

## Ephesians, Chapter Four, Lesson Three

WALKING IN UNITY Ephesians 4:11-16

### STIMULATE

\*\* What a tremendous privilege it is for us to be living our Christian lives each day by "Walking in Grace". It is my prayer that our study together last week encouraged you to use your spiritual gift. How many Christians have not received a spiritual gift by God's grace?

None! God's grace has given "Christ's gift" to "each one of us" according to verse seven of chapter four in Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

\*\* If we are truly "Walking in Grace" each day, how will we "employ" our spiritual gift according to Peter?

In serving one another. cf. 1Peter 4:10

\*\* Did any of you have an opportunity to serve the body of Christ this past week?

That question is somewhat rhetorical, in that every one of us should be serving the body of Christ through the effectual use of our spiritual gift. Hopefully we all are using our spiritual giftedness for the glory of the Lord.

### MOTIVATE

\*\* If all believers were to diligently put their gift to work, what would be the overall impact upon the body of Christ? In Ephesians 4:11-16 Paul is going to show us that if we are "Walking in Unity" there will be six results which work together for the building up of the body. Let's enjoy this passage together.

Read Passage (V.11-13) (V.14-16)

Opening Prayer

### *Walking in Unity*

### INVESTIGATE

**V.11** \*\* As he opens our passage for today, the apostle shifts from the broad category of Jesus giving "gifts to men" in verse eight, to a list of four specific categories of gifted men that the Lord has given to His church. What are they?

1) apostles, 2) prophets, 3) evangelists and 4) pastors and teachers (or teaching shepherds).

\*\* Let's try to find a Biblical definition for these four terms . . .

**First - an apostle**, apostolos (sent one).

This individual was unique in that he had to be chosen by Christ Himself. He had seen the risen Savior and his words were authenticated by the accompanying miracles that God would do through him. cf. 2Corinthians 12:12

**Second - a prophet**, prophetes (an interpreter or forth-teller of the divine will).

This person, as a gift from Christ to His church, was used in the local congregation and would speak revelation from God or sometimes, simply expound on revelation already given. cf. Acts 11:21-28 and Acts 21:10-14

**\*\* What do the roles of apostle and prophet have in common as they relate to the church?**

These two offices were chosen by Christ to be the "foundation" of the church with their writing and teaching the Word of God, by the power of God through signs, wonders and miracles.  
cf. Ephesians 2:20

**Third - an evangelist**, euangelistes (this is the man gifted by God to preach and explain the saving truth of the gospel to those who have not yet believed).

While all Christians are to evangelize (euangelizo) Christ has gifted specific men for this critical proclamation/teaching role. cf. Acts 21:8, 2Timothy 4:5, All see - John 4:1-39

**Fourth - pastor/teachers**, poimen (shepherd) used with the term didaskalos (an instructor).

Paul is showing us the office and its function with these two terms. The little word kai, translated here as "and" can mean "that is" or "in particular" which makes teaching the primary role of the one called to be a shepherd.  
cf. Acts 20:28, 1Timothy 5:17

**V.12 \*\* What were these men to do with their spiritual gifts?**

They were given by Jesus Christ to His church "for the equipping of the saints". They have a specific charge from Christ to equip those who belong to Him for a very special purpose.

**\*\* How are they to do that?**

Three ways -

- 1) Teach God's Word, 2Timothy 4:2
- 2) Be an example, 1Corinthians 11:1, Hebrews 13:7
- 3) Exhort excellence, Ephesians 4:1 and 1Peter 2:11-12

That stands out as our **first** result of "Walking in Unity", the members of the body of Christ become "equipped".

**\*\* Once we as believers are equipped, what do we do with our spiritual gift?**

We (joyfully) do the work of service!  
cf. 1Corinthians 15:58, Romans 12:1 with 2Thessalonians 3:11

These start to come rather quickly, but here is the **second** result of "Walking in Unity" - we willingly do the work that Jesus has set before us for His glory.

**\*\* Let's look at the third result, what is the outcome of gifted Christians doing the work of service?**

"...to the building up of the body of Christ"! Our faithful work on behalf of the Lord is actually used by Him to build up His glorious body.

**\*\* While we are doing this glorious work, what is the common resource in all of our lives, which God uses for this building process?**

His precious Word! cf. Acts 20:32 and 1Peter 2:2

**V.13** \*\* Alright then, we have seen that if we are "Walking in Unity" as Christians, the saints will be equipped, they will do the work of service and the body is built up by God's word. Let's look together to verse 13 and see the **forth** result of "Walking in Unity" - What is it?

