

EPHESIANS



Rooted and Grounded
— in love —

Lesson Seven EPHESIANS 4:1-16

Day 1



Father, feed me with your word. Comfort me with your presence. Heal me with your love.

- Read Ephesians 4:1-16 several times. Read through the passage *prayerfully*—responding to what you are reading with praise, thanksgiving, confession or surrender. (God speaks to us through his word and we respond back to him through prayer.)
- Pick one word or phrase that stands out to you to ponder on throughout the day and week. (It may be something that resonates with you or that you want to understand better.) Write it here.
- Write one sentence summarizing the passage.

Day 2- Eph. 4:1-2

Write out verses 1-2

In chapter 4 we transition from *Reality* to *Response*. Paul still weaves truths about God and his work throughout chapters 4-6, but he focuses on how we will want to live in light of the reality seen in chapters 1-3.

Scholar's Note: The word *walk* is used in the Bible to indicate a lifestyle.

1. Paul tells us in verse 2 what a lifestyle that is worthy of God's calling looks like. What is the opposite of each of these characteristics? (Which do you display more often—the virtue or its opposite?)

Humility-

Gentleness-

Patience-

Bearing with one another in love-

- How do each of these characteristics reflect who Jesus is?

Humility-

Gentleness-

Patience-

Bearing with one another in love-



Enlist these 3 P's to help you walk in a manner worthy of your calling:

Pray for power- Father strengthen me with power through your Spirit to walk in a manner worthy of my calling. Especially help me to reflect Jesus' _____. Help me to trust you as you make my heart more like Jesus. Eph. 3:16-17

Preach to yourself- How patient Jesus is with me! He is so gentle with all my sins and failings. God has poured out his grace on me, how can I not show grace to others? Tell yourself often how Jesus has forgiven you and made you into a new creation.
2 Pet. 1:9, 2 Cor. 5:17

Practice these qualities- Remind yourself often of what it looks like to properly respond to the rich spiritual blessings you have been given and called to, and then intentionally practice them!
2 Pet.1:10-11 (Then pray again!)

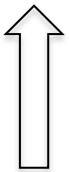
2. "Worthy (axios) is literally "bringing up the other beam of the scales" and hence indicates equivalence."¹ Paul is saying that the way we live (*walk*) must match our calling. How would you summarize what we are called to from chapters 1-3?

- How is it unworthy of God if our life doesn't match our calling?

Digging Deeper

Paul exhorts the Colossian believers in a similar way. Read the verses from Colossians. How does Paul express our calling in the verses below?

Colossians 3:12-15 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgive each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.



Father you have called me into a relationship with you through Jesus, that is filled with every spiritual blessing! I pray that from your glorious unlimited resources you will empower me with inner strength through your Spirit (Eph. 3:16) to live in a manner worthy of my calling!

Day 3- Eph. 4:3-6

Write out verses 3-6

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3. Why is being *eager to maintain unity* in verse 3 a characteristic of our calling? (Look back to 2:19-22 for help)

For Discussion

How are the four virtues in verse 2 connected to *eagerly maintaining unity*?



If we are going to show by our life how worthy God is, then we must make every effort to maintain unity in the family of God. Jesus already established this unity when he created one new humanity by his death on the cross, and now we must maintain it, as we let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts (Col. 3:15).

- ❖ Knowing that unity in the family of God was bought with the precious blood of Jesus, how does this impact our eagerness and effort at maintaining this unity?
- ❖ What does it do to irritations and frustrations with fellow believers when we are *eager* to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?
- ❖ What are we usually eager for if we are not eager to maintain unity?

Digging Deeper

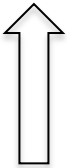
On the night Jesus was arrested, he prayed for his followers. We see in his prayer to the Father what was on Jesus' heart right before he offered himself up to a cruel death as a sacrifice for the sin of his children.

- Highlight the theme that is repeated over and over in Jesus' prayer.
- Describe the kind of unity Jesus prays for. How is this kind of unity possible?

- What will this kind of unity display?
- How does Jesus' prayer for oneness impact your thinking on unity in the body of Christ?

John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one...

20-23 I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.



Father help me to think about unity the way you do and to desire it the way Jesus does. Forgive me for putting my agenda above yours so often. Help me to be on your mission so that in the oneness of your children Jesus will be seen and glorified.

4. What is the foundation of the unity Paul is calling believers to maintain according to verses 4-6?

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For Discussion

What are the essentials that we need to have unity in? What secondary things are we sometimes tempted to unite behind within the church and let cause division?

Picture and Ponder

“First, the one Father creates the one family. Secondly, the one Lord Jesus creates the one faith, hope and baptism. Thirdly, the one Spirit creates the one body. Indeed, we can go further. We must assert that there can be only one Christian family, only one Christian faith, hope and baptism, and only one Christian body, because there is only one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”²

Day 4- Eph. 4:7-12

Write out verses 7-12

5. Even though there is one family of God or to put it another way, one body—the church, how is diversity expressed in the body or family according to verse 7? (See the NLT for help)
 - How does it impact you that Jesus has chosen a special gift—suited to you and his purpose for you—and given it to you?

