

**Bible Study Packet
Week 7**



**Pastor Marlon McDuffie
Lead Pastor**

Ephesians 4:1-16

Unity Lives Out

Commands/Calling (verse 1) Suggests a high and honorable state.

1. Paul began chapter 4 with the words "As a prisoner for the Lord, beg you... What does 4:1 lead you to expect in chapters 4-6?"
2. From what you learned in chapters 1-3, what do you think Paul wants you to remember about the "calling" we have received?
3. Read the character qualities Paul urges us to take on in 4:2. How can these traits help us fulfill the command in 4:3?

As you consider the meanings of the traits and attitudes Paul described, note that Paul urged these traits and attitudes with full certainty that his audience had the power to live up to his standard. (see

3:16-21) Also note that he rarely urged them to do certain things, but usually to *be* a certain way.

Humble (verse 2; KJV: "lowliness"). Willing to take little honor or to give higher place to another. In pagan eyes, humility suggested the cringing of a slave or lack of self-respect. (Mark 10:42-44; Luke 14:7-11; John 13:3-14; Romans 12:3-10; 1 Peter 5:5-6.)

Gentle (verse 2; KJV: "meekness"). Having no one to turn to except God or a benevolent king, so that one accepts His treatment without resistance or bitterness. Gentleness also was no virtue to the Greeks, who believed in using might for right, but Judaism honored Moses as meek. (See Numbers 12:3; Matthew 5:5.)

Patient (verse 2; KJV: "longsuffering"). "Having a wide...soul" so that one can bear with the burdensome neighbor; "self-restraint in the face of provocation." (See Matthew 18:21-35; Romans 12:19-21.)

4.a. What is the central, unifying point of Paul's declaration in Ephesians 4:4-6?

b. What light does this declaration shed on verses 1-3, if at all?

Why Christians Differ

Having emphasized the unity among believers, Paul seems to move in verses 7 through 16 to explain how and why Christians differ.

When he ascended... to his people (verse 8). Compare to Psalm 68:18. The Jews in Psalm 68 in their synagogues on Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks), the day on which they thanked God for His providence of all goods under the terms of the covenant. This psalm exalts God as a conqueror returning to His capitol in triumph.

The last line of verse 18 reads in Hebrew, "you received gifts from men." Most commentators think that Paul either himself inverted the words to stress that Christ is much more the giver than the receiver of gifts or was quoting a Christian hymn which had changed the psalm to make the same point.

Descended (verse 9). Some believe Paul meant that Christ descended to the underworld "to preach the gospel to those who had died before His coming." Others think he meant that Christ descended to the lowest state in the universe, not just living on earth as human, but even going down to death and the place of death as a human. Compare Philippians 2:8.

- 5.a. What do you think is the "special gift" Christ has given to each believer? (see verse 7) Also read Ephesians 4:12; Romans 12:4-6

b. Why do you think Paul immediately followed this statement with the explanations in Ephesians 4:8-9?

Apostles, ...prophets, ...evangelists, ...pastors and teachers (verse 11). All "Ministers of the Word." An "evangelist" was a missionary of lower authority than an apostle, who brought the gospel to new regions, A "pastor" (literally translated as "shepherd") was probably a local overseer of a church, also called a "bishop."

6. According to verses 11-13, what else has Christ given us, and for what purpose?

7. What is our unity in verse 13, and what are some practical implications for your own life?

Mature (verse 13). Literally. "a mature man." Suggests not just individual Christian is to be mature, but also that God's goal is to knit the individuals together into "one new man" (2:15) Christ.

8. What are the chief signs of spiritual maturity (see verses 13-15) and immaturity (see verse 14) in faith?

Maturity

Immaturity

9.a. What do you think it means to speak the truth in love (see verse 15)?

b. Can you offer an example of speaking the truth that is **not** done in love?

10. Look again at Paul's metaphor (image, picture, analogy) for the church in verses 15-16. What does this description suggest to you about:

Your own spiritual growth?

The collective growth of all believers in the body of Christ?

11. State what you think is the main teaching of 4:1-16.

12. List any questions you have about 4:1-16.