

# Ephesians: Blessed Beyond Belief to Build up the Body

## Lesson 8: Walk in Unity Ephesians 4:7-16

### Small Group Questions

1. Recall and share when the “body” ministered to you.
- 2.

### Outline

- I. Circular letter to those who are “in Christ” 1:1-2
- II. Praise to God: The believer’s position in Christ to the Praise of His Glory 1:3-14
  - A. The Father’s Past Plan: His eternal plan to choose individuals to be blameless and holy, to be adopted as sons—to the praise of the glory of His grace
  - B. The Son’s Present Provision of salvation: redeemed and forgiven, based on the superabounding riches of His grace, having made known the mystery of His will—to subject everything to Christ, providing an inheritance for those who believe—to the praise of His glory
  - C. The Spirit’s Present Protection of Future salvation: Sealing those who believe as a pledge of His ownership and their assurance of an inheritance—to the praise of His glory
- III. Thanksgiving and Prayer
  - A. Thanksgiving 1:15-16a
  - B. Prayer 1:16b-23
    1. Content 1:16b-18a
    2. Purpose 1:18b-19
      - To realize
        - The hope of His calling
        - The riches of His inheritance in the saints
        - The extent of His power on their behalf
    3. Creedal confession: Praise to God 1:20-23
      - The power to raise and seat Christ
      - To subject all things to Him
      - To give Him to the Church as Sufficient Head
- IV. God’s Plan applied individually 2:1-10
  - A. Our condition apart from Christ 2:1-3
    1. Dead in sin 2:1
    2. Explanation 2:2-3
  - B. Our current position in Christ 2:4-10
    1. God’s action described 2:4-7
      - a. Character: Mercy
      - b. Cause/motivation: Love
      - c. Action
        - 1) Made us alive together with Christ
        - 2) Raised us with Christ
        - 3) Seated us with Christ in the heavenly places
      - d. Purpose—to show His immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ
    2. God’s action explained 2:8-10
      - a. Explanation—grace through faith saves
      - b. Comparison—a gift not works (removing boasting)
      - c. Reason/result—to do good works
- V. God’s Plan Applied Corporately 2:11–3:13
  - A. 2:11-22
    1. The Problem: Separation 2:11-12
      - a. Call to Remember 2:11
      - b. Former State 2:12
    2. The Provision: Christ 2:13-18

- a. Separation removed—Union declared 2:13
- b. Explanation of union of believing Jews and Gentiles into a “new man” 2:14-18
  - 1) Assertion of Peace 2:14-16
    - a) Demolition process—removal of barrier 2:14-15a
    - b) Construction process—One from two 2:15b-16
  - 2) Announcement of peace—access to the Father 2:17-18
- 3. The Product: New Entity 2:19-22
  - a. New Relationship 2:19
  - b. New Establishment 2:20-22
    - 1) Foundation 2:20
    - 2) Formation 2:21
    - 3) Function 2:22
- B. Expanding on the mystery: corporate identity 3:1-13
  - Paul’s relationship to the Mystery of the New Community—A recipient of Grace 3:1-13
    - God is the source of the Mystery
  - 1. The Content of the Mystery revealed to Paul—by grace 3:1-7
    - a. Paul’s prayer—interrupted 3:1
    - b. Paul’s responsibility 3:2
    - c. When and to whom the mystery was revealed 3:3-5
    - d. Content of the mystery 3:6
    - e. (Hinge) Summary: Paul a servant of God’s grace 3:7
  - 2. The Proclamation of the Mystery 3:8-13
    - The Gracious Ministry to proclaim the mystery
    - a. Paul’s role 3:8-9
    - b. God’s goal, our purpose 3:10
    - c. Our benefits 3:11-12
    - d. Paul’s perspective 3:13
- VI. Paul’s Prayer for the New Community 3:14-21
  - A. Paul’s Impossible Prayer 3:14-19
    - Prayer for Power to Know, Experience and Demonstrate the Love of Christ
    - 1. Honor to God declared 3:14-15
    - 2. Content: Enablement to know and experience the Love of Christ and be filled with God 3:16-19
      - a. Empowered by the Spirit in the inner being 3:16-17a
      - b. Empowered to Comprehend the Love of Christ 3:17b-18
      - c. Filled with the Fullness of God 3:19
  - B. Paul’s Doxology—ascribing glory 3:20-21
- VII. Proper Conduct in the Church 4:1–6:9
  - A. Walk in Unity 4:1-16
    - 1. Basis for unity 4:1-6
      - a. Command: Preserve the unity of Spirit by walking worthy of your call 4:1-3
        - Proper attitude for unity
        - 1) Walk worthy 4:1
        - 2) Walk in love 4:2
        - 3) Maintain unity 4:3
      - b. Reason: Example of the Trinity as the basis for unity 4:4-6
        - 7 Fundamental Theological Realities
    - 2. Enablement for unity 4:7-16
      - a. The giving of gifts 4:7-10
        - 1) The description of diverse gifts 4:7
        - 2) The validation of the gifts 4:8-10
      - b. The people who are given as gifts: to equip for the purpose of maturity and unity 4:11-16
        - 1) Provision: Gifted persons 4:11

- 2) Preparatory purpose: Equip for ministry 4:12
  - 3) Goal: Attain maturity 4:13
  - 4) Ultimate purpose: Growth in unity 4:14-16
    - (a) Negative: What is the opposite of the purpose? 4:14
    - (b) Positive: What do the mature do? 4:15-16
      - (i) Speak the truth in love 4:15a
      - (ii) Grow up 4:15b-16
        - (a) The Source: Growth comes from the head
        - (b) The process: of Growth requires *unity* and *synergy*—members working together
        - (c) The Nourishment
- B. Walk in Holiness 4:17-
1. 4:17-32
    - a. Individual conduct 4:17-24
    - b. Corporate speech 4:15-32
- C. Walk in Love and Light 5:1-14
- D. Walk in Wisdom 5:15–6:9
1. Wise worship 5:15-21
  2. Wise family 5:22-6:4
    - a. Wives
    - b. Husbands
    - c. Children
  3. Wise work 6:5-9

VIII. Stand firm 6:10-20

IX. Conclusion 6:21-24

## Review

1:1–3:21 Positional Unity of the Church

1:1-23 God's (life insurance) plan and benefits

1:1-2 A circular letter to those "in Christ"

Paul writes to those "in Christ—that they might experience God's grace and peace.

1:3-14 Believers have: **Every spiritual blessing—to the praise of His glory**

*The plan, provision and protection of Salvation*

God is blessed, because He has blessed those "in Christ" with every spiritual blessing

"God has enriched believers with every spiritual benefit for their spiritual well-being."<sup>1</sup>

*A reminder of the great things God has done for the individual believer*

**WOW**—it is all about God

All we have in salvation is for His praise and glory.

1:15-23 Prayer for insight to truly know God

**The prayer for those who have everything**—know God better

*Prayer for personal insight to their relationship with God for the purpose of deeper experiential appreciation of their riches benefits*

To realizing the hope, riches and power on their behalf—which is evidenced by Christ current exalted position

Paul prays that believer's know God personally and intimately—so that they would realize the hope of their calling (past), the riches of His inheritance in the saints (value) (future) and the extent of His power on their behalf (present)—which is evidenced by the power to raise and seat Christ and to

<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002) p. 301.

subject all things to Him and to give Him to the Church as sufficient head (make Him head of the Church).

Why did He do this?

“In chapters 2 and 3 Paul explains the execution of the eternal plan by showing how God makes sinners into saints and builds them into the church, the body of Christ. In 2:1-10 Paul states how sinners, who deserve nothing but God’s wrath, become trophies of his grace.”<sup>2</sup>

2:1–3:21 Steps towards fulfilling God’s plan

2:1-10 God’s plan (1:3-14) applied to individuals

Man’s condition 2:1-3

Apart from God man is hopeless because they are dead in trespasses and sin

Condition apart from God (2:1-3)

- though dead in trespasses and sin resulting from
- nature/life—walk according to the values of the world
- devil—are controlled by the ruler of the world
- and actions of the will (enjoyment of sin)

“But God” (God’s provision) 2:4-10

Man’s condition, apart from God is hopeless because they are dead in trespasses and sin

as a result of their walking according to the values of the world, are controlled by the ruler of the world, and by actions in keeping with their desires.