Scholar's Note: “‘Saving grace’, the grace which saves sinners, is given to all who believe; but what might be termed ‘service grace’, the grace which equips God’s people to serve, is given in differing degrees according to the measure of Christ’s gift (verse 7).”³ A “Spiritual gift essentially means a *manifestation of grace*”.⁴

Digging Deeper

In verse 8 Paul refers to Psalm 68:18 where God ascends to his holy hill after his triumphant victory and divides the spoils with his people. Paul connects this with Jesus giving gifts to his people. Read the verses in Philippians below to help us understand what Paul is saying when he talks about Jesus ascending and descending in verses 9-10.

Philippians 2:6-11...who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- How far did Jesus descend literally and figuratively?

- How far did Jesus ascend?

Revelation 5:5 ⁵ And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

Revelation 17:14 They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."

- Why is it Jesus' prerogative to give gifts to his people?
6. In verse 7 we learn that Jesus has given gifts of grace to each and every person in the body of Christ. What leadership gifts does Paul name in verse 11?
- Look back to 3:8. What grace gift was Paul given?
7. What is the purpose of these leadership gifts according to verse 12?
- So, who does the work in God's family?

- a. The church leaders
- b. The saints (God's people)
- c. a and b



As we participate in the family life of the church and hear the word of God taught, we are being built up and equipped for the work of ministry. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:7, to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. Jesus has given gifts of grace to each one of his children for the good of the whole family.

- ❖ Do you believe that as a member of God's family you have been given a gift of grace by the Spirit? How are you using the grace gift given to you by Jesus to serve his body, the church?

- ❖ How does thinking of spiritual gifts in terms of *gifts of grace* or *manifestations of grace* affect your thinking on this subject?

- ❖ If you are not using the gifts of grace that have been given to you, how do you think this impacts the way God designed the family of God to function? Sometimes it's hard to know what your gifts are. Pray about it. Then jump into an area that needs help and see if it is a good fit. Ask someone who knows you what they think your gifts are. Don't waste the gifts of grace that God has given you!

There are three more places in the New Testament that speak about gifts of grace or spiritual gifts. *1 Corinthians 12:4-10; 28, Romans 12:4-8, 1 Peter 4:10-11.* (Keep in mind this is not an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts manifested by the Spirit.)

Picture and Ponder

"These gifts are ways in which we extend the ministry of Jesus on this earth. When you see gifts at work, you should adore Jesus who gave them. When someone's gifts bless you, you should see that as Jesus blessing you."⁵

Day 5- Eph. 4:13-16

Write out verses 13-16

8. What is the ultimate goal of building up the body of Christ according to verse 13? (See NLT)

Picture and Ponder

"The result of the church's unity and diversity is the church's maturity."⁶

For Discussion

Why is it important to have unity in understanding who Jesus is?

Scholar's Note: "*The fullness of Christ is an expression of completion or perfection.*"

9. What contrast does Paul make with maturity in verse 14?

- How do we grow out of this kind of immaturity?

10. What is another aspect of growing in maturity or growing to be more Christ-like according to verse 15?

Scholar's Note: "The wording in Greek in verse 15 (*speaking the truth in love*) is "truthing in love".⁷ "The idea is : maturity involves a truth-telling, truth-maintaining, truth-doing love."⁸



Growing to be more like Jesus means living a truthful life—regardless of the cost—where our beliefs, actions and speech are integrated and governed by the kind of love Jesus lived.

- ❖ Which aspect of “truthing in love” do you need to grow in: truth-telling love, truth-maintaining love, or truth-doing love? Spend some time asking God to help you grow in this area.

11. According to verse 16, what happens as each member of the body uses the gifts Jesus has given them?

- What is a hallmark of a growing, healthy body of believers according to verse 16?



Father thank you for making us part of a family of believers! Thank you for surrounding us with sisters and brothers who love you and who help each other to grow to be more like you!

For Discussion

Paul is saying that we grow into spiritual maturity only in the context of the community of faith. Why is this true?



It's obvious from this passage in Ephesians that God does not mean for us to live the Christian life alone. He created us as new creatures in Christ, to be part of his body, members of his family, each with a different gift of grace that put together makes the body complete.

- ❖ Why is it not good for us to try and do the Christian life apart from the family of God?
- ❖ How does using your gifts of grace help to mature you in your faith?
- ❖ In what ways does being the recipient of the gifts of others mature you in your faith?

Taking Root:

- What in this portion of Scripture swells your heart with love for God, or makes your heart treasure Jesus?

- What from this portion of Scripture spurs you on to love others?

- How are you challenged to reach God's world after living with this portion of Scripture this week?

¹ Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

² Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 151). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

³ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 155). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Zondervan, . Ephesians (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 10) (p. 342). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Merida, Tony Exalting Jesus in Ephesians. P. 98 B&H Publishing 2014

⁶ Merida, Tony. Exalting Jesus in Ephesians. P. 101 B&H Publishing 2014

⁷ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 172). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

⁸ Merida, Tony Exalting Jesus in Ephesians. P. 102 B&H Publishing 2014