

Introduction

As I was praying about the message today, the Lord showed me a picture of a jigsaw puzzle. The message was clear to me. Before we start working a puzzle, we usually look at the picture of puzzle on the cover of the box. This helps us put the various pieces of the puzzle in the appropriate sections. If you are like me, you sort the pieces by color and then you begin to match up the shapes. This morning, before we begin to put the puzzle together, I need to show you a picture of the Ephesians 4 puzzle.

Two weeks ago, we looked at three ways that we are to walk in a worthy manner of the calling that we have received. We are to walk in humility and gentleness. Second, we are to walk patiently and with forbearance. Third, we are to walk in unity. We are to preserve the unity of the faith.

In verses 4-6, it looked like we went down a different path. Really, God was showing us the unity that He had already created. This is the unity that we are exhorted to guard, protect, or to preserve. Here is the unity that we have:

1. One body
2. One Spirit
3. One hope
4. One Lord
5. One Faith
6. One baptism
7. One God and Father

Paul starts our passage this week speaking about the diverse gifts that God gives to the church. He says that to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. When Jesus ascended on high, He gave gifts to men. Some of these gifts are leadership gifts, to be used to equip the church for the work of service. No matter what gift we have been given, all of us are to do the work of service and to supply that which only our joint can supply. Even though we have diverse gifts and are all different parts of the body, we are all one body. There is to be a unity in the body.

(Ephesians 4:7-8) "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. {8} Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.""

God gave diverse leadership gifts to equip the body for the work of service, to the building up of the body, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man. Even though God has established these seven different areas of unity, there is another piece of the puzzle that must be put in place. The body of Christ must be equipped and built up so that it can grow to maturity. Until we come to a place of maturity, we will not attain to the unity that God desires.

Unity and maturity go hand in hand. Notice in 1 Corinthians 3 that Paul addressed the Corinthians as men of flesh and babes in Christ. He tells them that he gave them milk to drink, not solid food. Again, he is continuing with this thought of being a baby. Then, he tells them why they are babies in Christ. There is jealousy and strife among them. Strife and division are a sign of immaturity.

Ephesians 4:4-16 Three Steps Towards Maturity

Walking in unity is a sign of maturity.

(1 Corinthians 3:1-3) "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. {2} I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, {3} for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?"

What are the signs of maturity? In verses 13 and 14, Paul gives a number of different signs of maturity.

1. There will be a unity of the faith.
2. We will grow in our knowledge of the Son of God.
3. We will grow to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness Christ.
4. We will no longer be children tossed here and there by waves. (Stability)
5. We will no longer be carried away by every wind of doctrine. (Strong in word)
6. We will not be deceived by the trickery and deceitfulness of men. (Discerning)

For the church to come to this place of maturity, Paul gives us three specific steps. In our message this morning we are going to look at these three steps that will help us to come to a place of maturity.

Next, we find a small piece that says that if we are to grow up in Him, we must speak the truth in love to one another. Truth sets us free and liberates us. Truth helps us to grow in our knowledge. Truth helps us become more discerning. Truth is a wonderful thing and very necessary, but truth must be spoken in love. Truth spoken in the right way will help us to grow to maturity.

Eph 4:15 "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

In verse 16 we find that every joint is to hold things together and that every part is to be properly working. The combination of equipping the saints for the work of ministry, speaking the truth in love, and everybody doing their part will build up or grow up the church.

Before we look at the three specific steps of action that Paul exhorts us to take, let's take a look at an important concept that is used here. That concept is the idea of building up or growing up. Verse 11 says that the equipping is for the building up of the body. Verse 15 says that we are to grow up in all aspects. Verse 16 says the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. There is a connection between growth and building up.

Eph 4:12 "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;"

Eph 4:15 "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

Eph 4:16 "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which 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.”

In order for the body to be built up, in order for the body to grow to maturity, it needs to be edified. The concept of edification or building up is a theme throughout the New Testament. We must learn how to edify one another with our words (Eph 4:29). We must give ourselves to activities that edify one another in our church services (1 Cor 14). We are to take time every day to consider how to edify one another (Heb 3:13, 10:24-25). Paul says let all things be done for edification. We are to pursue things which lead to peace and the edifying of one another (Rom 14:19). Paul said the authority he had been given was for building up, not for destroying. Real leadership builds up the body (2 Cor 10:8).

What is edification. We saw in our series on Building The Church that the Greek word for edify is oikodome. This is a composite of two words, oikos, which means house, and dome, which means a roof. It literally means to build a roof over the house. It means to put a covering over a house. It has the implied meaning of building something higher. Here are some of the English translations used: encourage, edification, edifies, edify, build up, building, and buildings.

