

LC STUDY GUIDE: DONE IN SYNC WITH
THE SERMON FROM 5.4.14
The Passage – Ephesians 4:1-13
 For LCs meeting 5.4.14 – 5.18.14

These LC studies complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading and are not to be distributed to the entire group (it limits conversation). Not all of these questions need to be used in your LC meeting. Best to consider this a head-start to customize for your LC.

Big Idea: Believers in Christ are called to live in humility and unity with one another.

Ephesians 4:1-13 (NIV © 2011)

¹ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says:
 “When he ascended on high,
 he took many captives
 and gave gifts to his people.”

⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?

¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Discussion Questions:

In verse 1, Paul reminds the believers in Ephesus that he is a “prisoner for the Lord,” and then urges them to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” to which they have been called. Then in verses 2-13, he gives a more practical explanation of how to do that. What about Paul’s situation should cause the reader of his letter to take his words seriously?

(He is imprisoned in Rome as he writes these words. He is not ashamed of his imprisonment; rather, he believes the Gospel is worth suffering for. Out of all the things he could have written from prison, he chose to urge believers to live out their vocation as Christ-followers.)

What else could have Paul urged them to do?

(He could have asked them to help get him out of prison or to send him some sort of relief while he was there but what was more important to him was that believers live out their calling of unity, humility, and love for one another).

How would your relationships be different if they were all described by the words listed in verses 2-6? Describe your relationships that look like this or have similarities to this.

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

How can we make every effort to do this?

(We can refuse to fight back when people attempt to start quarrels with us. We can respond to those who mistreat us with love, humility, patience, etc. We can bear with one another and be quick to forgive. We can put others before ourselves, humbly be the first to initiate reconciliation even when we feel we are not at fault, etc. Romans 12:17-19 is another great passage on this topic. Verse 18 says, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”)

It is easy to start believing that it is impossible for certain relationships to ever become enjoyable or peaceful, especially when they have not yet been characterized in that way or maybe because somewhere along the way the relationship was broken. Paul writes of the grace that has been given to us according to the measure of Christ in verse 7. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 we are told that God’s grace is sufficient for us and that His power is made perfect in our weakness. Let’s take time now to individually quiet ourselves before God and ask Him to give us grace for difficult relationships and to be strong in our weakness so that He can work in us to bring peace, unity, humility, and love to our relationships.

*(Then group leader can close that time in prayer; *this can be done at the end of study time instead of in middle of study depending on leader’s preference.)*

Consider the variety of gifts that God has given to His people. According to verse 12, what is the purpose for these gifts?

(To equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.)

How can we sometimes forget that this is the purpose of gifts? How can our attitude be wrong when it comes to gifts?

(At times we forget that the gifts are to build up the church—that we are all on the same team, and we become competitive with one another even in the church; sometimes people become envious of the gifts/ministries of others; there may be arguing or division among believers because of differing perspectives; people may become prideful about the gifts that God has given them, maybe getting to the point of forgetting that those gifts are gifts and starting to believe the lie that they have the gifts out of their own strength, etc.)

According to the passage, for how long are we to use our gifts for the edification of the church?

(Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.)

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- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group.
 - b. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
 - c. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
 - d. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
 - e. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
 - f. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
 - g. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.