

GOD IS ONE AND WE ARE UNITED

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: I AM IN CHRIST
SERIES: GOD IS HOLY—I AM A SINNER/SAINT

BIG TRUTH: GOD IS ONE AND WE ARE UNITED

Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Isaiah 44:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 17:21; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Colossians 3:12-15; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 4:4

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call---,”

BIG IDEAS

- There is only one God in three persons.
- Division never comes from God because He is always unified in Himself.
- God’s people are to live in unity together becoming like Jesus.

BIBLE PASSAGE: EPHESIANS 4:1-7

TRANSFORM - I AM IN CHRIST

The Transform Year is an exploration of what it means to become a “new creation” in Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) In order for this to happen, we must first find our identity in Him. Many of us live in a consistent state of identity crises. We wrestle with questions like who am I, where do I belong, why do I exist? The answer to these questions is found in Jesus. Our prayer for this semester is that like the Apostle Paul we would be able to say, “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- God is holy and we are separated from Him in our sin.
- The gospel transforms sinners into saints.
- The Christian life is about becoming who we already are in Christ.



Every student should feel...

- The depth of their sin against the holy God.
- Wonder and awe at the good news of the gospel.
- Secure in the identity that they now have in Jesus.



Every student should strive to...

- Read the entire book of Ephesians
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week during the Ephesians series.
- Learn how to use a commentary.



Every student should want to...

- Be transformed by the gospel.
- Put sin to death and pursue holiness.
- Share the good news of the gospel.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 4:4

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call---,”

God’s people are united into one body of Christ.

“There is one body...”

- God’s people are referred to as His body. There is only one body of Christ. There are not many little bodies functioning separately. The body of Christ is another name for the church. Even though there are smaller, local churches, they all are united together by a common faith in Jesus as Savior.
- While believers are called to be members of a local church as an expression of the body of Christ, they are also made to be members of God’s global Church. This Church is the body of Christ, made up of every person who believes and repents in Jesus, and is used by God to fulfill His purposes

Every believer is united to one another through the Holy Spirit.

“and one Spirit...”

- Just as there is only one body of Christ, there is one Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives inside of every person who repents and believes. He is the common connection among believers all over the world. People do not receive different Spirits. They all receive the same Holy Spirit.
- Because the Holy Spirit is the power at work inside of every believer, all believers have the same power to fulfill God’s purposes and to live a holy life. Every believer is connected to one another forever.

All believers are united by one hope.

“just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-”

- Believers do not have separate hopes. Every believer has the same hope---eternal life with Jesus. It is this hope as believers live for and look toward eternity that connects them to one another. Thankfully, believers are not called to live isolated lives. In God’s providence, He has connected every person who places faith in His Son together through the gift of His Spirit.
- He has promised a new life in eternity and it is the hope of this new life that joins believers all over the world together.

BIG IDEA #1: THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS.¹**[THIS]**

In Paul's writing to the Ephesians, he reiterates that there is only one God. While this truth would have been common knowledge to the Israelites, the Gentiles were historically pagans, worshipping many gods. Paul makes it clear in Ephesians 4:5-6 that there is only one God and only one way to be saved: through faith in Jesus Christ that unites believers together as the body of Christ. Paul reminds the Ephesians that God is one and He is the true God. It is only through Him that man can be saved. Any other god is false and can never offer salvation.

[THEREFORE]

What are some false saviors that you or your friends have looked to for salvation?

Psalm 115:4-8 teaches us that false gods exist in people's hearts. Though false gods are not real, they do reign inside of us if we are not careful. These gods are created by man and have no saving power. 1 John 4:1 also teaches us that there are false teachers among us. Paul reminds believers in 1 Corinthians 8:6 that true salvation is found in Christ alone and no one else.

[THIS]

Ephesians 4:6 discusses the oneness of God and Paul hints at the three persons of God when he calls God "Father". God is one God, but He manifests Himself in three persons. These three persons are all equal and fully God. This is commonly referred to as the Trinity. The Trinity is made up of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. There is nothing in humanity that compares to the triune nature of God. Humans do not exist in this way. This triune nature is one of the things that sets God apart from man. God is a magnificent God whose ways and thoughts are higher than ours.

[THEREFORE]

How does each member of the Trinity play a part in someone's salvation?

Every believer experiences the three persons of God through reconciliation. Ephesians 1:3-6 shows us that it is the Father who chooses those who believe. Ephesians 1:7-12 teaches us that salvation is through the Son and only the Son and Ephesians 1:13-14 reveals that it is the Holy Spirit who shows us that we need the salvation offered to us.

How can Jesus followers avoid the temptation to live independently, and instead embrace their identity as a member of God's family?

In 1 Corinthians 12:27, Paul says that believers are individually members of the body of Christ and all the individual members make up the collective body of Christ. Because God is one, there is one body. Colossians 3:15 teaches us that there is but one body of Christ. Hebrews 10:24 speaks to the responsibility that individual members have to build one another up.

