

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE
Lesson 7

SESSION TITLE: “BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER”

FOCAL PASSAGE: (Eph. 4:2-3; Col. 3:12-13)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner commit to “bearing with” fellow Christians in order to preserve the unity of the Body.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. Share - the following information:

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In the January 30, 2004 Dallas Morning News, Steve Blow, who writes a daily column wrote about Brenda Loflus. Brenda is a 53-year-old woman who came from Jamaica as a teenager and ended up living in Dallas in an abusive marriage. In 1992, she shot and killed her ex-husband after he threatened to kill their daughter. A jury convicted her of manslaughter and sentenced her to probation. Brenda went on to live a great life with her daughter. But because of her conviction she would have to be deported back to Jamaica. So on Thursday morning January 29th, she stood at the DFW airport waiting to get on a plane to be deported from the U.S. forever. Little did she know the people who would “bear with” her in her time of need. A lawyer viewing her plight on a newscast heard that she had only received probation and realized that he could have her conviction wiped off of her record which would allow her to stay in the U.S. Andrew Chatham went to work on Brenda’s behalf. He contacted Paige Flink at The Family Place and they met at the courthouse. Judge Susan Hawk agreed to hear the hurry-up case. At 10:45 a.m. she signed the order to wipe the slate clean on Brenda’s record. Her flight was to depart at 12:00 noon. The decision was made for Brenda not to board the plane. Meanwhile, in Jamaica people had heard of Brenda’s plight. They had already secured housing and a job for her at a resort.

Ask – Why would strangers rally to help Brenda who they did not really know? How many opportunities do we miss to preserve the unity in the “Body” by helping others and showing compassion, kindness and gentleness toward fellow believers?

State – Today we are going to discuss what it takes to “bear with” fellow Christians preserving the spirit of unity in the “Body”.

B. Optional Method – Movie Clip - “Hoosiers”

Start: 01:21:51

Stop: 01:26:16

On DVD track 27

Synopsis:

The movie, Hoosiers, captures Indian’s obsession with high school basketball through the story of the 1951-52 Hickory Huskers. A small school with only eight players on its team, they defied all odds and marched to the state title.

Norman Dale (Gene Hackman) coaches Hickory into the regional semifinal. The underdog Huskers are up by three with 55 seconds remaining in the game when Buddy, a star defensive player, fouls out.

Because of an earlier injury, the only player left on the bench is Ollie, the five-foot-three equipment manager who never planned to suit up. When Dale arrived at the first practice, Ollie explained he wasn’t an actual player because he was “too short and not no good.”

Now, the Huskers desperately need him on the court. But he sits on the bench, looking at the floor, gripped with terror.

The coach calls out, “Ollie, we need you.”

But Ollie sits glued to his seat and unwilling to look up.

The coach crouches to look Ollie in the eye. With the tender firmness of a dad coaxing his son off the high-dive for the first time, he says, “Ollie, we need you...now.”

Fumbling to discard his warm-ups, Ollie steps onto the court, bewildered by the raucous crowd. Paralyzed by the fast-paced tempo, Ollie mishandles a dribble and turns the ball over. Seconds later, he is fouled and steps to the free-throw line.

He can't even shoot a normal free throw. Embarrassingly, he swings the ball between his legs and heaves it upward, granny style. It is a truly ugly shot, falling several feet short of the rim.

The crowd groans. The coach shakes his head. And little Ollie has dejection all over his face.

Because of Ollie's mishaps, Hickory loses their lead and is down by one point. With the final seconds ticking away, Ollie is fouled again. This time, he gets two shots. This time, the game—and the season—are in his hands.

With a time-out, the Huskers huddle as the coach gives them instructions. His words could have been a frantic attempt at a desperation play or a dressing-down of Ollie for his mistakes.

Instead, his words speak of faith in Ollie. “After Ollie makes his second shot”---he begins, and then looking directly to Ollie adds, “and you will make your second shot---get back on defense. They might have enough time to throw a desperation shot.”