But God

Who is rich in mercy (character), motivated by His great love (cause)

Applied His power to make believers alive, raised, and seated with Christ, so that they would be a revelation of God’s grace

Based on His grace provided a gift

—a relationship with Him—no longer separated (dead) but unified (alive) as an expression of the surpassing rich of His grace

Obtained through faith

—not works

For the purpose of doing good works

—to reveal God’s grace through actions

- Character—Who is rich in mercy
- Motivated—By His great love
- Based on—His grace
- Provided a gift
- Obtained—through faith
- Purpose—to do good works, which reveal God’s grace in action

2:11–3:13 God’s plan applied corporately

2:11-22 Our new position corporately

Now have been brought near to God and have been made into a new man—entity

2:11-12 Formerly

Those who were hopeless

Separated from God’s promises

and Messiah—given to Israel

2:13-22 Now have been brought near to God

And have been made into a new man—entity

3:1-13

The mystery of the Church is revealed after Christ

Paul explains his role as administrator and dispenser of the mystery to the Gentiles

The church is not natural—unity in spite of diversity is difficult

To show the wisdom of God—even to the cosmic powers

<sup>2</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002) p. 305.

3:14-21 Prayer and Praise

3:14-19 Prayer for the Ephesians to know and experience Christ’s love and experience maturity filled by God

The impossibly big prayer for intimacy and to be total consumed with God

3:20-21 Doxology: Praise to God for His superabounding

4:1–6:9 The Proper Conduct of the Church

4:1-16 Call to a mature unity

4:1-6 Walk in Unity (Call for Unity)

Unity—the unifying or overarching theme of the whole section

4:1 Therefore walk in a manner worthy!!!!

How can we not desire to walk in a manor worthy of our calling when we have been planned for, provided for, protected by, prayed for, sacrificed for, saved by, seated with, loved, liberated, lifted, unified, to the fullest with every spiritual blessing, with the surpassing greatness of His power, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, the riches of His great love, the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness, unfathomable riches, manifold wisdom, surpassing knowledge, who is able to do abundantly more than we could even ask or think??????

**WOW**

4:7-24 Ministry and Maturity

4:7-16 The enablement for Unity and Maturity

The goal of the church is to grow up—together

by practicing the truth in love

by everyone doing their part

Ephesians 4:7-10 Power

Ephesians 4:11-13 God’s plan (giving gifted individuals to equip the church for: works of service and to build up the body)

Our mission: Unity and maturity

When this happens the body **will** grow in love—the unity and maturity that are the Aim—will be reached

Stephen Motyer, *Ephesians: Free to be One*, Baker Bible Guides, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994, 1996, p. 172

4:17-24 The new Christian **Mind** Our thinking must be different

Principle of separation—purity

The changed life

4:25-32 The new Christian **speech** Our talking must be different

(This is a critical section for our church: it’s OK to have critical thinking but not to have a critical spirit. Gossip, complaining, anger, malice.....)

Next two may be one

5:1-6 The new Christian **motivation** Our impulses must be different

5:7-14 The new Christian **lifestyle** Our fellowship must be different

5:15-21 The new Christian **worship** Our time must be different

## Introduction

## Questions

1. Recall and share when the “body” ministered to you.

2. What did they do?
3. Agree or disagree with the follow statement  
“Nothing harms the testimony of a church more than disunity.”
4. What does maturity look like?

If we had a video camera panning the audience this morning—looking for “mature Christians”—how many would we find? Who would they be? What do they look like? These are all questions that we might asked. And wouldn’t you be curious to see who they were? But there are more important questions—

- Am I one of the mature?
- What does it take to become a mature Christian?
- What areas must be affected/

These are questions that our passage deals with.

**Key Point #1:** Growing to maturity requires growing together in truthful love

**Key point # 2:** Maturity requires everyone doing their part

Objectives: You will be able, by the end of this lesson, to:

1. understand that reality of the connection God has established in the Church
2. understand the responsibility God has given each of us to maintain our communion

## Context

Transition to the “practical” section.”

NO PASSAGE IS more descriptive of the church in action than Ephesians 4:1–16. Verse 1 marks a transition from the prayerful description of God’s grace and salvation in the first three chapters to an explanation of the consequences of grace in chapters 4–6. As noted in our discussion of 2:10,<sup>1</sup> Paul’s ethical instruction in Ephesians centers largely on the metaphor “walk” (Gk. *peripateo*; NIV, “live”). From 4:1 to at least 5:21 the ethical teaching is structured around this verb. Note the following:

- 4:1: “walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called”
- 4:17: “walk no longer as the Gentiles walk”
- 5:2: “walk in love”
- 5:8: “walk as children of light”
- 5:15: “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise”

To a large extent, 4:1–16 provides the framework and specific theological basis for what follows in 4:17–6:20.

We ought not overemphasize the distinction between the theological material in chapters 1–3 and the ethical instruction in chapters 4–6. While the ethical teaching in chapters 1–3 is nearly all implicit, chapters 4–6 contain significant and explicit theological teaching. Note that 4:17–24 is a theological description contrasting two ways of life, much like 2:11–22.

Throughout the New Testament, ethical imperatives are based on theological indicatives. Obedience is always a response to grace. God acts first, and humans respond. Just as *kerygma* (proclamation) and *didache* (instruction) cannot be separated, neither can the indicative and the imperative. Often the two blend together in the same text. The imperative can be a means of preaching the gospel, for ethical statements can contain the whole gospel (cf. 5:1–2). In the passage before us, 4:4–16 provides theological support for the imperative in 4:1–3.<sup>3</sup>

## Overview

The revelation of the unification of Jewish and Gentile believers positionally as “one new person” (2:15), the body of Christ, and the prayer that this unity would result in a mutual experience of Christ’s love (3:16–19) leads Paul to demonstrate the manner of walk expected of this unified body. This can only be accomplished by God’s own power through the ministry of gifted believers who Christ gives to the church.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 94, 96, 115.

<sup>3</sup> Snodgrass, Klyne. *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 1996) p. 194.

The **purpose** is to bring all the members of the body to the **unity of faith** and to the **full stature of Christ** with the result that they will be a **stable and growing body in living union with Christ the head**.<sup>4</sup>

The present passage focuses **on life, order, unity, and the purpose of the church, as well as its diversity and difficulties**. All five words summarizing Christianity appear here.<sup>3</sup> In other words, ecclesiology and ethics cannot be separated.<sup>4</sup> As we have noted, Christology is soteriology is ecclesiology is ethics,<sup>5</sup> and this understanding continues throughout the letter.<sup>5</sup>

Prominence is given to “one,” “body,” “measure,” “build up,” and “love.” The occurrences of “in love” in 4:2 and 16 form an *inclusio*, bracketing the entire section. That is, everything in this ethic is marked by love.<sup>6</sup>

The readers have been reminded of the high destiny to which God has called them, and now they are shown that the hope of this calling requires them to live lives in keeping with it. ‘Behaviour is thus seen in Ephesians as both response to what God has done in Christ, and as the proper accompaniment to the praise of God, the two themes present in chaps. 1–3’.<sup>3 7</sup>

At first sight it might seem that this diversity is at odds with the overarching unity of which the apostle has just spoken. But the diversity contributes to the unity of the body, since Christ’s giving different gifts to each is for the purpose of enriching the whole, so that all are prepared for full maturity when they meet their Lord (v. 13).<sup>53</sup> Christ’s giving of gifts (v. 8) is supported by a quotation from Psalm 68:18. In vv. 9 and 10 the words ‘he ascended’ and ‘he descended’ from the Psalm are picked up and applied to Christ. The ascent also implied a descent: Christ who ascended is the giver of gifts. Vv. 11–16 then interpret the second line of the Psalm quotation, expanding on the nature (v. 11) and the purpose (vv. 12–16) of the exalted Christ’s gifts within the context of the people of God. V. 11 specifies the nature of the gifts in terms of persons who are involved in some form of ministry and proclamation of the word. The function of these ministers towards other believers is expressed (v. 12a), as is the goal for all to aim at, first positively (v. 13) and then negatively (v. 14). Through an additional participial clause (v. 15) Paul speaks of growing into Christ as the head. Finally, v. 16 recalls in summary fashion the previously mentioned purposes of growth and building of the body, processes which have their source in Christ and the active participation of each member of the body.<sup>8</sup>

## Structure

4:1-16 Walk in Unity

4:17-24 Walk in Holiness

The beginning of the second half of the section (vv. 7–16) is clearly marked by *but to each one of us* (v. 7), as Paul introduces the note of diversity. This diversity is not at variance with the overarching unity, nor is it at the cost of unity. **The purpose of the ascended Christ’s giving various gifts to the church, particularly the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, is to build the whole body so as to enable it to attain maturity and unity** (v. 13), a **unity in which there is an integral role for the individual** (v. 16). The various ministries are intended to equip the whole body for ‘ministry’, so that it might ‘grow up’ into a healthy

<sup>4</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002) p. 501.

