

Digging Deeper by Robert Lee
Sermon Series: *It's Complicated – Relationship Status*
Sermon Title: *Christians with the World*
Scripture Lesson: *Ephesians 4:15 & 1 Corinthians 5:12*

Monday – Read Ephesians 4:1-3 and pray for Spiritual Unity in a world distracted by political divisiveness, social class entitlements, sexual immorality, etc. The in-text subject heading for this week's lesson is unity and maturity in the Body of Christ, which starts at the beginning of Chapter 4. The Apostle Paul urged the people of Ephesus to be completely humble, *gentle* and *patient*, bearing with one another in *love*. Several of the character traits that Paul advised the people of Ephesus to use are identical to the characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5. Make note of how appropriate Paul's message is today in our divided society.

Tuesday – Read Ephesians 4:4-6 and pray for Spiritual Understanding. Paul proclaims in verse 4 that there is one body and one Spirit. As the body has multiple parts, so does the Spirit. This does not mean that all parts are intended to be the same or equal. To the contrary, difference is intentional. In fact, Elohim (God) created difference and introduced it in the very first versus of Genesis: heavens and the earth, darkness and light, water and dry land, day and night, etc. Interaction within and between these variables demonstrate the limitless wonders and beauty of Elohim's creation.

Wednesday – Read Ephesians 4:7-8 and pray for Spiritual Acceptance. Is God's grace available to everyone? According to verse 7, the answer is yes. Apostles Peter and Paul taught that the ascended Yeshua gives grace to all Christians in the form of a spiritual gift to some and as multiple gifts to others. The purpose for having these gifts is to build up the church (1 Corinthians 12:11). The body of Christ is intended to maintain itself and we are to build everyone up to do good works with the gift of life Elohim provides to us (1 Corinthians 12:7). Is grace accepted by modern-day Christians? Meaning, are we building

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everyone up to do good works with our gifts? Perform periodic self-evaluations. Repent, if necessary, as Yeshua expects everyone who receives his gifts to participate in building the body of Christ!

Thursday – Read Ephesians 4:9-13a and pray in support of our Christian Leaders that we continue striving towards higher levels of Spiritual Service. The greatest gift that Elohim gave to mankind is Yeshua the Christ, who sacrificed his sinless life, giving sinners an opportunity to be redeemed. The goal of Christian leadership is to help all within our span of influence to unify and support the agenda of Yeshua the Christ, leaving our personal agendas aside. In doing so, we participate in the process of building up the body of Christ.

Friday – Read Ephesians 4:13b-14 and pray for Spiritual Maturity. In reference to verse 14, Paul warns against Christians thinking like children which makes us more vulnerable to false teaching and deception (1 Corinthians 14:20). *Deception*, by the way, is the first sin recorded in the Bible (Genesis 3:4-5), immediately followed by *idolatry* and *disobedience*, which are the second and third recorded sins, respectively (Genesis 3:6).

Saturday – Read Ephesians 4:15-16 and pray for Spiritual Fulfillment. When we speak truth in love, we declare that Yeshua is Lord and that Elohim is our Heavenly Father. Why, because Yeshua tells us that He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). Commitment to speaking truth is therefore, an essential component of obtaining spiritual fulfillment. John, author of the 4th gospel and 1st, 2nd and 3rd John make it clear that Elohim (God) is love, that whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them (1 John 4:16b and 16c).

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For this week's lesson, please also read 1 Corinthians 5:12 and pray for Spiritual Boldness. Sexual immorality of incest was forbidden by Old Testament law. Christians in Corinth during the time of this writing had a distorted view of grace that caused them to tolerate the sinful nature of sexual offenders. Apostle Paul warns that the church should not minimize sin in effort to achieve a level of tolerance. If someone among you who is persistent with sexual immorality or any other sin, expel them from the church. Then rejoice in their sorrow that led them to repentance (read 2 Corinthians 7:8-10). The goal here is not to tolerate sin. The goal is not to rejoice on another's sorrow. The goal here is to lead others to repentance.