Everyone lines up, and a guard from the opposing team bumps into Ollie's shoulder. Another whispers scorn into Ollie's ear, “I didn't know they grew them so small down on the farm.” The opposing crowd screams and taunts.

But Ollie sinks one, and then two shots, winning the game and sending the Huskers to the state championship.

---Hoosiers (Hemdale Film Corp., 1986), rated PG, written by Angelo Pizzo, directed by David Anspaugh

Ask – How many opportunities do we have to encourage a brother or sister in Christ, to show compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience? Many times, if we treated others who may be a little different than us with these characteristics, we could help them achieve victory in their Christian walk.

State – Today we are going to discuss what it takes to “bear with” fellow Christians preserving the spirit of unity in the “Body”.

BOOK Getting Into the Word

- A. Utilize - the Discussion Guide to examine the scripture.

LOOK Getting the Word into Life

- A. Distribute the handout; “Taking Steps to Bear With Others” and guide members to complete it.
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IV. Conclusion (Took)

A. Share the following information:

Sometimes it is little insignificant things that can control our temperament and how we react to those closest to us. Have you ever had a bad day in traffic only to arrive home and take your frustration out on your spouse or children?

Ask – Do you ever experience “road rage?” Do you ever lose it in traffic?

In a recent article in the Washington Post entitled “The Breaking Point” by Esther Iverem, the author states that road rage is an everyday occurrence that can begin with honking the horn, verbal abuse, obscene gestures and sometimes leads to violent confrontations. In the article Iverem quotes psychologist Arnold Nerenberg who has written a book entitled *Overcoming Road Rage: The 10-Step Compassion Program*. Nerenberg believes that almost one-third of us are suffering from “road rage disorder.”

Some real bumper stickers that express these sentiments:

“Cover me---I’m changing lanes.”

“I brake for no apparent reason.”

“Forget about world peace...visualize using your turn signal.”

“Keep honking...I’m reloading.”

“Caution: I drive like you.”

“Horn broken. Watch for finger.”

State – Sometimes we let other people rob us of joy and this affects how we interact with others. Start working on the little things this week that get to you. Take care of these issues before they begin to rule your temperament towards those you love.

B. Optional Method

Share – the following story:

A train was filled with tired people. Most of them had spent the day traveling through the hot dusty plains and at last evening had come, and they all tried to settle down to a sound sleep.

However, at one end of the car a man was holding a tiny baby and as night came on the baby became restless and cried more and more. Unable to take it any longer, a big brawny man spoke for the rest of the group, “Why don’t you take that baby to its mother?”

There was a moment’s pause and then came the reply. “I’m sorry. I’m doin’ my best. The baby’s mother is in her casket in the baggage car ahead.”

Again there was an awful silence for a moment. Then the big man who had asked the cruel question was out of his seat and moved toward the man with the motherless child. He apologized for his impatience and unkind remark. He took the tiny baby in his own arms and told the tired father to get some sleep. Then in loving patience he cared for the little child all through the night.

State – Sometimes we let outward circumstance control how we react with others when we really do not know what is going on in people’s lives.

May we get “in the know” before we say no.

May we think before we speak.

May we bear with one another and preserve the unity in our fellowship.

**DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)**

1. Outline the character traits mentioned in (Ephesians 4:2) and (Colossians 3:12-13) that are vital for "bearing with" one another.

Humility, gentleness, patience, a heart of compassion, forgiveness.

2. What is the literal meaning of "bear with" in these 2 passages and what is the context?

a. literal meaning --- forbear, be patient with

b. context --- with fellow Christian's idiosyncrasies or personality quirks

3. How can one develop greater patience with fellow believers?

4. How is Jesus patient with sinful man? (1 Timothy 1:15-16)

He shows incredible patience waiting for sinful men to come to Him.

5. What does (Ephesians 4:3) state as the reason to bear with others?

To be diligent in preserving unity in the Body.

6. What type of circumstance or actions of people can damage the unity in an SGM?

7. According to (Colossians 3:13) why should we be willing to forgive fellow Christians?

Because Christ has forgiven us. If He can forgive us in our condition, then we should be willing to forgive others.

