

PTB2-5b: What is the criterion for peace and unity among Christians?

Gist: Generalized answer is ultimate integration and integrity;
Details of answer from Ephesians.

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in

the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.” (Job 2:3)

“And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments...” (I Kings 9:3,4)

NOTE: If you impressed with the word integrity in the Bible, you may wish to search for all instances of usage. Either a good concordance or even better do the free download on [sungrist of the King James Bible](#), and search in it for the word “integrity” to see what God Himself thinks of it!

3-4: This Is Your Life.

When you read Ephesians, you are reading about your own life. If you are a Christian, it will remind you of both what your life was like before you became a Christian and what it is like now or can be. If you are not a Christian, you can find in Ephesians from your Creator a description of alienation from God that should strike accord with the feelings of your own heart and a description of a more peaceful way that should challenge the best in you. Ephesians chapter 1 tells us that IN CHRIST we have been blessed by God with all kinds of spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms. Christians are chosen from before the foundation of the world; they are adopted as sons by the very God of the universe; they are forgiven; and they are sealed by the very power of the God that created all things, to be kept by the power of God into eternity--just to name some of the spiritual blessings that presently puts the believer squarely in heavenly realms.

Then in Ephesians chapter 2, Christian pilgrims comes back to earth, passing from heavenly realms to earthly history as we are reminded of human misery, sin, wickedness, rebellion, and the trend of this world. But briefly! For that is all we can take or need by way of annotation of our problems. Chapter 2 quickly passes to the solution--God's rescue program for the human race; and even as God in Christ left the security of heavenly realms to walk the dusty roads of life, preaching peace, and then ascended back to the heavenly Father, a similar plan is offered to humanity whereby God "hath quickened us together with Christ" (2:5), "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus That in the ages to come he

might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (2:6,7 KJV)

Your life is bracketed by a discrete amount of time; and although Ephesians is authored on the divine side by the Lord to whom a thousand years is as one day and vice versa, He speaks practically to mortals in Ephesians 2 about time- "Time was when " (2:11 NEV) Your life has memories, many of which you would like to forget; and although God is purposefully forgetful, promising to remember our sins no more, He condescends to human needs, saying "Remember then your former condition" (2:11 NEV) in order to progress from past to present with "But now in union with Christ Jesus . " (2:13 NEV)

3-5: Appreciate Your Blessings Now.

Ephesians 1 contains a "roll-call" of spiritual blessings in heavenly realms that can be appreciated now, chapters 2-5 amplify on and reinforce these blessings, and chapter 6 makes the supreme application of these blessings to life by encouraging the Christian warrior to **"Put on the whole armor of God " (6:11 KJV)**

1. Before God made the world, He thought it more important to choose you as a Christian. Sometimes we are over powered by the things we see in the world, the works of God and the works of man; but the God who "In the beginning created the heaven and the earth " (Gen. 1:1 KJV) and the God who commissioned man, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it and have dominion " (Gen. 1:28 KJV) is the same God "that was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself " (II Cor. 5:19 KJV) and the same God "who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20 KJV)

2. This omnipotent Being has adopted you as one of His sons. "But as many as received him, to them gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name " (John 1:12 KJV)

3. Right now as a Christian you have written in your heart the will that assures you of a complete and eternal inheritance from God, **"after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession " (Eph. 1:13,14 KJV)**

4. God has let you know the secret meaning of the universe. A secret that was hidden from the foundation of the world, but which God has now revealed in Ephesians and on which you can now have illumination with the help of the Holy Spirit.

5. With this purpose for the universe God has also revealed a plan to bring it about; and both are yours today in the book of Ephesians if God through the Holy Spirit wants to let you know.

6. As a Christian, you have hope--an assurance that what God has promised will really come to pass. (Eph. 1:18; Eph. 2:12; Eph. 4:4; and Eph. 6:17)

7. Right now, you have unlimited power available.(Eph. 1:19, 3:20, and 6:10)

8. You are rich in the inheritance that you have with all Christians. **"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." (Eph. 1:18 KJV)**

NOTE: If have not yet become a believer IN CHRIST, it is prayed that these blessings of belief might be yours also. Amen.

