



UNITY: THE FORGOTTEN TREASURE

ETC Course Handout - Lesson 6

Setting Priorities

Course Section	Section 1 - A Diagnostic of the Church's Disunity
Book Connection	Chapter 5 - Priorities: Upper and Lower Levels
Lesson Aim	Learn to distinguish central Gospel truths from upper-level theological conclusions so doctrine serves growth rather than rivalry.

Key Scriptures

1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 4:15.

1. Why Priorities Matter

- Not every biblical truth carries the same role in salvation, fellowship, and Christian identity.
- When secondary conclusions are treated as the center, the Gospel can be functionally pushed to the side.

Notes:

2. Upper-Level Theological Discussion

- Upper-level discussion works with developed systems, labels, deductions, and defended conclusions.
- It can be useful, but it is especially vulnerable to rivalry and inflexibility when conclusions are treated as unquestionable.

Notes:

THINK ABOUT IT

Which theological issues receive the most emotional energy in your setting? Are they proportionate to their biblical importance?

3. Lower-Level Biblical Exploration

- Lower-level discussion returns to the biblical text, asks what God is saying, and allows believers to learn together.
- This posture makes room for humility, questions, discovery, and fellowship.

Notes:

4. Doctrine as a Servant

- Doctrine should clarify Scripture, protect Gospel truth, and form Christlike disciples.
- When doctrine becomes a badge of superiority, its use has drifted from its spiritual purpose.

Notes:

5. Reordering the Center

- The Gospel and the glory of Christ must remain central. Other conclusions should be handled in a way that does not eclipse love for God's people.

Notes:

Study & Application

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

1. Describe the difference between upper-level and lower-level theological discussion.

2. Why can a correct doctrine still be used in a divisive way?

3. How does keeping the Gospel central change the way we discuss secondary issues?

4. Choose one debated doctrine. What would a lower-level Bible-centered conversation about it look like?

KEY TAKEAWAY: Sound priorities keep the Gospel and Christ at the center while allowing secondary conclusions to be examined with humility.

Next: Complete the 7-question Lesson 6 online quiz.