

Book	Ephesian – Study 11
Topic	How The Church Works
Reference	Ephesians 4:1-10
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This part of the epistle talks about the glory and grace of God. This talks about how it restored peace in the church. These are the practical ramifications of what he has basically told us about our inheritance in Christ and the whole thing will be living and working out spiritual transformation in a church.

Here we are going to look at living and working out spiritual transformation in a church. So this is the first prayer request and the prayer request is for you to be filled with all the fullness of God. So basically spiritual transformation that he will give me power to be like Jesus, that give you power to understand the experience to grasp his love. That's what he wants us to do, that's the prayer. Now the practical outworking would be here, 1-13

Ephesians 4:1-13 (ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner ...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,

Again the same language, fullness of God, full of Christ.

Eph 3:19b ..that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

This part isn't a prayer, this part is actually action. So on one hand, you should be at home, praying that God will give you power to be like Jesus, you should be at home asking give you power to understand and grasp his love inside the church, but today we are going to learn about that, living it out in our lives. So basically living in a manner that maintains unity using our diversity to actually build up unity. So transformed to fullness of Christ. We have few sections here.

- Motivation
- Behavior
- Foundation
- Expression of unity
- Diversity direction

So this is living in a manner that maintains unity. So unity is extremely important. In the eyes of Paul and everything works through the church

A. LIVING IN A MANNER THAT MAINTAINS UNITY

a. Motivation

Ephesians 4:1-6 (ESV) 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

Whenever you look at therefore, you look at why it is therefore, so you look backwards. What the grace of God has achieved for you in chapter 1-3; God's blessing, every spiritual blessing, election, predestination, sealing of Holy Spirit, inheritance, spiritual rebirth, new humanity, everything which God has given you. Because of that then we are to live.

How we are to live?

In unity, in holiness, in love, in light and in wisdom. So that is how the epistle make sense. It doesn't tell you to live in unity out of the blue. He tells it because of what he has given to you.

This is the practical outworking of the prayer. Prayer for power to be like Jesus, prayer to experience of His love with the saints. This is the practical outworking of the fullness of God.

b. Behaviour Consistent with Calling

Ephesians 4:1 (ESV)walk in a manner worthy of the calling

God choose us before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him. He predestined us as sons. God already planned and choose you that you be like Him. Holiness is an attribute of God. He wants you to be God like. We are created in the image of God, so we have to reflect him. Christianity isn't about all the other bells and whistles and speaking in tongues and all that. That all means to an end. The end is to be like Him. Now if that's the calling then you look back, to which you have been called.

How do you live?

You have got humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love. So this whole section is like that, if we are actually born again and called by God, we have to reflect God and we have to reflect God as a body. These words are relational word. So these are not individual characteristics of you, they occur in you in relationship to somebody else. How can you bear yourself in love, you can't do that. It is a relational term. So therefore the conduct of unity is extremely important and these are the factors. These factors also maintain unity in a church. This is how you should act. In Galatians it happens to be fruit of the spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

So therefore if it is the fruit of the spirit, you can't generate it. You can't sit down there and say I think I am better and humble. If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you cannot be humble. So therefore it is the fruit of the spirit. Humility is a word that did not occur before the New Testament. In fact, Roman Emperor Galba was called gentle and humble by the Praetorian guard.

They are the guards who look after him, they looked down on him. They actually killed him later on. The Greek idea is a 'the crouching submissiveness of a slave', a very lowly idea. So nobody wants to be humble. Only in the New Testament, it comes out.

Stoic Philosopher Epictetus says, *First among the qualities not to be commended*. If all the qualities in life, this is the worse one, you cannot want to be humble.

DESCRIPTION OF HUMILITY

Humility is a 'lowliness of mind', the humble recognition of the worth and value of other people. Stuart Scott gave a definition,

When someone is humble they are focused on God and others, not self. Even their focus on others is out of a desire to love and glorify God.... A humble person's goal is to elevate God and encourage others. In short, they "no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf"

So when someone is humble, they are basically other person focused. That's all it means. The biggest problem in a group is pride. So when you got somebody in the church who demands to have all the attention, if you don't give him the attention, they get upset. People in church are like that. In fact, all of us are somewhat like this. Why? Because we already hang out all the people who appreciate us, the people who criticize us we never hang out. We avoid these people; we call them toxic people. All of us are like that, we are not humble in that sense.

Robert Schuller started this idea of self-esteem and he wrote that

"Dare to be a possibility thinker! Do not fear pride; the easiest job God has is to humble us. God's almost impossible task is to keep us believing every hour of every day how great we are as his sons and daughters on planet earth."

