



**Sunday September 18, 2016**  
**Ephesians 4:1-16 : Grow into maturity**

**Ephesians 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,**

In chapter 1:18 Paul prayed for them "that you may know what is the hope of His calling".

Now that we know something of what God has called each of us to as believers in Christ, Paul urges them to walk in a manner that is appropriate.

beseech meaning encourage, lovingly exhort

walk meaning to "tread all around", where ever you go

worthy meaning, appropriately, as is fitting, live the way God's people should live

**Ephesians 4:2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,**  
**Ephesians 4:3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

Here is how to walk in a manner worthy of what God has called us to. Walk in:

- ✓ lowliness = humility of mind, humbleness,
- ✓ gentleness, be gentle (not harsh, not rude, not imposing, not domineering)
- ✓ longsuffering = patience
- ✓ bearing with one another in love
- ✓ endeavoring to keep unity which the Holy Spirit brings by walking in peace. This means that we choose to do what promotes peace, in the middle of difficult situations.

**Ephesians 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;**

**Ephesians 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;**

**Ephesians 4:6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

Why is it that we can walk in the manner outline above (in humility, gentleness, patience, love, unity and peace) with one another?

Once we understand that we all have so much in common, there really is no need for anything that would divide us, cause strife, competition, want to make one feel better than the other, etc. Consider all that we have in common (Paul lists 7 things):



1. one body : We all belong to the same Body of Christ
2. one Spirit : We all have the same Holy Spirit in us
3. one hope of our calling : We have all been called to the same hope in Christ
4. one Lord : We all have the same Lord and serve the same Lord
5. one faith : We have one common faith in the Lord Jesus
6. one baptism : We have all been baptized in one baptism (water baptism). [Just an FYI: Now we know that there are three baptisms (Hebrews 6:2 (i)water baptism Matthew 28:19, (ii)Holy Spirit baptism Matthew 3:11,Acts 1:5, and (iii)being baptized into Christ's body 1 Corinthians 12:13) ]
7. one God and Father : We all belong to the same God who is Father to all of us, who really is the focus of everything. He is above all, through all and in all of us.

*Given that we have so much in common (as "one"), it should be easy to walk in humility, gentleness, patience, love, unity and peace with one another. Truly, it is when we do not live conscious of these realities that we get into strife, build walls and walk in a manner that is "unworthy" of the Lord who has called all of us.*

**Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

Now Paul begins to talk about our individual calling and gifting.

As a point of contrast notice in 4:7 he talks about what is given to "**each one**", but in 4:11 he talks about what is given to "**some**".

Each of us has "grace" and "gifts" given to us by the Lord Jesus. This is the grace that has to do with our individual gifting and calling.

**The "grace" you have is related to the "gifts"** that have been given to you. [Now these are not talking about the nine gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 which are common gifts given to all believers]. These are what we will call "grace gifts", gifts that are connected to your "area of grace" or function or ministry in the Body of Christ. We find Paul describing more of this in Romans 12:4-8.

Over in Romans 12:4-6 *"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: .. "* This is the same as what we read in Ephesians 4:7.

**So each of us has "grace" and "gift" in relation to our function** (or ministry, or areas of service) that God has for us.



Now what does "the measure of Christ's gift" in Ephesians 4:7 mean?

**There are different "measures" of the same gift.**

For example: teaching the Word.

Both Joyce Meyer and some one here can teach the Word.

But there is a huge difference in the measure of the same teaching gift in scope, in impact, in the anointing that is released, etc.

The grace you have is not only **related to**, but also **in proportion to** the measure of the gifts given to you to fulfill your function.

However, remember in the Kingdom of God **we can all grow (increase) in our grace, gifting and function.** In order to grow or increase in the Kingdom, God looks at things like:

- ✓ faithfulness : be faithful in little things (Matthew 25:21,29)
- ✓ proper stewardship : regularly use, care for, nurture and guard your gift and grace (2 Timothy 1:6, 1 Peter 4:10)
- ✓ submission : use it well when working under God-appointed leadership (Ephesians 5:21, Luke 16:12)
- ✓ glorifying God : use it to glorify God and not to promote self (1 Corinthians 10:31)

**Ephesians 4:8 Therefore He says: "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, AND GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."**

**Ephesians 4:9 (Now this, "HE ASCENDED"--what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?)**

**Ephesians 4:10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)**

Paul begins to tell us that the Lord Jesus when He ascended back to heaven, from that time on, began dispensing gifts to men. But then he interweaves this with another picture of a triumphant procession of liberated captives.

While we don't want to be too dogmatic about these details, here is what we can piece together from Scripture, which Paul seems to be referring to during Christ's death, resurrection and ascension:

"Hell" in Greek is "hadēs", "the unseen world," is the place of unsaved human spirits between death and resurrection. "Hades" is the equivalent of the Old Testament "sheol." Hades before the ascension of Christ had two compartments, one compartment for the righteous and one for the unrighteous (lost) (Luke 16:19-31, Luke 23:43). The compartment for the righteous (the Old Testament saints) was called "paradise" or "Abraham's bosom". The compartment for the lost was a place of torment and pain.



People in Hades in both compartments were conscious, could exercise their faculties, memory, emotions, etc. When Jesus died he went to paradise, as he had mentioned to the thief who died next to him.

