

**DOCTRINE THAT DELIGHTS  
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS  
Ephesians 4:1-16  
"GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR A HEALTHY BODY"**

**INTRODUCTION:** *It is no secret that many churches do not function as well as they should. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is comprised of every born again believer. He has provided the instructions, power, and people for local churches to do their work. Since the instruction manual is perfect, and the boss is perfect, the problem is obviously with the workers themselves!*

**BACKGROUND:** *Paul spent two years in Ephesus on his third missionary journey, and it became the base of his evangelistic outreach. In a very corrupt environment, believers were coming to faith in Christ. Ten years later as he was imprisoned and sometimes chained to Roman guards, Paul was writing letters to strengthen the followers of Christ. He was obviously more concerned about the spiritual condition of others than his own difficult circumstances.*

**I DOCTRINE TAUGHT LEADS TO DUTY PERFORMED IN UNITY WITH OTHER BELIEVERS. (Ephesians 4:1-6)**

**A.** *Although he was a prisoner in Rome, Paul was free in his spirit. He was glad to have been taken captive by Christ and free to do God's will. His duty, and ours, is to conduct our lives in a way that honors all that Christ has done for us. Walk worthy!*

**B.** *A worthy walk in Christ will manifest His character and relational lifestyle.*

1. **HUMILITY:** *Christians made this virtue popular in a world that despised people who seemed lowly and servile. Humble people see themselves, others, and the Lord from the right perspective.*

2. **MEEKNESS:** *This virtue has been described as the perfect mid-point between excessive anger and never being angry. Meekness is power under control, being angry without sinning, and showing anger at the proper time and not at the wrong time. Jesus described Himself as meek.*

3. **PATIENCE:** *The patient person knows how to put up with others and deal graciously with difficult people. It takes patience to have a spirit that does not retaliate. Patience fights through discouragement while expecting victory.*

4. **LOVE:** *Christian love made the word agape popular. It is love that seeks the highest good for others, regardless of how they respond or what they deserve. Other Greek words for love describe friendliness ("phileo"), erotic love ("eros"), and family love or natural affection ("storge"). It takes Christ in you to manifest agape love! (1 Corinthians 13)*

5. **PEACE AND UNITY:** *The Holy Spirit has united us so we do not have to make unity. We are to work well together to maintain it. Peace describes the good relationships and "sacred oneness" that believers can enjoy.*

**C.** *The basis of our unity comes from the spiritual oneness learned from the triune nature of our God, commonly referred to as the "Trinity."*

1. *All believers are included in the same spiritual Body of Christ*

2. *There is one Holy Spirit who indwells all believers.*

3. *All believers have responded to the same call, and share the same hope.*

4. *There is one LORD, comprised of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*

5. *Believers share the same saving faith, same spiritual baptism, same physical baptism as followers of Christ, and recognize the Omnipresence of God who is above, through, and in all of us!*

**II BELIEVERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN GRACE GIFTS TO DO WHAT THE LORD WANTS DONE (Ephesians 4:7-13)**

**A.** *Christ came down from heaven to earth, was crucified and buried, spoke to believers in Paradise, proclaimed His victory to the spirits of unbelievers in prison, ascended back to Heaven in a glorified body, set the captives free, and gave spiritual gifts to the members of His Church! (Psalm 68:18) (Luke 23:39-43) (1st Peter 3:18-22)*

**B. In biblical times and in most cultures, kings receive or demand gifts from their subjects. Christ, our king, gives gifts to His subjects, and He Himself is the greatest and most perfect gift of all!**

**C. The Lord has given gifts and established positions in His Church for each local body to have what it needs to grow to maturity, and do His will. The popular acronym for the gifts described here is APEST.**

**Apostle: One sent on a mission. The original apostles had authority over all churches. They must have seen the Risen Christ. More than twelve persons had this title, and some were female. They had authority to write Scripture. No person today has that apostolic authority or office, yet the gift itself is needed as believers plant churches, start ministries, and go into territory where Christ is not known.**

**Prophet: One who foretells future events or boldly proclaims (preaches) the Word of God, often speaking truth to power. God's prophets spoke with 100% accuracy. The scriptural revelation from God was completed when John wrote the Revelation of Jesus Christ. When someone speaks prophetically today, they are sharing something God wants known in the moment that is always in alignment with Scripture, never adding to it. (Deuteronomy 18:18-21)**

**Evangelist: Someone gifted to share the Gospel, defend the faith, and lead others to Christ. This person is typically not expected to do the follow up work of discipleship or lead a church.**

**Shepherd: Someone gifted to feed and lead the flock of God, having been given the skills and heart to come alongside believers and provide the environment for growth and care-giving.**

**Teacher: Someone gifted to explain what has already been revealed in Scripture. The Pastor-Teacher is often considered to be the same gifted person, although many teachers may be in a congregation.**

**D. The Apostles and Prophets helped lay the foundation of the "building" where Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone. (Ephesians 2:20) (1st Corinthians 3:10-11) (1st Peter 2:6) All spiritual gifts are needed in a local church, even though the offices may no longer exist. This list in Ephesians 4, is not exhaustive. (See Romans 12; 1st Corinthians 12-14) The saints must be equipped so they can do the work of the ministry-not just the leaders. The word for "equipped" is the same word used when the disciples were "mending" their nets to prepare to catch fish. (Matthew 4:21)**

#### **■ THE GOAL IS TO GROW TO MATURITY WHILE DOING THE WORK OF MINISTRY (Ephesians 4:14-16)**

**A. The flock of God must be fed the Word of God so believers are not deceived by false doctrine from false teachers who sound good. Babies should grow from drinking milk to eating meat and developing strength. Do not settle for "cotton candy" preaching that keeps you weak. Eat a well balanced meal from the entire Bible! (1st Corinthians 3:2) (Hebrews 5:13) (1st Peter 2:2)**

**B. We must grow in our ability to demonstrate love to one another and cherish the truth. The body and head have to work together, while recognizing the instructions come from the head (brain) which is Christ. Every body part and joint has an important role to play in keeping the entire body healthy and functional.**

**YOU WILL NEVER GROW TO MATURITY WHILE LIVING IN SINFUL ISOLATION FROM OTHER BELIEVERS. YOU MUST SHARE YOUR GIFTEDNESS WITH OTHERS BELIEVERS SO THE ENTIRE BODY CAN GROW. YOU HAVE ONLY LEARNED WHAT YOU ARE PUTTING INTO PRACTICE, SO LET'S KEEP STRIVING TO LIVE AND LOVE LIKE JESUS.**

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