3-6: Heavenly Realms to Earthly Armor.

The last aspect to illustrate how Ephesians and ONE are a practical commentary on life takes us from heaven to earth, from blessings to armor, from peace to warfare. It begins with Ephesians 1:3 where we read--

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ " (KJV)

And concludes with Ephesians 6:11 where we read

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (KJV)

As Ephesians passes from heavenly realms to the seven pieces of earthly armor, it also progresses through seven stages of development with each stage dealing with all seven pieces of the armor. The stages are (1) great doctrinal statements or truths about the spiritual blessings in heavenly realms of chapter one; (2) history of the Christian *life* in chapter two with contrasts of time, memory, and Christ; (3) prayer for all Christians, like Jesus's prayer that all Christians may be ONE; (4) then, in chapter four, Christians are encouraged to be worthy of the calling; (5) behavioral modification in terms of "walking" dominates most of chapters four and five; (6) Proverbs from Ephesians are scattered from chapter four to six; and (7) the focal point of the Christian life in chapter six, where life is lived and the battle is fought each day.

3-7: ULTIMATE INTEGRATION.

The ultimate theme of Ephesians is ultimate integration. The more you revel in this portion of God's Word, the more you will see it's the supreme integration in God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; the integration of heaven and earth under the Lordship of Christ; the integration of human character and personality into a whole person; the integration of husband and wife into one; and the integration of individual Christians into the total church body of all God's people.

The word "integration" as commonly used has at least three distinct meanings. Socially. We Americans that have lived over half a century have witnessed personally dramatic changes in the integration of races in our schools and churches. Mathematically. As students know all too well integration and differentiation are the two opposite processes of the branch of mathematics known as calculus. Psychologically. Wayne Oates, a Christian psychologist, in his book *THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF PERSONALITY* lists integration along with meaning and purpose as dimensions of man's religious being and becoming personality.

Not as commonly known is a higher integration which is the major theme of the book of Ephesians. This theme may encompass much that is implied in social, mathematical, and psychological "integration"; but goes far beyond it, as far as the heaven is from the earth. Ultimate integration is an integration into God and into God's purpose. It is an integration from infinity to infinity, from before the beginning of time to eternity, represented mathematically as: It is an integration under the rule of Christ, into the body of Christ, and through the Holy Spirit integration as part of God's new creation; and represents the trend of progression for the universe, a happy portion in the great

world climax, and an inheritance incorruptible with a down payment now on assurance of the full glory to come.

Ultimate integration is a matter of personal identification with the God that made this whole thing. While in Genesis we learn how the ONE God of Father, Son (John 1 1 '3) , and Holy Spirit (Gen. 1 12) "In the beginning, created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1 KJV); in Ephesians we learn for what purpose God made it all and how we can fit into this plan and program.

It is a big universe; Our God is bigger because He made it all. His purpose and plan is also big; and although we may feel small in comparison, which we should, we can have a part in this large program, In fact, the assurance of Ephesians is that even before the Trinity set out to create the heaven and the earth, God chose us to be Christians "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4 KJV). God cares about the world, because He is going to redeem it also; but He cares more about the people in the world for which all things were made and for whom Christ died on the cross.

Mathematicians get closer to ultimate truth than they realize as they delve into the mysteries of this universe. For example, as in the integration of calculus or as in the matrix theory of algebra and computer programming. They have defined in matrix theory the IDENTITY MATRIX as:

1 0 1

0 1 0

0 0 1

with three members of one. Also, it is interesting to note that even in the fundamental arithmetic of mathematics that any number multiplied or divided by one retains its own identity. Our God is a mathematician and a physicist and a psychologist, for He created all these mysteries that humanity is just now beginning to understand; but He is also a PERSON that loves people and that actively seeks for people to personally identify with Him through Christ.