<sup>3</sup> “Grace,” “truth,” “faith,” “love,” and “hope.”

<sup>4</sup> Barth, *Ephesians*, 2:451.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 146.

<sup>5</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 194-95.

<sup>6</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 195.

<sup>3</sup> Best, 353.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 272.

<sup>53</sup> Note the similar discussions of the apostle in Rom. 12:3–8 and 1 Cor. 12:4–11, 12–31.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 286-87.

(mature) body, with Christ at the head and the whole of it drawing its life from him as it grows into his likeness (vv. 12-16).<sup>9</sup>

The opening words of v. 7, ‘*But* to each one of us’, which begin a new paragraph on the overall theme of unity, introduce the motif of diversity in Christ’s distribution of grace to each individual believer. Vv. 7-16 are a distinct unit within the section as a whole (vv. 1-16), and this is underscored by the presence of ‘each one’ in both vv. 7 and 16, which forms an envelope within the passage (*inclusio*). We move from the stress on unity (vv. 4-6) to diversity in vv. 7-10, and back again to unity in vv. 11-16.<sup>10</sup>

## Exposition

### I. Proper Conduct in the Church 4:1-6:9

#### A. Walk in Unity 4:1-16

##### 1. Basis for unity 4:1-6

##### 2. Enablement for unity 4:7-16

“But”

Diversity in unity that leads to maturity

The subject of 4:1-6 was living out the unity we have

The contrast is the diversity which God enables for the benefit of unity and maturity.

#### b) The giving of gifts 4:7-10

##### (1) The description of diverse gifts 4:7

Compare 4:7 to 1:8; 2:4, 7—How much grace has Christ given?

What is given?

Grace

Who is it given to?

“each one of us”

Who was it given by?

Christ

How was it given?

As Christ determined

What is intended result?

Building up the body

Unity

Within the flow of vv. 7-11 the key theme is that of Christ’s giving: ‘grace has been given [by him]’, it is ‘according to the measure of Christ’s giving’ (v. 7); ‘he gave gifts’ (v. 8); and ‘it was he who gave’ (v. 11). Christ sovereignly distributes his gifts to all the members of his body. The recipients are not limited to some special group, such as the ministers of v. 11.<sup>56</sup> *Each one of us* is to be understood comprehensively since it includes Paul and all

<sup>9</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 273.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 286-87.

<sup>56</sup> H. Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 59-62 (cf. Schlier, 191), argues at length that the author identified himself (‘each one of us’) with the ministers named in v. 11. While there is a closely knit structure in vv. 7-11 (so that v. 11 interprets the citation of Ps. 68:18 that supports v. 7), the narrower reference in v. 11 is not intended to limit the ‘each one of us’ of v. 7 to the ministers. There is a difference of emphasis between v. 7, where Christ’s grace is said to be given to *each*, and v. 11, where those named are Christ’s gifts to the church. V. 11 is best understood as a particularizing from the argument of the preceding verses. Note the detailed arguments of R. Y. K. Fung, ‘Ministry in the New Testament’, in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A.



his readers (it is thus the counterpart to 1 Cor. 12:7, 11). None misses out on Christ’s bounty.<sup>11</sup>

### Grace

Paul could as easily have written, “**To each of us *ministry* has been given.**” Just as in 3:8 he spoke of the grace given to him to preach to the Gentiles, here in virtually identical language he writes of the grace given to each person to do the work of one’s calling.<sup>1912</sup>

Within the unity of the body each member has a distinctive service to render for the effective functioning of the whole. The ability to perform this service is due to the ‘grace’ given by the ascended Christ to each one. Grace is viewed in terms of its outworking in a variety of ways in the lives of individuals, and thus comes to signify much the same as *charisma* does in the parallel passages in Paul (1 Cor. 12:4; Rom. 12:6). Perhaps the use of *charis* here, rather than *charisma*, is to stress the source of divine grace in providing the gifts. Not all believers, however, have the same abilities or receive the same gift. Grace was distributed in varied measure to each individual, and this is ultimately due to Christ’s sovereign distribution.<sup>57</sup> The proportionate allocation of gifts is underscored elsewhere by the apostle: according to 1 Corinthians 12:11 it is the Spirit who ‘apportions to each one individually as he wills’, while in Romans 12:3 the similar notion of God measuring out different degrees of faith appears. In Ephesians 4 this measuring, like the giving in general, is the work of the ascended Christ. So grace was given to the apostle Paul for his ministry to Gentiles (cf. 3:2, 7, 8); now it is said to be given to each individual Christian for the benefit of the whole body.<sup>13</sup>

### According to the measure

Endowment, apportion—that which is measured

“As Christ apportioned it” (v. 7) is literally “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” This does not suggest Christ gives only a small amount of grace to some, for he has lavished his grace on us (1:8). The identity of the gift<sup>20</sup> is uncertain. It could be grace (as 3:7), the Holy Spirit (as 1 Cor. 12:7), or Christ himself. Closer determination is neither possible nor desirable, for to speak of grace is to speak of Christ and the Spirit. **The concern is to recognize the God-intended and God-empowered diversity of functions within the body of Christ.**<sup>2114</sup>

The proper use of the gift, that is, the particular *endowment* (see on 3:2, 7) which in his grace God has bestowed on anyone, implies the following:

**a. that the recipient shall indeed recognize it as a gift, and not as the product of his own skill or ingenuity;**

Carson (Exeter: Paternoster, 1987), 154–212, 318–42, esp. 321–22; Schnackenburg, 174–75, who reversed his earlier view; Lincoln, 241; and Best, 376–77.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 287.

<sup>19</sup> At least fifteen of Paul’s 101 uses of “grace” refer to grace for ministry (see esp. Rom. 1:5; 15:15–16; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 9:8).

<sup>12</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 200.

<sup>57</sup> The expression κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ may be rendered: ‘in proportion to Christ’s allotted giving’. Here μέτρον means a ‘measure as the result of measuring’; cf. vv. 13, 16 (so BAGD, 515).

<sup>13</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 287–88.

<sup>20</sup> Paul uses *dorea*, not *charisma*, here, although 1 Peter 4:10 does use *charisma* in a similar statement.

<sup>21</sup> Similar language occurs in Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 4:10.

<sup>14</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 200.

- b. that he view his gift as only one among many and as limited in extent, a measured gift; and
- c. that he be eager to use it not for his own glory but for the benefit of the entire body, and thus, to God's glory.<sup>15</sup>

**I Corinthians 12:7** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (ESV)

- (2) The validation of the gifts 4:8-10  
Paul draws on the Old Testament for support for the statement in 4:7. But to do so he modifies the quote.

These are easily the more difficult verses in Ephesians to understand:

- There is a textual issues
  - Paul's modification of Psalm 68:18
- There is an interpretive issue
  - The two key terms—descend and ascend—what do they refer to?
  - That might or might not leave a theological issues
  - Did Christ descend to hell?

The word “therefore” must here be interpreted to indicate something like “in accordance with this.” By direction of the Holy Spirit Paul introduces a passage from the Psalms (Ps. 68:18; LXX 69:19) that has a bearing upon the present subject. He does not intend to quote literally but rather, as occurs so often in such cases, to elucidate a passage by showing how that which in the Psalter was said concerning *God* attained its fulfilment in *Christ*.<sup>108</sup> When we bear in mind the typical character of the old dispensation, the fact that “the Old is by the New explained,” so that we do not have two Bibles but one Bible inspired by one original Author, the Holy Spirit, we will not be able to find fault with this method.<sup>16</sup>

Old Testament Quote modified

**Psalm 68:18** You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there. (ESV)

<p><b>Psalm 68:18</b> You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there. (ESV)</p>	<p><b>Ephesians 4:8</b> Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” (ESV)</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Paul sees in Christ's ascension a fulfillment of God's promised triumph for His people.

This quote ties back to Ephesians 1:20-22 where Paul has already praised God for the completed work of Christ, including His present place of authority at the right hand of the throng of God.

<sup>15</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001). 188-89.

<sup>108</sup> For other instances in which what is said of *God* in the Old Testament is referred to *Christ* in the New compare Exod. 13:21 with I Cor. 10:4; Isa. 6:1 with John 12:41; and Ps. 102:25–27 with Heb. 1:10–12.

<sup>16</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001). 190.

There have been many attempts to solve the problem—commentaries on this passage are full of possibilities. Some of those possibilities raise too many other problems (lexical, grammatical and theological).

