



Ephesians

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...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; Ephesians 4:13

The intent of the several offices previously noted was that they were given to accomplish specific tasks until “we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.” The words, “unity of the faith,” are given not concerning unity of doctrine, but of the act of belief. It is “the faith” which is referred to. The work of those mentioned in verse 11 is given for bringing people into the faith. It is also to bring them to “the knowledge of the Son of God.”

It is of special note that the term “Son of God” is used rather than “Son of Man.” Christ accomplished the work in His humanity, but it is in the knowledge that He is the Son of God upon which our faith is dependent. If Christ were only a man, he would have inherited Adam’s sin through his father. But He is fully God and no sin was transferred from His Father. The resurrection proved this. Thus He was “declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4).

In our understanding of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, we will then develop “to a perfect man.” The idea here is that of growth and maturity. A child may have knowledge, but it is imperfect. As he grows into a man, his knowledge of things grows and he becomes grounded in what he does.

For example, if he sets out to become a doctor, he would have limited knowledge of his desired profession. But through schooling, observance, and practical application, he would develop into a knowledge-filled practitioner. This is to be the goal of each Christian who has

first obtained the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. We are not to get saved and then feel we have satisfactorily met all we are to do. Instead, we are to be like the youth who desires to be a sound and effective doctor. We are to grow into maturity in Christ “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Our knowledge of Him is to lead us to be like Him. We are to be morally mature, grounded in understanding, and to be Christ-like in all we do. To be in “the stature of the fullness of Christ” is to walk in this world as He did, to pursue righteousness in full measure, to be able to expound upon the truths of Scripture accurately and completely. In all ways, we should endeavor to be fitting examples of the One who went before us, Christ the Lord.

As a notable point, it cannot be argued that all five offices of verse 11 must therefore remain until this is fully realized. Rather, each remains as long as it is needed for its specific purpose. The offices of apostle and prophet actually do continue on to this day in the sense that we still have the writings of those who gave us the New Testament, even if they do not continue on as necessary offices.

Life application: To be Christ-like does not mean that we are to pursue works of the law as Christ did in His earthly ministry. It is to trust in the work that He has accomplished and to go forward in that knowledge. We cannot impose on ourselves the burden of the law and say, “I am being Christ-like.” We will fail at the law; He prevailed over the law. It is important to understand this and to rest in His work and to emulate Him as the Fulfiller of the law. This cannot be stressed enough.

...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,
Ephesians 4:14

Paul is still speaking of the appointment of the five offices mentioned in verse 11. These were given for the purpose of equipping the saints, edifying the body, and so forth. This then would lead to the point where “we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (verse 13). Now, in contrast to the “perfect man” just mentioned, he reverts to the thought of what so many in the church are, children. This word is often translated as “babes” or “infants.” It is almost exclusively used in a negative sense. It refers to those who are impulsive, rash, unthinking, and so on. Such people are easily manipulated and their doctrine is as changing as those of the garments of a woman in a fashion show.

The reason for this is because they are not grounded in Scripture by those who have been mentioned in verse 11. This is what they need, but it is also what they often stubbornly refuse to receive. People who spend all their time in prophecy circles are a classic example of this type of believer. They are often shallow in biblical knowledge, and their focus is myopic and

twisted. Such people are ripe for being turned with very little effort at all. Their attention span is only as long as the next crazy video about another “prophecy” issue.

Thus they are “tossed to and fro.” This is the only use of the word *kludónizomai* in the Bible. It refers to the waves which rise and fall, billowing high and then turning into deep caverns. People without proper doctrine are carried along in just this manner, ever pulling at their faces and saying, “Oh my!” as they are pulled from strange doctrine to strange doctrine. Such crazy teachings are described by the words, “with every wind of doctrine.”

In a raging storm at sea, the winds turn from one direction to another, blowing the spray of the waves right in the face of the sailors at one moment, and then knocking them off their feet from behind in the next. This is the idea that Paul gives here. Instead of picking up the Bible, checking it carefully, and taking all verses in context as they should, they pull verses out of context, or they receive verses already torn out of context. They establish doctrines which have nothing to do with God’s intent for His people.

