
EPHESIANS 4 BOTH CONFRONTS MANY THINGS THAT DIVIDE THE CHURCH AND ENCOURAGES US TO BE ONE.

- o one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father of all
- It talks about our Heavenly Father because it is implied there is one Family.

EPHESIANS 2 TALKS ABOUT JEWS AND GENTILES BEING UNITED UNDER CHRIST.

Ephesians 2:19 So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family.

- o If we are followers of Jesus, we are all part of the same spiritual family.

THE BIBLE USES _____ LANGUAGE.

- o God the Father, Paul as a spiritual father to Timothy, 1 Corinthians 3’s spiritual infants

BECAUSE ALL OF US COME FROM A VARIETY OF FAMILY EXPERIENCES, WE NEED TO DEFINE WHAT FAMILY LOOKS LIKE.

- In Ephesians, Paul addresses what the church is supposed to look like prior to describing what the family looks like.
 - o Paul did this because the people in Ephesus come from broken, pagan families.
 - o Ephesians 5 is re-writing the household code for the Ephesians.

YOU CAN’T READ THE BIBLE SERIOUSLY AND WALK AWAY WITH THE IDEA THAT IS GOD IS OKAY WITH YOU BEING DISCONNECTED FROM OTHER BELIEVERS.

- The Garden
- 10 Commandments
 - o All the laws are _____
 - o There are a lot of Christians who are good at following the rules; they just missed that God’s laws are about the relationships that the rules are supposed to promote and protect.

Romans 12:9-13 ⁹Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. ¹⁰Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. ¹¹Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. ¹²Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. ¹³When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

- o Think of how attractive the Church would be if we all acted like this all the time!

There are reasons God told us to stay connected to others. Scientific research suggests that relational connectedness actually affects our whole self, proving what God has known all along!

_____ health, _____ health, and _____ health

MOST AMERICANS DON'T HAVE CLOSE FRIENDS. WE ARE ONE OF THE LONLIEST NATIONS IN THE WORLD.

- The fact is, people have more Facebook friends and more Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram followers than ever before. At the same time, we are, as a nation, lonelier than ever before.

THERE ARE THINGS WE CAN ONLY GET IN DEEP RELATIONSHIPS.

- _____ - Who can you be real around?
- _____ - Who can call you on your junk?
- _____ - Who's going to tell you the things you can't see yourself?
- _____ - Who can pull you up when you are down?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 ⁹Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: ¹⁰If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up

AS MEMBERS OF REAL LIFE MINISTRIES, WE AGREE TO PURSUE DEEP RELATIONSHIPS.

- Our mission: "We will create biblical disciples in relational environments."
- When relationships look like God's design for relationships, they're amazing!
- Close relationships need to have some important components:
 - Extreme familiarity
 - People you can tell anything to
 - People whose advice you will take
- This is going to happen imperfectly—really imperfectly.
- If we want to grow in spiritual maturity, we don't really have an option. And God is calling all of us to grow in spiritual maturity.

1 John 4:20-21 ²⁰If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? ²¹And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Passages to consider: Ephesians 2:11-21; 1 John 3

1. What from the sermon caught your attention?
2. Read 1 John 3 a couple of times, slowly. What does this passage say about Jesus, love, family, and unity?
3. What stands out from what you observed in the passage?
4. How is that similar or different from your current understanding of seeing other believers as family?
5. Share how you have experienced fellow believers as family.
6. How can you be a part of making the church a family?

Passages to prepare for next week's sermon topic, One Body: Romans 12 & 1 Corinthians 12