Even that Paul was using a midrashic hermeneutic.

The Aramaic Targum does have the concept “gave” rather than receive. So Paul may have been quoting the tradition of the Targum.

#### One possible solution

Knowing that Psalm 68:18 was itself referring to earlier Scripture (Num. 8, 18) and that the Lord’s *receiving gifts*, that is, chosen individuals, from among the people was for the purpose of *giving* them back to his people for ministry, Paul cites the Psalm using the verb ‘gave’ in an explanatory way, and places the emphasis on the persons given back (‘gifts’, vv. 8, 11) and the ministries they are to fulfill (vv. 11–16). According to Smith, ‘Paul wants his readers to understand that throughout history God has chosen special men as leaders of the community of believers’.<sup>80</sup> The grace given to fulfill these different responsibilities may vary (cf. v. 7). The apostle’s exegesis of Psalm 68, then, is not that of *midrash peshet*, ‘but a remoulding of the thought of Psalm 68:18 on the basis of the Scriptural commentary in Numbers 8:6–19; 18:6 which the Psalmist used. . . . [T]he controlling factor [is that] of a grammatical-historical understanding of the text’.<sup>81</sup>

None of the above-mentioned suggestions fully solves this difficult crux. Smith’s attractive proposal, however, has drawn attention to a number of likely connections between Numbers 8 and 18, Psalm 68, and Ephesians 4. God’s action in taking and receiving the Levites as a gift, then giving them back to his people in order to minister to the congregation parallels the ascended Christ’s leading captives and giving gifts in Ephesians 4. Whether these links, however, have demonstrated a clear case of intertextuality, recurring typological patterns, or simply parallels is more difficult to ascertain.<sup>17</sup>

According to the Old Testament passage God is represented, it would seem, as descending from heaven to wage war against his enemies. He ascends again as Victor, loaded with spoils. What gave Paul the right to apply this *receiving* of gifts to the activity of Christ whereby he *gives* gifts to his church? Ever so many explanations have been offered with which I shall not weary the reader. The one I accept is the following: *Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the apostle had every right to make this application, for the Victor receives the spoils with a view to giving them away. The giving is implied in the receiving.* When Christ ascended he was not returning to heaven with empty hands. On the contrary, as a result of accomplished mediatorial work he returned *in triumph* to heaven, in the full possession of salvation for his people. These people were, so to speak, in his triumphant procession. They were captives in his train, chained, as it were, to his chariot. There was a vast host of captives. Among them was also Paul, destined, along with the others, to spread abroad the fragrance of the gospel. Thanks be to God! See II Cor. 2:14. Now Christ *received* in order *to give*. He *had earned* in order *to bestow*. He received these captives in order to give them to the kingdom, for kingdom-work.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4:9-10

<sup>80</sup> G. V. Smith, ‘Paul’s Use’, 188.

<sup>81</sup> G. V. Smith, ‘Paul’s Use’, 189.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 293.

<sup>18</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001). 190-91.

What do the descent and ascent refer to.

Again, there are many possible explanations. The one I favor, which seems most direct is that:

The descent is Christ's incarnation

The ascent is Christ's exaltation after resurrection

... a descent to Hades is difficult to accept for this text or for any other. Paul nowhere else speaks of a descent into Hades, and it is doubtful whether 1 Peter 3:18–22 refers to such an idea either. In Ephesians the conflict with the powers takes place in the heavenly realms, and Christ's victory is by exaltation, not descent (see 1:20–23; 6:10<sup>29</sup>). The main focus with this theme is on the movement from heaven to earth, that is, on the Incarnation (see John 1:51; 3:13; 6:51).<sup>19</sup>

On balance, then, the incarnation provides the most obvious reference for the descent. But it needs to be borne in mind that, although the descent has attracted much discussion, Paul's main focus is on Christ's *ascent* in the context of his giving gifts.<sup>20</sup>

Having descended to the earth below in his incarnation, Christ then ascended *higher than all the heavens*. The 'all' indicates that a number of heavens is in view. Whether three (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2), seven, or more heavens are referred to, Christ has ascended above everything to the place of highest supremacy. This language parallels his exaltation and enthronement 'in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion' (1:20–21). In the light of this similar phraseology, and the following purpose clause, 'in order that he might fill the whole universe', which corresponds to the expression in 1:23 (Christ 'fills everything in every way'), 'all the heavens' is best understood as a metaphorical reference to the powers of 1:21 who have been subjugated to him.<sup>9221</sup>

Whenever Paul mentions the ascension, he emphasizes Christ's authority and the fact that Christ encompasses all things and places them in their proper role. **Nothing is outside his jurisdiction or excluded from the benefit and wholeness he brings.**<sup>3022</sup>

- c) The people who are given as gifts: to equip for the purpose of maturity and unity  
4:11-16

Christ now sets out<sup>94</sup> to accomplish the goal of filling all things by supplying<sup>95</sup> his people with everything necessary to foster the growth and perfection of the body (v. 13). Having achieved dominion over all the powers through his victorious ascent,<sup>96</sup> he sovereignly

<sup>29</sup> Any discussion of Christ's going to Hades to release Old Testament believers is motivated by theological issues in the church's history and not by the text of Ephesians. Other occurrences of the ascent-descent motif do not refer to a descent into Hades; only Romans 10:6–8 even suggests such an idea, but there the idea is that no one needs to descend into the "deep" (*abyssos*, the place of the dead) to bring Christ up.

<sup>19</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 201-02.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 296.

<sup>92</sup> So W. H. Harris, ' "The Heavens" ', 84, who takes τῶν οὐρανῶν ('of the heavens') as 'a metaphor of simple replacement' in which the 'powers' of 1:21 are 'replaced ...by a reference to the locus of their dwelling'. Lincoln, 248, on the other hand, considers the language of Christ's exaltation to be paradoxical: he is both locally in heaven (1:20; cf. 6:9) and at the same time above the heavens (4:10).

<sup>21</sup> Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 296.

<sup>30</sup> See 1:10, 22–23; 3:19; Colossians 1:15–20.

<sup>22</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 202.

<sup>94</sup> V. 11 commences another long, intricate sentence which runs through to the end of v. 16.

<sup>95</sup> According to D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 375, Christ is the one who fills all things, and v. 11 adds 'the specifics of his giving spiritual gifts'.

<sup>96</sup> W. H. Harris, ' "The Heavens" ', 84; cf. Arnold, 56, 57.

distributes gifts to the members of his body.<sup>97</sup> The building of the body is inextricably linked with his intention of filling the universe with his rule, since the church is his instrument in carrying out his purposes for the cosmos.<sup>98,23</sup>

- (1) Provision: Gifted persons 4:11  
How does growth take place?

Gifted individuals are given to the church to equip the church for works of service to build up the body.

This section is one long sentence in Greek, in which two subjects are treated: the ministry that takes place in the body and the maturity this ministry is to achieve. The gifts Christ gives to the church are *people* to promote serving and building up. This text teaches both about gifts and about institutional order.<sup>24</sup>

#### Clarification

Paul is talking about gifted people, given to the church, not necessarily offices.

While several of the terms were used for office or special roles

Apostles

Prophets

Pastors

what is emphasized here is the function not the office.

All four focus on the role of proclaiming truth or the faith.

In fact, although all the titles refer to roles that proclaim the faith, the actual definition of the titles is difficult. Particularly in Paul's letters the evidence is limited. Moreover, the categories are not mutually exclusive. Theoretically at least, all of them could be applied to Paul (cf. 2 Tim. 1:11, which applies "apostle" and "teacher" to Paul along with "herald"; also Acts 13:1, which lumps "prophets" and "teachers" together as one group).<sup>33</sup> Any attempt at neat classification fails when the evidence is examined.<sup>34,25</sup>

These in v. 11 are deliberately emphasized since they provide the church with the teaching of Christ for the **edification of the body (v. 12) and for the avoidance of false teaching (v. 14)**. They enable others to exercise their own respective ministries so that the body is built to maturity, wholeness, and unity. Those listed are **ministers of the Word through whom the gospel is revealed, declared, and taught**. The return to 'each one' occurs in v. 12 with its reference to 'the saints' who have been equipped by the ministries which the apostle lists here.<sup>26</sup>

First apostles and prophets, connecting to 2:20 and 3:5.

<sup>97</sup> The exalted Christ who fills the universe by his rule is *the one* of whom the Psalm said, 'he gave gifts to men' (note that the αὐτός, 'he', of v. 11 picks up the αὐτός of v. 10).

<sup>98</sup> The connection between v. 10c ('that he might fill all things') and v. 11 is more natural than Best, 388, seems to suggest.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 297.

