

A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 5:17 — *“On this account, do not be foolish but be understanding what the will of the Lord is.”*

Study Number Seven – His Plan for a Functioning Body **– Ephesians 4:1-16**

We’ve had the calling of the church, now the CONDUCT.

From an inductive point of view, we’re trying to put the whole book together so that it’s easier to see one basic truth that the apostle is trying to get across to us.

In the first three chapters we’ve called it Life According to God’s Plan. We looked at:

The Master Plan—and an overview,

His Plan for Getting to Know Him,

His Plan for Giving Life,

His Plan for Peace, and

His Plan for a Body (in which He could dwell and function through).

And then we talked about:

His Plan for Power.

We discovered that there is available to us the power of God released through our prayers.

Now we come to what is called:

His Plan For a Functioning Body—Ephesians 4:1-16.

The last two verses are our key verses in this study:

Ephesians 4:15, 16

but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, Christ, from whom all the body, being joined and knit together through every joint with which it is supplied, according to the power that corresponds to the measure of each individual part, is making for growth of the body, resulting in the building up of itself in love.

As we get into this particular section, Paul wants to apply the great truth that Jew and Gentile are part of one body. They're part of one building.

How do they relate to each other now as they are Christians in this body?

v. 1 I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, am begging you to walk worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

“I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, am begging you to walk worthy of the calling to which you have been called,”

This great truth that has been revealed in the first three chapters of this epistle. We plead with you to “walk worthy” of the privilege which is yours now that you are now His child and you are part of His family.

A missionary to China said it so simple. He said “Remember whose you are and who you represent.”

(source unknown)

Paul’s saying:

“Remember whose you are and who you represent. I’m begging you to walk worthy of the calling to which you have been called.”

Now how do we do that? The HOW of that is described in the FIVE wonderful VIRTUES that are in the next verses.

How do we “walk worthy”?

These are things that make a demonstration of a worthy walk.

There are five of them here. They're very easy to outline in the next couple of verses.

v. 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

“with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,”

Now let's look at those five a little more closely because they'll be some in verse 3.

The first virtue is: 1. in “lowliness” or humility.

This is a virtue that's developed as a result of spending time in the presence of God.

It's recognizing the fact that we are UNWORTHY. It's a consequence of a true knowledge of our relationship with our God.

The second virtue is:

2. “meekness.”

Now some people say MEEKNESS is WEAKNESS. That meekness is someone who really doesn't make any waves.

The best description of meekness is a German shepherd. A

German shepherd can be so friendly with the family. But just let some intruder get close and wow.

Barclay says of the word “meekness”:

He is the man who is so God-controlled that he is always angry at the right time, but never angry at the wrong time. He is a man in who self has died and, whose whole life is directed and controlled by God. He is God’s gentleman.
(source unknown)

That’s a far cry from what we use as a term—“meekness.”

The third word:

3. “patience.”

We sometimes don’t have the right understanding of the word *hupomenō*.

Hupo is the preposition that means “under.”

Menō means “to remain.” To remain under the stress, to remain under the circumstance, to stay with it so that we finish.

It’s to run the race with endurance. Stay until we finish! Go through until completion.

One of the characteristics of a person who walks with God is

he's remaining under the stress of his circumstances because Christian character's being developed from that.

The fourth word is:

4. "bearing with one another in love."

Barclay says of this:

The real meaning of *agape* [love which is a God-like kind of love] is unconquerable benevolence. If we regard a person with *agape*, it means that nothing that person can or will make us seek anything but his highest good. Though he injure us and hurt us and insult us, we will never feel anything but kindness toward him. It is the ability to retain this unconquerable goodwill to the unlovely and the unlovable and towards those who do not love us. *Agape* love is the power to love even the people whom we do not like. It is that quality of mind and heart which compels a Christian never to feel any bitterness, never to feel any desire for revenge but always to seek nothing but the highest good of every man no matter what men do to him.

(source unknown)

Four characteristics there that are of a WORTHY WALK:

Humility, meekness, patience and love—"bearing with one another in love."

These words are all recorded in Galatians 5 as a manifestation

of the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT in our life.

