



September 6, 2015  
Celebration | 8:45 am  
Pastor David Mitchell

## **Better Together** Ephesians 1:1-2

**Introduction of Paul and the Ephesians:** Learn from the writer and recipients of this letter how to live better together.

**Our Calling:** What does it look like when we live better together? Ephesians 1:15-16

*"I too having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers"*

**Six essential qualities for a healthy relationship:** Acts 20:17-37

- Investment of time (v.18)
- Humility of heart (v.19)
- Open and authentic with tears and trials (v.19-20, 23)
- Communicate truth to each other, no deceit (v.21, 27-31)
- Selfless motivation (v.33-35)
- Emotional bond (v.37-38)

**Our Commitment:** We are better together so we do not lose heart from suffering. Ephesians 3:1, 13-21; 4:1; 6:20; Acts 28:22-24

*"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles."* Ephesians 3:1

*"Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory."* Ephesians 3:13

**Our Challenge:** Be warned – we can do good works with good doctrine but fall out of love with the Lord and others.

*"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."* Revelation 2:2-5

**Our Character:** Life is better together when we unite with one another in attitude, heart and deed. Ephesians 4:1-3, 15-16

*"...walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love"*

## Digging Deeper:

Paul wrote Ephesians to the believers in Ephesus in what was called Asia Minor in that day. Today we can visit this location in Turkey. There was a strong bond created between Paul and the Ephesians. Paul's ministry to Ephesus caused a dramatic change in the lifestyle of those people as you can read in Acts 19. Even the economy changed because people turned from worshipping idols which caused the silversmith Demetrius to lose money and the city rioted.

## LifeGroup Discussion:

When Paul departed from the Ephesians, you can observe the deep emotional and spiritual bond between Paul and the leaders in Acts 20:17-31. During that time of openness with the elders, notice how Paul connected with them as they served together in Acts 20:19. Three key words are "humility," "tears," and "trials." These express the kind of connection that allows a relationship to grow deeply and healthy. Let's take a look at them.

**Humility:** No one ever gets an award, notoriety or prestige for humility. But you cannot have a healthy relationship with another person without humility. Use the following contrast of Pride and Humility to evaluate where you can grow. Put a check in each box that best describes you.

Pride	Humility
My focus is on my needs	My focus is on your needs
I am most concerned about my rights and feel an entitlement to my own way.	I willingly will wave my rights and any entitlement for your sake.
I feel best when I am "one-up" on you.	No position or person is below me. I am here to serve all.
My life is driven by my pursuit of power, position and prestige and how others view me.	I gave up any concern about my image or prestige to love you.
When I see a person in need, I usually first want to lecture, judge or condemn them if they are in sin.	When I see a person in need, I first seek to understand, sympathize and listen to them.
I wait for you to change before I love you.	I love you first before you change or love me back.
I will not be open or get close to you to avoid rejection.	I am willing to love you, get close and take a risk that you will reject me.
I wait for you to serve me first.	I have come to serve you first.
I become defensive, judgmental and angry with you when you disagree with me.	I am open to your thoughts, ideas, and opinions and seek to learn, even if you disagree with me.
I seek to control myself, my circumstances and relationships. I attempt to change people according to my rules of life.	I live by faith in my Heavenly Father that He controls my life, circumstances and relationships. I trust that God will change people by His grace and design.
I have a reputation of being critical and finding fault with people	I have a reputation of being compassionate and forgiving toward people.

Paul also was with them in **tears**. How do you feel when you shed tears before other people? Read about the tears of Jesus in John 11:35-38. What did the people think when they saw Jesus cry? What does it reveal about His heart for people in need?

Finally, Paul connected with the elders in "**trials**." (Acts 20:19) Suffering and struggling with people will cause the relationship to grow open and deep. How has suffering in your life deepened your relationships?

What relationships do you want to connect with as Paul did with the Ephesians? What stands out to you as an area of strength in your life? What area can you invest more time in?

Based on Paul's connection with the Ephesians, how and where do you see this theme of "better together" with other people at work in your life? What relationships can grow as a result of this emphasis?

Paul's relationships included humility, tears and trials. Which of these marks your relationships these days? In what ways?

## Next Steps:

- Grow Together by joining a LifeGroup.** Come on Sunday, September 20 after the morning services to the LifeGroup Fair and find a LifeGroup that suits you! Learn more at [calvarylife.org/lifegroups](http://calvarylife.org/lifegroups)
- Serve Together.** Join us for the "Love Santa Ana" serve day on Saturday, September 19 at 8:00 am at the Pico-Lowell Neighborhood as we serve alongside ten other Santa Ana churches that are committed to showing the love of Jesus to at-risk neighborhoods. For more info, contact Matt at [MDoan@calvarylife.org](mailto:MDoan@calvarylife.org) or 714.550.2378 or visit [calvarylife.org/local](http://calvarylife.org/local)
- Reach Together. Invite a friend to attend the Alpha Course with you.** The Alpha course meets on Wednesdays from September 9 - October 18 at 6:30 - 8:30pm in the Lobby. For more info, visit [calvarylife.org/alpha](http://calvarylife.org/alpha)



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