



Working Together Bible Study

[Please provide: Bibles; copies of this study; white board/markers or chalkboard/chalk or easel with poster board/markers; hymnals; if singing, musical accompaniment]

From the beginning, God did not want people to be alone or isolated. The Lord made each one of us and placed us in a family, community, and congregation. But because we are sinners, working and living with others can be challenging. In this Bible study, we will see God's framework for accepting others and how, with God's help, different personalities can work together toward a common goal.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, by Your hands You fearfully and wonderfully made each one of us. You so graciously gave us life, and through Your Son's victory over sin and death, You give us eternal life! Open our hearts and minds today to receive Your words of peace and love as we strive to work on our relationships with others. Help us to work together in love with tender hearts and humble minds to serve You and others in Christ's name. Amen.

The Word Of The Lord

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind (1 Peter 3:8).

Unity Of Mind

Hearing the phrase "unity of mind" may tempt us to think, "Great! Once everyone agrees with everything I say, we will have no problems in this group!" Not only would this be an impossible task, would it even be desirable? _____

Without unique ideas and fresh perspectives, would our society (workplace, community) be a place to learn, grow, or be inspired? Instead, what would these places be? _____

Unity of mind does not mean that everyone thinks the exact same thing on matters of working and serving together. So, what does God mean for us to have unity of mind? _____

Read Romans 8:5.

Since we are born into a sinful nature, having our minds set on the things of the flesh is our default setting. We want the things that benefit ourselves individually. What are some of these things of the flesh on which we have our minds set? _____

If we continue to constantly focus inwardly on ourselves – having our minds set on serving only us individually – we will have zero ability to be able to work with others. But, good news! Our Lord has rescued us from our sinful flesh-focused selves! Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, died on the cross for us! Our selfishness is forgiven, and now the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to set our minds on the things of the Spirit! Amen!

Read Galatians 5:22–23. What are these things of the Spirit? _____

Read Philippians 2:1–4. As Christians, how can we have unity of mind even if we may not all agree on how some things should be done? _____

The written and spoken Word of the Gospel is one of God’s means of grace. How does studying God’s Word together with other believers help to bring us unity of mind? _____

Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the other two of God’s means of grace. How does God work through these means of grace to unify us? _____

Sympathy

How would you describe what sympathy is? _____

What are ways in which we show sympathy toward others? _____

Read Romans 12:15.

While we might not always know the words to say to someone, we are usually able to have sympathy with those who are grieving. But, are we able to show sympathy towards someone who is angry, perhaps even angry at us?

There is a story about a dog that was hit by car and was able to limp to the side of the road and hide in some bushes. Along comes a woman who sees the dog in the bushes and walks up to it. But the dog would not let her anywhere near. The woman hears the growls and sees teeth bared at her, but what isn’t obvious is the dog’s injury. This dog is hurt. This dog is in pain. But what we see from the dog is only anger. Perhaps people are the same. Perhaps anger is just masking hurt.

Setting aside expressions of anger and trying to understand where others have been hurt can lead us to show sympathy.

The ultimate sympathy ever came from God Almighty, who saw us in our sufferings and pain, and rescued us from eternal death and separation to bring us to eternal life through Jesus' death and resurrection!

Love

What do the following verses say about God's love for us?

Deuteronomy 7:9: _____

Psalms 86:15: _____

Zephaniah 3:17: _____

John 15:9-13: _____

Romans 5:8: _____

Romans 8:37-39: _____

Ephesians 2:4-5: _____

1 John 4:7-8: _____

How does the Holy Spirit work in us to respond to God's great love? _____

How would you describe "sisterly love"? _____

Sometimes "sisterly love" can have the look of extremes. If you grew up with a sister, share some of the extremes you may have experienced with her. (For example, on looks – were you dressed like twins or complete opposites? On your relationship – how quickly it could go from angry at each other to love for each other? On competition – were you on the same team or the competition?) _____

What are some examples of "sisterly love" in your LWML society (zone, district)?

How is God's love for us and our love for our sisters in Christ related? _____

A Tender Heart

Think about the kindest person you know. What are some things they do to show kindness to others? _____

Why do you think they are so kind? _____

Read Ephesians 4:29–32. How do these verses describe what it means to be kind? _____

Even the kindest person we know won't always be kind in every situation, and neither will we. But, through the love of God in Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we too can adopt kindness and have a tender heart.

A Humble Mind

What is humility? _____

A tune by singer/songwriter Mac Davis goes, "O Lord, it's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way" ("It's Hard to be Humble," ©1980 Songpainter Music). We may occasionally (or often) think this way about ourselves, but is it true? Instead of perfect, what is a more accurate way to describe ourselves? _____

Instead of puffing ourselves up by listing our accomplishments and expecting praise, let us put the focus on what our Lord has done for us and how we can work together to do the missions God has led us to do!

Read Ephesians 4:1–3, Philippians 2:5–11, and Colossians 3:12–13. What words or phrases in these verses have we already heard today? _____

Unity of Mind

Sympathy

Love

Tender Heart

Humble Mind

What word is at the center of the line of words and phrases shown above? _____

Now watch carefully as your Bible study leader draws a diagram using these words and phrases. Do what the leader does on your own copy of the Bible study.

Flowing out of love, we are enabled to have sympathy and tenderness. How are sympathy and a tender heart related? _____

Because our hearts are full of God's love, this love flows out to our minds. How are unity of mind and a humble mind related? _____

Because of God's love, how are we able to accept others and be able to work together? _____

Closing Prayer: We thank You Lord that Your love is at the center of our lives. Your love created us and redeemed us. Help us to love our sisters in Christ here today, so that we may have sympathetic and tender hearts toward each other. Give us unity of mind and humility so that all our words and actions honor You and build others up. Lead us and guide us to accept others and to work together. We ask this all in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Sing: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" LSB 700, TLH 351, LW 286

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