So it's not foreign that Paul would pick these out of the air. This is an evidence of the fact that Christ is living in us, if these things are true of us as a believer.

Now look at the next one because this is where sometimes we get off base.

v. 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

“making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Are we a peace maker?

Do we recognize that as a believer when the Spirit is dominating our life, it's going to be more for UNITY than it is for DIVISION?

A lot of Christians don't read that text and don't operate on that text very well because it's almost a feeling that to be spiritual you have to be militant. You have to be picky, critical, divisive. You have to have your own little movement.

Here he's saying that if we're walking worthy of the Lord, we're “making every effort.”

Notice it says “making every effort.” It's SWEAT! We swallow

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it sometimes for the sake of unity in the bond of peace.

What we have here in these FIVE VIRTUES that are described are the manifestations of a worthy walk.

v. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling,

“There is one body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling,”

Now from verses 4-6 we’re going to find a 7-FOLD UNITY.

Why should we with our brothers and sisters in Christ be struggling and making an effort for unity?

Well the opposite of that is our horrible witness to the world, isn’t it?

“Oh those Christians don’t like each other, they just fight.”

But over and above that, he says there are seven reasons WHY we ought to be one with our brother and sister in Christ.

It’s a 7-FOLD BASIS FOR UNITY in verses 4-6 and why he makes that command “make every effort to maintain unity.” Why?

1. “There is one body”—we’ve already had that back in chapter 2:16—“he might reconcile us both to God in one body

through the cross.”

The second basis for unity is what?

2. “one Spirit”—there’s only one Holy Spirit energizing each of us.

Third:

3. “There is . . . one hope of your calling”—we are going to spend eternity together. We don’t have different hopes and different places. We’re all going to be with the Lord.

v. 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

4. “[There is] one Lord,”— that’s JESUS CHRIST.

5. “[There’s] one faith,”

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace are you saved through faith...

Just “one faith.”

6. “[There is] one baptism.”

Now when we look at the word “baptism” a lot of times in the Bible, we always think of water. It’s normal to do that. There is a safer way of interpretation. Biblically when we see the

word “baptism,” think of the SPIRIT rather than WATER.

The water is an OUTWARD SYMBOL of an INWARD WORK.

The water is an ORDINANCE.

It’s a WITNESS, a demonstration of Christ living in us.

When he’s talking about “one baptism” here, he’s talking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit that places the believer in the body of Christ.

There’s only one Spirit who does the baptizing and He baptizes us into the body of Christ.

In Romans 5 we’re BORN IN ADAM. When we receive Christ, we’re taken out of Adam and we’re BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST by the Holy Spirit.

Where do we read that in the Bible?

1 Corinthians 12:12, 13

Our bodies have many parts, but the many parts make up only one body when they are all put together. So it is with the body of Christ. Each of us is a part of the one body of Christ. Some of us are Jews and some are Gentiles, some are slaves and some are free. But the Holy Spirit has fitted us together into one body. We have been baptized into Christ’s body by one Spirit and have all been given that same Holy Spirit.

That's where there's a problem with the modern charismatic movement because it's making the baptism of the Holy Spirit a separate act. It's something that happens at a different time. The only teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit is right here. It signifies the Spirit of God taking us out of Adam and placing us into the body of Christ. So we must experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the moment we receive Christ. He is placing us INTO CHRIST.

They refer to being baptized in the Holy Spirit is that we get immersed in the Holy Spirit and there is no place for that in the Bible.

Granted in the book of Acts, in the transitional sections, we can talk about the coming of the Holy Spirit into individual's lives. But here when we speak of it, it is Christ who is the one who is magnified. We are being baptized into Christ by the Spirit. He is the instrument that is used for that.

v. 6 one God and Father of all, the One who is above all, and through all, and in all.

We have “one God and Father of all, the One who is above all, and through all, and in all.”

The seventh basis for unity then is:

7. “one God and Father of all.”

Where have we come?

He's saying:

“walk worthy of the calling to which you have been called.”

