

Ephesians Bible Study

Lesson 11 Questions / Ephesians 4:1-6

Our Compelling New Identity

Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you through this week's lesson.

Think About:

Every person is created with a longing to understand who they are and to know that their life has significance. There is a lot of talk these days about this concept of identity. Identity defined is *"the essence of who a person truly is, or who they really are."* As believers, we have been given a glorious new identity in Christ, but so often we still tend to let worldly standards of identity influence our attitudes and actions more than our new life. Listed below are some common areas that tend to be obstacles for Christians in living out their new identity. Circle the ones that have been the biggest struggles for you over the years.

I have tended to define myself by/ or have sought to find my value in:

My work	Material possessions	My spiritual gifts	My feelings
My success	Man's acceptance	My talents and abilities	My health
My past	External appearance	My relationships	My intellect
My failures	Popularity	My roles	My sin

Can you think of any others? _____

What are some consequences you experience when you allow ungodly standards to shape the way you perceive yourself? _____

How do you think God wants you to perceive yourself? _____

Getting into the Passage:

In chapters 1-3 Paul has beautifully articulated the new identity that believers possess because of their union with Christ. Just to name a few, they are now: saints, blessed with every spiritual blessing, chosen before the foundation of the world, blameless, beloved, redeemed, forgiven, joint heirs with Christ, children of God, citizens of heaven, a dwelling place for the Spirit, stewards of grace, alive to Christ even though they were dead, recipients of the gift of faith, empowered to live righteously, God's workmanship, citizens of heaven, etc. etc. **To put it**

simply, the first three chapters of Ephesians are entirely about the believer's new identity in Christ!

This week we transition into the more practical, application- based chapters of Ephesians. While it is easy to get caught up in the standards God is calling us to, we must constantly remember the motive Paul is urging us to have for godly living: gratitude to God for the new identity we have been given in Christ.

Read Ephesians 4:1-6

1. In verse 1 Paul reminds his readers yet again that he is ***“a prisoner for the Lord.”*** Why do you think he mentions this? How does the reminder of his suffering encourage us to embrace living out our new identity? (Matt. 13:44-46, Phil.3:8-11, 2 Tim. 1:8-9)

2. Paul then begs his readers ***“to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.”*** Have you ever been in a position where you have begged someone to follow Christ? Or someone begged you to follow Christ? Describe what that was like.

3. Paul's chief desire was that those he loved would daily conduct themselves in a manner worthy of their new identity as God's beloved child. Using these verses describe the calling to which we have been called.

John 6:44-45, 15:16

I Cor. 1:26

Rom. 11:29

2 Tim. 1:8-9

4. Paul really doesn't want us to forget the nature of our calling 😊 Appropriately, the first attitude he calls us to put on is humility. How does a having a low or wrong view of our calling work against us walking in humility? (I Cor 4:7, John 3:27, James 1:17-18)

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5. The attitudes Paul urges us to have flesh out relationally with our brothers and sisters in Christ. They are the basis for a worthy walk and the foundation for practical unity in the church. Using a Bible dictionary (or regular dictionary), define the attitudes which characterize a worthy walk.

Humility (*tapeinophrosune*) _____

Meekness (*praotes*) _____

Patience (*macrothumia*) _____

Forbearance (*anecho*) _____

6. Interestingly, the secret to manifesting these attitudes is linked to how much we value our union with Christ. Why is this so? How does treasuring Christ and his purpose for us as ambassadors help us lay aside our fleshly attitudes and manifest His character, even in our difficult relationships? (2 Cor. 5:14-20, John 13:12-16, John 13:35, 2 Cor. 2:14)

7. In verse 3 Paul calls for us *“to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* Notice the apostle does not call for us to create the unity; rather he calls for us to preserve the unity we have already been given. Using these verses, summarize how true God-honoring unity can be maintained among believers. (Eph. 4: 1-3, Rom. 15:1-3, 1 Cor. 1:10, Phil. 1:27, 2:1-7) _____

8. With the above truths in mind, how does seeking our identity in worldly pursuits (think of the intro questions) work against us having a diligent heart in maintaining healthy relationships in the body? (James 4:1-10) _____

9. In verses 4-6 Paul lists 7 causes of our spiritual oneness as believers. We have "one _____ and one _____ - just as we were called to the one _____ that belongs to our call, one _____, one _____, and one _____, and one _____ and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." How does understanding the spiritual realities that unite us as believers help to break down the fleshly barriers (background, temperament, race, social status, etc.) that so easily tend to divide us? (2 Cor. 5:16-17) _____

Application

10. As a result of this study, how do you sense the Holy Spirit may be challenging you to walk in a manner more reflective of the glorious new identity you have been given in Christ? _____
