

# *Can You Trust God?*

## **How Can We Stay Unified?**

**Ephesians 4:1-7; Philippians 2:1-11**

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / May 31, 2020*

**[See Ephesians 3:20-4:7]**

### **I. God Calls Us to Work on Something that Only Jesus Could Have Started**

**[See Ephesians 2:13-19]**

The greatest apologetic to the reality of the Gospel and how it changes people forever is how we love each other, even when we differ with each other over some of our preferences.

### **II. God Calls Us to Make Our #1 Priority Working on Something that the World Cannot Ignore – Unity in the Midst of Diversity**

If you're not maintaining and promoting unity in the family of God, you will jeopardize or even destroy your testimony to a lost and dying world.

**Philippians 2:14-16** “Do all things without complaining and disputing, <sup>15</sup>that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup>holding fast to the word of life...”

There is a big difference between unity and uniformity. Unity comes from within and is a work of God's Spirit and grace, while uniformity is the result of pressure from the outside to think and do the same on every issue.

Paul highlights what makes us the same in vv. 4-6, then shows us in v. 7 how Jesus has also made us different:

**Ephesians 4:4-6** “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

**Ephesians 4:7** “But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.”

### **III. God Calls Us to Move Forward in a Way that We Would Never Choose**

**Ephesians 4:2** “...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love”

#### **A. Cultivate Humility in the Midst of Your Conviction and Preference**

**Ephesians 4:2** “...with *all* humility”

It doesn't matter how much you know, how much you can do, or how gifted you are; If you don't go into it with all humility, you'll do more harm than good.

**Philippians 2:3** “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

Study, pray, investigate, think hard, and come to a personal conviction about any number of issues... but then hold that conviction with a hand of humility and a heart of love, knowing two things:

#1 - I could be wrong.

#2 - God could actually lead other believers who love Jesus as much as I do to believe or choose differently.

## **B. Recognize that Your Strength Becomes Destructive Unless It's Harnessed with Meekness**

**Ephesians 4:2** "...and gentleness"

The Greek word for "gentleness" or "meekness" is a word that refers to a powerful animal that has been trained and domesticated so that it's now under control and useful instead of out of control and destructive.

Incredible gifting and strengths without humility and meekness will do far more damage than good.

Meekness is not synonymous with weakness. Meekness is strength under control—and it takes a strong person to be like Jesus and consider the needs of others more than themselves.

## **C. Be Passionate But Patient with Other People Who Don't See Things the Way You Do**

**Ephesians 4:2** "...with patience, bearing with one another in love"

The Greeks had more than one word for "patient" and Paul chooses to use the Greek word "makrothumia" which focuses exclusively on being patient with *people*.

People don't just wear us out. They often slow us down as we take time to consider their needs and their interests, instead of just plowing ahead.

**Philippians 2:4** "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

## **IV. God Wants to Spread His Glory and Make His People More Like His Son**

**Ephesians 3:20-21** "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, <sup>21</sup> to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

We should be driven by love for others and the glory of God far more than proving a point or promoting a cause.

What would those who know you best, say characterizes you the most?

**Ephesians 4:15** "...grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ."

Becoming more like Christ happens best in the midst of diversity—as you put into practice humility, meekness, and forbearance with others around you.

**Philippians 2:5-11** “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”