

“Endeavouring To Keep the Unity of the Spirit”
Ephesians 4:1-3

Introduction: All of Paul’s letters contain a beautiful balance between doctrine and duty, and Ephesians is the perfect example. The first three chapters deal with doctrine, our riches in Christ, while the last three chapters explain duty, our responsibilities in Christ. The word “therefore” is the transitional word from doctrine to duty. It does make a difference what you believe, because what you believe determines how you behave! The key word in this first half of the book is wealth, while the key idea in the last half is walk.

1. Paul Deals with Our Vocation vs. 1-2

a. It is to be Done with Lowliness v. 2

- (1) “lowliness” (Strong’s)- “the having a humble opinion of one's self”
- (2) “lowliness” (Webster’s)- “Freedom from pride; humility; humbleness of mind.”
- (3) Humility is that grace that, when you know you have it, you have lost it.
- (4) Humility means putting Christ first, others second, and self last.

b. It is to be Done with Meekness v. 2

- (1) “meekness” (Strong’s)- “gentleness, mildness”
- (2) “meekness” (Webster’s)- “Softness of temper; mildness; gentleness; forbearance under injuries and provocations”
- (3) Meekness is not weakness. It is power under control.
- (4) In the Greek language, this word was used for a soothing medicine, a colt that had been broken, and a soft wind. In each case you have power, but that power is under control.

c. It is to be Done with Longsuffering v. 2

- (1) “longsuffering” (Strong’s)- “patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs”
- (2) “longsuffering” (Webster’s)- “Bearing injuries or provocation for a long time; patient; not easily provoked”
- (3) Longsuffering literally means long-tempered, the ability to endure discomfort without fighting back.

d. It is to be Done with Forbearance v. 2

- (1) “forbearing” (Strong’s)- “to sustain, to bear, to endure”
- (2) “forbearing” (Webster’s)- “Patient; long suffering”
- (3) Forbearance is a grace that cannot be experienced apart from love.

2. Paul Deals with Our Cooperation v. 3

a. We Must Strive for Unity v. 3- “*Endeavouring*”

- (1) “endeavouring” (Strong’s)- “to hasten, make haste; to exert one's self, give diligence”
- (2) “endeavouring” (Webster’s)- “Making an effort or efforts; striving; essaying; attempting.”
- (3) The verb used here is a present participle, which means we must constantly be endeavoring to maintain this unity.
- (4) The spiritual unity of a home or a church is the responsibility of each person involved, and the job never ends.

- b. We Must Safeguard Unity v. 3- “keep”
 - (1) “keep” (Strong’s)- “to attend to carefully, take care of; to guard”
 - (2) “keep” (Webster’s)- “To preserve from falling or from danger; to protect; to guard or sustain. To tend; to have the care of. ”
- c. We Must Specify Unity v. 3
 - (1) “unity” (Strong’s)- “agreement; one”
 - (2) “unity” (Webster’s)- “The state of being one; oneness”

Body: The unity of the Spirit is a union of the spirits. Now to endeavour or study to keep and preserve this, supposes that this union does already exist; that it is very valuable and is worth taking some pains about; and that it is very difficult to secure. There are so many things which frequently arise, and break in upon it, through the devices of Satan, and the corruptions of men's hearts: but though it is difficult, and may sometimes seem to be impossible, yet it becomes the saints to be diligent in the use of means to keep it up, and continue it. What unity should we tend to? We should have:

- I. A Spiritual Unity with the Saviour
- II. A Spiritual Unity with the Saints

Conclusion: Note that the reason for war on the outside is war on the inside. If a believer cannot get along with God, he cannot get along with other believers. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. We have committed the golden rule to memory; now let us commit it to life.