From this man sprang out the whole idea of prosperity gospel later on, word of power and faith, the keys of David, big-big problem. If you look at the picture of humility, you will actually see in Philippians

*Philippians 2:3-8 (ESV) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, **but in humility count others more significant than yourselves**. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but **also to the interests of others**. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the **form of a servant**, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

So therefore what Paul is saying is that, we should actually count the needs of other people. That's what humility is, you go in there and look at the needs of other people. That means, they are more significant than yourself. That is very-very difficult isn't it. We are more significant than anybody else and for us to lose ourselves, that's why Jesus Christ says dying on the cross, which means dying to self. That's the difficult bit, humility is counting other people more significant than

ourselves. Humility is not denying the power you have, but admitting that the power comes through you and not from you. This is another great definition based on 1-Cor chapter 4

1 Corinthians 4:7 (ESV) For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

Romans 12:3 (ESV) For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

So here the idea of humility comes from the fact that whatever you have is given by God, not due to yourselves. So humility is not denying yourself. There are self-descriptions in the Bible.

Genesis 18:27 (ESV) Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.

God agrees and kept quiet, God doesn't go so ill. Every time man says I am like a worm, God doesn't intervene. Robert Schuller will say, no you must think of how clever you are. So because we are like worms, it is a fact. We are like dust and ashes.

Job 40:3-5 (ESV) Then Job answered the Lord and said: 4 "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. 5 I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further."

He is scared, God doesn't say anything at all. So therefore there is no self-promotion. A lot of people have misinterpreted this verse

*Matthew 22:39 (ESV) And a second is like it: You shall **love your neighbor as yourself.***

Robert Schuller says, you must love yourself. The verse is not about you loving yourself, this verse assumes that you surely love yourself, everybody loves themselves but the point of verse is that, you have to love your neighbor like you love yourself, which is a very-very tall order. Only by the power of Holy Spirit can we approximate that. So never you can see in the New Testament do you have God stroking you like Robert Schuller which is a self-esteem movement.

The other one is meekness. Aristotle always talks about the golden mean. For him, everything is in the middle, neither too hot or too cold. If the mean between being too angry and never being angry at all, 'the absence of the disposition to assert personal rights, either in the presence of God or of men. This is very-very calm. It doesn't jump off.

It reminds me of two pictures, one is Shrek, gentle giant, conscious, exercise of self-control, he chooses to be gentle as oppose to retaliation. The other one is a picture in Greek of oxen, the taming of animals, very powerful animals and yet they can be actually tamed. So meekness is strength under control. The quality of a strong personality who is nevertheless the master of himself and a servant of others. A meek person isn't going to go around and then telling everybody how clever he is. So he is actually powerful, he is clever, he is gifted but it is under control all the time. Someone wrote,

'the meek man thinks as little of his personal claims, as the humble man of his personal merits'.

So basically meek person doesn't claim very much and humble man doesn't claim his merits at all. A meek person doesn't mean that he doesn't get angry.

Numbers 12:3 (ESV) Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.

Exodus 32:19-20 (ESV) And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. 20 He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.

So you actually have someone who is meek under control but when the right time comes. Why he is angry? He is angry because they have idolatry, they worship unknown gods. They have betrayed Yahweh, who actually brought them out of Egypt, saved them through miracles and yet they can turn around and betray. The anger comes out. It is a righteous anger. So anger is good in that sense. Anger is not necessarily wrong. So here you have Moses being angry.

Matthew 11:29 (ESV) Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls

Jesus is meek, very meek man, they whack him on the cross, he didn't resist, but

Matthew 21:12-13 (ESV) And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. 13 He said to them, "It is written, 'my house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

So here he is brave, he comes right up there. Because he is consumed by anger, because these people are not really worshipping God but he is a meek man. Jesus is a meek man and yet at times he is angry. So meekness is angry at right time and the rest of the time not angry, choosing not to be angry.

PATIENCE (MAKROTHYMIA)

This is a fruit of spirit which some of us struggle, it is called makrothymia, to have a big and wide soul. Patience is the exercise of a largeness of soul that can endure annoyances and difficulties over a period of time. Patience is that long-suffering which makes allowance for others' shortcomings and endures wrong rather than flying into a rage or desiring vengeance. So basically this is something that you can actually wait. So it is like waiting without complaint, but in the presence of discomfort. So if somebody is waiting for you and he is playing his computer, he got nothing to do the whole day, that is not patience. If he is waiting in the hot sun with his computer and he is sweating and he has waited three hours for you and you are late that is called patience. So there are two things, one is waiting and one position of discomfort. So that is very-very important. Three kinds of patience

- Facing kind of nuisance or aggravation
- Facing boredom
- Facing suffering psychological or physical

You can have patience with God, patience with others or patience with yourself. People with patience do not complain. I am not saying there are legitimate complaints. A legitimate complaint is something that is unjust, impractical and should be changed and something that needs to be changed. So therefore if you actually complain about something that can be changed. The other complaints that are illegitimate are petty and pointless. So patience is not having illegitimate complaints as it were. Look at complaints to God:

Psalms 10:1 (ESV) Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

Psalms 44:24 (ESV) Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?

