

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

Lesson 15

Chapter 4:12-16, The Study

"The Church As The New Mankind" P-3" "The Church's Given Goals"

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REVIEW

Our Condensed Outline to date:

GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET

- I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ
- II. CHAPTER 2 – The Church AS The Temple of Christ
- III. CHAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret
- IV. **CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind**
 - A. The Coordination of the Church 4:1-6
 - 1. The Problem of a Godly Walk 4:1
 - 2. The Problem of a Godly Love 4:2
 - 3. The Problem of the Unity of the Spirit 4:3
 - 4. The Provisions for Coordination 4:4-6
 - B. **The Corporateness of the New Mankind 4:7-11**
 - 1. **The Rightful Giver 4:7-10**
 - 2. **The Right Gifts 4:11**

It's All about Jesus Christ!

We started off last time looking at the "corporate" look of this new administration called the Church. First, we found that God administered His Grace through the ministry of the Life, Death, Resurrection, and ascension of His Son Jesus. This "gift" was, and is, administered to each and every believer in a measured amount that matched each person's ministry and life experience.

We took a few moments to look at 2 Corinthians 12:9 where Paul tells his readers that Christ had said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." Indeed, a powerful statement for us to consider.

We found that through Christ's ministry at the post death/pre-resurrection ministry brought great freedom to previous, now dead, believers. And of great importance is the knowledge that through His death and resurrection, "He gave gifts to men." Those gifts would be for the growth of this new body of believers that would grow exponentially into the 2.4 billion "Christians" alive today. We also remarked that not all who call themselves Christian truly are believers, but even still, the truth is still a strikingly large number.

In verse 9 Paul makes sure that His audience understands that Christ came down from Heaven (as the child Jesus), with a great mission to accomplish, and it was He who ascended back through the clouds to His Father in heaven to His awaiting heavenly Father, to His Father's Glory. In Christ's honor, He would now be placed into the place of absolute authority over creation, the Earth, and mankind – Such a great Honor.

In the corporateness of this new body of believers, now unified as "set-apart ones," no longer Jew or Gentile, Jesus revealed the long-term plan for the establishment of this new "Body of Christ," The Church. Over the previous centuries Christ gave certain people-groups certain information, revelation, and power for the establishing of this new administration of believers. Using the Temple as His imagery, He built a foundation for this new living Temple. That foundation was laid upon the Apostles and Prophets of the Old Testament – remembering that the Gospels are technically part of the Old Testament Covenant. The New Testament Church isn't established until after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension – at Pentecost (book of Acts). Through the Gospels this new body now has its own Apostles and

Prophets. The New Testament Apostles (from the Gospels and New Testament writers). Evangelists for the acquiring of new members developed along the way, as well as Pastor/Teachers for the shepherding and training of those called by God in this new ministry. Certain qualities and abilities in the Apostles and Prophets groupings (specifically those Christ given abilities of the early Apostles and Prophets) waned over the first 100 years after getting the Church started. Prophets are now defined as those who know and understand the Word of God, in Christ, and proclaim it around the world. New biblical revelation has not been granted to our age – as of yet.

In the past lesson 4:7-11 we encountered a couple problems the Ephesian church was having, and we need to look at our own values and understanding to keep from mirroring their difficulties.

First, the Ephesians had a basic misunderstanding of the purpose of Christ's Gifts – and His giving of Spiritual Gifts to every believer through the Holy Spirit. They were seeking the wrong gifts, as they wanted gifts for self-aggrandizement. Christ was giving gifts that were to elevate the Church Body in both knowledge of their purpose and gifts that would make the evangelization of unbelievers easier and more successful as well as gifts for the unity of believers one to another.

Second, they were seeking the wrong grace. They were seeking ways of gaining personal power when they needed to understand the basis of God's love for them as both individuals and as a corporate entity. The powers that were being offered through the Spirit were to grow them in God's Grace so that they would grow in unity within the body.

