



UNITY: THE FORGOTTEN TREASURE

ETC Course Handout - Lesson 4

Church Leadership and Unity

Course Section	Section 1 - A Diagnostic of the Church's Disunity
Book Connection	Chapter 3 - Leadership: The Church Lacks Credibility
Lesson Aim	Examine how leadership loyalties and structures can either honor Christ's headship or reinforce division.

Key Scriptures

1 Samuel 8:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:4-7; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:11-16.

1. Christ Is the Head

- Christian leadership must remain visibly subordinate to Jesus Christ, the Head of the church.
- When loyalty shifts from Christ to personalities, institutions, or systems, leadership can reinforce division.

Notes:

2. Israel's Desire for a Human King

- 1 Samuel 8 exposes the danger of replacing direct loyalty to God with confidence in human structures.
- The lesson uses this Old Testament scene to ask whether church structures can function in a similar way.

Notes:

THINK ABOUT IT

Do the leadership structures you know make Christ's headship clearer, or can they unintentionally compete with it?

3. "I Am of Paul"

- 1 Corinthians 3 rebukes party spirit built around respected leaders.
- Gifted teachers are servants through whom God works; they must never become competing centers of identity.

Notes:

4. Ecumenism and False Pictures of Unity

- Not every effort labeled unity is biblical unity. Organizational cooperation can coexist with theological confusion.
- The answer to false unity is not permanent disunity but clearer allegiance to Christ and Scripture.

Notes:

5. Leadership That Preserves Unity

- Leaders model humility when they honor other members of Christ's body, distinguish central truths from secondary conclusions, and refuse to build their identity on rivalry.

Notes:

Study & Application

Use these after the lesson and related book reading. The complete chapter study-question set remains in the textbook.

1. How can Christian leaders unintentionally displace Christ as the practical center of loyalty?

2. What warning does 1 Corinthians 3 give about identifying ourselves around leaders?

3. Why is rejecting false ecumenism not enough to solve the problem of disunity?

4. What leadership practices can cultivate respect for the whole body of Christ?

KEY TAKEAWAY: Healthy Christian leadership magnifies Christ, not the leader, and helps believers recognize their shared life under one Head.

Next: Complete the 7-question Lesson 4 online quiz.