In verses 17-32, Paul returns to the overall thrust of the passage, that we are to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. He says that we are to walk with the mind of Christ, not in the futility of our minds, like the Gentiles. He says that we must walk in our new self. We are to walk with truth and integrity. And finally, we are to walk with edifying words. We can quickly tear down what God is trying to build through careless words. We are to only speak those words that edify and build up the body.

Now that we have the overall picture, we are going to work on one section of the puzzle. Our section today is Ephesians 4:13-16. I have titled this section three steps towards maturity. Let’s read our passage together.

Our Text

(Ephesians 4:7-16) "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. {8} Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." {9} (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? {10} He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) {11} And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of 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 a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. {14} 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; {15} but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, {16} from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which 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."

Subject: What are three ways that the body of Christ is built up to maturity?

Ephesians 4:4-16 Three Steps Towards Maturity

Complements:

1. Everyone is to be equipped for the work of service by the gift ministries.
 - a. Equipped by the apostles.
 - b. Equipped by prophets.
 - c. Equipped by evangelists.
 - d. Equipped by pastors.
 - e. Equipped by teachers.
2. Everyone is to speak the truth in love.
3. Everyone is to do their part.
 - a. Everyone is to be fit together.
 - b. Everyone is to hold things together.
 - c. Everyone is to work properly.

Steps Toward Maturity: Now let's look at the three steps that Paul gives the church which will help them grow to maturity. The first step is for leadership to equip the saints.

1. Everyone must be equipped for the work of service by the gift ministries.

The church needs to be equipped for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, 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 fulness of Christ. Paul lists five specific gifts that are to equip the church for the work of service. We could spend weeks on each of these gifts. This morning I want to just give a quick overview of these gifts.

(Ephesians 4:11-13) "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of 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 a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ."

A. Apostles

1. Plant churches
2. Lay foundations in churches
3. Lay hands on and ordain pastors in churches
4. Equip the church
5. Build up the body
6. Bring unity of the faith to the body
7. Bring maturity to body; they are fathers
8. Bring administration to body of Christ
9. Discern truth from error and keep body from deception and false teaching
10. Bring or set in order

We saw last week that God appointed apostles first in the order of gifts. We also saw that they are to be earnestly desired. This earnestness is a boiling over, a passion, or a zealous desire.

(1 Corinthians 12:28) "And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of

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tongues."

(1 Corinthians 12:31) "But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way."

Why are apostles first and why is the ministry of apostles to be earnestly desired? In addition to all the things that the apostle does: plant churches, lay foundations, etc., apostles have the ability to move in the other gifts. Apostles have a shepherd's heart. Apostles can teach. Apostles can evangelize. Apostles move prophetically. Apostles can fill in the gaps, particularly in church plants and new works where there are not many people assembled yet.

An apostle will have a primary gift, just like every member in the body. Paul's spiritual gift was teaching before he began to do apostolic work. Barnabas' spiritual gift was prophecy before he was called to do apostolic work. When they became apostles, their primary gifting did not change. Paul was an apostle with a strong teaching background and ministry. Paul could evangelize and prophecy, but his primary gift was still teaching. Barnabas was an apostle with a strong prophetic background. Barnabas could teach, evangelize, and pastor people, but his primary gifting was as a prophet. Every apostle is going to look different because of their different giftings, personalities, background, etc.

Another reason that apostles are needed is their heart for the body to do the work of ministry. Apostles tend to do only what no one else can do. Apostles try to train and equip others to do the work. Apostles try to work themselves out of a job. Apostles are not insecure about their work and are not fighting to keep their job. They are busy trying to get everybody involved in the game.

A couple of years ago, Chad played on a basketball team. In this league there was a rule that all the players had to play equal time. On this particular team, the coach did not abide by that rule. His rule was to play the players that would help him win each game. He was not looking at player development, only in winning for the short term.

There are some leaders in the church that have the same attitude. There is no one who can do this as well as me. Therefore, I will do everything myself. An apostle does not think that way. His goal is the long term. He wants each player in the church to develop and to get into the game. He knows that the church will only come to maturity when every joint is supplying. He knows that the church will come to maturity when every part of the body is working properly.

The second gift ministry mentioned is the prophet. It was the second gift mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28. One of the primary reasons that is mentioned second is because of the important role that prophets play in planting churches and laying foundations. We saw in Ephesians 2:20 that the foundations of the church are laid by apostles and prophets. Churches that do not have either apostles or prophets helping lay the foundations are going to struggle.

(Ephesians 2:20) "having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,"

Here are some of the things that the prophet does.

B. Prophets

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1. Plant churches.
2. Lay foundations in churches.
3. Equip the saints to encourage and exhort one another
4. Encourage, build up and strengthen the believers
5. Exhort and prod saints to action
6. Discern truth from error and keep body from the trickery of men, craftiness in deceitful scheming
7. Give direction to the church
8. Give correction to the church
9. Maintain holiness in the church

The next gift mentioned is the evangelist. John Dean does not believe that there are many evangelists today. His reasoning is that if there were, scores of new believers would be joining the church. I have a different take on this. My first church plant had two evangelists. Yes, they did reach out and win the lost. I thank God for both of these men. I see lots of other men with the calling of an evangelist. However, I see them in raw form. These diamonds do not look like polished evangelists.