<sup>24</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 202.

<sup>33</sup> Barnabas is listed as a teacher-prophet, but he is also called an apostle in Acts 14:14.

<sup>34</sup> See Ernest Best, "Ministry in Ephesians," *Irish Biblical Studies* 15 (1993): 146–166.

<sup>25</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 203.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 298.

The specific mention, first of all, that Christ gave *apostles* and *prophets* corresponds to the earlier references in 2:20 and 3:5 (see the exegesis above) to their *foundational* role as the authoritative recipients and proclaimers of the mystery of Christ (note also their appearance first in Paul’s list of 1 Corinthians 12:28)<sup>27</sup>

### Apostles

Sent ones, envoy, messenger

Three kinds in two categories in the NT

Technical term (office, applied to 12, plus Paul) for those who were Jesus official delegates, commissioned for the task of establishing the Church, therefore given special authority and power. (See Acts 1:21-22; Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:8-9)

Gift of apostle—what is described here

“It seems then that the main function of an apostle is to establish churches in areas that have not been reached by others (Romans 15:20). They are God’s messengers to open up new territories for Christ.”<sup>28</sup>

“Apostles” has a broad semantic range in the New Testament. The background is the Jewish concept of agency, in which an agent goes out to represent a sender in the New Testament. Sometimes it means that someone is God’s agent as a result of having seen the resurrected Lord.<sup>35</sup> At other times it refers to those who have the foundational ministry of setting out the parameters of faith, particularly because of their presence with Jesus or their activity in the early church.<sup>36</sup> At other times it means little more than an envoy of the church.<sup>37</sup> In at least one place (Rom. 16:7) the term is used of a woman.<sup>38</sup> But in most cases “apostle” refers to a person in a limited group of leaders who had a special authority and role; otherwise, Paul’s strenuous efforts to defend his own apostolic office make no sense. Apostles were specially authorized agents of God, responsible for explaining and disseminating God’s good news.<sup>29</sup>

### Prophets

Forth tell—to proclaim the truth

Foretell—to predict the future

“...the prophet was one who was endowed by the Holy Spirit with the gift of prophecy for the purpose for edification, comfort, encouragement (1 Cor 14:3, 31), and further, to understand and communicate the mysteries and revelation of God to the church (1 Cor 12:10; 13:2; 14:23, 30-31). The prophetic gift may include a predictive element (1 Thess 3:4; 4:6, 14-18; Gal 5:21). However, the prophet is not one who is overcome by some uncontrolled ecstatic force, but rather one who has self-control when receiving the revelation (1 Cor 14:30-32; Rev 1:9-10). In light of the incomplete canon, initially the prophets may well have received

<sup>27</sup> Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 298.

<sup>28</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002) p. 542.

<sup>35</sup> Note Acts 1:21–22; 1 Corinthians 9:1.

<sup>36</sup> This is how Ephesians uses the word (see 2:20; 3:5; also Acts 1:21–22; 15:2–16:4; Gal. 1:17–2:10).

<sup>37</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:23 (NIV, “representatives”); Philippians 2:25 (NIV: “messenger”).

<sup>38</sup> The NIV translation “Junias” is unfortunate, for the name is clearly the feminine, “Junia.”

<sup>29</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 203-04.

revelation to complete what was needed so that every person could be presented perfect before God (Eph 4:12; Col 1:28).<sup>30</sup>

Apostles and prophets are related their function overlaps.

The emphasis for the apostle was more on the divine commission to a special task of proclaiming authoritatively the message in oral and written form and of establishing and the building up of churches, whereas for the prophet it was the communication of divine revelation.<sup>31</sup>

“Prophets” likewise carries breadth of range. It can refer to prophets who had a foundational role along with the apostles (2:20; 3:5) or to people who were designated prophets in the life of local churches (Acts 13:1; 15:32; 21:9; 1 Cor. 14:32). While any Christian could prophesy (1 Cor. 14:31), occasional prophetic speech did not necessarily bring with it the label *prophet*. At times prophets predicted future events (Acts 11:27–28; 21:10), but usually they explained the relevance of the gospel and the will of God (see 1 Cor. 14:3–40).<sup>32</sup>

The other two categories work the gifted individuals most of the church people were familiar with, they may have never meet an apostle.

### Evangelist

Proclaimer of the gospel

Most-likely itinerant, but not exclusively

Their focus was on proclaiming the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Not mentioned anywhere else in Paul’s letter. Only the reference to Timothy to do the work of an evangelist.

**2 Timothy 4:5** As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (ESV)

Only other occurrence as a noun, is of Phillip the Evangelist (Acts 21:8)

As proclaimers of the gospel *evangelists* carried on the work of the apostles. While the term probably included itinerant individuals who engaged in primary evangelism, it was not limited to them. The admonition to Timothy to ‘do the work of an evangelist’ is set within the context of a settled congregation,<sup>106</sup> which presumably meant a ministry to believers and unbelievers alike, while the cognate verb, rendered ‘preach the gospel’,<sup>107</sup> covers a range of activities from primary evangelism and the planting of churches to the ongoing building of Christians and the establishment of settled congregations (cf. Rom. 1:11–15).<sup>108</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002) p. 542.

<sup>31</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002) p. 542.

<sup>32</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 204.

<sup>106</sup> Although it may be true that Timothy is not instructed in so many words ‘to seek the conversion of unbelievers’ (so E. Best, ‘Ministry’, 164), his ministry of preaching and teaching the word (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2) is directed to Christian and non-Christian alike, even when exercised within the congregation (against Best). The gospel addresses both believers and unbelievers. Regarding Paul’s concern, expressed in the Pastoral Epistles, that Timothy and other believers, as members of churches, might be wholly committed to the spread of the gospel, see the recent work of P. H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus* (Downers Grove/Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 29.

<sup>107</sup> Gk. εὐαγγελίζομαι.

<sup>108</sup> Note the detailed discussion in P. T. O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 61–64, etc.

Here in Ephesians 4 evangelists are given by the ascended Christ for the purpose of building his body, and this included both intensive and extensive growth.<sup>33</sup>

Some would say,

In conclusion, the evangelists would win converts to the faith, the apostles would establish churches, and the prophets would fill in needed revelation for the perfecting of the saints. Some of these functions seem to have overlapped.<sup>34</sup>

### **Pastor/shepherd-teacher**

Teaching shepherds

Grammar

One article covering both terms

“...the first is the subset of the second and the thus ‘all pastors are to be teachers, though not all teachers are to be pastors.’”<sup>35</sup>

Reminder / Clarification

Paul is taking about gifted people, given to the church, not necessarily offices.

**The focus is on function not office.**

The terms Elder, Overseer (bishop) and Pastor (shepherd) are used interchangeably by Paul.

**Acts 20:17** Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the **elders** of the church to come to him. (ESV)

**Acts 20:28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to **care** for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. (ESV)

Pastor/Shepherds

Elder maturity, dignity

Bishop leader, overseer

Shepherd leading and care

Protect—from attack

Feed—with the Word

Nurture—encouraging, comforting, exhorting

While all Christians have a teaching responsibility (1 Cor. 14:26; Col. 3:16), some people were recognized as “teaching pastors” (more lit., “teaching shepherds”) in the church and were compensated for their teaching (cf. Acts 13:1; Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Tim. 5:17). The figure of a shepherd leading and caring for sheep is a familiar Old Testament image applied to both God and human leaders.<sup>39,36</sup>

The *pastors* and *teachers* are linked here by a single definite article in the Greek,<sup>110</sup> which suggests a close association of functions between two kinds of ministers

<sup>33</sup> Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 299.

<sup>34</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002) p. 543.

<sup>35</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002) p. 544, Quoting Wallace.

<sup>39</sup> This list is not a complete list of early church leaders; note, for example, “overseers and deacons” (Phil. 1:1) and “elder” (Titus 1:5).

<sup>36</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 204.