8. With whom in your life do you need to develop more forbearance?

a) Family _____

b) SGM _____

c) Work _____

“Taking Steps To Bear With Others”

Step 1 Evaluate yourself

- a. What do I do (or not do) at home that irritates my wife and children or my parents, my brothers and sisters or apartment-mate.
- b. What do I do (or not do) at church that irritates my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?
- c. What do I do (or not do) at work that irritates my fellow employees?
- d. What do I do (or not do) that irritates my friends?

Step 2 Evaluate your weaknesses in light of your attitudes and actions toward other Christians

1. Do I expect more from others than I do from myself?
2. Do I criticize others in the areas of my own weaknesses?

Step 3 Make a list of Christians you have difficulty relating to

If you have a list ask yourself, why am I so angry with them?
Are my feelings justified?
Are they aware of how I feel?
Am I upset with them because they remind me of myself?

Step 4 Consciously and deliberately forgive every person who has ever done anything to hurt you

Talk to each person to ask their forgiveness and make things right

Caution: Do not base your forgiveness on the condition that they offer an apology. Take care of your own attitudes and eventually God will take care of theirs.

THE Word For The Week

"Admonishing One Another"
Rom. 15:14; James 5:19-20

Monday - Read Romans 15:14

- Ø How are you encouraged? When you are encouraged by someone, do you immediately think that they are "just saying that" or do you receive the compliment with humbleness? Does your response indicate anything about accepting how God views you? (Psalm 19:4; Phil 1:6)
- Ø Paul says that they are full of "goodness." This does not mean that they were without sin but it does mean "a positive moral quality characterized by their interest in the welfare of others." Is this true of your own life? Why or Why not?

Tuesday - Read Romans 15:14; Col. 1:28; Proverbs 27:6

- Ø Who is/was your favorite instructor or teacher? Were they "easy" or "difficult?" Most people would agree that good teachers are "hard" teachers because they care enough to not let you stay where you are. Good friends are that way too. To admonish (instruct in the NIV) means "to give counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct." As an adult we avoid putting ourselves in a position to be admonished or we tune it out when we receive it. Why is that the case?
- Ø What was Paul saying that these "good" and "knowledgeable" believers would be capable of doing to one another? How should this affect your attitude about being corrected?

Wednesday - Read James 5:13-16

- Ø What are the connections between the emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions of our lives? What is the role that the body of Christ should have in healing in these areas? Looking at verse 16, what role does confession play in healing? Does it follow that people are "sick" emotionally, physically, and/ or spiritually because they haven't confessed their sins?
- Ø Spend some time reflection while reading, meditating, and praying Psalm 19:23-24. Read Matthew 5:23-24 and 1 John 1:9. Are there things that you need to confess or reconcile to the Lord, to a close believer or small group? Don't allow any sickness in your life because of un-confessed sin.

Thursday - Read James 5:17-18; 1 Kings 18:36-40

- Ø What has been the biggest answer to pray you've ever witnessed? Why did you think God answered that prayer?
- Ø Why do you think God answered Elijah's prayer? If Elijah would have had selfish motives, do you think God would have answered his prayer? What should your motive be in prayer (1 Kings 18:36)?

Friday - Read James 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- Ø When have you wandered or come close to wandering from the truth? Who helped bring you back?
- Ø How would you go about turning someone back from the truth? What role should scripture be in that process? How would you rate your competency level in using scripture in turning someone back to the truth? What can you do to increase that level of confidence?
- Ø What is the result and/ or reward for turning someone back to the truth?

REAL LIFE
“Bearing with One Another”
Ephesians 4:2-3; Colossians 3:12-13

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to the Ephesians/Colossians back THEN)
THE RESULT OF THE EPHESIAN/COLOSSIAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES LIVING LIVES
CONSISTENT WITH THEIR POSITION IN CHRIST
BY BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER WAS THAT
THE SPIRIT OF THEIR UNITY WOULD BE PRESERVED.

[The CONTENT of Paul's Appeal to the Ephesians was that They Live Lives Consistent with Their Christian Position, (Ephesians 4:1).]