Psalms 142:2-3 (ESV) I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.³ When my spirit faints within me, you know my way. In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me.

So we are actually invited to complain to God. Complaints to God are not illegitimate and they are not pointless and they are not petty, because God is so big. He can take all the complaints. When you complain to God, it is a sign of faith that God will do something. So therefore we are actually encouraged to complain, because you have to be honest with God.

Why is patience so difficult?

Patience is difficult because we are dealing with sinful people. There are some things in everyone that you and I might not like. All of us have something that others don't like. The other issue is we have got "egocentric predicament" which is my own thoughts, my own needs, my own frustrations and I am not aware of other people. I don't care how they feel. Maybe they have been trying to be nice to me, but I don't even give them credit for being nice to me, because I don't see it, because I judge people according to my own temperament. I judge people according to my own standard. That's the problem. Our own sin causes this egocentric predicament.

To have patience you also must have self-control, humility, generosity and hope, it combines all these virtues together. The only way to get patience is when God sends to you difficult people. It is suffering. Whatever suffering you go through you will learn patience, because you will be put in a situation where there is no solution. That is why God allows a lot of suffering to come into our life because it teaches us to enlarge our souls. So next time suffering comes, there is a lesson behind it.

FORBEARANCE IN LOVE

It is endurance, holding yourself back. It is not a feeling or emotion, but an act of the will. It exists only in relation to specific people, and it is always costly. It seeks the highest good for the one loved, seeking the will of God for the loved one, it is unconditional love

Isaiah 42:13-15 The Lord goes out like a mighty man, like a man of war he stirs up his zeal; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes. 14 For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant. 15 I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools

Forbearance is restraining yourself. All these qualities are very important when you are actually in a fellowship. Now if everybody had these qualities, this is going to be fantastic, but that's the vision God has given us. The only way we are going to have this vision is when you allow the Holy Spirit to work in us and produce that love. So the disunity caused by the lack of these factors cause many churches a split. People gossip, which is comparing yourself with other people.

So some people have their own ideas and they are self-serving. They push their ideas. That's why they breakup the church. Partisan spirit is the biggest thing that breaks up churches. That fellow brought chicken soup to my house, that particular pastor, so therefore I must worship him and whatever he does, he can do no wrong. This is called partisan spirit. You need to look at the facts, even in church it doesn't matter, when you assess church splits always because of elders or pastors, never is split because of normal people. Always look at the issue and decide based on that issue.

Hypercritical spirit, some people are never happy, everything not good. So people come to church, they all complain about the dirt and all of us are sinful, so plenty to complain. So hypercritical spirit will destroy a church.

*1 Corinthians 1:10-12 (ESV) I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be **no divisions** among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is **quarreling** among you, my brothers. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ.*

So here in the Corinthian church, already fighting. They are all polarized around their leaders, that's why leaders cause split, normal people don't cause split.

1 Corinthians 3:3-4 (ESV) for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

Joe Towns writes, "Unity for the sake of unity is not Biblical unity at all. Unity for the sake of purity is what the Bible commands. That is, our unity should be applied in an exclusive way—in order to preserve others and ourselves as a true and faithful body"

Some people will yearn and be patient and do whatever, it doesn't matter as long as we are united, you could be united in sin. So you have got a tension between forbearing other people, loving other people, tolerating other people and on the other hand you have got an issue with the truth. The two are there, there is an intention and we will talk about exercising your gifts in truth, telling love in truth but this way let's look

2 Thessalonians 3:6-8 (ESV) Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.

We are supposed to keep away from idle persons.

2 Thessalonians 3:13-15 (ESV) As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. 14 If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

So therefore if you don't follow the word of God, we in a fellowship are instructed to put you in cold storage and to rebuke you but warn you as a brother, always as a brother, but being a brother means you are also to be firm.

Titus 3:10-11 (ESV) As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

So the reason why Paul says this is because he recognizes that in a church, not everybody in a church is a Christian, a lot of people in a church are not Christians. So therefore he is treating them like non-Christians. He is saying that a person who stirs up division are probably not Christian. Scripture says to kick out such people, because if you don't it will cause trouble in the church and kicking you out is an act of love, because hopefully you will repent. Christian church is such that we ignore the truth. If we actually have to be firm, there is justice and there is love and often justice is applied for because of love. So we actually have justice and apply that and hopefully the person will actually repent. 1-Cor chapter 5 tells us a man who has his father's wife, excommunicated from church. Not only that, there are so many other crimes down there, who are greedy people, they also kicked out of the church, very strict, but when they repent they come back in. So the church is actually respected. So we actually have people with wrong ideas of love. So even when you look in Corinthians, a man who has his father's wife, a kind of sin that nobody has ever seen, when he repents he comes back. That is the beauty of the grace. So we actually have to have these two intentions.