1. Ephesians 4:5-7: God is one God in three persons. He is not three gods.

BIG IDEA #2: DIVISION NEVER COMES FROM GOD BECAUSE HE IS ALWAYS UNIFIED IN HIMSELF.²**[THIS]**

Because the Holy Spirit unites believers everywhere into one body, the body of Christ can live unified. Ephesians 4:1-4 speaks to this unity when Paul encourages the Ephesians to eagerly maintain the unity they have received from the Spirit. God in His three persons exists in perfect harmony and unity; therefore, believers should pursue unity among themselves.

[THEREFORE]

In what ways have you experienced the unity made possible by the Holy Spirit in your local body of Christ?

In John 17:21, Jesus prays for His disciples and their unity as a representation of Him. When He prays, Jesus references the perfect unity that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit have. Colossians 3:12-14 gives us a picture of what a united body of Christ looks like. It involves love, forgiveness, and patience.

[THIS]

Paul teaches in Ephesians 4:1-4 that believers should seek to live in unity with one another. The unity that the body of Christ should have is only possible through the Spirit of God because God is the giver of peace. Without the Holy Spirit, we could not really live united to one another. We can live at peace with other believers, no matter what, because we have peace with God. When we understand that we are no longer at war with God, but have peace through Jesus, we can seek to live peaceably with fellow believers. Division is not from God, so when we experience division, it is the work of our sinful flesh and not the Spirit of God. Paul encourages the Ephesians to be seekers of peace and unity. This means that every believer should actively pursue to live at peace and in unity with others as much as it's possible.³

[THEREFORE]

What are some causes of division that occur within the body of Christ?

Titus 3:9-11 speaks to some of the causes of divisions that may occur within the body of Christ. Titus also gives the response that we should have toward those who would stir up divisions. Romans 16:17-18 gives a warning about those who serve their own desires and in the process stir up strife and division. These things are not from God because division is not from God.

How can we pursue unity and fight against disunity within our church family?

Philippians 2:2-4 gives us the formula for living unified to other believers. When we are not seeking to please ourselves and we are counting others as more important, we will be peace-keepers and seekers of unity. Romans 12:10 offers another way to live unified with other believers when we are showing brotherly love and affection to fellow followers of Christ.

2. Ephesians 4:1-4: Believers are to seek peace and unity with one another because this is part of their calling to be like Christ.

3. Romans 12:18: We are called to live at peace with others as much as it depends upon us to do so.

BIG IDEA #3: GOD'S PEOPLE ARE TO LIVE IN UNITY TOGETHER BECOMING LIKE JESUS.⁴**[THIS]**

The calling of every Christ-follower is to be like Jesus. When we repent and believe in Jesus, we begin a sanctification process that lasts our earthly lifetime and results in our looking and acting like Jesus. Paul addresses this calling in Ephesians 4:1-6. Because God's Spirit makes unity possible, His people are to seek unity. Every believer is given the responsibility of dying to himself or herself and seeking the good of fellow believers. Believers can live in unity to one another when they humble themselves before God and seek His glory above all else. Jesus set the example of humbly going to the cross to die for sins He did not commit for the glory of God and the good of man.

[THEREFORE]**Why is living in unity difficult for us?**

Jude 1:16-19 gives us a list of attitudes and behaviors that lead to division and prevent unity. When we are self-seekers and put ourselves above others, we sabotage unity in the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:3 shows us living according to our flesh can lead to jealousy and strife, which can lead to divisions.

How has the unity of your local body helped you become more like Jesus?

In Colossians 3:12-15, Paul speaks of the way in which believers should live with one another. His list of attitudes and behaviors is a list of the character traits of Jesus. Philippians 2:5-8 gives us the picture of perfect unity that the Trinity experiences. When we are unified as believers, we become more like Christ everyday.

[THIS]

In Ephesians 4:1-2, Paul describes the way that every believer should live with one another. The gentleness, humility, patience, and love he describes are all characteristics of Christ. Believers are united to one another to be a representation of Christ to the world. The Spirit of God makes unified, Christ-like living possible. As believers live in unity, they become more like Christ because they must die to themselves daily, humble themselves before God, and count others as more significant than themselves. These are all characteristics of Jesus and when we seek unity and live a unified life, we are seeing the result of our sanctification. We will bear the fruit of the Spirit as we grow to be more like Christ. As we bear the fruit of the Spirit, we will seek unity and live at peace with others, just as Christ did.

[THEREFORE]**What are some practical ways you can intentionally pursue humility this week so that you can live in unity with your brothers and sisters in Jesus?**

Ephesians 4:2 teaches that humility comes when we are patient and bear with one another in love. 1 Peter 5:5 speaks to a humility required of younger people when they submit themselves to older people. Proverbs 12:15, 22:4, and 27:2 all remind us that pride does not lead to humility and remaining prideful is the opposite of bringing God glory.

4. Ephesians 4:1-6: When believers live in unity, they are displaying the character of Jesus to the world and they are growing in their own Christ-likeness.