How are we going to do that? By these FIVE VIRTUES. Humility, meekness, these qualities and characteristics that demonstrate that we're His child. But one biggie:

“maintaining unity...in the bond of peace.”

How do we do that? And why do we need to do that?

Well here are the 7-FOLD REASONS for it—the basis for our unity in what we have seen to this point.

Now comes the TURNING POINT in the passage.

When we get to verse 7, we no longer have to talk about the way we're supposed to act in the body, why we're supposed to be in the body in oneness and unity. Now what are we supposed to do in the body?

A lot of people get the idea that if we do God a big favor and receive Christ as Savior and take the gift of His Son then we can take this like a life insurance policy. When we flick it in, we're going to draw on it because we're going to get to go to heaven.

There is so little! We're poverty stricken on the instructions of what happens after a person receives Christ.

What are we supposed to do? What do we think we're supposed to do now that we've become a Christian?

Some of us would say, "Well I'm supposed to go to church. I really don't want to go all the time but I better go. That's just part of the thing I got to do."

Some of us would say, "Well, you know, if there are some of us out there making the bucks and paying the bills, the church is going under so I'm going to go out there and make the money and pay the bills, give my money."

"Hey and well if I get elected as an elder or as a deacon, well then I'll serve. If I get put on some committee or get to teach Sunday school class, that's what I'm going to do."

That's putting the cart before the horse. That's a total misunderstanding of the way God designed this beautiful body to be intricately related to one another so that it bears a common and effective witness to the community.

What we have to learn as soon as we become a Christian is how God gifted us. Because understanding our gift in the body of Christ is going to allow us with some authority to say no to some people who want us to do some things that we weren't gifted to do.

Some Christians today are under horrible bondage because they're feeling like they have to teach that Sunday school class because if they don't teach it nobody else is going to and they're making a mess out of it. They aren't gifted in teaching. Yet they have to do it because the Sunday school superintendent is going to be mad at them if they don't. And they don't have the foggiest notion about what God means when He talks about each of us in the body being gifted in unique ways to function.

If we want to get excited and are ready to make an impact, we need to find out what our job description is from the Spirit's point of view. Strip this thing down. Start trying to discover how God gifted us when the Spirit of God came into our life and go to our local church bodies and function with those spiritual gifts to the edification of everyone there.

These next verses are so critical because it's the kind of stuff that's just passed over that we don't talk about to Christians.

v. 7 But to each one of us there was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

“But to each one of us there was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

Now why is the word “BUT” there?

We are to “make every effort to maintain the unity.”

These are all the manifestations of the unity. BUT there's a critical area of unity that we don't understand. That is that God has gifted us in unique ways to function with one another in the body of Christ to edify each other.

“But to each one of us”—does that leave out any of us?

Every person who becomes a Christian is gifted in some way spiritually to edify and to function in the body of Christ. Just maybe we might be among that particular group who say, “Oh I'm so hungry! I'm so starved! Oh I've got to go to church to get fed! Oh I don't like that church because it doesn't give me what I need!”

Doesn't that sound spiritual? Oh it just sounds so wonderful!

It's not what the church can do for us, it's what we can do for the church that's really the most important matter.

To quote a president of a by-gone era:

“It's not what my country can do for me but what I can do for my country!”

(source unknown)

It's the same spiritually!

It's what can we give, what contribution can we make? How can we help? It ought to be the first concern of the born-again believer and how they can function.

“But to each one of us there was given”—and when something is given, there is demanded a stewardship. So we’re going to get a computer print-out at the Judgment Seat of Christ on how we exercised our spiritual gift. It’s going to be part of the thing. We’re going to be able to read down and catch the bottom line on how we did on our spiritual gift that God gave us.

God feeds all that stuff in the computer day after day. We have so many days to live and we exercise our spiritual gifts. There it is—the good and the bad—just take a look at it. See the bottom line on that down there at the bottom line? How many of those crowns are going to be available for at the end of the whole thing?

“was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

v. 8 Therefore, it is said when He went up on high, He led away captive those taken captive, and gave gifts to men.

“Therefore, it is said when He went up on high, He led away captive those taken captive, and gave gifts to men.”

