



Ecclesiology: The Study of the Church
Lesson 29: Sound Doctrine is for Unity

INTRODUCTION

1. Which do you think is more important: unity or doctrine? _____

MAIN IDEA

Sound doctrine is the ground of and motivation for Christian unity, and unity is one of the goals of sound doctrine.

DIGGING IN

In Ephesians 4, Paul turns from expounding the riches of salvation in Christ to calling the Ephesian church to live in light of those truths:

Ephesians 4:1–6

1. In verses one through three, Paul exhorts the Ephesians to walk in a manner worthy of their calling, and then he specifies several specific ways they are to do this. In one sentence or phrase, what is a summary of what Paul is calling the Ephesians to do? _____

2. What does Paul stress about the Christian faith in verses 4–6? _____

3. How does this unity of the faith encourage us to pursue unity with one another? _____

Philippians contains an exhortation similar to the one we just considered:

Philippians 2:1–11

- 4. What does Paul tell the Philippians to do in this passage (v. 2a)? _____

- 5. By what means are the Philippians to do this (vv. 2b–5)? _____

- 6. What threats to unity does Paul address in this passage? _____

- 7. What are some results of disunity and division in the church and even beyond? _____

- 8. What does Paul say Jesus did in this passage (vv. 6–8)? _____

- 9. What has God done in response (vv. 9–11)? _____

- 10. How does Paul’s teaching about Jesus in verses 5–11 address our temptations of pride, rivalry, and conceit?

- 11. Conceit, rivalries, and the threat of division are all very practical problems. Is Paul’s instruction about these matters purely practical? Explain. _____

12. In light of Paul’s teaching in these passages, what is an appropriate response to someone who says, “Doctrine is what divides Christians from each other. What we really need is to pursue unity.” _____

13. In light of Paul’s teaching in these passages, what is an appropriate response to someone who loves sound doctrine but consistently causes divisions within the local church?¹ _____

¹ Adapted from Bobby Jamieson, *The Whole Truth about God: Biblical Theology*, ed. Mark Dever, 9Marks Healthy Church Study Guides (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 37–41.