



UNITY: THE FORGOTTEN TREASURE

ETC Course Handout - Lesson 19

Crossing the Great Divide

Course Section	Section 3 - A Unifying Analysis of Our Doctrines
Book Connection	Chapter 17 - Crossing the Great Divide
Lesson Aim	Learn a practical way to move from opposing theological camps toward Gospel-centered unity without erasing real differences.

Key Scriptures

Romans 15:5-7; Ephesians 4:1-6, 15; Philippians 2:1-5; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.

1. Focus on the Gospel of Jesus Christ

- The first movement across a divide is to restore the Gospel and Christ to the center.
- Shared saving faith gives believers substantial common ground before secondary disagreements are addressed.

Notes:

2. Observe the Two Sides

- A fair examination listens carefully to what each side is trying to protect.
- Misrepresentation intensifies division; understanding can reveal shared concerns hidden behind different terminology.

Notes:

THINK ABOUT IT

Think of one theological divide. What does each side believe it is protecting?

3. Identify the Real Point of Difference

- Some disputes involve direct contradiction; others involve emphasis, definition, inference, or different frameworks.
- Naming the kind of disagreement often reduces unnecessary conflict.

Notes:

4. Make the Shift to Unity

- The shift is not from conviction to indifference but from rivalry to brotherly engagement.
- Believers can state differences clearly while refusing contempt and maintaining fellowship where the Gospel allows it.

Notes:

5. Crossing Together

- Unity becomes practical through listening, shared Scripture, prayer, humility, and repeated acts of mutual respect.

Notes:

Study & Application

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

1. Why must the Gospel be the first point of orientation when crossing a theological divide?

2. What is gained by accurately describing both sides before evaluating them?

3. How can you tell whether a disagreement is about biblical fact, inference, terminology, or emphasis?

4. What would a real "shift to unity" look like without requiring identical conclusions?

KEY TAKEAWAY: Great divides become crossable when believers center on the Gospel, understand one another accurately, and replace rivalry with humble engagement.

Next: Complete the 7-question Lesson 19 online quiz.