UNITY! We "all attain to the unity of the faith". Please notice that this is not unity for unity's sake. This represents the joining together by God's grace around the one true Faith, faith in Christ!  
cf. Ephesians 4:5 and Jude 1:3

\*\* Right on the heels of a "unity of the faith" comes our **fifth** result, do you see it?

A unity "of the knowledge of the Son of God". This is a blessing that we cannot explain to the lost around us because they have no capacity to properly evaluate its worth.  
cf. 1Corinthians 1:18, 1Corinthians 2:14

Our unity in "the knowledge of the Son of God" is what makes us completely unique in all of creation and causes us to be able to glorify God. cf. 2Peter 1:2-3 and verse 8, 2Peter 3:18

\*\* That brings us to our **sixth** and final result from "Walking in Unity". We will spend the rest of our time together today exploring the "maturity" which comes from "Walking in Unity" with one another. By what standard are we to measure our maturity?

"to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ". cf. Romans 8:29  
Note: We do not measure our maturity by comparing to other men, either saved or unsaved.  
cf. 2Corinthians 10:12

**V.14** \*\* As a result of our Christian growth and maturity, what two things are we to avoid according to the apostle Paul?

- 1) Acting like children, who are "tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine".
- 2) The demonic heresy of false teachers - those who employ "the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming".

\*\* Did you notice the three characteristics that Paul delineated for us which describe a false teacher?

Trickery - intentional fraud

Craftiness - clever manipulation of error, to make it look like truth, unscrupulous

Deceitful Scheming - planned, subtle and systematic error from the father of lies.(John 8:44)

**V.15** \*\* By the refreshing contrast introduced in verse 15, what are we supposed to do?

We are the ones (the only ones, by the way) who are "speaking the truth in love".

\*\* What impact will this type of speech pattern have on our spirituality?

"...we are to grow up in all aspects into Him..."

\*\* Did you notice in how many areas of our life we were to be growing into Christ likeness?

In "all aspects"...there is no area of our daily life that is to remain untouched by the maturing process that is brought on by "Walking in Unity".

\*\* In preparation for what he is about to say in verse 16, why does Paul refer to Christ as the head?

Because we are "the whole body", Paul wants us to be sure we remember that Jesus Christ is the only source for all truth, direction and strength. cf. Ephesians 1:22 and Colossians 1:18

**V.16** \*\* Before we get into this last verse of our passage, Who causes the growth of Christians - even the growth of the body of Christ itself?

God - alone! cf. 1Corinthians 3:6-7, Colossians 2:18-19

\*\* OK, now in verse 16, how does God cause the growth?

**First**, He holds us together - "Walking in Unity", is that which every joint supplies. We cannot make it without each other!

**Second**, He amazingly uses our involvement!

"...according to the proper working of EACH INDIVIDUAL PART..." - don't miss Paul's use of the word "proper" in that statement. We must be faithful to use our spiritual gift for the good of the body. All see - 1Corinthians 12:12-25

## **EXTRICATE**

\*\* As we return to our passage in Ephesians 4:11-16, what were the six results which come from the practice of "Walking in Unity"?

- 1) The saints are equipped
- 2) The saints do the work of service
- 3) The body is built up
- 4) We share in the unity of "the faith"
- 5) We share in the unity of the knowledge of Christ
- 6) We share in our common maturity in Christ

## **DELINEATE**

\*\* What did we see today that needs to be avoided at all costs?

Acting like spiritual children who are:

- 1) tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by everywind of doctrine, and
- 2) the heresy of false doctrine that is put forth by "the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming".

\*\* Do you think that is a problem for us today?

Absolutely, 1Timothy 4:1 - "...the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons."

## **EVALUATE**

\*\* Am I doing my part by "Walking in Unity" each day with my brothers and sisters in Christ?

Do I fit the phrase Paul used in verse 16 when he said that God causes the growth of the body "according to the **PROPER** working of each individual part"?

\*\* How can I improve my "individual part" in the work of service to our Lord Jesus Christ?

That is a personal question that can only be answered between you and your Lord. We must take the time, though, to seriously consider what He would have us to do!

### **ACTIVATE**

\*\* I hope that you will take to heart what our Lord has graciously shown us today. Let's all take a moment now to go before Him in the silence of our own heart and ask Him to show us our "proper" response to this marvelous passage which has encouraged us to always be "Walking in Unity".

Closing Prayer