

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians – Chapter 4

Unity in Community

1 Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. 2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. 3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. 5 There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all. 7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. 8 That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." 9 Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. 10 And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. 11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. 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. 17 With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18 Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19 They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that isn't what you learned about Christ. 21 Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, 22 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. 25 So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbours the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. 26 And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 for anger gives a foothold to the devil. 28 If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. 29 Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. 30 And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour. 32 Instead, be kind to each other, tender hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Chapter 5 1 Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. 2 Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

Ephesians 4:1-5:2 (NLT)

Introduction

Paul's structure:

Chapters 1–3: Theological blueprint: blessings in Christ (chosen, redeemed, forgiven, reconciled, new family).

Chapter 4: Shift to living it out.

- “Walk worthy of the calling.”
- Calling = new way of life (Eph. 2:10).

Unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:1–6)

“Therefore I urge y'all,

I the prisoner in the Lord, to walk

in a manner worthy of the calling with which y'all have been called,

2 with all humility and gentleness,

with patience, bearing with one another in love,

3 being zealous to keep the one-ness of the Spirit with the bond of peace:

4 **one** body and **one** Spirit, just as y'all were called by

One hope of y'all's calling,

5 **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism,

6 **one** God and Father of everyone,

who is over all and through all **and in all**.

Attitude: humility, gentleness, patience, bearing in love, zeal for peace.

Seven Ones (new messianic Shema):

1. One body
2. One Spirit
3. One hope
4. One Lord
5. One faith
6. One baptism
7. One God and Father
 - Grounded in Trinity.
 - Unity = gift of the Spirit, not human achievement.
 - Unity ≠ uniformity.

Illustration: family dinner (unity by blood, harmony by love).





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Diversity of Gifts (Eph. 4:7–16)

7 But to each one of us was **given** grace/**gift**
according to the measure of the **gift** of the Messiah.

8 Therefore it says:

“Having ascended to the height,
he took captive the captive forces;
he **gave** **gifts** to people.”

9 Now, what is “he ascended,”
except that he also descended to the lower regions of the land?

10 The one who descended,
he is also the one who ascended
high above all things in the heavenly realms,
in order that he might fulfill all things.

11 And he **gave** some on the one hand as apostles,
and some prophets, and some evangelists,
and some as shepherds and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the holy ones
for the work of the ministry,
for the building of the **body** of the **Messiah**,

13 until we all attain
unto the unity of the faith
and unto the knowing of the **Son of God**,
unto a mature person,
unto the measure of the stature of the **fullness of the Messiah**,

14 so that we might no longer be babies,
tossed by waves and driven by every wind of teaching
done by the trickery of humans, in the craftiness of a scheme of deception,

15 but doing truth in love, let us grow up in everything into him
Who is the head, Messiah

16 from whom all the **body**, being joined together
and being united together through every supporting joint,
according to the working by the measure of each one of the parts,
produces the growth of the **body** for the building up of itself in love.

Christ gives grace gifts: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers.

Purpose: Equip body, build up, reach maturity.

Goal: No longer immature, truth in love, growing into Christ.

Body metaphor: Every part matters, Christ as head.

Source language: *kephale* = source, not authority.

Christ = Nourishment, provision, life.

Illustrations:

- Psalm 68: Victor receives vs. Christ gives.

Ephesians 4:8	Psalm 68:18 Hebrew Text	Psalm 67:18 Septuagint
Having ascended to the height, he took captive the captives; he gave gifts to people."	You ascended to the height You took captive the captives you received gifts among men	You ascended to the height You took captive the captives you received gifts among men
ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ῥῆγμαλῶτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.	עלִית לְמָרוֹם שָׁבִית שְׁבִי מִתְּנוּת בְּאֶדְם לְקַחַת	ἀνέβης εἰς ὕψος, ῥῆγμαλῶτευσας αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔλαβες δόματα ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ,
Ephesians 4 and Two Translations of Psalm 68. Created by Tim Mackie for BibleProject Classroom: Ephesians (2019).		

- AFL grand final team: every part needed.

Jesus is the head (source)

(kephale/κεφαλή) *ka fa lay* and it does not mean "authority" in ancient Greek. Its primary nuance of meaning is (1) literal head, (2) literal source, and (3) metaphorical prominence.

"17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. 18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything."

Colossians 1:17-18 (NLT)

"3 But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."

1 Corinthians 11:3 (NLT)

The New Humanity (Eph. 4:17–5:2)

17 Therefore I say and I testify by the Lord
that you should walk no longer as the nations walk
in the futility of their mindset
18 Having been in the dark in their mindset
estranged from the life of God because of the ignorance
which is in them on account of the hardness of their heart,
19 who after making themselves calloused
they gave themselves over to a lack of self-control
resulting in deeds of every kind of impurity along with insatiable desire.
20 but in such a way you did not learn the Messiah,
21 if indeed you have heard of him
and were taught in him as truth *is* in Jesus,
22 that y'all are to take off the old humanity of y'all's former way of life
which is being corrupted by its deceptive desires,
23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
24 and to put on the new humanity
which has been created in accordance with God in justice and true piety.
25 therefore having put off the lie speak truth each one with his neighbour
because we are members of one another.
26 be angry and do not sin do not let the sun set on your anger,
27 and do not give an opportunity to the slanderer,
28 the one who steals let him know longer steal
but rather let him labour producing good with his own hands
so that he can have something to share with the one who has need.
29 Any rotten word don't let it come out of y'all's mouth
but only what is good for building up what is needed
so that it might give grace to those who hear.
30 and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God
by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
31 All bitterness and anger and wrath and blasphemy let it be taken from you
along with all wickedness. 32 But be kind to one another,

compassionate forgiving one another

just as God in Messiah forgave you.

5:1 Therefore become imitators of God as beloved children,

2 and walk in love just as the Messiah loved us

and gave himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God as a pleasant aroma

Old humanity: Futility, darkness, hardness, impurity, greed.

New humanity: Created in likeness of God.

Put off the old, put on the new.

Practical outworking:

The Old Humanity	The New Humanity
Take off your old human	Put on the new human
Of your former way of life	Being renewed in the spirit of your mind
That is being ruined by deceptive desires	That has been created according to God in righteousness and holiness of truth
Take off lying	Speak truth
Anger	Not allowing the sun to set on your anger
Let the stealer no longer steal	Work so that you can share with others
<i>The Old and New Humanity. Created by Tim Mackie for BibleProject Classroom: Ephesians (2019).</i>	

Model: Christ loved, gave himself, fragrant offering.

Illustration: Changing clothes (take off old, put on new).

Christ at the Centre

He is:

- One Lord.
- Giver of gifts.
- Head of body.
- Pattern of forgiveness and love.

Analogy: wheel – unity (rim), gifts (spokes), transformation (motion), Christ (hub).



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Conclusion and Call to Action

Unity = Calling.

Diversity = Strength.

Transformation = Spirit's work.

Christ = Centre and Source

Walk worthy of calling.

Church as living picture of new creation.

This week: Commit to one practical step that builds unity, uses your gift, or reflects Christ's love in action.

