

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

SESSION 6

Letter to the Ephesians: Ephesians 4 - **LEADERS GUIDE**

ICE BREAKER

Start off with an ice breaker to get everyone warmed up.

WELCOME

Today, we're going to continue our study in Ephesians by picking up in **chapter 4**. In this chapter, Paul shifts the focus from what Jesus has done for believers to how these truths should shape our daily lives. Previously, Paul emphasized salvation, blessing, and redemption for all believers, Jew and Gentile. But now, he urges us to live in a way that reflects God's work in us, impacting every aspect of our lives [private & public]. This includes our roles as spouses, parents, children, and workers, as well as our interactions with other believers and our response to spiritual challenges. Paul's message is clear: we're called to live in a manner that showcases the transformative power of God's love and grace in our lives.

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 4:1**

EPHESIANS 4:1

When we really understand how much God did for us – **WHEN WE ARE TRULY ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHO WE ARE NOW THROUGH CHRIST** – it should humble us and empower us to “walk in a manner **WORTHY** of the calling to which you have been called.” We will naturally want to serve and obey Him out of gratitude.

Paul isn't telling us to “walk worthy” *SO THAT* God **will love** us. No, we “walk worthy,” *BECAUSE* He **showed us love** – while we were sinners. To “walk worthy,” is a heart of **gratitude** – not an attempt to **earn** His affection.

QUESTIONS

After reading **verse 1**, how can this verse be read as a kind of purpose statement for the second half of the letter?

How would it be difficult to read the and obey the commands of **chapters 4-6**, without understanding the context/ the foundation of **chapters 1-3**?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 4:2-6**

EPHESIANS 4:2-6

Paul then goes on to tell the church what this “worthy walk” looks like. Those who are regenerate and have confessed Jesus Christ as Savior walk humbly, and gentle, and patient. They bear one another in love and are eager to maintain unity.

We maintain unity *[not create it]* because of what we share – the bond of peace through Jesus Christ. In Jesus, we share one **body**, one **Spirit**, one **hope** of our calling, one **Lord**, one **faith**, one **baptism**, and one **Father**. Each of these common areas is **GREATER** than any potential church conflict.

QUESTIONS

Why do conflicts happen among Christians within the church?

According to Paul, should these conflicts be expected?

What should be the difference in church conflicts and worldly conflicts?

Why is unity a trait that the local church should pursue?

Describe a time when you were a part of a group, a team or a staff that had a strong sense of unity and purpose.

- What were some of the characteristics of the group that led to a sense of unity and purpose?

EPHESIANS 4:7-16

We all have **grace** given to us according to the measure of Jesus’ gift. Grace is basis for God’s distribution of spiritual gifts through His church. This means that we cannot earn our gift and we don’t deserve our gift. It was given to us for this purpose – to give glory to God and so that the church might be **equipped**, AND so that the body of Christ would be **strengthened**.

This seems a little backward for most of us. In America, we are accustomed to hiring and paying a staff to do the work of the church. But Paul teaches us that the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, have one purpose - to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Knowing – through Christ - each part [was] working properly, [and the] body [grew] so that it builds itself up in love.

QUESTIONS

Deep-ish question – in Ephesians 4:7-12, what is the relationship between the ascension of Jesus and His distribution of gifts to the church? [They were given by Jesus, by grace and they were given to equip the saints – the church – for ministry, AND for building up the body of Christ. IN the variety of gifts that Jesus is giving – of Himself – He is sharing more of Himself than can be contained in any one person.]

How do we – the church – often view these gifts? *[They belong only to the “professionals,” the paid staff.]*

What would happen in the church – with the mission of the church – if the church viewed these gifts as an opportunity to contribute to “[build] up the body of Christ”?

In **verses 13-16**, which of the characteristics of spiritual maturity impacted you the most?

Why is it important for every part of the “body” to be working properly?

What does this metaphor imply about the way we should think about the church?

Reflection question: Do you pray for the health AND unity of First Baptist Church?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 3:17-24**

EPHESIANS 4:17-24

Instead of walking in those past sins, Paul again reminds them to “walk in the manner worthy of their calling...to put off the old self...and be renewed in the spirit of their minds.” Paul’s command presents us with an illustrate that is very similar to the idea of changing your clothes – to take off the dirty clothes and put on clean clothes. The idea is to “change into” a different kind of **self** – one that has been transformed by Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS

Why are bad habits – especially habits formed over a long period of time – so difficult to break?

What were some of the Gentiles “bad habits” that Paul detailed in **verse 19?** *[They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity]*

In **Ephesians 4:20-21, what does Paul assume about the Ephesian Christians?** *[that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus]*

- Do you think we often make the same assumptions in the church today?
- If so, then what should be the message to the church today? *[verses 22-24]*

How does Paul explain the characteristics of the “new self” in **verse 24?**

- Does it happen by “trying harder”? *[Nope – by becoming a new creation!]*

In **Colossians 3:5-17, Paul uses the same language of “putting on” and “putting off.” Have someone in your group read those verses.**

- What specific qualities and actions does Paul list in **Colossians 3:5-17**?
- Do they add anything to what Paul was teaching in **Ephesians 4**?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 4:25-32**

EPHESIANS 4:17-24

Paul closes on **chapter 4** with a summary of how the church and the Christian community should act toward one another: be honest; control our emotions; make sure our speech is productive; and maintain a spirit of kindness, forgiveness, and compassion toward others. When we show mercy, kindness, and forgiveness to others – as God has shown us – we walk in the manner worthy of our calling. If we treat others as God treats us, we fulfill everything Paul instructed us to do in **chapter 4**.

QUESTIONS

In **Ephesians 4:26**, how does Paul say that believers should deal with anger?

Based on **verse 27**, in what way might Christians give the devil an “opportunity” based on feelings/ anger we have toward others?

Based on your experiences, what are some of the sinful attitudes/ habits that seem to result in a friendship being destroyed?

- Why do these attitudes/ habits have such a damaging effect?

Why should the forgiveness of others **CLEARLY** characterize a person who has truly met Jesus Christ? *[we would be reflecting Christ and the mercy & grace He showed to us]*

- In many cases, what makes forgiving others so difficult?
- **Reflection Question** - Do you need to forgive anyone?

CONCLUSION

Was there anything that stood out to you from **Ephesians 4**?

- Was there an “aha moment” for you?

Outline for how we will study Ephesians:

- **April 21st: Ephesians 5–6:9** – *In regeneration, walk in love toward one another.*
- **April 28th: Ephesians 6:10-24** – *Strength through the whole armor of God.*
- **May 5th: Hangout Night or Content Make-Up**