomination is a separate religious body.
21. T F The creed of the one church is the New Testament.
22. T F A person can be in a denomination and be united with God.
23. T F Denominationalism is pleasing to God.

2. There is one Spirit–Unity in manner of life, v.4

The Holy Spirit is one, and His message is one. People in different denominations claim that they receive messages from the Holy Spirit, yet they teach and practice opposite things. Some teach that there are three persons in the Godhead; others teach there is only one person in the Godhead and His name is Jesus. Some practice sprinkling for baptism; others immerse people three times. They all say they get their messages from the Holy Spirit. But there is only ONE Spirit, and He does not contradict Himself. His message is found in the writings of the apostles and prophets—the New Testament. If we listen to the one Spirit, we will listen to His message in the New Testament. We will not listen to people who teach things not found in His word.

Faith,” or I am of the Roman Catholic faith.” People think they have the right to choose which faith to follow in the same way they have the right to choose which hat to wear. But God has not given us that choice. *“There is one faith.”*

In my library I have a number of books published by various denominations. Each of them is a statement of the belief (faith) of that denomination. There is the Baptist Manual, the Roman Catholic Catechism, The Methodist Discipline. The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene, the Handbook for the Students’ Christian Movement of South Africa, and others. Each creed book contains a different faith.



These denominations claim to follow the Bible. I wonder why they need to publish creed books? God has given us “The faith.” Anything more is too much; Anything less is too little; anything different is wrong! If these creeds could be abolished and if everyone would try to follow only the New Testament, the denominations would disappear. The Christian wants the unity of the Spirit; therefore he listens only to the one faith, the truth revealed in the New Testament.

Questions:

41. T F There is only one body of truth which we must believe.
42. T F The “one faith” is the truth revealed in the New Testament.
43. T F Acts 6:7 shows that we must be obedient to the faith.

If we listen to someone else, we will be lost. *“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”* (2 John 9)

Hinduism and Ancestor Worship have many lords. Denominations listen to their leaders instead of Jesus. The worldly listen to Satan. The Christian knows that there is only one Lord and he will not let anyone turn him away from Christ. Jesus’ word is absolute authority, and the Christian will not listen to anyone else.

Questions:

- 35. T F The “one Lord” is Shemba.
- 36. T F The word “Lord” means “Saviour.”
- 37. T F The authority of Jesus is greater than the authority of Moses.
- 38. T F We must obey the government even if it tells us to do wrong.
- 39. T F If I do not stay in the teaching of Christ, I do not have God.
- 40. T F The Christian must listen only to Christ.

5. There is one faith–Unity in message, v.5

In this verse the word *“faith”* means *“that which one believes.”* There is one body of truth which must be believed if we are to be saved. There is only one faith.

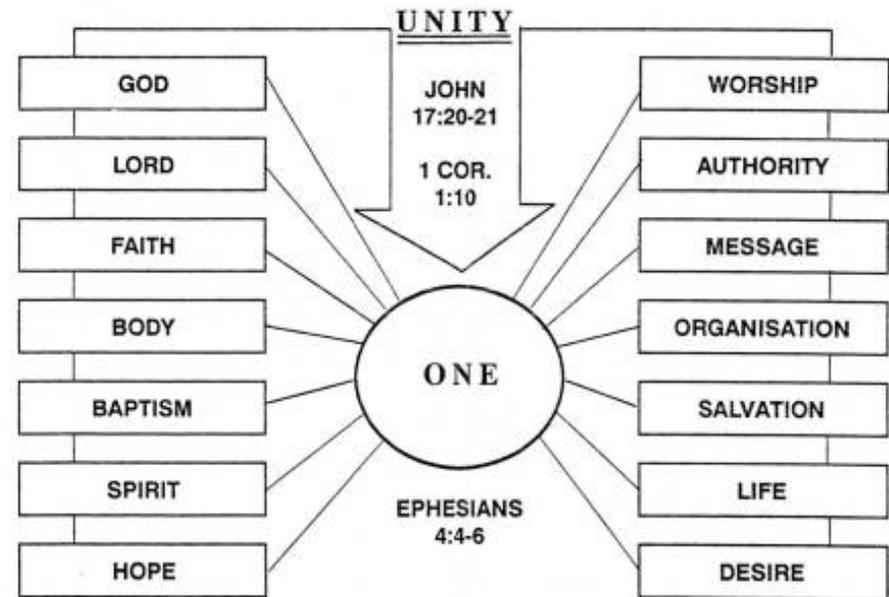
In lesson 4 we noticed the statement of Jude, part of which says *“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”* (Jude 3) The one faith was delivered by the Holy Spirit to the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:5). They delivered it to us through the writings which are the New Testament (Ephesians 3:3-4). Therefore the “one faith” is the truth revealed in the New Testament.