Now what’s he mean by that? When did he go “up on high”?

Acts 1:9 is the last time they saw Him, wasn’t it? That’s the ASCENSION.

Acts 1:9

It was not long afterwards that He rose into the sky and disappeared into a cloud, leaving them staring after Him.

Then the next phrase says:

“He led away captive those taken captive.”

Now some people introduce a foreign thought to this passage.

Some people think that “when He went up on high” and He led captivity captive that was the time that He went down and emptied the righteous part of Hades. Now He’s in His resurrected body and He takes all the righteous saints home to be with Him.

That is totally foreign to the passage. It’s introducing a foreign principle. Granted He emptied Hades. He took the righteous saints home to be with Himself. But that doesn’t fit the argument.

What this teaches is that the moment Christ descended into glory, He at that point defeated Satan once and for all. He’s the one who holds captive.

He RELEASED—He gave the potential for releasing us from the bondage and the captivity of Satan himself!

Colossians 2:15

God disarmed the principalities and powers ranged against us and made a bold display and public example of them in triumphing over them in Him and in the cross.

Then thirdly:

“[He] gave gifts to men.”

What we can say is that each of us has a spiritual GIFT but we also might have spiritual GIFTS. We might have more than one.

There are FOUR BASIC TEMPERAMENT traits. There's the SANGUINE, the MELANCHOLY, the CHOLERIC and the PHLEGMATIC.

Now most people have a DOMINANT and a RECESSIVE temperament.

There are not too many pure sanguines. It'd be tough to live with that. There are some. They are so enthusiastic they'd just run you off the road.

It would be tough to live with pure temperament traits so there's a dominant and recessive usually and we try to discover what combination we are.

In discovering spiritual gifts, it's the same thing. There might

be a dominant recessive. There might be several spiritual gifts involved.

The one thing we have to accept is that we have one. Everybody does. It's finding out what that gift is.

v. 9 Now the fact that He went up, what is it except that also He went down into the lower regions of the earth.

“Now the fact that He went up, what is it except that also He went down into the lower regions of the earth.”

This of course was during the time that He died upon the Cross and experienced death.

v. 10 The One who went down Himself is also the One who went up, above all the heavens, in order that He might fill all things.

“The One who went down Himself is also the One who went up, above all the heavens, in order that He might fill all things.”

Here comes the listing of some of the gifts. This is a very brief list.

v. 11 And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers;

“And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers;”

Some Greek students make this just four gifts. They say:

1. “apostles,”
2. “prophets,”
3. “evangelists,
4. “pastor-teachers”—they make a hyphen there so that is the same gift. It is a pastor-teacher gift.

This is a great little prayer:

O Dear God there is within me
a deep intense longing
to use whatever gifts you’ve
entrusted to me. But Lord they
seem so small. There’s so little
I can do, so little I can say.

My timid child [the Lord answers]
is it just “that little”
that I ask from you.
Hear what I say:
“OBEY.”
(source unknown)

Just take the gift that God has given and function in the body

Raymond Stedman wrote a book called *Body Life* and he has demonstrated this greatly in his church. This is what he says about spiritual gifts:

(Body Life by Ray Stedman)

These spiritual gifts are like so many electrical appliances. What a variety of appliances are available today. There are electric toasters, toothbrushes, mixers, irons, razors, dishwashers and a host of others. I even saw an advertisement one day for an electric shoestring tier! I may be ready for that myself in a few more years.

But if you look carefully at these electrical appliances you will see that though they are vastly different in their function, there is one thing they all have in common: they all have a cord with a plug at the end. They are all designed to utilize the same power! No matter how different the appliance may be, the power required is the same for all. But it is not utilized to the same extent. Each appliance uses its own specific amount of power. Some are marked for 50 watts, some use 100 watts, some only 20 or less, while others may require 1500 or more. The degree of power that is required to operate the appliance is usually stamped on each.

At wedding showers young couples are often given many different electrical appliances. As they go through their gifts, noting the many varieties, they might well say, appliances were given to us according to the measure of the power

available.

