

**THE CONTEXT**

The book of Ephesians divides logically into two sections.

Chapters 1 to 3 emphasize doctrine, beliefs, concepts, orthodoxy

Chapters 4 to 6 emphasize duty, behavior, conduct, orthopraxy

The link between the sections is established by the word “therefore” or “then” in verse 1 of chapter 4.

1. Based on these words, describe the link between the two sections?
2. Which of the two parts, doctrine or duty, do you think gets the most emphasis in the Christian church, in WEFC, in your reading, in your life?

**DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION OF UNITY**

3. Consider the following statements. Do you agree, disagree, or discuss?
  - a. Unity is the absence of disagreement.
  - b. Unity can be created, organized, or manufactured.
  - c. Unity involves harmony.
  - d. Unity is the same as uniformity (everything the same).
  - e. Unity can be used for good or evil.
  - f. Unity is the goal in the Christian church.

**THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

In the doctrinal section of Ephesians, Paul provides insight into Christian unity.

4. Read Ephesians 2:11-16
5. What truths are foundational for Christian unity?
6. Is your group theologically unified?

**PRACTICAL UNITY – HALLMARKS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY**

7. Read Ephesians 4:1-6

**A. METICULOUS MAINTENANCE** – (v.3)

<sup>3</sup> *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

*“Be diligent to preserve...” “Do your best to maintain.”*

8. In what contexts do you spend time, energy, and money on maintenance?
9. What kinds of effort are required to maintain unity in a friendship, marriage, staff, or church?
10. What effort could you/believers exert to strengthen unity at WEFC right now?

## **B. A WORTHY WALK** - (v.1-2)

<sup>1</sup> *Therefore I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

*“walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you were called.”.*

11. What does a police officer or politician or teacher do (or not do) to “walk worthy of his/her calling?”
12. How would you describe a Christian’s “calling?”
13. Consider the four virtues that are worthy of the Christian calling.  
Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Forebearance
  - a. Can you give an example for each of these virtues in which the virtue was displayed in a way that preserved or enhanced unity?
  - b. Can you think of an example in which the opposites (pride, harshness, impatience, hard-heartedness) fostered disunity?

## **C. A FIRM FOUNDATION** - (v.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 over all and through all and in all."*

Paul lists seven spiritual foundational truths/realities which must be respected in order to maintain unity.

- One BODY – the universal church
- One SPIRIT – the Holy Spirit
- One HOPE – of your calling
- One LORD – Jesus Christ
- One FAITH – once delivered to the saints (Jude 3)
- One BAPTISM – baptism of the Spirit
- One GOD and FATHER of all – Our Father in heaven...

14. When you consider these seven, exclusive realities, which ones do you think the Christian church has relied on most consistently as the basis for unity?
15. Which ones have spawned their share of disunity?

## **CONCLUSION**

A group of porcupines is called a “prickle.”

In order for the porcupine population to survive, they NEED each other, but they can also NEEDLE each other.

16. In what way are the believers at WEFC like, or dislike, a “prickle?”