We must obey that faith. *“a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”* (Acts 6:7) It is not enough to believe the truth, it must be obeyed.

Every religion has its own faith. There are as many faiths as there are denominations. Sometimes a person will say, “I am of the Methodist

The message of the Holy Spirit will produce in us the fruit of the Spirit: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”*

Those who put the word of the Holy Spirit to work in their lives become changed people. Their *love* for God and for others causes them to obey God and preach the word to others. Knowing that they are pleasing God brings great *joy* and *peace*. *Kindness* characterizes their dealings with others, and their life is full of *goodness*. Their *faithfulness* causes them to be trusted by other people, and *faithfulness* is seen in their faithful obedience to the word of the Holy Spirit. *Gentleness* is evident in the way they deal with others and *self-control* causes them to keep themselves from evil things. All those who listen to the one Spirit produce this fruit. Can you see how this will produce unity? Are you listening to the one Spirit?



Questions:

24. T F The Holy Spirit never contradicts Himself.
25. T F Sometimes the Holy Spirit tells one person something and tells another person the opposite.
26. T F The message of the Holy Spirit is found in the prophets of the denominations.
27. T F If we have unity in the one Spirit we will not listen to people who teach things not found in His word.
28. T F If we listen to the message of the Holy Spirit we will produce the fruit of the Spirit.

3. There is one hope—Unity in desire, v.4

The Hebrew writer talks about we “*who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. . . This hope we have as an anchor of the soul.*” Some false teachers “*who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.*” (2 Timothy 2:18) Our hope of the resurrection and of heaven is precious. It is this hope which keeps us striving with one mind to please God.

It is important to understand that heaven is the hope of the Christian. Peter wrote: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.*” (1 Peter 1:3-4) Our inheritance is “reserved in heaven.”

The people who call themselves Jehovah’s Witnesses deny that there is one hope. On page 15 of their booklet, “The Government That will Bring Paradise,” they write: “So there are two hopes, There are 144,000 invited by Jehovah God to go to heaven to rule with Jesus Christ. But millions of others have the sure hope of living on earth forever as subjects of his Kingdom.” These people are bold to contradict the Bible! Paul says, “There is one hope”. The Jehovah’s Witnesses say, “There are two hopes.” If you believe Paul, you cannot listen to the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Others say that heaven and hell are on earth, or in the mind. This means there is no hope for the Christian. Do not believe these people. “*There is ONE hope.*”

Questions:

29. T F Hope is an anchor of the soul.
30. T F The resurrection has already taken place.
31. Give verses which show that heaven is the hope of the Christian.
- _____
32. T F There are two hopes.
33. T F Only 144 000 people will go to heaven.
34. T F Heaven and hell are on earth.

4. There is one Lord—Unity in Authority, v.5

In 1 Corinthians 8:5-6 Paul wrote, “*For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.*” The “one Lord” is Jesus Christ.

The word “Lord” means “supreme in authority.” Jesus said, “*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*” (Matthew 28:18) When Peter wanted to make tabernacles for Elijah, Moses and Jesus, God said, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!*” (Matthew 17:5) Peter wanted to honour Jesus alongside Moses and the prophets, but the Father made it clear that the authority of Jesus is greater than theirs. We must listen to Jesus only, not to anyone else.

For the Christian there is only one Lord. If earthly father or mother commands the Christian to disobey Jesus, the Christian listens only to Jesus. If the government requires us to do something Jesus forbids, we obey Jesus instead of the government. (See Acts 5:29) If a husband tells his wife to lie, the wife tells the truth because Jesus is her Lord, her supreme authority. Jesus is Lord!