

A CRASH COURSE IN CHURCH GROWTH

EPHESIANS: A CRASH COURSE IN BASIC CHRISTIANITY | EPHESIANS 4:1-16 | JULY 13/14, 2019 |

PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." (Ephesians 4:1)

Growing by Walking (Ephesians 4:1)

The pivot of Ephesians 4:1

The calling we've received

Walking worthy of the calling

The Fundamental Unity upon which the Church Grows (Ephesians 4:2-6)

Unity within our character with one another (4:2-3)

Unity within the new realities in Christ (4:4-6)

The Necessary Diversity in the Unified, Growing Church (Ephesians 4:7-16)

Diversity of grace gifts from Christ the King (4:7-10)

Diversity of grace through fivefold ministers for the Church (4:11-13)

Diversity held in unity through Christ-ward growth of the Church in truth and love (4:14-16)

STUDY GUIDE:

1. As we continue our series on Ephesians, this week we look at Ephesians 4:1-16. Begin your study by asking God to speak to you through your study of Scripture. Then, whether you're alone or in a group, read that passage aloud.
2. As chapter 4 begins, Ephesians generally pivots from the first three chapters of theological truths to the second three chapters of life application. Verse 1 sets the tone for the next three chapters: "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." What is the calling the believers have received, according to chapters 1-3?
3. Verses 2-3 outline some basics of Christian behavior related to unity. What stands out to you most? Which of these do you find most easy or difficult to live out?

4. In verses 4-6, Paul outlines some fundamental aspects of our unity in Christ. Try to define each "one" term—one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all—in these verses.
5. After talking about unity in verses 1-6, verses 7-16 talk about diversity within unity. As in passages like Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, Paul now illustrates how Christ gives a diversity of gifts to the body for living out its calling. Why do you think it's important that "to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (4:7)?
6. Background: The aside on Christ' descent and ascent in verses 8-10 interprets Psalm 68 in light of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion and death, resurrection, and ascension. This psalm was often connected with Moses' giving of the Law at Sinai, but here Paul describes how Jesus' work surpasses Moses and gives us greater gifts.
7. The gifts are brought into focus in the fivefold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Looking at the first two, what do Ephesians 2:20 and 3:5 tell us about the unique role of the apostles and prophets?
8. The next three—evangelists, pastors, and teachers—represent both the outward and inward ministry of those God has called to build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets in the church. Based on this and a comparative reading of Acts 20:13-37, what would you say the purposes of these unique roles are?
9. What does Paul say the purpose of this fivefold gift of ministers is for the church in verses 12-13?
10. With verse 14, Paul contrasts the growth into the fullness of Christ of verse 13 with infancy in a storm-tossed boat. What does he say causes believers to fall into this storm-tossed infancy?
11. What is the opposite way, according to verse 15, by which the church moves toward maturity in Christ?
12. What do you think it looks like to "speak the truth in love" in order to help the church grow? Do you think there is a difference between speaking truth without love and speaking truth with love? Do you think you can speak truth in love without aiming for the growth of the church? Why or why not?
13. According to verse 16, who gives growth? How does growth happen? Who is a part of that growth?
14. What is one thing that stands out to you or that you sense God is speaking to you today from this study? If you are in a group, share your experiences together, taking time to pray for one another. If you are studying on your own, write down some of the words God spoke to you and take them to prayer throughout the week.