<sup>110</sup> τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους. Note the discussion of shepherds and teachers in E. Best, ‘Ministry’, 166–70.



who operate within the one congregation (cf. 2:20). Although it has often been held that the two groups are identical (i.e., ‘pastors who teach’),<sup>111</sup> it is more likely that the terms describe overlapping functions (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28–29 and Gal. 6:6, where ‘teachers’ are a distinct group).<sup>112</sup> All pastors teach (since teaching is an essential part of pastoral ministry), but not all teachers are also pastors.<sup>113</sup> The latter exercise their leadership role by feeding God’s flock with his word.<sup>37</sup>

Teaching<sup>114</sup> is often an exposition or application of Scripture (Acts 15:35; 18:11, 25; Rom. 2:20, 21; Col. 3:16; Heb. 5:12), or an explanation and reiteration of apostolic injunctions (1 Cor. 4:17; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:10). In the Pastoral Epistles, teaching appears to be an authoritative function concerned with the faithful transmission of apostolic doctrine or tradition and committed to men specially chosen (e.g., 2 Tim. 1:13–14; 2:1–2; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Tit. 1:9). Timothy is urged not only to pursue a teaching ministry himself but also to entrust what he has learned to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (1 Tim. 4:13, 16; 2 Tim. 2:2). Teachers did not simply impart information or open up new ways of thought. They also urged their hearers to live by what they taught (Eph. 4:20–21). So important is this ministry for building the body of Christ that provision is made for its continuity for succeeding generations.<sup>38</sup>

The term ‘pastor’ is used only here in the New Testament to refer to a ministry in the church, although the related verb ‘to shepherd’ appears several times in this sense (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2; cf. John 21:16), and the noun ‘flock’<sup>109</sup> is used of the church (Acts 20:28–29; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3). *Pastors*, whose functions are similar to those of overseers (cf. Phil. 1:1) and elders (cf. Acts 20:17, with 28; also 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:17, 19, etc.), exercise leadership through nurture and care of the congregation. They manage the church (1 Thess. 5:12; Rom. 12:8), and are to be regarded in love ‘because of their work’. The imagery of the shepherd, which was applied to God (Gen. 49:24; Ps. 23:1; 80:1; 40:11) to denote the way he cared for and protected his people, as well as to leaders (both good and bad) in Israel (2 Sam. 5:2; Ps. 78:71; Jer. 23:2; Ezek. 34:11), comes to be applied to church leaders as those who carry on Jesus’ pastoral ministry. He is the Good Shepherd, who cares for God’s flock (John 10:11–18; Matt. 18:12–14; Luke 15:3–7; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4). Leaders in the church are exhorted to be ‘shepherds of God’s flock’ (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28) who pattern their pastoral ministry after Christ’s example.<sup>39</sup>

Similar to this section

**I Corinthians 12:27–31** Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

<sup>111</sup> According to Barth, 438–39, the one ministry was being described, namely, that of ‘teaching shepherds’.

<sup>112</sup> E. Best, ‘Ministry’, 167–68, while conceding that two groups may be envisaged, acknowledges that the same people could exercise the different functions of shepherding and teaching from time to time. He adds that we should not think of a rigid separation between them.

<sup>113</sup> D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 284, argues on syntactical grounds that the ποιμένας (‘shepherds’) were part of the διδασκάλους (‘teachers’). This is ‘in keeping with the semantics of the plural noun construction’, in which ‘the first-subset-of-second category is well-attested’. Calvin, 179, came to a similar exegetical conclusion.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 300.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Lincoln, 251–52; and Best, 391–92.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 300-01.

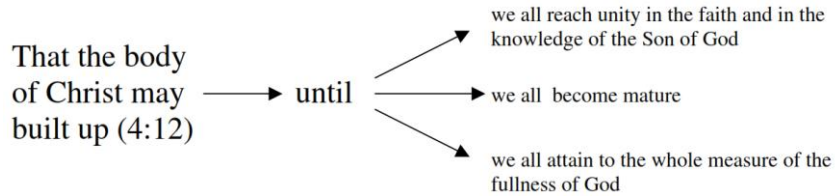
<sup>109</sup> The terms belong to the ποιμήν word-group.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). 299-300.

30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. (ESV)

The New Testament contains five such lists (Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:8–10, 28–30; Eph. 4:11–12; cf. 1 Pet. 4:10–11) which between them number more than twenty different gifts, some of which are not particularly spectacular (cf. Rom. 12:8). Each list diverges significantly from the others. None is complete, but each is selective and illustrative, with no effort to force the various gifts into a neat scheme. Even together all five do not present a full catalogue of gifts.<sup>40</sup>

(2) Preparatory purpose: Equip for ministry 4:12



What is the primary responsibility of the individuals listed in verse 11?

Equipping

Repairing, mending, training, preparing

The notion of equipping or preparing, in the sense of making someone adequate or sufficient for something, best suits the context.<sup>41</sup>

Who does what in this verse?

Equipping

Gifted people

Work of ministry

All

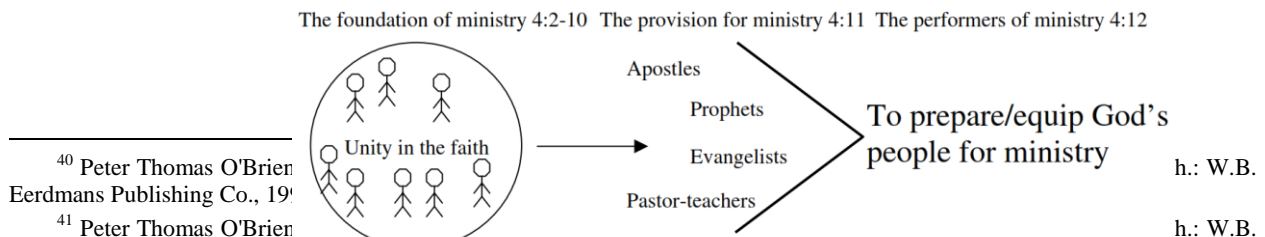
Building up the body

All

“Building up” (or “edification”) is an important theme in Ephesians (4:16, 29) and in Paul’s ecclesiology. He uses the word fifteen times in his letters (in Ephesians, Romans, and 1 and 2 Corinthians).<sup>40</sup> It is the goal of personal ethics (Rom. 14:19), of corporate worship (1 Cor. 14:26), and of Paul’s own ministry (2 Cor. 10:8). The focus is mostly on internal strengthening of the church, but building up the church by reaching out to unbelievers is also included.<sup>42</sup>

Through the equipping ministry of gifted leaders and mutual service individuals grow, the church grows and God is glorified.

(3) Goal: Attain maturity 4:13



<sup>40</sup> Peter Thomas O'Brien Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Thomas O'Brien Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991.

<sup>40</sup> The related verb occurs nine times as well.

<sup>42</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 205.

“Then” – looking back to 4:11-12 — growing up into the fullness of Christ—maturity  
Maturity— τέλειο» sometimes translated completeness or perfection—  
means “reaching the intended end” or “accomplishing what it was intended  
for”

The mature is the one who is accomplishing what he was intended for.  
(Loving God and Loving man)

What are the three aspects of the goal described in this verse?

**Unity of faith**

While unity is assumed as something given in 4:3, it is still something toward which Christians must work. “Unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son” is not merely unity in the ideas that we believe, but a unity resulting from the experience of receiving the gospel and living with Christ. This is not knowledge about Christ, but a firsthand relational knowing *him*. Our Lord wants us to have a “mature” faith (cf. 1 Cor. 13:11).<sup>41,43</sup>

**Mature manhood**

Fully grown

**To the measure of status of the fullness of Christ**

The word “measure” (v. 7; NIV, “apportioned”) reappears in 4:13 (“the whole *measure* of the fullness of Christ”) and in 4:16 (“according to the working in *measure* of each part”; NIV, “as each part does its work”). What is measured to each one is needed to make the full measure of the body of Christ.<sup>44</sup>

(4) Ultimate purpose: Growth in unity 4:14-16  
—secure confidence in confusing world through the WORD

(a) Negative: What is the opposite of the purpose? 4:14

**Don’t be like infants**— we were just told our aim is maturity, now Paul contrasts maturity with immaturity.

What characteristic of an “infant” does Paul point out?

unsteady, wavering

**Being easily deceived**

When you watch a child begin to walk, they are unsteady, they can’t walk in a straight line. They fall down easily. Any change in the terrain is trouble.

But Paul’s concern is not our physical walk, but our spiritual understanding.

Here Paul says that what immature believers can be tossed around by is false teaching

---

<sup>41</sup> The NIV “become mature” represents the words “unto a mature man.” A parallel should be drawn to the new being in 2:15, but even though both images are corporate, the intent is not the same. *Aner* is used here for “man” rather than *anthropos*, which was used in 2:15. Nowhere else is *aner* used to represent the church, and it is safe to say that the focus is on conveying the ideas of unity and maturity, not on maleness or church. James 3:2 uses this same expression to speak of the person who is mature enough to control the tongue.

<sup>43</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 205.

<sup>44</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 200.

The Tossed and carried (blown) are both in the passive—what is done to us. These are not the winds of a storm, but the winds that produce drifting at the whim of the waves and wind.