The gift of evangelism is misunderstood. I see people with the gift of evangelism and most of them do not have a clue that this is their gifting. Most of them are trying to walk in other gifts, and most are frustrated.

Second, some of the doctrines of men that are in the church have put the evangelists in a straight jacket. There is no need for an evangelist when the people that are going to heaven have already been pre-determined. There is nothing that you or I can do to influence the salvation of anyone; it is pre-determined who is going to hell and who is going to heaven. This type of doctrine discourages the gift of evangelism.

Third, in most churches there is not room in leadership for evangelists. Someone with a pastoral heart is welcome. He cares for the sheep. Someone with the gift of teaching, which is the most common leadership gift in most American churches, feeds the flock. He may not be the best shepherd, but he does feed the flock. Someone who is interested in those outside the church and focuses on those outside the walls has a different mindset than the pastor who is trying to have a holy huddle.

I had a man named Jim in my second church. Jim had a pastor's heart. He wanted everyone to be part of his small group. Jim did not believe that it was time to reach out to the lost. The church needed to focus on growing relationally together, not in reaching those outside the church. Churches with this focus miss out on the mandate that the Lord has given to the church – to go and preach the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Therefore, in many churches, with the senior leadership being a pastor or teacher, the gift of evangelism and the focus of the evangelist is not thought to be in line with the vision of the leader. Wise leaders know that churches need to grow in size and stature, not just in knowledge.

Fourth, there are many people in the church that have been hurt. Wounded people are not the best people in the world to evangelize. Healthy people, who are excited and passionate about the Lord are great ambassadors.

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At the pastor's service that John did on Saturday night, the pastor of New Heart Church, Dave Angier shared with some of us after the service what the Lord had spoken to Him about planting a church. He said that until people are experiencing the Father's love, they cannot share that love with others. Therefore, Dave is trying to help people experience God's love, with the ultimate goal of reaching Albuquerque for Christ. Dave is right on the money.

His vision is very similar to what the Lord spoke to me about. The Lord told me that we have the cart before the horse. We need to get people excited and passionate about the Lord. When people are excited about the Lord, we will not be able to stop them from sharing with others. I believe that the day of the evangelist is going to come. When God begins to move in our midst and when people are being set free, they will want to be equipped in evangelism. The evangelists will finally have a sought after ministry in the church.

Here are some of the things that an evangelist does in the church.

C. Evangelists

1. Equip the saints for evangelism
2. Build up the body of Christ by personally evangelizing and by equipping others to evangelize
3. Stir up and activate the body for service.
4. Move in signs, wonders, and power gifts.
5. Move in healing ministry.
6. Attract and bring in the necessary members of the body

The fourth gift ministry is the pastor or shepherd. Most people are very familiar with the role of the pastor, so I will not spend much time here. Here are the things that pastors do.

D. Pastors/Shepherds

1. Equip the body to shepherd and care for one another
2. Are examples to the flock.
3. Feed the flock with God's word
4. Care for the flock.
5. Heal the flock so that they can do the work of service
6. Guards the flock so that they stay in the flock and receive care and equipping
7. Lovingly discipline the flock

The final gift ministry mentioned is the teacher. Again, people are very familiar with the gift of the teacher. However, let me give one additional thought. In this list of gift ministries, there is a purpose or objective given – to equip the saints for the work of service. Many teachers try to do all the teaching. A five-fold teacher is to equip others to do the teaching, not to do all the teaching. They still need to teach, but they need to be raising up teachers in the body. One of the primary things that I have focused on for the past 15 years is equipping others to teach and to preach. I have developed lots of training materials in the process.

Here are the things that a five-fold teacher does in the church.

E. Teachers

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1. Equip the saints to be teachers
2. Give extensive instruction of God's word (line upon line)
3. Give understanding to the Scriptures
4. Keep body from error by establishing sound doctrines.
5. Helps people grow in their knowledge of God.
6. Helps people grow in their understanding of the ways of God.

Where does this equipping take place? The equipping of the saints did not take place just at church on Sunday mornings. The leaders in the early church met with their members in the temple and also in homes, like we are doing. The apostle Paul said that he did not shrink back from declaring anything that was profitable and that he taught them publicly and from house to house. Real leadership will find ways of equipping the saints in both public settings and also in small group settings. Real leadership will equip the saints in all aspects. They will not shrink back from sharing hard things with people. They will not shrink back from declaring truth to people.

(Acts 5:42) "And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."

(Acts 20:20-21) "how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, {21} solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. Everyone is to speak the truth in love.