The seven ONES of Ephesians 4:4-6 are clustered around the three members of the Trinity--

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, am in you all." (KJV)

Surely ONE is the ultimate integration, God and God's people become as one, God's purpose and the Christian calling as one, God's plan and Christian methods as one; heaven and earth, one; tangibles become one with things which cannot be seen; personal priorities become one with eternal. priorities, visible integrate with invisibilities 1 doctrine and Persons become one; and the Living Truth becomes truth that is alive and rightness that which is livable, One with God the Father, one with God the Son, and one with God the Holy Spirit; and the close relationship of the Trinity Itself tightens the integration of connections with the Three, The message of Ephesians is to tighten those connections or associations with the members of the Godhead!

"... make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the Spirit gives," (Eph. 4:1-3 NEV)

Yet we are alarmed when the "Peace Committee" of the 1986 Southern Baptist Convention reports that "there can be no peace without casualties," Surely Southern Baptists represent a large portion of the presently existing body of Christ, and yet they cannot find grounds for peace and unity even among their own members,

NOTE: This is a much larger problem of the Falling Away and how the SBC made significant contributions to the Falling Away, not only by showing a lack of unity and peace by splitting into 3 separate denominations, but by the warfare lead by Criswell, Rogers, and Stanley that destroyed the careers and reputations of much better men of love and service that were preachers, pastors, and teachers. It is little recognized but what really destroyed the SBC was Scofield, the Scofield Reference Bible, and Scofield mites: the Roman Vatican had its great falling away apostasy about 1000 A.D. as the "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" forbade priest to marry (now in the law courts you are seeing what this caused); and now in the law courts you are seeing something of the type of Scofield mite like Judge Pressler that hatched the 10 year takeover plan of a lack of peace and unity. You can make a very good case for in the SBC the doctrines of devils of Scofield and Scofield mites had to accompanied with seducing spirits, the type that caused divisions and the type that made that casualty stated of the so-called Peace Committee led by Adrian Rogers, and the statement shortly before the split made by Criswell to Bill Moyer of "we are going to keep fighting until one side or the other wins."

We think of this social and religious warfare in the SBC, we think of the long history of wars centered around religion and religious differences, we think of the troubles in Ireland between the catholic and Presbyterians, likewise in Scotland with "the killing times" of the covenanters. Can you imagine and remember that some authorities on history during the 50's were saying that all wars were over but look across the world that all we have now! Israelis daily battle with Muslim countries that would seek to destroy them and democracy in the Middle East; within their own borders with Gaza and the West Bank are breeding grounds of Palestinian terrorists with some legal claims to the land. Hezbollah in Lebanon, in Syria, and in Iran underground efforts are made against the current borders of Israel.

What is the criterion for peace and unity among Christians?

That is the prime subject of the book of Ephesians, it lays God's foundation or criterion for peace and unity--more peace and more unity with more ultimate integration, the unity of Ephesians comes from each member of the Godhead, but the Holy Spirit gives it as the point of practical implementation in the individual, life of the believer and in the total collective body of Christ. It is a unity through God's purpose--a purpose at work in history from the beginning, a purpose established from before the beginning of history, a purpose revealed through the Apostle Paul in Ephesians as one of the great mysteries of the ages, and a purpose that inevitably will find fulfillment at the end of time as we know it, Unity through the death and Headship of Christ.

Ultimate integration speaks of total redemptions of the world, God's people, and the Christian--body and soul. It alludes to a "new heaven and a new earth" in that this is the only place for ultimate fulfillment where no murder or unrighteousness is allowed.

Ultimate integration of Christian personality in this life can be described under the word's "integrity" and "learn Christ." It is a matter of coming to the "full stature of Christ" with integrity that includes honesty, reality, intellectual honesty, and characters like Job who lost everything and still God gave him the supreme compliment that Job walked in the integrity of his heart and like David, who although he sinned, God still summarized his life as "he walked in the integrity of his heart", we also can work toward the achievement of this ultimate compliment from God Himself.