The early Christians knew the secret of living by resurrection power and nothing else will account for the amazing effect they had upon the world of their day. They did not try to borrow power from the world, for they found they had all they could possibly need, available continuously from a risen, triumphant Lord. Thus Paul writes in Ephesians 3:20, 21, “Now to Him who is able to do infinitely more than we are asking for ourselves or imagining according to the power which is working in us.”

(source unknown)

Now why were these gifts given?

v. 12 For the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ;

“For the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ;”

Notice in that verse there are THREE “FOR’s”:

1. “FOR the equipping of the saints,”
2. “FOR the work of the ministry,” and
3. “FOR the building up of the body of Christ,”

Recognize there is ONE REASON for the giving of spiritual gifts:

“for the equipping of the saints.”

Now why do we need to be equipped?

We have TWO THINGS that we’re supposed to be doing now that we’re a member of the body of Christ.

We’re to be doing “the work of the ministry” and we’re to be “building up the body of Christ.”

Those spiritual gifts were given “for the equipping of the saints” to do TWO THINGS:

1. “for the work of the ministry”—that we’ve all been called to and
2. “for the building up of the body of Christ.”

That’s totally foreign to our thoughts and ideas about the church itself and how it functions.

Lovett in his commentary said:

The leaders do not function for their own sake but for the purpose of developing each saint as a minister to those around him. Each Christian is a minister to his own private world. Sadly we have shifted from this concept looking to Bible schools and seminaries to produce a clergy while the church program has been reduced to meetings. Today the saints listen

to sermons rather than minister. However, the Master's intention remains unchanged. It is still His plan for souls to be won outside the church, then brought in for instruction and fellowship. Each is to be trained in the use of his talents for reaching those around him as well as growing daily in the likeness of the Lord.

(source unknown)

That it is NOT for us to stage our little evangelistic Sunday night services for the sinners, to preach the gospel to them and have them come to know Christ. That's a far cry from the concepts that are described here.

This tells us that having been equipped, we're to go out to the places where we operate and do "the work of the ministry" in sharing Christ.

That somehow we could raise up a gigantic army that would serve as fingers into all of our major corporations.

It is coming together to be equipped, that we go out and carry on "the work of the ministry."

Read 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 and understand spiritual gifts in a way that is very convicting. It also solves a lot of confusion if we listen to these two E's.

Why did God give spiritual gifts? Spiritual gifts were given to always be pointed OUTWARD and never INWARD.

The focus of the gift is never upon the person who is the recipient of the gift.

Now once again we have to take issue with the charismatic phenomenon because the gift does not benefit the body or it's being used incorrectly.

The gift of teaching does not benefit the teacher, it benefits the student. That's teacher's gift and function in the body of Christ.

Now one of our gifts might benefit someone but it won't benefit us. It's a give-and-take proposition.

The TWO E's—we'll never go wrong if we'll just listen for a second. This summarizes the teaching on gifts.

1. Gifts were given to EDIFY the body of Christ.

That's the first E—EDIFICATION.

We use our gift to edify our brother and sister in Christ.

2. Our gift is used for EQUIPPING the saints.

There's our second E.

It's equipping others for the work of the ministry.

If we can share with our gift to help someone be more effective

in their ministry, then as a brother in the body of Christ we've helped them.

EDIFICATION and EQUIPPING are the two E's.

We don't get a spiritual gift for our own personal edification, as though we have something that somebody else doesn't have. We don't gloat over it and we don't try to get everybody else to have that same spiritual gift. That's where the division's coming. That's where the strife is coming. We have brothers and sisters fighting with each other over these silly things! Simply because we have a wrong interpretation on spiritual gifts—it's to edify! It's to equip! It's the giving out. It's not some special thing that we have that nobody else has.

Now the gifts have been given for this function.

v. 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

“until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

There's a FOUR-FOLD AIM right there in that verse as to why gifts were given.

1. “until we all attain to the unity of the faith.”

If we're functioning properly with our spiritual gifts, it leads to UNITY NOT DIVISION.

Secondly it says:

2. “and the knowledge of the Son of God.”

