



BEST SUMMER EVER

DIGGING DEEPER

UNIFIED WITH ONE ANOTHER

JUNE 11

What will make this the best summer ever won't be the destinations we go to or the pictures we take, but rather the people we do life with- those we impact and those that impact us. Diversity in all its facets makes the world the beautiful kaleidoscope that it is, but when we become fixated solely on our differences it leads to division.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own or get together with your group, spiritual running partners, or family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Would you describe yourself as a team player? Do you like being on a team or do you prefer to fly solo?
2. How would you describe the purpose of the church? How important is unity in that purpose?
3. What stood out to you from the message?
4. Read **Ephesians 4:1-16**.
 - What do we learn from this passage about the purpose of the church?
 - What role does unity play and how is it reached?
5. Read **John 17:20-23** and make some observations. This is what became known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer in which He gives a significant amount of attention to praying for unity for, not only His disciples but for "those who will believe in [Him] through their word." That's us!
 - Looking at His prayer, what difference does our unity with one another make in the world? Why is it so essential?
6. What barriers have you had to overcome in order to walk in unity with those in the church? Are there economic barriers, political barriers, racial/ethnic barriers, gender barriers, etc.?
7. Is there any area where you are not walking in unity with the church? Consider these questions to help you discern this:
 - Where am I contributing to a fractured world? (social media, my own family relationships, a growing frustration around a particular belief, etc...)
 - What could I possibly relearn that I thought I already knew? (family history, the ethnic background of my friends/neighbors, scripture learning, history of our city/state, etc...).
 - Am I reflecting the fruit of God's spirit even when I am in disagreement? Unity often comes with a price tag, but the price usually costs less than what we think. Sometimes the cost of unity is merely saying 'please', 'thank you', 'I'm sorry' and giving others the benefit of the doubt.

KEY SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:1-16 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

John 17:20-23 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

TAKE A NEXT STEP

- As we prepare for going out into our neighborhoods on July 4th weekend, follow along with the Acts devotionals on the Gateway youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@gatewaychurchaustin>
- For further information on the "love one another" of scripture, check out this infographic: <https://overviewbible.com/one-another-infographic/#:~:text=Here's%20all%20that%20info%20in,in%2094%20New%20Testament%20verses>

FOR THE PARENTS

This week, kids learn about the fall of the first humans and how God still cared for them.

- THE BIBLE: The Fall: Genesis 3:1-15; Matthew 9:9-13
- THE BIG IDEA: God can create and rebuild things

ASK THIS

Because sometimes you and your kid need a conversation starter that isn't, "So . . . how was church?"

- How do you know God planned all along to unbreak, or fix, what the first humans did in today's story?
- What might you do to help someone feel better when they feel broken – for example, when someone feels sad or sick?

REMEMBER THIS

This month, your kids are memorizing the Bible verse Hebrews 3:4 (NIV), in case you want to work on them together.

Preschool: "God is the builder of everything." Hebrews 3:4b

Elem: "For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything." Hebrews 3:4 (NIV)

NEXT WEEK

Next week, kids will learn about what happened between Cain and Abel.