



Ephesians 4 v 1-16

Living a life worthy of the calling we have received – leader's version

For an hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – ask everyone how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

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How should being a Christian affect our day to day lives?

What does the passage say and mean?

Read Ephesians 4 v 1-16

*1. In v1, what do you think 'the calling you have received' means?

The universal calling on believers refers to glorifying God in our day-to-day lives, being a witness for him, 3 v 10.

*2. Paul is in prison because of his calling – he refused to stop living for Jesus. What is strange about what Paul encourages the Ephesians to do in v1?

He encourages them to do the very thing that got him sent to prison – to live for Christ and share the gospel! (NB the calling doesn't refer to his vocation, it's the calling common to all believers – to live for Christ)

3. **STICKERS** Why do you think Paul wants the Ephesian Christians to live in a way that will put them in significant danger of arrest?

God's authority is the highest authority. It is more important that we live to please God than men.

*4. **SHOUT-OUT** Read v2-3. What should a life worthy of our calling look like? How do these qualities help us to keep the unity of the Spirit?

Unpack each word on the flip-chart, looking at what it means to live this way.

Humility – to give respect instead of demanding it. Recognising the worth and value of other people. (It doesn't mean you are a doormat or put yourself down).

Gentleness – controlling your temper (internally as well as in your actions), being open to others, not demanding your rights.

Patience – bearing with one another in love, however much you are irritated (but not being a doormat or allowing bad behaviour to continue)

Bearing with one another – tolerating each other, especially when it's difficult!

Love – the sum of the other 4! To put others before yourself

If we can demonstrate these qualities, we will find that we are living in unity.

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Do you find it easy to live in the way Paul describes in v2? Which characteristic do you most need God to help you with?

Help the group to think through practical ways that they can work on this, and remind them to ask God for help!

***5. What is the unity of the Spirit? (v3)**

All Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. In this we are united and held together and have a common belonging and purpose. Through Christ's death we are at peace with God and through the Holy Spirit we can be at peace with each other.

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If you were to treat everyone with respect, what would it look like on the wing? Would it change any relationships?

Lay down a gentle challenge to the group to think about ways in which they could start to respect people, including prison staff.

Questions 6-8 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group to work on them in pairs.

***6. SDL** Why is it important for the unity of the church that we each live a life worthy of our calling?

If we live selfishly, unity is destroyed because we are not focussing on the community. Our behaviour can divide us even though our theology unites us. But, if everyone's eyes are fixed on Christ, we will work together for His glory, not our own.

***7. SDL** Read v3-6. What should Christians be united about?

One God and one gospel. These are non-negotiable. Things like the order of a service, the style of songs used, what the leader is wearing etc. should not divide us.

*8. **SDL** Read v4-6. What is the Bible's answer when someone says that all religions point to the same God?

It is not true to say that all religions point to God, although people may claim it to be so. Only Jesus points to God. Other religions may think they point to God, but they don't because they don't point to Jesus as the way to God, even if they share some parts of Scripture with Christians (John 14 v 6).

Other verses include:

Mark 12 v 32 'God is one and there is no other but him'.

Romans 3 v 30 'since there is only one God'

Eph 2 v 8-9, 'by grace you have been saved, not by works' - no other religion has salvation by grace.

John 17 v 3 - 'now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent'.

John 14 v 6 'I am the way, the truth and the life'. Jesus is the only way to God.

Heb 9 v 28 'Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people'

9. Read v7. Grace means 'a gift we don't deserve'. What is God's gift of grace to us?

Forgiveness of our sins through Jesus' death on the cross. Because of this, our broken relationship with God has been mended and we know we have eternal life.

10. **SHOUT-OUT** The Holy Spirit gives gifts (abilities) to all Christians. Some are listed in v11 (others are mentioned elsewhere). What gifts are mentioned here?

Write the answers on the flip-chart.

Apostleship (people who saw the risen Jesus and were inspired to write the New Testament and planted / led the early church), prophets (people who spoke the inspired word of God = messengers of His direct revelation), evangelists, pastors, teachers.

(There are no apostles or prophets today, in the primary sense of the passage (see Stott 2008, p160-162)).

11. Why does God give these gifts / abilities? (v12)

To equip God's people (the church) for works of service, so the body of Christ may be built up.

Help the group to understand that gifts of the Holy Spirit are not for our own benefit, but for the benefit of others, to build up the church.

12. Why are God's people equipped for works of service? (v12)

Individuals are equipped so that the whole body of Christ may be built up.

13. What is the ultimate goal of this? (v13)

For us to be united as mature Christians.

***14. Read v14-15. What is spiritual maturity and why should we seek it?**

Knowing the truth about God and standing firm in it. Recognising false teaching and not being swayed or thrown off course by it.

Not from the passage, but worth expanding the discussion to include: growing in our relationship to God and our understanding of Him and His word, becoming more dependent on Him (spiritual maturity is growing in dependence on God, not becoming independent of Him!), living our whole life in reference to God, etc..

***15. How does someone become spiritually mature and why does this matter? (v13)**

Remember v12, the church is equipped with pastors, evangelists, teachers etc to help us in this journey to maturity – we're not on our own.

*Make two columns on the flip-chart, thinking about the **process** (prayer, Bible study, wise counsel, 1 to 1 mentoring, i.e. not just gaining academic knowledge of the Bible etc.), and the **evidence** of maturity (changed behaviour, changed attitudes, a conscious struggle against sin etc.).*

It matters that we mature in our faith 1. to attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (probably both individually and corporately) – 'the maturity of the perfectly balanced character of Christ' (NIV Study Bible) and 2. so we can discern wrong teaching and not be wobbled by it.

16. Read v15-16. How does the church grow in maturity?

Only through truth (Jesus) and love.

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Are there opportunities to grow in maturity in faith in this prison that you are not taking? What needs to happen?

Bible study groups, daily reading notes, personal Bible reading, praying, going to chapel services etc.

Check out – ask everyone how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



Ephesians 4 v 1-16

Living a life worthy of the calling we have received

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3. Why do you think Paul wants the Ephesian Christians to live in a way that will put them in significant danger of arrest?
4. Read v2-3. What should a life worthy of our calling look like? How do these qualities help us to keep the unity of the Spirit?

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Do you find it easy to live in the way Paul describes in v2? Which characteristic do you most need God to help you with?

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11. Why does God give these gifts / abilities? (v12)

12. Why are God's people equipped for works of service? (v12)

13. What is the ultimate goal of this? (v13)

14. Read v14-15. What is spiritual maturity and why should we seek it?

15. How does someone become spiritually mature and why does this matter? (v13)

16. Read v15-16. How does the church grow in maturity?

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