We get to know the Lord Jesus better through the use of spiritual gifts.

Third, till we all attain:

3. “to mature manhood.”

Moving men to maturity ought to be the motto of every person who is exercising his gift in the body of Christ.

We want to help each other grow up. We want to help others grow up in the Lord Jesus. We want to share together the gifts to make us more mature in Jesus Christ.

Then the fourth one is seen in the next phrase:

4. “until we all attain . . . to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Satan has a TWO-FOLD PROGRAM:

1. he wants to keep you out of the body of Christ.

Then when you get in the body of Christ:

2. he wants to keep us childish and carnal. Living by the flesh and living like a little baby.

He doesn't want this to happen so he's going to fight against it.

There's the four-fold aim of a functioning body in the thirteenth verse.

v. 14 In order that we no longer may be immature, being tossed here and there by the waves, and being carried here and there by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming;

“In order that we no longer may be immature, being tossed here and there by the waves, and being carried here and there by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming;”

We don't want to be immature. We don't want to be carried away by teachings and by trials in our lives—tossed to and fro, confused constantly “by the trickery of men” and by the “craftiness in deceitful scheming.”

v. 15 but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, Christ,

“but”—CONTRASTING that—“speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, Christ,”

There’s our KEY VERSE—this verse and verse 16—to the plan for a functioning body.

How do you “speak the truth in love”?

Some take that verse and, as a believer, they just set the saints straight.

It’s like “Well if I’m going to speak the truth in love, I’m just going to tell them how the cow eats the cabbage. I’m just going to be right up front. I’m going to put it to them.”

“Speaking the truth in love” is done in TWO WAYS:

by our LIFE and

by our LIP.

We “speak the truth in love” by the way we live. That is our greatest message. Then our lips only affirm what our life has already told them.

In the body of Christ, as we’re using our spiritual gift, we “speak the truth in love” first by our LIFE and then by our LIP.

People who watch our life will grow up into the Lord Jesus.

People who are watching our life will want to grow up into their head, even Christ.”

So the life and the lips, the shining and the sharing go together, growing up into the head.

v. 16 from whom all the body, being joined and knit together through every joint with which it is supplied, according to the power that corresponds to the measure of each individual part, is making for growth of the body, resulting in the building up of itself in love.

“from whom”—that is Christ—“all the body, being joined and knit together through every joint with which it is supplied, according to the power that corresponds to the measure of each individual part, is making for growth of the body, resulting in the building up of itself in love.”

As each part is careful to exercise his gift in the functioning body, we’re told it “is making for growth of the body, resulting in the building up of itself in love.”

We have fourteen lessons that come from our passage.

Lesson #1: It is vitally important that we learn to walk worthy of the calling to which we have been called.

Lesson #2: Our walk should be characterized by five things—lowliness, meekness, patience, bearing with one another in love, and making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

Lesson #3: Isaiah 32:17 “The fruit of righteousness will be peace. The effective righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.”

Lesson #4: Our great God is the one who is above all, and through all and in all.

Lesson #5: Spiritual gifts are for edifying and equipping the body of Christ.

Lesson #6: Everyone who receives Christ is given a grace gift to function in the body of Christ.

Lesson #7: Speaking the truth in love involves life and lip.

Lesson #8: Satan's desire is to keep us childish and carnal.

Lesson #9: Gifted individuals are given to the body of Christ for three reasons:

- a. for the equipping of the saints
- b. for the working of the ministry
- c. for the building up of the body of Christ

Lesson #10: Unity, maturity and fullness are God's plan and purpose for each of us as individuals in the body of Christ.

Lesson #11: Our prayer should be Psalm 25:4—5, “Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me for you are God my Savior and my hope is in you all day long.”

Lesson #12: Are we vulnerable by our immaturity to be tossed by every wind in doctrine, by the trickery of men, by their craftiness and deceitful scheming? Or are we rooted and grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His Word?

Lesson #13: Have you discovered what place the Lord has for you in His Body and how He has gifted you to minister to that body?

Lesson #14: Will you join Isaiah in saying, “Here am I, send me”?