Third, they were not giving Jesus Christ proper credit for their reception of these powers and gifts. Their basic problem would be that they were ignorant of the person and place that Jesus, the Christ, had received upon His ascension. He became Lord of All. It was He who ascended on high. It was He who dwells there. It is He who is our salvation, the God who is our salvation.

So next we move into the “how this new body of believers will function together for safety and growth” phase of Paul’s writings.

**THE STUDY, 4:12-16, The Introduction
GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET**

OUR OUTLINE FOR THE LESSON:

- I. **CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ**
 - II. **CHAPTER 2 – The Church AS The Temple of Christ**
 - III. **CHAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret**
 - IV. **CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind**
 - A. The Coordination of the Church 4:1-6
 - B. The Corporateness of the New Mankind 4:7-11
 - C. **The Church's Given Goals 4:12-16**
 1. **Goal One: Teaching The Team To Serve 4:12-13**
 - a) The Body of Christ Is To Be **Built Up Through Service** 4:12
 - b) **Till a Set End** – Achieving Experiential Unity, Knowledge, **A Complete and Full Fullness** 4:13
 2. **Goal Two: Training The Team For Stature 4:14-15**
 - a) **Training** the Team for a Negative Environment 4:14
 - b) **Training** the Team for a Positive Environment 4:15
 3. **Goal Three: Toning Up The Team For Spirituality 4:16**
 - a) Training the Team in **Godly Love** 4:16
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THE STUDY, Ephesians 4:12-13
Teaching the Team to Serve
GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET

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 - b) **Till a Set End – Achieving Experiential Unity, Knowledge, A Complete and Full Fullness 4:13**

4:12 [Mac]

The first purpose of this is to equip those who are set apart to do the work of serving, with the building up of the Body of Christ as the goal.

4:12 [NASB]

for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

4:13 [Mac]

This is to go on until we all arrive experientially: first, at the unity produced by the faith and at a thorough experiential knowledge of the Son of God; second, at a complete mankind; third, at our proportion to the stature of Christ's fullness.

4:13 [NASB]

until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

THE COMMENTARY

About 3028 years ago King David wrote about the following revelation: Today we could title this Psalm as: The Complete Plan of God for a complete mankind. Just remember while you consider this Psalm – that it is about the Glory and Majesty of God... not man, and in a parallax view it is about Jesus, the Son of Man, The Son of God – so many interesting parallels!

PSALM 8

O Lord, our Lord,
 How majestic is **Your** name in all the earth,
 Who have displayed **Your** splendor above the heavens!
 2 From the mouth of infants and nursing babes **You** have
 established strength
 Because of **Your** adversaries,
 To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.

3 When I consider **Your** heavens, the work of **Your** fingers,
 The moon and the stars, which **You** have ordained;
 4 What is man that **You** take thought of **Him**,
 And **the son of man** that **You** care for **Him**?
 5 Yet **You** have made **Him** a little lower than God (the Father),
 And **You** crown **Him** with glory and majesty!
 6 **You** make **Him** to rule over the works of **Your** hands;
You have put all things under **His** feet,
 7 All sheep and oxen,
 And also the beasts of the field,
 8 The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,
 Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

9 O **Lord, our Lord**,
 How majestic is **Your** name in all the earth!

The establishment of what we now call The Church is the key to the completion of what Psalm 8 speaks of. Verses 12 and 13 teach us what the Gifts that Jesus gave to the Church (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, and Pastor/Teachers) are all put into place to, as the outline says, **“Teaching the Team to Serve.”** We may have come to the conclusion that all this was about the making of great numbers of believers, but we would be wrong about that. Yes, the numbers have grown remarkably, but the purpose of our given leadership is that we would be learn **TO BE HUMBLE AND SERVE CHRIST!** MacCorkle speaks of “building up the Body of Christ as the goal.” But we must not interpret the “building up” as just increasing numbers. He means it as a weightlifter builds up his body through discipline.