This is done “by the trickery of men.” The Greek word is *kubeia*, and it is another word unique to the Bible. It is the source of our word “cube,” and hence it gives the idea of dice. The sleight of hand by the player of dice fools those who are in the game. So it is with the sleight of hand of those who misuse Scripture in order to pervert its true, pure, intended meaning. Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Hebrews Roots Movement teachers are great examples of this type of sleight of hand. With a few verses, cunningly presented without all of the relevant information, the shallow and unprepared person is led completely astray.

And this “trickery of men” is from “the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.” This refers also to the skillful abilities of gamblers. It gives the sense of shrewdness of behavior which is reflected in “unscrupulous cunning that stops at nothing to achieve a selfish goal” (HELPS Word Studies). The ultimate goal of such manipulation is power and greed. When one is spiritually bound up in this way, they are easily manipulated to do the desires of the false teachers, and are more than willing to expend themselves and their fortunes in order to appease their cruel taskmasters.

For the term “deceitful,” Paul uses the term *methodeia*. It is “a predictable (pre-set) *method* used in *organized evil-doing (well-crafted trickery)*” (HELPS Word Studies). None of this is arbitrary or unplanned, but is methodically prepared in order to bind up and imprison the uneducated person.

Life application: By running ahead and following teachers without first reading and contemplating the word of God, people are so quickly and easily turned astray. One must be exceedingly careful what teachers and preachers they will follow. And no matter who they are instructed by, every person has the responsibility to then go out and check what they have been taught. Paul wrote these words 2000 years ago. False teachers have thus had a long time

to prepare their false teachings and to employ their wicked schemes against the body of Christ. Beware!

...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— Ephesians 4:15

Paul begins the verse with a word here translated as “but.” It is given to contrast the equipping of the saints in order to keep them from being children who are tossed to and fro by all kinds of false, cunning, and deceitful teachings. Instead of such things, sound instructors of the word are always to be “speaking the truth in love.” This thought comes from a single Greek word which is used only here and in Galatians 4:16.

It is used in classical Greek with a full meaning of “to be true, to arrive at truth, and to speak truth” (Vincent’s Word Studies). HELPS Word Studies tells the Christian that it “includes Spirit-led confrontation where it is vital to tell the truth so others can live in God’s *reality* rather than personal *illusion*.” All teachers of the word are to speak only in truth. They are never to waffle in their proclamation or their convictions concerning what God’s word states.

However, Paul gives an extra precept for them to follow. They are to speak “the truth in love.” One can speak the truth bluntly and with force. The tone can be disgusted or crabby. In this, the truth is spoken, but it can actually produce a harmful reaction in the hearer. It is true that people who do not receive Jesus are going to hell, but to stand on a street corner as an evangelist and to condemn all those who don’t believe to this sad fate in a demeaning and arrogant way will only lead them further from Christ. It is unfortunate that so many teachers follow this abrupt and demeaning path. The very thing they should be doing, which is leading people to Christ, is the very thing they fail to do.

Paul never waffled in his doctrine, and yet when he confronted another who was not following the truth, he did it in a firm yet loving way. A good example of this is found in Galatians 2:11-21. Peter was failing in sound doctrine, and Paul corrected him without demeaning him in any way. He spoke in love. Such an approach is proper so that those who hear “may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”

This idea is contrasted to that of the previous verse. There he spoke of the state of believers as “children;” a term used in a negative way. Here he speaks of believers who are given the truth in love as those who “grow up.” There is to be a process where believers mature in order to become sound, effective members of the body. In doing so, they will be sound “in all things into Him who is the head.”

This is to be the goal of our Christian life, and so it is sad to see how few actually avail themselves of it. Such a large percentage of believers are content to live their lives in spiritual immaturity. Paul tells us that in order to be sound in Christ, we are to mature in Christ. It is an

exhortation which we ignore at our own peril. Without growth, we will be unprepared for what transpires when trials, doctrinal issues, and false teachers come our way.

Life application: Have you called on Christ? There is a lot you need to know. Don't get stuck on one subject and spend your whole Christian life stuck in that box. Rather, take in the whole counsel of God and pursue Him and His word all your days. Be an effective member of His body.