- (1) infancy versus maturity
- (2) tossed about versus joined and held together (v. 16);
- (3) deception versus speaking the truth (v. 15)
- (4) of human origin versus from Christ
- (5) crafty people serving themselves versus honest, loving people serving other<sup>45</sup>

The equipping of the Saints for Service then requires grounding them in the word.

Listen to

**Hebrews 5:11–6:2** About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. 1 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. (ESV)

If we are not mature, if we are not grounded in the Word—we don't have an anchor to hold us when false teaching comes are way.

The Tossed and carried (blown) are both in the passive (what is done to us). **4:14 tn** While the sense of the passage is clear enough, translation in English is somewhat difficult. The Greek says: “by the trickery of men, by craftiness with the scheme of deceit.” The point is that Paul is concerned about Christians growing into maturity. He is fearful that certain kinds of very cunning people, who are skilled at deceitful scheming, should come in and teach false doctrines which would in turn stunt the growth of the believers.<sup>46</sup>

Notice further how Paul explains this false teaching—

The idea of being pushed around without direction is enhanced by the idea of,

Human cunning: “Deceitful schemes” or “Trickery” *κυβεία*, a word that was used of—dice play—metaph. *sleight of hand, trickery*.

craftiness in deceitful schemes—There are individuals who are *πανουργία cunning, craftiness*, lit. ‘readiness to do anything’ to deceive will the immature.

How are you aiming at maturity?

What are you doing intentionally to take next steps in your growth?

<sup>45</sup> Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). 206.

<sup>46</sup>NET Bible

The point is that Paul is concerned about Christians growing into maturity. He is fearful that certain kinds of very cunning people, who are skilled at deceitful scheming, should come in and teach false doctrines which would in turn stunt the growth of the believers.<sup>47</sup>

Much of the vocabulary in this verse is pick-up in chapter 6 in dealing with Satan, and spiritual warfare. But here the battle is over truth which men distort.

Instead of wavering and blown around—the mature need to be stable, secure, steady

Equipping to maturity enables the church to avoid error and understand the craftiness of evil men.

So it is the job of every believer to grow to maturity. This maturity brings with it the capacity to evaluate various forms of teaching, to accept truth and reject falsehood.

So instead of being immature, unsure of what we believe, we are to be mature, secure in what we believe. Not look at the Positive instruction.

(b) Positive: What do the mature do? 4:15-16  
What is the primary command?

(i) Speak the truth in love 4:15a  
Notice the counter point and balance:

→ Paul contrasts the deception of heresy with the integrity of the gospel. The church cannot allow falsehood to go uncorrected, yet the truth must always be vindicated in the accents of love.<sup>48</sup>

This moves from the passive to the active. Instead of being at the whim of false teaching, we act.

At the very least this passages teaches us that our speech should be both truthful and loving.

The balance is important.

I hear people in the hallways of the church saying things like:  
“I don’t have a problem telling them that what they should do!”

The passage is not instructing bluntness.

This passage is not teaching us. . .  
“Boy did you get a bad haircut!”  
“That dress is hideous!”  
“I’ve heard Chuck Swindoll preach, and your no Chuck Swindoll!”

Notice the *contrast* and *compliment* that Paul draws.

---

<sup>47</sup>NET Bible

<sup>48</sup>EBC

Truth is in contrast to “every wind of teaching or doctrine” and the “cunning and craftiness of men’s deceitful schemes.”

And the compliment or manor in which truthfulness is to be practiced is **love**.

→ Paul seems to have in mind dealing honestly and lovingly with those who are either mistaken or wrong.

But the concept here go beyond words. It should be translated, “**dealing truthfully**” or “**practicing truth.**” We are to deal truthfully with others. That is both a mark of maturity, and it leads to maturity. Because Integrity, is doing the right things even when it costs.

ἀληθεύω ἐν ἀγάπῃ—speaking the truth in love (or good will), or practicing the truth in love  
“be truthful in love”

Practicing the truth in love, or speaking loving truthfulness—means that we will have to take a stand for what is right, even when unpopular or when it requires confrontation.

What I have found to be true in the church (we have dealt with this in my ABF class on 1 John) is that we don’t deal with conflict very well. Sometimes we feel that disagreeing is unspiritual. When Paul tells us to speak the truth in love, he understands **that truth can never be compromised** for the “appearance” of unity. But true unity requires truth. (Paul and Peter)

But the converse is also true. Some of us, are quick to “speak the truth”—to *say it as it is*,

“I’m not afraid to tell the Pastor what to do.” (That one I heard in the hallway outside my office.)

—but we don’t do it with love, kindness and compassion, goodness, gentleness, and self-control (the Fruit of the Spirit, which is a mark of maturity).

We can be very much like the world—complaining, arguing, gossiping—but this is the subject of the next step—Our Speech (4:25-32)

But Paul wants **Loving Truthfulness**—

Paul seems to make this a foundational concern, that the church which practices loving truthfulness will grow to maturity.

The balance:

“Stand for the Truth, but don’t forget Grace. Demonstrate Love, but don’t forget purity.”

Notice what

**This leads** to—“we will then” active—growing up

The focus of the “growing up” is corporate. **We will grow together when**

**we together stand for the truth in love.**

**Key Point #1: Growing to maturity requires growing together in truthful love**

When we are saved, we are placed into the Body of Christ, and we need each other to grow.

**Teacher’s Study Notes**

**Practical Application**

1 Thessalonians 5:14 and to some degree Jude 22-23, provide practical expression of what it means to practice love and truth.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Admonish the unruly

Encourage the Fainthearted

Help the weak

Be patient with everyone

We are to minister grace and challenge sin.

**Warn idle 5:14-15**

Now Paul is more authoritative, “we urge you.” — He uses the imperative to communicate his instructions.

(1) Notice the progression between the four groups mentioned in 5:14

(a) Warn the idle

(i) “Warn” same word as in verse 12 *νουθετειτε* — to put one in mind, to advise, to warn, to admonish.

(ii) “Idle” *ἀτακτος* — without rank, out of rank, disorderly. “The word was primarily a military term used of the soldier who is out of step or out of rank or the army moving in disarray. It then was used more generally of whatever is out of order. In the present passage the special reference would seem to be the idleness and neglect of duty which characterized certain members of the Thessalonian church in view of the short expected *parousia*.”<sup>49</sup>

(iii) 2 Thessalonians 3:6-7 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, (NIV)

(b) Encourage the timid

(i) *παραμυθισθε*— to encourage, comfort (1 Thess 2:12)

(ii) Timid — fainthearted, worried, discouraged, fearful

(iii) These could be individuals who were struggling under the opposition they were experiencing. The trials.

(iv) Or more likely, they are those who were uncertain/troubled over the loss of friends (4:13) or confused about the end times (5:1-11).

(c) Help the weak

(i) Weak morally or spiritual weakness

These could be individuals who:

(ii) Where shrinking from persecution (3:3-5)

(iii) Yielding to temptation, to immorality (4:3-8)

(iv) An unknown reason, but one that the Thessalonians would understand

(v) Or possible, (outside chance) they had not fully understood their Christian freedoms and were the “weaker brother.” (Romans 14:1—15:6; 1 Corinthians 8—10)<sup>50</sup>

(d) Be Patient with everyone

(i) A general command to sum up the three previous ones.

(ii) Longsuffering

(iii) “It pictures the even-tempered response of one who is slow to anger.”<sup>51</sup>

(2) No Retaliation

<sup>49</sup> Rienecker/Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) p. 602.

<sup>50</sup> Frank E Gaebelein, Ed. *Expositors Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) Thomas, p. 289.

<sup>51</sup> *Expositors Bible Commentary*, Thomas, p. 290.

- (a) The group as a whole was to practice the virtues mentioned above with the overarching principle of not returning evil for evil.
  - (b) Instead of retaliation for wrong, the believer is to “pursue” (διોકετε — to hunt, pursue, to seek eagerly) being kind (αγαθον good).
  - (c) ⇒ “In place of wrong, injury, or harm dictated by a vengeful spirit, Christians must diligently endeavor to produce what is intrinsically beneficial to others, whether other Christians (“each other”) or unbelievers (“everyone else”). . . The welfare of the offender must be the prime objective.”<sup>52</sup>
- (3) Romans 12:14-17 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.  
17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. (NIV)

(ii) Grow up 4:15b-16

How do we do we grow?

How do we grow together?

What is the **Source** of our Growth?

(a) The Source: Growth comes from the head

“we will in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head.”

As we are being equipped with the Word together, to stand firm against false teaching, and stop being infants—**we will grow up.**

Growth is a natural process—when the parts are all working correctly (will come back to that), growth happens.