Paul says right off in verse 12, ***“The first purpose of this (apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor/teachers) is to equip those who are set apart to do the work of serving.”*** Serving each other within the body and serving those around us – for the Glory of God. The Prophets who have set the Word of God in place. The Apostles who have personally witnessed the Lord Jesus Christ and recorded His ministry and began the process of enlarging this new Body of Christ. The Evangelists who have gone out into the world to bring that world to Christ, and the Pastor/Teachers who have stayed home to teach and equip believers for ministry.

These ministries will continue until the establishment of a complete mankind – in Christ, and that new mankind is led and taught into the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ – to the Glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. “The goal at any particular moment is the unity of the body produced through faith and an experiential knowledge of the Son of God.”¹

¹ MacCorkle, Douglas, God’s Special Secret, MBM Books, Cocoa Beach, Florida 1993, p. 149

Here's a good list for you:

- 1. Apostles**
- 2. Prophets**
- 3. Evangelist (the Good News-ers)**
- 4. Pastor/Teachers**

For the building up of the Body

For the Attainment of the Unity of Faith

For the Attainment of the knowledge of the Son of God

Resulting in: The Mature Man in Christ

Resulting in: The Stature of Christ

Resulting in: The Display in US of the Fullness of Christ

THE STUDY, Ephesians 4:14-15
Training The Team For Stature
GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET

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 - a) **Training the Team for a Negative Environment 4:14**
 - b) **Training the Team for a Positive Environment 4:15**

4:14 [Mac]

The ultimate purpose is that we may no longer be mere babes, constantly storm-tossed and borne about by every wind of teaching perpetrated by the trickery of men using this cleverness to further the teaching techniques of error.

4:14 [NASB]

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

4:15 [Mac]

Instead, dealing truthfully in godly love, grow up into Him Who is the Head, namely Christ.

4:15 [NASB]

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

THE COMMENTARY

Here, midway through the fourth chapter, Paul finally sounds disappointed and upset at the local Ephesian church. ***"The ultimate purpose is that we may no longer be mere babes."*** There's Paul, hundreds of miles away, in prison for his faith, hearing of the activities in these local churches out there, far away, in the pagan lands. And what has he been hearing? It would seem from what he says here, is that these young Christian churches, although growing and loving each other are suffering from immaturity. At the beginning of his letter, he commends them for their faith and love. But deep down, in the background, they are suffering from the human condition – as we are in our local church. Oh, how we all need to hear what Paul has to say. We need to stop being children being blown around in the winds of doctrine and the deceitful scheming of the world around us – just peruse the internet if you doubt the worldwide mess out there.

Verse 15 is really great advice, ***"dealing truthfully in godly love, Grow Up! How, "into Him who is the Head, namely Christ."***

MacCorkle says, *"This is to go on until we all arrive experientially: **First**, at the unity produced by the faith and at a thorough experiential knowledge of the Son of God; **Second**, at a complete mankind; and **third**, at our proportion to the stature of Christ's fullness. This is to go on until we all arrive experientially at the unity produced by **the faith**."²*

² Ibid.

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 - a) **Training the Team in Godly Love 4:16**

4:16 [Mac]

The whole Body causes its own maturing by His means with the purpose of building itself up in godly love, because it is harmoniously framed together and held together by means of the rich provision from every joint in keeping with the proportionate operation of each individual part.

4:16 [NASB]

from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Verses 14 and 15 teach us that the local church needs to be trained to survive in a negative environment – the outside pagan world. We need to focus on retaining proper biblical doctrine and

teaching it with our whole hearts. We need to be constantly aware of evil forces which aim their resources toward Christians. Our Elders and Deacons need to be alert and focused, making sure that error is not introduced into the body.