The "paradise" compartment of Hades has since been shifted to heaven with the ascension of Christ. The unsaved dead still go to the lost torment compartment of Hades below. At the judgment of the great white throne, Hades will give them up, they will be judged, and will pass into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-14). Paul was "caught up to the third heaven. . .into paradise" (2 Corinthians 12:1-4). Paradise, therefore, is now in the immediate presence of God. (See also Revelation 2:7) Hence we infer that Ephesians 4:8-10 indicates when this change in location of paradise happened. "When he ascended up on high he led a multitude of captives." It also states that he first "descended first into the lower parts of the earth," that is, the paradise division of Hades. During the present church-age the saved who die are "absent from the body, at home with the Lord."

As the Lord took the Old Testament saints with him to heaven, He also give gifts to men, that is to the Church.

It is important to note that the word "men" is gender neutral.

**Ephesians 4:8,11**  
8...He gave gifts unto men (anthropos).

It is the same word used in Matthew 4:4

**Matthew 4:4**  
4 "Man (anthropos) shall not live by bread alone..."

The Greek "*anthropos*", is gender neutral and means "a human being, whether male or female. Paul does not use the Greek word for man "*aner*", which is totally masculine, but the gender neutral word "*anthropos*".

So the gifts that Paul is going to tell us about is for both men and women.

**Ephesians 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,**

"some" has two implications:

1, this could be both men and women as we saw from vs 8



2, that these next five gifts mentioned are given by Christ to specific individuals, which is different from what we say earlier in 4:7, where Christ has given grace and gifts to each one.

Paul then lists what we call the **five-fold ministry** offices, or ministry gifts, or ministry functions.

**still operative** : All the five offices are still in the Church. Nowhere in Scripture is there any indication that these offices have been withdrawn from functioning in the Church.

[See page 86, in the "Revivals, Visitations and Moves of God" publication from APC]

During the Dark Ages (AD 400 - 1400) these functions became non-existent for the most part. As reformation and revivals progressed, we see people beginning to function in these ministry offices.

In the 20th Century, as more and more people began to operate in these ministry areas, as understanding of these ministry functions and their acceptance was established, these ministry offices became fully restored to the Church.

Here is a very brief, one line description of each office:

- ✓ **The evangelist** is primarily a preacher of the Gospel and winning souls. Starting in the **1950s** and on we see God restoring the office (function/ministry) of the Evangelist.
- ✓ **The teacher** teaches the Word to establish them in God's truth. We see the office of the teacher emerge in the **1960s**
- ✓ **The pastor** shepherds God's people establishing and overseeing a family of believers in a local church. The office of the pastor restored in the **1970s**
- ✓ **The prophet** primarily hears from God and delivers a now Word from God. We see this ministry function fully restored in the decade of the **1980s**
- ✓ **The apostle** is a pioneer leading the way for Kingdom advancement into new areas/territories geographically or otherwise. We see this ministry function fully restored in the decade of the **1990s**

Some people can operate in more than one area. Example: Paul was an apostle, prophet, teacher, evangelist and also served as pastor at various points during his ministry.

1 Corinthians 12:28 also identifies these five ministry functions.



**Ephesians 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,**

*for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry*

The five-fold offices exist to equip the saints so that the saints can do the work of the ministry.

Not many people understand this. Many in the five-fold offices want to do all the ministry and they want the saints to help them expand their ministry.

Actually the five-fold offices exist to serve, equip, impart, train and release the saints into the work of the ministry.

*for the edifying of the body of Christ*

As the saints are equipped they will serve towards the building up of the body of Christ.

Every ministry office imparts and equips people in their specific area. Every gift reproduces itself in believers, just as every seed reproduces after its own kind.

Very briefly:

The apostle will develop the apostolic in people, moving them to be pioneers.

The prophet will develop the prophetic in people, tuning them to hear from God.

The pastor will develop people to love, care and nurture each other.

The teacher will develop people in God's truth establishing them in the whole counsel of God.

The evangelist will impart passion for souls and get people to be soul winners.

In a local church context we need to equip and encourage God's people in all of these five areas, by encouraging them to receive from such ministries.

**Ephesians 4:13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;**

So the five-fold ministry will continue to function to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and building up of the Body ....till.....

*till....we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God*

As we saw earlier in **4:4-6** there are 7 areas where we can all find unity concerning the faith, and we can all find unity in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

This is where the Church is presently. People coming to a place of unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. While this seems impossible, God is able to do this and bring His Church to this place.



*till we all come .....to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;*

the word 'perfect' simply means mature, fully grown  
the full measure of maturity if Christ Himself.

To be mature means to be Christlike  
God wants all of us to come to that place of maturity - to Christlikeness

**Ephesians 4:14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,**

"children" are easily swayed by every "wind of teaching" that blows through, but  
"mature" people discern and are not easily carried away by every wind of teaching.

**Ephesians 4:15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--**

**Ephesians 4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

God calls us to: speak the truth in love, grow up in all things to be like Christ

Notice in vs 16: "every joint supplies", "every part does its share"

the whole body is from Christ, and is also joined and knit together (again talking about unity), **by what every joint supplies**....meaning that all of us are involved in preserving the unity that Christ gives to His Body

according to the energy that comes from **every part doing its share**

We all contribute to the "effective working" or energy, strength of the Body

Remember **4:7** every one has been given grace and gift to fulfill their function.

As every joint and every part does its share, it will result in the growth of the Body in love. At APC we emphasize that every believer is a minister since we believe all of us have something to contribute to the building up of the Church.