Charlie Jones in his book *Life is Tremendous* says:

(Life is Tremendous by Charles Jones)

A lot of men never get to know the thrill of letting a job make them what they ought to be, because they don't start right. I've never seen a man who was a failure on his job and was good for anything else. I've been learning that a job is something God gives to me and says that I'm to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I've been called, that I'm to begin learning to do everything I can with all my heart.”

(source unknown)

The challenge of this study is to discover our gifts and to be functioning with all our hearts in the body of Christ, to be a member making for growth and helping to build up [the body of Christ] in love.

Father, we pray that as believers we could affirm one another as to what their spiritual gifts might be. Lord we would just pray that You would help us to understand it is a stewardship. Whether we've been given five gifts or two gifts or one gift. We know there is a day coming when we're going to be held accountable for that stewardship. And if we've buried that talent in the ground and we have to come and face You with that one talent, the text isn't very exciting as to Your response to that unfaithfulness. We pray that You'd help us to discover and to be found faithful functioning in the body of Christ to bring about this unity that we've talked about. To demonstrate in life the love of Christ, to affirm it with our lips to the glory and praise of God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 5:17 — *“On this account, do not be foolish but be understanding what the will of the Lord is.”*

STUDY NUMBER SEVEN – HIS PLAN FOR A FUNCTIONING BODY – EPHESIANS 4:1-16

KEY VERSES 4:15, 16

v. 1 I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, am begging you to walk worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

v. 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

v. 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

v. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling,

v. 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

v. 6 one God and Father of all, the One who is above all, and through all, and in all.

v. 7 But to each one of us there was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

v. 8 Therefore, it is said when He went up on high, He led away captive those taken captive, and gave gifts to men.

v. 9 Now the fact that He went up, what is it except that also He went down into the lower regions of the earth.

v. 10 The One who went down Himself is also the One who went up, above all the heavens, in order that He might fill all things.

v. 11 And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers;

v. 12 For the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ;

NOTES

NOTES

v. 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

v. 14 In order that we no longer may be immature, being tossed here and there by the waves, and being carried here and there by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming;

v. 15 but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, Christ,

v. 16 from whom all the body, being joined and knit together through every joint with which it is supplied, according to the power that corresponds to the measure of each individual part, is making for growth of the body, resulting in the building up of itself in love.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Ephesians 4:1-16 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What is Paul begging of them according to verse 1?

3. Define a worthy walk according to verses 2 & 3.

4. Outline the facets of oneness in verses 4—6.

5. Why did the Lord give spiritual gifts according to verse 12?
Do you know what your gift is?

6. What is the goal that Paul outlines in verse 13?

7. Outline what happens when we fail to grow according to verse 14?

8. Describe the growing process according to verses 15 & 16.

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: It is vitally important that we learn to walk worthy of the calling to which we have been called.

LESSON #2: Our walk should be characterized by five things—lowliness, meekness, patience, bearing with one another in love, and making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

LESSON #3: Isaiah 32:17 “The fruit of righteousness will be peace. The effective righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.”

LESSON #4: Our great God is the one who is above all, and through all and in all.

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LESSON #5: Spiritual gifts are for edifying and equipping the body of Christ.

LESSON #6: Everyone who receives Christ is given a grace gift to function in the body of Christ.

LESSON #7: Speaking the truth in love involves life and lip.

LESSON #8: Satan's desire is to keep us childish and carnal.

LESSON #9: Gifted individuals are given to the body of Christ for three reasons:

- a. for the equipping of the saints
- b. for the working of the ministry
- c. for the building up of the body of Christ

LESSON #10: Unity, maturity and fullness are God's plan and purpose for each of us as individuals in the body of Christ.

LESSON #11: Our prayer should be Psalm 25:4—5, "Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me for you are God my Savior and my hope is in you all day long."

LESSON #12: Are we vulnerable by our immaturity to be tossed by every wind in doctrine, by the trickery of men, by their craftiness and deceitful scheming? Or are we rooted and grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His Word?

LESSON #13: Have you discovered what place the Lord has for you in His Body and how He has gifted you to minister to that body?

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