The other thing is the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:29-32 (ESV) For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Here it says we as a church should also judge ourselves. You come up to the brother and say, hey look you know, I don't think you are taking the Lord's Supper properly, because you were just fighting with the fellow outside the door, because if you take the Lord's Supper, you will die or you will fall sick because that is what happened to them. So in order for me to prevent that, I am going to talk to him. You got to judge, you got to make a decision, whether the person is actually sinning.

So we are asked to be our brother's keeper in church. That's why people don't like to be in church. You come in the church, you also come under the authority of the church as well and the authority is for you to grow, not for you to do as you like. We are in such a situation where people hop from church to church, they only go for sermon, but they don't participate in body. If you don't participate in body life, you will never learn humility, patience, forbearance and love, meekness. You cannot learn that, you are alone at home. You have to be in a group and the worst the group is better, learn more forbearance. If you come to group where all are very nice, you will learn nothing.

Christianity is a God-directed, Christ-defined, other-oriented religion. Only with such direction away from self, do we find ourselves.

Jesus said, when you lose your life then you will gain it.

C. FOUNDATION OF OUR UNITY:

Ephesians 4:3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

This means the unity is already there. Parents have a relation to their kids due to the DNA. When parents love them, they are just expressing the entailments of that DNA. What Paul is saying is that, we are expressing the unity that is already there, because the unity is already ontologically created for us. We are one in Christ. That's why when we are united with this expressing, what is the reality. So it is like a family. So all in the church have DNA which is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our DNA. It doesn't matter which country you go to; it is still the same. We are bound by the Holy Spirit and because Jesus created one new man in the place of two. So we are actually one new man.

A real family will fight, but we are trying to learn patience in order to basically grow together. So if you look at Isaiah, in the last days when the spirit comes,

Isaiah 11:6 (ESV) The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.

This is already started in the Christian church. The little child is Jesus. That's why Carson writes

"The church is...made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything else of that sort. Christians come together...because they have all been saved by Jesus Christ....They are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus' sake."

So we are natural enemies, so if I bite you tomorrow you should not turn your back on me. It is a fact, we will give half a chance, we will bite each other, but the difference is, in a Christian fellowship you will come back and say sorry I bit you and then we will get over it. I think that's the beauty of the Christian church, because we are reconciled. It is not that the fact when you come to church, where you go to church and nobody bites you, that means it is a hypocritical church. A real church, you turn your back will bite you, but the real church is that because they love Jesus Christ

they will apologize, you will apologize and we all grow in unity. That's the picture. That's why you cannot grow unless you are inside of church. God has designed that you be in a church.

We all share same ontological unity, it is like a DNA, we have got the same DNA. Some irrespective of our history, irrespective of backgrounds, Jesus Christ have broken down the hostility.

B. USING OUR DIVERSITY TO BUILD UP UNITY

How does unity and diversity works. So you have got,

Ephesians 2:15-16 (ESV) that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

That is unity.

Ephesians 4: 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

That is unity. When we become one, he created us as one and yet he uses diversity in order to create unity in the end. So therefore these are all the gifts that he has given us. So Jew and gentile become one under Jesus, different gifts, back to the fullness of who Jesus Christ is. Unity, diversity and unity again.

We discover our individuality when we become one, where all his workmanship created in Christ

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

So all of us have a role to play, because we are all unique, workmanship or masterpiece of God. In the story of Esther, they were going to persecute the Jews and the Mordecai came and say,

Esther 4:14 (ESV) For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Only she could have intervened with her husband to save the Jews. In a sense we are all unique in our gifts. Totalitarian regimes whether it is a scientology or Hitler, you cannot talk against them, everything must be uniform. There is no freedom of speech.

If we are poor in our thinking, everybody must be the same. Totalitarian regimes are like that. Christianity is in every single culture of the world. It is the only religion and faith that occurs in every single culture. It is designed for diversity. So when we are in church, stop people to conform, ministry type, life group structure, location, we should be as diverse as possible. It is very sad if in the church everything must be like that, every program must be like that. We should have different

programs. Because each different kind of ministry will minister to different kinds of people. Diversity is a richness. Churches are also diverse. There is no better church. Some churches are wildly charismatic and they are fantastic because they are able to reach to the slumps. Where conservative churches are not able to. Each one has their own strengths and weakness. We must recognize diversity in churches. Grace is given to each one according to the measure of Christ gift.