

SESSION
8

THE CONVERSATION STARTER
“Forces Combine”
UNITE AROUND OUR COMMON FAITH

CONVERSATION STARTER

[Watch the video](#) or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Ephesians 4:1-16



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to Podcast episode #189, “I Am Glue Man” before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

Biblegeeks.fm/189



Whether you grew up loving the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Power Rangers, Charlie's Angels, or the Avengers, something special happens when forces combine around a common goal. What one team member can't do alone with their unique abilities, they can easily accomplish when they work together. They're unstoppable unless somehow they're weakened from within.

Good news: you've made it to the last half of the Ephesian letter! While the first three chapters felt poetic and grand, in Ephesians 4:1-16, Paul — Christ's prisoner — puts all his prior praise and prayer into practice. After introducing his audience to four Christlike qualities of humility, gentleness, patience, and loving forbearance (Eph. 4:2), we learn to put these virtues into action as we unite around our common faith.



THE BIG IDEA

Though we all bring something unique to our role in the church, Jesus calls us to join forces and grow stronger together in love.

There's so much that could divide us, yet *"There is one body and one Spirit ... one hope ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all"* (Eph. 4:4-6). And in God's oneness, we're glued to each other in the *"bond of peace"* (Eph. 4:3).

Calling back to a Hebrew song, Paul reveals how the Lord equips his *"host of captives"* with gifts to use in his service (Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:7-8). Though our contributions differ, they all serve the greater purpose of building up Christ's church to be more like him as mature disciples (Eph. 4:11-14).

We fight a crafty enemy who tries to trick us at every turn (Eph. 4:14). But as our bond with Christ and his followers grows, the more we hold firm to the truth and draw strength from each other (Eph. 4:15). We're unstoppable when each of us uses our abilities for the greater good!



THE BIG QUESTION

Do you hold the body of Christ together in your work?

INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.
Read or watch “Forces Combine” – biblegeeks.fm/ephesians/8 ▶▶▶



ICE BREAKER — Get everyone engaged and talking.
What would your role be on a superhero team?

ACT I



FINDING JESUS — Ephesians 4:1-16
What does this passage teach you about Jesus?

Of all that Paul tells us about Christ’s work and character, what strikes you the most?
Why?

How can reflecting on and applying this passage draw us closer to Christ?

ACT II

**TOP 4 PROVERBS — Conflict Resolution**

Using a concordance, topical Bible, internet search, or other resource – choose four favorite Proverbs about conflict resolution. Then jot down a few notes on the application or insight you take from each verse. What do you appreciate about how it's said and the wisdom it contains? How have you seen the principle in action?

If you're part of a group study, ask everyone to pick one of their four and share their insights.

Proverb #1 _____

Proverb #2 _____

Proverb #3 _____

Proverb #4 _____

ACT III



REACH OUT — Connect with each other with this question.

Which of the four virtues – humility, gentleness, patience, and loving forbearance – do you excel in? Which do you struggle with?

WRAP UP



THE CHALLENGE — Ready to put it into practice?

Commend a brother or sister for their work as a "peacemaker" this week.



REQUEST — Go to God in a closing prayer.

"Lord, may we maintain the unity of the Spirit and grow into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (cf. Eph. 4:3,13).



NEXT SESSION — A New You

Prepare by reading Ephesians 4:17-32