- I. The RESULT of the Ephesians Living in Humility, Meekness, Patience, and Loving Forbearance (Bearing with One Another) would be the Preserving of the unity of the Spirit, (Ephesians 4:2-3).
 - A. The Manner of the Ephesians' Living that demonstrated consistency with their Christian (New Community) Position was in Humility, Meekness, Patience, and Loving Forbearance (Bearing with One Another), (4:2).
 - B. The Result of the Ephesians Living Lives that were Consistent with their Christian Position was that the unity of the Spirit would be Preserved, (4:3).
- II. The MANNER in which the Colossians were to Live in a way characterized by compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience was by Bearing with One Another and Forgiving each other any complaint just as the Lord had Forgiven them, (3:13).
 - A. The Basis of Paul's Command to the Colossians was that they were God's chosen, holy, and dearly loved people, (3:12a).
 - B. The Content of Paul's Command to the Colossians was that they Put On (live in a way characterized by) compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, (3:12b).
 - C. The Manner in which the Colossians were to Put On compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience was by Bearing with One Another and Forgiving each other any complaint just as the Lord had Forgiven them, (3:13).

(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)
THE MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITY
BEARS WITH ONE ANOTHER.

- I. The Master-Planned Community Lives Consistent with Its Standing in Christ, (Eph 4:1; Col 3:12).
- II. The Master-Planned Community Bears with One Another, (Eph 4:2; Col 3:13).
- III. The Master-Planned Community Preserves the “Unity of the Spirit,” (Eph 4:3).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means for us NOW)
BEAR WITH ONE ANOTHER.

Our study of the “one another” passages includes “accepting,” “bearing with,” and “forgiving” one another. The contexts of these commands often blur as we consider how to live out these commands in REAL LIFE. Although the following distinctions cannot be forced on every use of these three different terms in the New Testament, it seems appropriate to distinguish them from each other in our series study. You may want to keep these subtle variations in mind as you present each lesson.

The context of Romans 14 and 15 was dealing with issues of Christian liberty; responding to “weaker” and “stronger” brothers and sisters. The question was not sin, but non-moral distinctions of practice, preference, opinion.

The contexts of Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3 dealt with two apparently different questions. One addressed how to relate to “irregular” people; the other addressed how to relate to those who sinned against another (lying, stealing, etc.). Believers were to “bear with” others' idiosyncrasies, oddities, and quirks.

(In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul referred to the Corinthians' "bearing with" his "foolishness" – his bragging about his long list of hardships.) They must also, and in addition, "forgive" those who had sinned against them.

Text/Translation Term/Transliteration Context

(Ro 15:7; 14:1)To accept (gather to oneself) proslambano Opinions, preferences, issues of Christian liberty
(Eph 4:2; Col 3:13)To bear with (forbear, be patient with) anechomai Idiosyncrasies, oddities, personality quirks

(Eph 4:32; Col 3:13)To forgive (grant favor or grace) charizomai Sin, transgression, offense against another

I. Live like you belong to God's Family.

A. God Chose You, (Col 3:12).

B. God Set You Apart as His Own, (Col 3:12).

C. God Dearly Loves You, (Col 3:12).

[There are many "irregular" people who don't meet your expectations. These people lack manners, taste, sensitivity, common sense, responsibility, etc. Still, as secure children and servants of God you can . . .]

D. Show Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Compassion, and Kindness, (Eph 4:2; Col 3:12).

[So . . .]

II. BEAR WITH ONE ANOTHER, (Eph 4:2; Col 3:13).

A. Accept One Another's Christian Liberties, (Romans 14:1; 15:7).

B. Forgive One Another's Sins, (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).

C. Bear With One Another's Idiosyncrasies, Oddities, Quirks.

[As a result, you will help to . . .]

III. Keep the Peace, (Eph 4:3).

A. Little things (and tiresome people) won't disturb the Peace.

B. Conflict won't disrupt the Unity of the Spirit.

C. We can stay on task (fulfill our purpose).

[Get over it; it's not worth it! Not in your marriage, family, or church.]