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THE UNITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 35
EPHESIANS 4:3-7

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EPHESIANS 4:3-7 "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

The purpose of this chapter is found in verse 13.

EPHESIANS 4:13 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" This verse describes the purpose of soul-breathing. We take in doctrine so we can breathe out faith toward God. The object is to get Bible doctrine in the soul so we will be prepared to meet every situation we confront.

EPHESIANS 4:3 "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The verse begins with "endeavouring." Now God knows our abilities and limitations and he knows what we can do and what we cannot do. God never expects more of us than we are able to produce. Every believer is a priest and as a believer priest we have our own right to be spiritually self-sustaining and to live our own lives as unto the Lord. Every believer is an ambassador and as an ambassador, we represent the absent Lord. Whatever we do in life we must remember we are in full-time Christian service. For our task God has provided for us our abilities and he often disciplines us to keep us in line with our purposes, and in line with his will for us. He has provided spiritual gifts for each believer and each does not have the same gifts. Gifts are provided for us on the basis of grace. When the believer becomes spiritually self-sustaining and then keeps taking in Bible doctrine every day, he keeps growing, keeps expanding and never does reach a plateau and cease to grow spiritually. Faith-rest plus love helps the believer to keep growing daily in the grace of God.

Divided Into Three Parts

This passage before us is divided into three parts.

First of all, we are to see what we all have in common. This is the unity of the God of peace, as it is called here in verse 3.

Secondly, we will see how we differ in spiritual gifts.

Thirdly, we will see how we can all reach maturity and eventually be spiritually mature. We will see that the enemy of such maturity is the failure to take in Bible doctrine daily. This neglect of Bible doctrine causes scar tissue on the soul and darkness begins to flow into the soul. This leads to a frantic search for happiness, the happiness that can never be found in this way. And for this very reason many Christians are the most miserable people in the world.

This word "endeavouring" is a present, active, participle and it really means "to concentrate on doing something right." The Greek word is "Spoudozo." It is very easy to do everything wrong. At the point of

conversion all scar tissue on the soul is removed, but if Bible doctrine is neglected the scar tissue forms on the soul very quickly. Now remember, the Christian life is designed so you can do things right. Some people believe that just because they are moral they are doing everything right. Well, remember, you can be perfectly moral and be doing everything wrong. The Rich Young Ruler was, you remember. Doing good and being moral is not the Christian way of life. You must be free of scar tissue on the soul so you can breathe in spiritual truth. We are going to discover here that this word translated "endeavour" is nothing less than the way to do things right, and it leads to peace. The word peace means a relaxed mental attitude and it is an agape love toward God which leads to this relaxed mental attitude. But scar tissue on the soul causes God to be hidden from us behind a curtain, and because of the curtain, we can't see him or know him. Our endeavour is to remove that curtain so we can really see God clearly. The only way to remove the curtain is the daily intake of Bible doctrine. Just as your lungs are designed to inhale air, so your soul is designed to take in doctrine every day and the exhale of faith toward God will remove that curtain. This will produce something wonderful in your life. So the word "Spoudozo" translated "endeavour" means self-discipline, the ability to concentrate and to recognize what is important and what is not important. To use an old expression, "Come hell or high water" you are to keep on pushing on in the intake of Bible doctrine until you build up spiritual ability to really see and know God.

This sets us free from the slavery of the details of life and sets us free in the love of God. Darkness goes out of the soul and fantastic happiness flows into the soul. All you have to do to be an unhappy and miserable Christian is to ignore Bible doctrine. When one is a believer and yet refuses to learn Bible doctrine, it throws him out of step with God and causes one to be terribly miserable. Just develop scar tissue on the soul by the neglect of Bible doctrine and you have developed a level of spiritual incompetence that brings spiritual misery. We should call it "How to be miserable in six easy lessons" or "How to be miserable without doing anything at all."

When you neglect Bible doctrine and scar tissue begins to build up on the soul, immediately you begin to seek cheap and superficial substitutes. It may be some sort of social life, or slavery to some horrible habit. Bible doctrine in the soul means you can become the master of every situation and have inner peace, inner power, inner happiness and daily victory.

Now what you are right now is a matter of privacy and no one is going to check you out and judge you. But just for a moment be honest with yourself and answer this question--Are you happy? Are you contented? Are you really at peace with God and with yourself? Now you answer to yourself and to nobody else. Now it may be that there is nothing wrong with you now more than the fact that your feet hurt, or you have some other physical ache. But then it may be possible also that your soul hurts and you are covered up with scar tissue in the soul and you are perfectly miserable. So whether you take in Bible doctrine is your own business, but on that one thing rests your happiness or unhappiness as a Christian. So take it or leave it, it is up to you.

So this word "endeavour" doesn't mean endeavour at all or anything close to it. It means concentrating on doing something right and with accuracy. It is a present, active, participle of "spoudozo" and it means to keep on every day concentrating on doing this thing right.

"To keep" is from "tereo" and it means to guard something that belongs to you. Now what belongs to you? The whole heritage of Bible doctrine belongs to you and you must learn it with accuracy and with diligence and guard it every day.

