

The Way
Fruit of the Church: Ephesians
Lesson 36: God Desires for the Church to Have Unity and to Grow

We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis of these lessons

Scripture

Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16

Review (Where We've Been)

Paul's Writing So Far...

- *In Ephesians 1:1-14*, Paul wrote of **spiritual blessings** they possessed so they could be confident God had fully equipped them to live as He had called them
- *In Ephesians 1:15-23* Paul wrote about **spiritual prayers** to God on their behalf
- *In Ephesians 2:1-10* Paul wrote about their **spiritual standings** before God
- *In Ephesians 2:11-22* Paul wrote about **spiritual unity** amongst Jew and Gentile

Today we'll briefly touch Ephesians 3 and spend most of our time in Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 3 can be summarized as follows...

- In Ephesians 3:1-13 Paul reminds the Ephesians that he was called by God to minister the Gospel to the Gentiles and the church.

Ephesians 3:8 (ESV) "To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ..."

- In Ephesians 3:14-21 Paul prays that the inner man may find spiritual strength

Ephesians 3:16 (ESV) ...He may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

BIG Idea

Paul now turns to challenging the Ephesians based upon the truths he has been teaching in chapters 1-3. In Ephesians 4-6 application will be built upon those truths. Without the foundation of the empty moralism without this gospel foundation.

Information (What You Need to Know)

Paul had already explained *why* the Ephesians were to live in unity, but now he was going to show them *how* they were to walk in unity.

How was the church at Ephesus to walk in unity?

▪ **By conducting themselves in a manner worthy manner of the calling (vv.1-6)**

Ephesians 4:1 (ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy [equal weight] of the calling to which you have been called...

“One’s calling and conduct should be in balance.” – Bible Knowledge Com.

✓ The characteristics or outworking of this unity

Ephesians 4:2 (ESV) ...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- Humility - to have a proper view of oneself compared to Christ (pride was more highly revered in this culture)
- Gentleness - the ability to control emotion and reaction
- Patience - a hesitancy to retaliate or take revenge on wrongdoing
- Bearing with one another in love - putting up with someone else’s faults as we recognize that we have our own

✓ The basis for this unity

Ephesians 4:4 (ESV) There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- One body and one Spirit – all are members of the church by the work of the Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer
- One hope – eternal life through the work of Christ
- One Lord – there is only one Savior/Deliverer
- One faith – the whole of doctrine in the New Testament
- One baptism – all believers have been baptized into the body of Christ
- One God and Father – there is only one, true God

▪ **By placing themselves under the equipping of the church leaders (vv.11-17)**

Ephesians 4:11 (ESV) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers...

✓ Church Leaders...

○ Apostles and Prophets

“Prophets and Apostles hold the responsibility of delivering divinely revealed, authoritative teaching. Once God has spoken finally through His

Son and those whom He appointed as His Apostles, there is no more special divine revelation until Christ returns (Heb. 1:1–2).” – Ligonier.org

- Evangelists (those who clearly proclaim the gospel)
- Shepherds and Teachers

“This phrase is best understood as a single office of leadership in the church. The two functions together define the teaching shepherd. He is identified as one who is under the ‘great shepherd’ Jesus. One who holds this office is also called an ‘elder’ and ‘overseer’.” – ESV Study Bible

✓ Function of Church Leaders...

- To equip the saints for the work of the ministry/build up the body of Christ
Ephesians 4:12 (ESV) ...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ
To make disciples who make disciples
- To move people from immaturity to maturity
Ephesians 4:13 (ESV) ...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...
A fuller knowledge of Christ through prayer, study of the word, and obedience to God’s commands.
- To guard from false teaching through speaking the truth in love
Ephesians 4:14 (ESV) ...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. **15** Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...

Application (What You Need to Do)

Ephesians 4:16 (ESV) ...from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body. Believers make up the different parts of His Body. We have been joined to Him by the Holy Spirit.

In addition, we must also be aware that we need one another. Every part of the Body must be functioning and doing the work that it has been given to do if the Body is to grow and be healthy. God wants the church to grow as each member does its part.