

WORD

15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:15,16

We don't just choose to follow Jesus in order to encourage others to do the same, if we've already decided to do so. Alongside other Christians, we are following Him and living together. Fundamentally, fellowship is what it sounds like. In order to intentionally bring God glory through our lives, Christians intentionally build their relationships with other believers. We'll examine unity, love, and maturity as three essential components of true fellowship in this lesson.

1. UNITY

1I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:1-3

Paul urged the Ephesian church to walk in harmony, humility, and endurance. It is not shared personalities, backgrounds, or preferences that bind believers who live similar lives together. Because we share a belief in Christ, the Bible instructs us that we should be eager to protect our unity. What are some factors that could lead to strife or disunity among believers, and how can we prevent this?

2. LOVE

"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ . . .

Ephesians 4:15

Even when we speak the truth and risk upsetting others, as Christians, we should always act in love. Maturity results from this. What do you suppose would happen if we acted in love, as Christ loved us? What do you think will happen if we act selfishly, prideful, or insecurely instead of from a place of love?

3. MATURITY

. . . we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ . . .

Ephesians 4:15

A body is one of the metaphors the Bible employs to depict the church. Each of us has a role to play in the body of Christ, and as we each fulfill our role effectively, the body develops and matures in Him. What occurs when a component of your body is malfunctioning? What do you think it would appear like in a church?

APPLICATION

- Are your relationships in the church genuine, solid ones? What can you do right now to foster healthier relationships inside the church of Christ? How can you regularly and deliberately share your life with fellow believers?
- How can you contribute to keeping the body of Christ united? What one thing could you start changing this week?
- How should you respond, in your opinion, when you have to confront another believer with the truth? What must you watch out for?

PRAYER

- Praise God for calling us to follow Him, to fish for the lost, and to fellowship with other Christians. Ask God to help you follow Jesus faithfully for the rest of your life.
- Praise God for the friendships He has given you at church. Request from God that these connections overflow with grace, humility, and love.
- Pray for the body of Christ to be unified, filled with love, and mature. Ask God to help each component—including you—do its job well. Ask God to strengthen the church and help it carry out His plans for the world.



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