

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN YOU COME TO GROUP HAVING PREPARED WITH THIS GUIDE!!

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

At the beginning of chapter 4, the apostle Paul begins to share with his readers (and us!) a 3-chapter list of the practical things that we can do to begin to live out the unity that Jesus has accomplished for us. But before we can really live out the unity, he knew that we'd need to understand a very powerful truth: we have ownership in the unity of the body. If we don't understand that, then everything he shares with us from this point on will feel more like a chore than a choice.

1. **"I get to" versus "I have to":** Ownership really does change everything. It's what made you want to wash YOUR car as a teenager but what made you hate washing your DAD'S car! You owned yours, and so you chose to keep it clean. But washing someone else's car felt like a chore for the simple fact that you had zero ownership in it. As believers, we're never called to create unity because Jesus already did that. But we are called to own it and to guard it, and that one shift in perspective will help us see the list of practical actions that Paul gives us as OPPORTUNITIES to improve our unity rather than OBLIGATIONS that we feel like we have to do.
2. **Balance begins with "be":** Living as owners of the unity we've been given requires balance between who we are and what we do. Just like a tightrope walker, we'll need to carry some poles with us to help us stay balanced, and Paul shared three "be's" that can help us walk out unity with the balance we'll need: be humble, be gentle, and be patient.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- As you've thought back through this week's message, what one thing – if any – inspired you or maybe even confused you?
- What are some examples of how ownership has changed your perspective throughout your life? In a job? In a relationship? In the church? Take time to share with your group.
- Why do you think ownership has such a powerful effect on us?
- Of the 3 "Be's" found in Ephesians 4:2 (be humble, be gentle, be patient), which one has made the biggest impact on your life when you received it from someone else? Which one do you think is the most lacking in your life currently?
- As Americans, we love having lots of options, don't we? How do you respond to the idea that Paul wrote about in Ephesians 4:4-6 that there is one body? Does that motivate you to step up and make that body the best it can be or does it make you nervous at the idea of "limiting" your options?
- How does taking ownership of the body help us become contributors more than consumers? Why do you think this is so important in the life of a church body?