



UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

Fully Alive: Ephesians

May 4-10

Ephesians 4:1-16

Things to Know

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Studying God's Word *In Community*

Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.

Sermon Recap

Ephesians 4:1-16 calls us to live in a way that reflects the calling we have received in Christ. This means walking in humility, guarding unity, and using the gifts God has given us to build up the church. We are not saved to sit on the sidelines, but to grow into maturity and help others do the same. When each person plays their part, the body of Christ becomes stronger, more unified, and a clearer picture of Jesus to the world.

Read

Read Ephesians 4:1-16 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
 - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
 - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
 - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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Scripture

Ephesians 4:1-16

Unity in the Body of Christ

[1] I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, [3] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. [4] There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—[5] one Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6] one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. [7] But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. [8] Therefore it says,

“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,

and he gave gifts to men.’

[9] (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? [10] He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) [11] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, [13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14] so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

[15] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (ESV)

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Ephesians 4:1-16.

Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means recognizing that unity and growth are part of our witness to the world. Ephesians 4 shows us that when the body of Christ is healthy (marked by humility, love, and truth) it reflects Jesus in a powerful way. As a group, this means we commit to protecting unity, using our gifts to serve one another, and helping each other grow in Christ. We don't compete or compare; we contribute. And as each person plays their part, the group becomes a place where people are equipped, encouraged, and sent out to live on mission, showing the world what it looks like to follow Jesus together.

How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?

Optional Breakout Questions

Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:

1. How did you feed yourself?
 - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
 - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
 - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

Leader Resources - May 4-10

Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 4:1-16

1. Session Overview

Ephesians 4 marks a major shift in Paul's letter. The shift moves from what God has done to how we are now called to live. After laying out the riches of the gospel in chapters 1–3, Paul now calls believers to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” they have received. This calling is not about earning salvation, but about living in light of it. The Christian life is a response to grace, not a means to achieve it.

At the center of this passage is unity within the body of Christ. Paul emphasizes that there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. This unity is not something we create—it is something we protect. At the same time, Christ has given each believer unique gifts to contribute to the growth of the church. These gifts are not for personal recognition, but for the building up of the body so that it matures into the likeness of Christ. When each part does its work, the church grows in truth, love, and stability, becoming a clear reflection of Jesus to the world.

2. Opening

Prayer:

Father, help us to live in a way that reflects the calling You've given us. Teach us to walk in humility and dependence on You.

Icebreaker question:

Ask:

“What do you think it means to “live a life worthy of your calling” as a follower of Jesus?”

3. Scripture Reading

Have someone read Ephesians 4:1-16 out loud.

4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

In verse 1, Paul urges believers to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” they have received, marking a shift from theology to application. This calling is rooted in everything God has already done in Christ, meaning our lives are now meant to reflect that reality. Paul immediately describes what this kind of life looks like—with humility, gentleness, patience, and a willingness to bear with one another in love. These are not optional traits, but essential marks of a gospel-shaped life. They are especially important because they protect the unity of the church, which Paul calls believers to eagerly maintain. Unity is not something we manufacture; it is something Christ has already established, and we are called to guard it through the way we live and relate to one another.

In verses 4-10, Paul reinforces this unity by highlighting the oneness that defines the church. The Church is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father. This shared foundation unites believers across every difference. Yet within this unity, there is also diversity, as Christ has given grace in different measures to each believer. These gifts are not random or self-assigned; they are given by Christ according to His purpose. Paul points to Christ’s authority and victory, reminding us that the same One who descended also ascended and now fills all things, distributing gifts to His people for the good of the body.

In verses 11-16, Paul explains the purpose of these gifts: to equip the saints for the work of ministry and to build up the body of Christ. Leaders are not given to do all the work, but to prepare God’s people to serve. The goal is maturity—growing into unity of faith, deeper knowledge of Christ, and stability that is not easily swayed by false teaching. As believers grow, they are called to speak the truth in love, reflecting both clarity and compassion. When each member of the body uses their gifts faithfully, the church grows and builds itself up in love. This is what it looks like to “walk worthy”—a life marked by unity, service, and spiritual growth that ultimately points to Christ.

5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 4:1-16?
2. What stands out to you about what it means to “walk worthy” of your calling?
3. Why do you think humility, gentleness, and patience are so important for unity?
4. How can we actively “guard” unity in the church rather than unintentionally harm it?
5. What gifts or strengths has God given you that could help build up others?
6. What does it look like to “speak the truth in love” in real, everyday situations?

6. Application

Identify one way you can contribute to the unity and growth of the church this week—whether that’s encouraging someone, serving in a tangible way, or stepping into a role where your gifts can be used to build others up.

7. Closing Prayer

Prayer:

“Father, build Your church through us. Help us to reflect Jesus in the way we live, love, and serve together. Amen.”

8. Memory Verse

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,”

Ephesians 4:1

