

**BRIARCLIFF CHURCH**  
**Small Group Study Guide: Ephesians**  
Week of October 22 (Week 8)  
Ephesians 4:1-16



## REVIEW OF CHAPTER THREE

Chapter 3 concludes the first half of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. In Chapters 1-3, Paul presents a doctrinal/theological exposition. In this section, Paul presents the role of the Triune God in salvation (1:3-14). The salvation of both Jews and Gentiles is by grace through faith that results in the creation of a new humanity in Christ (Chp. 2). The new humanity—the church, is a mystery that is now revealed and continues to display God's manifold wisdom through the unity the members maintain (Chp. 3). The doctrinal exposition in Ephesians has two main themes: the salvation of sinners and the unity of the saved sinners. Each doctrinal exposition is ended by a prayer. Paul's first prayer relates to salvation. He prays that believers may know the hope of their calling, the riches of their inheritance, and the greatness of God's power. Paul's second prayer in Chapter 3 is built on the unity he presents in Chapter 2, but he diverted to another topic – the mystery of the church (Eph. 3:1-13). Paul picks up his prayer in Eph. 3:14 and prays that the unity that was theirs spiritually might be realized experientially in their relationship with one another. With that in mind, Paul prays for four truths that John Stott likes to think as "a staircase by which he climbs higher and higher in his aspiration for his readers". The four elements of Paul's prayer are strength (v. 16), love (v. 17), knowledge (v. 18), and fullness (v. 19) (Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*. 134).

## BIG IDEA

Unity in the church flourishes when believers are eager to be humble, gentle, and patient. They help one another mature by utilizing their gifts.

## OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

Based on the doctrinal exposition he presented in the first three chapters, Paul, in Chapter 4, moves to the practical application. Thus, from Chapter 4 on, Paul's writing shifts from making statement of truths, to exhortations and commands in applying the truths. The passage for our study this week is Ephesians 4:1-16. Paul begins with the phrase "I therefore," a reference to the preceding thoughts that he has presented. He exhorts and reminds believers to live according "to which [they] have been called" (v. 1), that is "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (v. 3). Paul appeals to the believers to maintain unity among them (vv. 2-3). His appeal is based on the unifying realities of the faith (vv. 4-6). Paul then makes the case that God has given various gifts to the believers to build the body of Christ to maturity (vv. 7-16). Key to maintaining unity and building the body of Christ is doing everything "in love." Thus, Paul says, "bear with one another **in love**," "speaking the truth **in love**," and "the body grow so that it builds itself up **in love**."

## **OBSERVING THE TEXT**

### **Starting with God**

1. Let us read Ephesians 4:1-16 and observe what the passage says or implies about God – His character, nature, and work.

### **Continuing the Conversation**

2. In verse 1, Paul appeals to the believers “to walk worthy of the calling” to which [they] were called.  
What does it mean “to walk worthy”?

The appeal to “walk worthy” is followed by the phrase “of the calling to which you were called.” What is the calling that Paul is talking about?

3. Paul argues that unity in the church depends on the charity of the believers’ conduct. What are the conducts he commands the believers in verse 2?
4. Building on the virtues he mentions in verse 2, Paul urges the believers to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit ...” (in some translations it says: “diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit ...”). On what basis does Paul urge/appeal the believers for unity or oneness among them? Read verses 4-6.
5. Unity in the church is maintained not only through the virtues that every believer lives out (4:1-3), but it is enriched by the diversity of our gifts (4:7-16). According to verse 11, what are these gifts that God gave to the church?

6. According to verses 11-12, what is the purpose of the spiritual gifts?

7. What does Paul say about the unity of the church in verses 13-16?

## CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXT

8. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 with Ephesians 4:4-16 to understand Paul's teaching on the importance of one body and the significance of many members in the body.

9. Compare John 15:4-5 with Ephesians 4:15-16 to see how John complements Paul's teaching on the fundamental dependence that believers, together, have on Christ.

## APPLYING THE TEXT

1. As you consider the appeal to walk worthy of the calling that God has called you, what area(s) of conduct listed in verse 2 do you need to work on?

2. In verse 7, Paul says "grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift." How are you using your gift to equip and build fellow believers?

3. Living the Christian life, either with minimal fellowship with other believers or in isolation, is a vulnerable place to be. Paul sees the danger of believers being tossed around if they are not growing in maturity. Growing in Christian maturity comes only when believers are united together in Christ and do life together as verse 16 indicates. What effort are you making towards your growth towards maturity?

## PRAYER

### PRAYER GUIDE

October 22, 2023

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

In the first three chapters, Paul gave clear teaching on the wealth we have in Christ Jesus. In the last three chapters, he deals with our walk in Christ Jesus. This is an urgent matter because Paul begins by begging the Ephesians to live worthy of their calling. Let each day challenge you in your praying according to the wealth we have in Christ Jesus and to walk in his strength.

**Monday:** <sup>4:1</sup> *I ... beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling.* Remember *your calling* to salvation. Take a moment to reflect and give God thanks for his calling you. Consider the challenge *to lead a life worthy of your calling*. How well are you doing? How might you live better? Take a moment to write your goal to live more *worthy of your calling*.

**Tuesday:** <sup>4:2</sup> *Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.* Do you find that challenging or even impossible? It is! But remember his power in you. Ask God for guidance and strength as you write your goals to meet the challenge.

**Wednesday:** <sup>4:3</sup> *Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.* Check your relationships. Is there anything that needs to be mended and requires some effort on your part? Write it down. Ask God for his help. After much prayer, be courageous and take the first step. Do it today!

**Thursday:** <sup>4:15</sup> *... growing in every way more and more like Christ ...* Becoming more like Christ is to have a mind that thinks like Jesus, eyes to see the world like Jesus, ears to hear God like Jesus, lips that speak words of encouragement like Jesus, to have hands that serve like Jesus, and a heart to love like Jesus. Pick one you will put into action today. Not later. Today!

**Friday:** <sup>4:16</sup> *As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.* Consider how you are helping other parts of the body to grow. Specifically, list how you are helping *other parts to grow* healthier and fuller of love.

For more resources, visit [www.briarcliff.church/ephesians](http://www.briarcliff.church/ephesians)