Grow up—αὐξήσωμεν (αὐξάνω) *first person, plural, aorist, active, subjunctive*

**“Grow up in union with Christ”**

Paul used it in Eph 2:21

Also, of the gospel Col 1:6. Of faith 2 Cor 10:15. Of knowledge Col 1:10. Of unrighteousness D 16:4. Cf. Lk 22:28 D.

“In all aspects” or “all things” — growth is a holistic or an integrated process. We cannot claim to be mature, if we are childish in certain areas.

Maturity not only leads to **stability** when it comes to false teaching but the **maturity** in relationships. Immature relationships are characterized by **selfishness** (see 4:25-32). Mature relationships do not require unanimity, but enable unity by Speaking, practicing the Truth in Love.

In connection to 4:14—**Live out the Truth**—Truth is the antidote for error and must be maintain, but it must be maintain and practiced in LOVE this leads to the church growing you in Christ who is the head.

**The imagery**, that this creates (though Paul may not have had this in mind)—is that of a baby. An infant or toddler’s head is out of proportion to their body. When our kids were babies, we used to play a game with them—most of you are familiar with it—“How big are you?” “So big.” The problem was that because their bodies

<sup>52</sup> *Expositors Bible Commentary*, Thomas, p. 290.



were not proportional, their little arms couldn't reach over their heads.

But as they grow up, their body grows to fit the head.

Our head—Christ, is what He should be, the task of the church is to grow up to what **we should be**.

**Key Point #1: Growing to maturity requires growing together in truthful love**

- (b) The process: of Growth requires *unity* and *synergy*—members working together

Look at verse 16. This is a little comparison; let me read it out of the New English Translation.

Ephesians 4:16 From him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament. As each one does its part, the body grows in love. GS\_NETBIBLE

Unity	Built up in Christ	in love
Synergy	All working	

Growing up

Working together

συναρμολογούμενον back to the passive Joined together, fit together

In 2:21 it is translated "built together"

**4:16 tn** The Greek participle συμβιβαζόμενον (*sumbibazomenon*) translated "held together" also has in different contexts, the idea of **teaching implied** in it.

*bring together, unite*

This process (of growing to maturity) depends on the fact that the various parts of the body are interrelated. The whole is continually being integrated (NIV "joined" NET "fitted") (*synarmologoumenon*) and kept firm (NIV, NET "held together") (*sumbibazomenon*) by each separate ligament (*haphes*)--"joined and held together by every supporting ligament." The precision with which these medical terms are employed makes us wonder whether Paul checked the details with Luke.<sup>53</sup>

If you look at a joint

It fits together just right

It is held together by the ligament

I had a physical this week, and one of the things the doctor was checking was my knees. In order to describe what was going on in my knees, he had a diagram of the body, showing the bones, muscles, ligament, and tendons. Everything fits together just right. But if one part is damaged, or is not working, the whole is affected.

That is the imagery of the church—a mature growing church is a body, in which all the parts (and **all** parts are necessary) fit together just right (because God created them, He brought them together)—and are **held together *by*** each one doing his or her part.

Did you get that—by each one doing his or her part. (Or as Charles Stanley would say, “Listen to me”)

→ It is when each individual works with the other members of the church doing his or her part that the church receives what it needs to grow to maturity. By correlation—when we as individuals are each doing our part, when we are serving, that is when **we** are growing.

The phrase “as each part **does** it part” or “as each part does its work”. — translations the word ἐνέργεια—working, power, energizing. It is the same word that is used of God’s power in resurrecting Jesus, of His power in us to ministering together

In

**Colossians 1:28–29** Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his **energy** that he **powerfully works** within me. (ESV)

His power is mightily working in us, when we are serving.

This working power is evident when each does it part.

**Ephesians 4:16** From him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament. As each **one does its part**, the body grows in love. NETBIBLE

**Ephesians 4:16** from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, **according to the proper working of each individual part**, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. NASB

**Ephesians 4:16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, **as each part does its work**. NIV

Paul has already told us that we each have a part.

**Ephesians 4:7** But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. (ESV)

Part—is a measure or designated task

Now this is awesome! Even what God requires of us for growth—HE PROVIDES!

The ability, the energy to do our part, is given by Christ.

**Key point # 2: Maturity requires everyone doing their part**

The church has no bystanders—either you are helping or hindering

“Each part does its work” – if one part doesn’t do it work—the work is hindered.

There are two parts to the process.

**Unity**, being built up in Christ

**Synergy**, when all are working together, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

(c) The Nourishment

**How is unity and synergy maintained?**

**What is the Nourishment for growth?**

Love

Paul mixes his metaphors

Growing and building

He has used these to metaphors throughout the book.

1:22-23 he spoke of the Body as the church and	Jesus as head
2:20-22 he spoke of the church as a Building	Jesus and Apostles and Prophets as foundation
3:17-19 The church/individuals as the Temple—not complete—but still growing (2:21-22).	

So it is interesting that he mixes these metaphors.

He is showing that this building, this Temple is unique. It is not built by outsiders, but it builds itself.

And that is why Paul mixes his metaphors. A building cannot build itself, a body can. (Just give food to a 12-15 year old and what them grow!)

When the church is Building itself up — οἰκοδομή — or edifying itself, the word edify, means spiritual strengthening, promoting spiritual growth—here through love

Paul uses the word three times in Ephesians all in this context (4:12, 16, 29)

In the Greek the verse ends with the phrase, “building up in love.” Love, here last for emphasis ties to verse 15 where we are commanded to speaking the truth in love.

So the practicing of loving truthfulness and the building up or edification of the church are tied together by love.

Equipping and Edifying go hand in hand.

Notice the two parts

Truth—equipping

Service—edifying

Growing to maturity (the goal) is accomplished by standing firm in

the Word against false and misleading ideas (therefore you must be taught the truth) **and** when we are putting those truths into practice by serving.

Paul doesn't want us to have Dead Doctrine or Sterile Service—He doesn't want our motivation to be primarily duty, but devotion. Love is the motivation and maintainer of the process.

**Key Point # 3: Duty doesn't lead to devotion, devotion leads to duty**

This is all related by to equipping. When the people God has gifted to equip the church do their jobs, and the people are equipped for service leading to maturity— the church will stand firm in the truth (by which they were equipped) and each individual will do his or her part in unity and synergy, developing and maintaining a atmosphere of love. So when we equip, we should also be edifying.

Now Paul turns to specific areas in which the church needs to be mature in order to maintain the unity and purity he is calling us to.

## Summary

The goal of the church is to grow up—together  
by practicing the truth in love  
by everyone doing their part

When this happens the body **will** grow in love—the unity and maturity that are the Aim— will be reached

The goal of the individuals within the church—grow up—don't think and live like the pagans  
Put aside corruption, impurity and deceitful desires  
Be renewed—starting with your thinking  
Then leading to you actions

Both points—the corporate and individual are mutually supporting.  
As individuals grow they will serve as a response to God  
As the church ministers to each other, individuals will grow through the influence of the word and their fellow believers.

## Review and Application

When the people God has gifted to equip the church do their jobs, and the people are equipped for service leading to maturity—the church will stand firm in the truth (by which they were equipped) and each individual will do his or her part in unity and synergy, developing and maintaining a atmosphere of love.

**Key Point #1:** Growing to maturity requires growing together in truthful love

**Key point # 2:** Maturity requires everyone doing their part

**Key Point # 3:** Duty doesn't lead to devotion, devotion leads to duty

**Key Point:** The natural consequence of the reality of our connection to Christ is growth. For that growth to take place each member is necessary and the result is a community where the Spirit makes His dwelling.

When the people God has gifted to equip the church do their jobs, and the people are equipped for service leading to maturity—the church will stand firm in the truth (by which they were equipped) and each individual will do his or her part in unity and synergy, developing and maintaining an atmosphere of love.

Unity and Maturity are twin goals for the church. We do not want to sacrifice unity in our attempt to help people grow, or dismiss people who need to grow, in order to maintain unity.

The reality is that part of the way we grow in maturity is through our interaction with others. The need to maintain unity which at times requires us to give up our rights or to step out of our comfort zone to confront, will not only help maintain unity, but develop maturity.

### **Applicational Questions**

1. Do you need to learn to speak the truth in love? Is there a particular individual you need to speak to?
2. Are you promoting or preventing the unity of the church?
3. What role are you fulfilling in bringing about the purpose described in this passage?

It is interesting that in the next section (Ephesians 4:17-24) Paul turns to the topic of purity. For **Purity** is key to both unity and maturity.