As we move into verse 16, we begin to see another side of Paul's concern. The local church team must be trained for its positive environment – The clear teaching of God's Word that educates, teaches, and grows us up from mere spiritual babes to mature spiritual adults.

How is this accomplished? By focusing on Centering on Jesus Christ and building the body up on love and service to each other. Paul uses the bones and joints of the human body as his example. The strength of the human body comes through the joints. He sees the "bones" as the clear teaching of Biblical doctrine, and He sees the "joints" as the people within the body who connect the "bones" through Godly love for the teachings and for the people involved.

HOMEWORK: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – 4:12-16

Look at the question and ignore the answer. Then study the answer!

4:12 [Mac]

The first purpose of this is to equip those who are set apart to do the work of serving, with the building up of the Body of Christ as the goal.

1) The Phrase, "The first purpose of this..." What is the "THIS?"

The overall title for Chapter 4 is "The Church As the New Mankind," The Father has designed and coordinated it's building, and He has purposefully design this new body like a great and mighty corporation. So our answer is that the "THIS" is the **coordination and corporation** of this new body. Included in that is the revelation that the "Church" structure is founded and built upon the teaching of the Apostles and the Prophets.

2) What are the two steps in this verse leading the "goal?"

Step-1 is to recognize that the teachings of the Prophets and Apostles is the key to equipping the church's leadership. **Step-2** is to recognize these teachings of the Prophets and Apostles, if properly done, will result in the building up of the Body of Christ.

3) Then what is this new venture set up to do?

This new Body of Christ, made up of all possible people of the earth, is designed and coordinated by the Father God in order to SERVE this world, bringing new believing members into the body and building up all the members in knowledge, belief, grace, and faith in Jesus Christ.

4:13 [Mac]

This is to go on until we all arrive experientially: first, at the unity produced by the faith and at a thorough experiential knowledge of the Son of God; second, at a complete mankind; third, at our proportion to the stature of Christ's fullness.

1) This verse lists three definite goals for the individual – what are they?

First – Unity of the members of the body, brought about through experiential knowledge of the Son of God. **Second** – We become complete as a person in Christ, and **Third** – That we become Full of the Knowledge, Grace and Love of Jesus Christ.

2) What is the importance of the word "experientially" in these three goals?

Head knowledge is not the aim. God the Father wants each and every one who is a believer to experience Unity in the body of Christ, a knowledge of and in Jesus Christ that is experienced, not just head knowledge, and that each and every believer experiences the "fullness" of the power of God's Love and Grace as found only in the "Fullness" experienced through Jesus Christ.

4:14 [Mac]

The first purpose of this is to equip those who are set apart to do the work of serving, with the building up of the Body of Christ as the goal.

1) Who are those who have been "set apart" to do the work of serving?

Specifically, Evangelists and Pastor/teachers. But the work of service to the Body of Christ is not limited to these alone. Every member of the body is to serve his/her brother/sister and son/daughter (Brothers and Sisters in-the-Lord). Not a single believer is to be left out of service for Our Lord.

4:15 [Mac]

Instead, (you) dealing truthfully in godly love, grow up into Him Who is the Head, namely Christ.

Just a comment here. Paul sums up his statements about the Body Of Christ in this very important way. He uses the plural "you" so that every member of the Body should understand. You are to GROW UP INTO JESUS CHRIST in every way - you are to become like Him.

4:16 [Mac]

The whole Body causes its own maturing by His means with the purpose of building itself up in godly love, because it is harmoniously framed together and held together by means of the rich provision from every joint in keeping with the proportionate operation of each individual part.

Here is the best news of all... He is going to do this in you. He will see to it that ever member of the body works together to the building up of itself in GODLY LOVE! This will be accomplished as each individual grows up in the Love of God and the love of each and every member of the body.

Decode this verse please:

"That the Whole Body grows itself up through Christ through Godly Love, because every person in contact with every other person has been given the Grace of God to accomplish this."

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The Writings of Douglas B. MacCorkle

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path."

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