

**Life Groups – Winter, 2007**  
**Ephesians**

**March, Lesson One**

**Gathering Question:**

As a group, discuss what you believe to be the top three things that cause disunity in groups--whether family, churches or other groups.

## **The Mystery of Unity in Christ**

Ever since the rebellion in Eden shattered the relationship between humans and God, people have found it difficult to coexist peacefully. Every marriage, family, church (including the church at Ephesus), community, and nation struggles to maintain harmony and peace. Humanity's fallenness creates powerful feelings of alienation and suspicion, leading to prejudices, misunderstandings, disagreements, conflict, and even outright war.

It was no different in Paul's day. The early church consisted of Jewish people who already believed in God before they came to believe in Jesus, yet they still struggled to overcome prejudice against the Gentiles, the non-Jews, who were also becoming Christians. Paul showed them that Christ is the Prince of Peace and the key to unity in the church. He alone can bring us into a right relationship with God. He alone can shatter the walls of prejudice and malice that separate human beings.

During World War II, a group of American soldiers was exchanging fire with some Germans who occupied a farm house. The family who lived in the house had to run to the barn for protection. Suddenly their little three year old daughter became frightened and ran out into the field between the two groups of soldiers. When they saw the little girl, both sides immediately ceased firing until she was safe. A little child brought peace, brief as it was, as almost nothing else could have done. Jesus Christ came as a baby to earth, and in his sacrifice on the cross he himself became peace for those who trust in him. His peace was not temporary but permanent.

God has always been concerned about the unity of his people. Through salvation, he has effected a real spiritual oneness. He has created a commonness based on sharing the same eternal life. This reality of conversion should impact the life of the church by being the impetus for unity.

**Read and Reflect:**

Ephesians 2:11-3:13; II Corinthians 5:16-21

1. According to Paul in Ephesians, in what ways do the Jews have an advantage as they come to Christ? In what ways would a Gentile have an advantage?
2. List some of the struggles that Jews and Gentiles would have trying to be One Body.
3. What are the conditions for peace in the Church? What has to be present?
4. What is the significance of Paul's description of the church as "a holy temple of the Lord?"
5. In Paul's letter to Corinth, what changes are implied in a person's life when they become a new creation?
6. What is the job description for the "ministry of reconciliation?"
7. We are called to be ambassadors for Christ. What is the job of an ambassador?