The atmosphere around us is filled with oxygen and hydrogen and nitrogen and etc. It can be said as far as the human race is concerned (Not angels, for I suppose you know that angels do not have respiratory systems like we humans do, and they can travel out in space and not breathe) but we humans require air to breathe if we are going to live. And when we take in oxygen, we breathe out carbon dioxide in the exhale. So you can say that air is the necessity of every member of the human race. When we were born the first thing we did was to inhale and the doctor gave us a spank and out came the exhale. You can't exhale until you inhale. You must first inhale the message of salvation before you can exhale the faith that is necessary for salvation. If you are going to concentrate on doing something right, you must take from God the whole heritage of the truth of Bible doctrine. This is something we must guard, for it belongs to us, "In the unity of the spirit" or "In the oneness of the spirit." One of the 34 things we got at the point of salvation was union with Christ and the Holy Spirit did this for us at the point of salvation.

"In the bond of peace" and the in is "en" plus the locative case and the bond means the one thing that pulls us all together, and that one thing is our heritage of doctrine, which leads to a relaxed mental attitude and it is here called "peace." In this passage we are going to have seven points of unity, all of these put doctrine in the soul.

Then later in this chapter, we will study the various gifts which make us different, and these are the various spiritual gifts. A relaxed mental attitude is an attitude that is constant and consistent in all circumstances of life. Adversity and prosperity can be treated just the same.

THE SEVEN FACTORS WHICH UNIFY ALL BELIEVERS

EPHESIANS 4:4 "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;"

"FIRST" ONE BODY. We are all members of one body. We all belong on the same team. In 30 A.D. on the Day of Pentecost, the team was organized. Once Christ ascended and sat down at God's right hand, he was glorified and at that moment the forming of this one body began. At that moment the Holy Spirit was given to every believer and once Christ was glorified he was qualified to select his bride. A body is being formed on the earth and every believer since the Day of Pentecost is a part of that ONE BODY. And since Christ is in heaven glorified and can no longer be the target of Satan, every believer is now the target of Satan. This ONE BODY is now under attack, a kingdom of priests, and

this is the unity of that one team. We studied this in Ephesians 2:16 and we get more details in Ephesians 5:30-32 and also in Colossians 1:24 and 2:19 and 1 Cor. 12. We are all members of the same body. God loves every believer with the same amount of love. God's love toward you is maximum and never changes. God's love is perfect and we are all members of the same body, and we are all on the same team. The ability you have to respond to that love depends on your supply of Bible doctrine in your mind.

"SECOND" ONE SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit is the one spirit we all possess. The Holy Spirit is inside and gives us the ability to take in doctrine. The Holy Spirit dwells in us in order to get doctrine in us, so on the outside we can serve God. The same Holy Spirit indwells every believer.

"THIRD" ONE HOPE.

Now this takes us far into the future. Whether we live or die, it makes no difference. We are all headed (if we are believers in Jesus Christ) toward the same hope. Every believer is given dying grace and then comes Revelation 21:4. Every believer gets exactly the same treatment after death. Now I know that that is a little hard for some to take for you have gotten so many "brownie points" and you are expecting a big slice of the cake up there. But it isn't going to be that way. All believers have an inheritance undefiled. We are all called into this hope. He has a perfect happiness for you. You are called into this hope. The aorist tense means you were called into it in eternity past, the passive voice means you received this inheritance from God, and the indicative mood means the reality of this call into the ONE HOPE.

EPHESIANS 4:5 "One Lord, one faith, one baptism,"

"FOURTH" ONE LORD.

We all have the same eternal Father, who designed the plan, and gave us our Saviour. So the ONE LORD here means, "The Lord Jesus Christ" given for our salvation by God the Father.

"FIFTH" ONE FAITH.

All believers are saved in exactly the same way. It takes a little faith, but when that faith is put in Jesus Christ, that result is salvation. The Holy Spirit works in your soul and you believe and that's all it takes to save you. The object of your faith is Jesus Christ and he gets all the credit.

"SIXTH" ONE BAPTISM.

And this is not water baptism and has nothing to do with water. People are baptized in all kinds of ways (That doesn't mean that they are all correct in mode). There are seven baptisms in Scripture and four are dry baptisms and three are wet baptisms. The actual identifications are the dry baptisms and the ritual identifications are wet baptisms. The four dry baptisms are:

1. 1 Cor. 10:2

The baptism of Moses was a dry baptism. Israel identified with Moses and more really with Christ, and they all got across dry shod.

2. Matt. 20:22
This is the baptism of the cup. What is the cup? It is a cup filled with our sins and Christ drank it down and took our sins. Our sins were identified with Christ and he died for them.
3. This is the baptism of fire, at the end of the Tribulation when all believers are taken off the earth.
4. The baptism of the spirit at the moment of salvation.

Now the subject here is the oneness of the Spirit. This is not water baptism but the Spirit baptism which comes to every believer in the Church Age at the point of salvation.

EPHESIANS 4:6 "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

"SEVENTH" ONE GOD AND FATHER OF US ALL.

This is God the Father, the author of the plan of salvation. He is above all. He is the Sovereign God. He is through all--this describes his eminence and his transcendence. And in all refers to a personal relationship with him.

You may be a poor Christian or a good one, a Christian in fellowship or out of fellowship, a serving faithful Christian or a carnal Christian--but you all have these seven things.

EPHESIANS 4:7 "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Now this is how God did it. But unto each one of us is given--it is an aorist, passive, indicative of "didomai" and it refers to the point of time when you accepted Christ, and God takes that point of time and lifts it out of time and perpetuates it forever. It becomes a perpetual memorial to the plan of God. The passive voice means you receive it as a free gift. The indicative mood means the reality of the gift.

Now it is one thing to have it, and it is another thing to enjoy it. The extent of the inhale of Bible doctrine determines how much you will enjoy it.