


April 15, 2026 – Study #4
Unity, Maturity, and the New Life in Christ – Ephesians 4

 **Icebreaker**

Think of a team or group you've been part of where unity really mattered. What made it work well—or what caused it to fall apart?

 **Historical Context**

Ephesians 4 marks a major shift in Paul's letter—from theology to application. After laying out the believer's identity in Christ (chapters 1–3), Paul now calls the church to live in a way that reflects that identity. Writing from prison around AD 60–62, Paul urges believers in a diverse and often divided culture to walk in unity, maturity, and holiness. The early church included people from vastly different backgrounds—Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, slave and free—making unity both essential and challenging. Paul emphasizes that unity is not something believers create, but something they must maintain through humility, patience, and love. He also highlights spiritual growth, the role of leaders, and the transformation of daily living. This chapter shows that the gospel not only saves individuals but reshapes how they relate to one another and live in the world.

 **Digging Deep Into It**
Ephesians 4:1–6

Theological Insight

Paul begins with a call to “walk worthy” of the calling believers have received. This walk is characterized by humility, gentleness, patience, and love—qualities that preserve unity. Unity is grounded not in shared preferences but in shared realities: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. These seven “ones” form the foundation of

Christian unity. The emphasis is not on uniformity, but on a deep spiritual oneness rooted in God Himself.

Extra-Scriptural or Theological Reference

John Stott described Christian unity as something to be maintained, not manufactured—it is already given in Christ.

Practical Steps

- 1 Practice humility by putting others' needs ahead of your own this week.
- 2 Choose patience in moments of frustration within relationships.
- 3 Actively pursue peace in your church or community.

Ephesians 4:7–13

Theological Insight

While unity is central, diversity of gifts strengthens the church. Christ gives grace to each believer and appoints leaders—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—to equip the saints for ministry. The goal is maturity: growing into the fullness of Christ. Ministry is not limited to leaders; every believer is called to serve. The church matures when each part functions as designed, building itself up in love.

Extra-Scriptural or Theological Reference

John Calvin emphasized that church leaders exist not to dominate, but to equip believers for service.

Practical Steps

- 1 Identify how God has gifted you to serve others.
- 2 Encourage and support leaders who equip the church.
- 3 Take one intentional step to serve within your church this week.

Ephesians 4:14–16

Theological Insight

Spiritual maturity protects believers from instability and deception. Paul warns against being like children, easily swayed by false teaching. Instead, believers are to speak the truth in love, growing into Christ, who is the head. Growth is both individual and communal—each part contributes to the health of the whole body. Love and truth must work together; truth without love wounds, and love without truth misleads.

Extra-Scriptural or Theological Reference

Augustine taught that truth must always be spoken in love, or it ceases to reflect Christ.

Practical Steps

- 1 Commit to growing in biblical understanding to avoid spiritual confusion.
- 2 Practice speaking truth with kindness and grace.
- 3 Invest in relationships that encourage spiritual growth.

Ephesians 4:17–24

Theological Insight

Paul contrasts the old life with the new life in Christ. The “old self” is marked by darkened understanding and separation from God, while the “new self” reflects righteousness and holiness. Transformation involves putting off the old and putting on the new—an intentional, ongoing process rooted in renewed thinking. This is not behavior modification alone but a complete reorientation of identity and mindset.

Extra-Scriptural or Theological Reference

Martin Luther emphasized daily repentance as putting off the old self and putting on the new in Christ.

Practical Steps

- 1 Identify one habit or mindset that reflects your “old self.”
- 2 Replace it with a Christ-centered alternative rooted in truth.
- 3 Spend time renewing your mind through Scripture each day.

Ephesians 4:25–32

Theological Insight

Paul makes transformation practical by addressing speech, anger, work, and relationships. Believers are called to truthfulness, self-control, generosity, and kindness. Words should build up, not tear down. Forgiveness becomes central, modeled after God’s forgiveness in Christ. These instructions show that spiritual maturity is revealed in everyday interactions.

Extra-Scriptural or Theological Reference

John Wesley taught that holiness is expressed in both inward transformation and outward actions toward others.

Practical Steps

- 1 Speak words this week that intentionally encourage others.
- 2 Address anger quickly and constructively without sinning.
- 3 Extend forgiveness to someone as Christ has forgiven you.

Cross References

- Colossians 3:12–14 — Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, and love.
- 1 Corinthians 12:4–7 — Different gifts, same Spirit, for the common good.
- Romans 12:4–5 — Many members, one body in Christ.
- John 13:34–35 — Love as the defining mark of discipleship.

Reflecting on It

- 1 What does it look like for you personally to “walk worthy” of your calling?
- 2 How are you contributing to unity within your church or relationships?
- 3 In what areas do you need to grow toward spiritual maturity?
- 4 What part of your “old self” is God calling you to put off right now?
- 5 How can your words and actions better reflect Christ this week?

Challenge of the Week / Next Step Practice

Choose one area from Ephesians 4 (unity, service, speech, or forgiveness) and intentionally practice it every day this week. Track how it impacts your relationships and your spiritual growth.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for calling us into one body through Christ. Help us walk worthy of that calling, living in humility, love, and unity. Grow us into maturity, and teach us to put off the old self and put on the new. Let our words and actions reflect Your grace so that others may see Christ in us. In Jesus' name, Amen.