The second way for us to become mature is to speak the truth in love. Notice that Paul says that we are to grow up in all aspects of Him by speaking the truth in love. If you and I do not speak the truth in love, we will not grow up. All of us have a responsibility to speak the truth in love.

Ephesians 4:15 "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,"

Why is it important for us to speak truth to one another? One of the many reasons is that true worshipers of God worship in spirit and truth. Worshiping God does not just include our words, but our lives as well. Our lives have to be lived according to truth, in obedience to truth.

(John 4:23-24) ""But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. {24} "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.""

Another reason we need to speak the truth in love to one another is that truth sets people free. Jesus said that if we abide in His word, we are truly His disciples and we will know the truth, and the truth would make us free. We find truth in God's Word and it is powerful. It is truth that transforms lives and we have the responsibility to know truth. We need to share God's Word with one another.

(John 8:31-32) "Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; {32} and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.""

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Not only does truth set us free, but it also sets us apart. John 17:17 is referred to as the priestly prayer. Jesus prays for the Father to sanctify us in truth. We are sanctified or set apart by truth. The word sanctify means to make holy. We are made holy by truth. One of the most common words used to describe Christians in the New Testament is the word saint. A saint is a holy one. Saints are sanctified or made holy with truth. We need to speak truth to one another so that we can be made holy.

(John 17:17) ""Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."

Jesus promised help to you and I in regard to truth. He said that He would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to us. The Spirit of truth will guide us into all the truth. We need the help of the Holy Spirit when we read God's word. We need the help of the Holy Spirit when we hear God's word. We need the Spirit of truth to guide us into all truth. That will help us in our own lives and will also equip us to speak truth to others.

(John 15:26) ""When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,"

(John 16:13) ""But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."

How do we speak truth in love? Paul addresses leaders in 2 Timothy 2:24-26 and said that they must correct with gentleness. Sharing truth gently with others is a good application of speaking the truth in love.

(2 Timothy 2:24-26) "And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, {25} with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, {26} and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will."

What does truth mean? The Greek word for truth is alethes. The Greek word used in Ephesians is aletheuo, which comes from alethes. Alethes means true, as not concealing. It comes from two root words. The prefix a is a negative prefix, meaning not. The other word is lanthano, which means to be hid or lie hid, to be ignorant or unaware. When we talk about truth, there is nothing being hidden. It has the context that the whole picture is being presented.

G226. aletheuo, al-ayth-yoo'-o; from G227; to be true (in doctrine and profession):--speak (tell) the truth. [G227. alethes, al-ay-thace'; from G1 (as a neg. particle) and G2990; true (as not concealing):--true, truly, truth.]

3. Everyone is to do their part.

Ephesians 4:16 "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which 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."

A. Everyone is to be fit together.

The third step towards maturity is that everyone is to do their part. The first thing that Paul says in verse 16 is that the whole body is to be fit together. Remember, God is building a temple. You and I are the living stones that He is trying to fit together. There are some odd shapes and sizes in the materials. Each of us have some high or bulging spots that keep us from fitting together. God has to cut, grind, sand, and work on each of us so that we can fit together. It will take speaking the truth in love to one another to help us get resized so that we can fit together.

Here are some things that will help us fit together. We must have a common goal and vision. We saw a few weeks ago in the message on four essentials for building how they had a common goal. They had unity and God looked down and said that nothing that they intend to do will be impossible. Therefore, God confused their language and scattered them. When we have one mind and one purpose, we will not mind being squeezed into a tight spot. We will not mind making sacrifices so that we can fit together.

We also saw that we must good communication. We have to work at good communication. That is important in a marriage. Good communication is necessary in business. And, good communication is necessary in church. If we are going to be fit together, we must work hard on our communication with one another.

Another important part of being fit together is to submit to authority. A builder is going to determine which stones or bricks is needed in various places. He is going to take the rock and fit it into the wall where it is needed. A rock cannot say to the builder that he will determine where he will fit and that the choice is not up to the builder. In the same way, a leader must help organize and place people.

The Greek word for submission is hupotasso. The word literally means to be under proper order and arrangement. The order and arrangement of God's people is part of the responsibility given to leaders. The willingness to be under proper order and arrangement is the responsibility of every believer. For many of us, that is a difficult pill to swallow. We have such a mistrust of leadership. Many of us have been hurt by leadership. Many of us have seen abuses of power by leadership. I am sorry that many have been hurt. I am sorry that we have not been the example and models that we should. However, this does not negate the fact that we are called to allow ourselves to be properly arranged and fit together in the making of this temple.

B. Everyone is to hold things together.

The second thing that Paul mentions is that the whole body is held together by that which every joint supplies. All of us have a responsibility to keep things together. You have heard the expression that the chain is only as strong as the weakest link. That is true. Every joint, every link in the church chain must hold together.

Ephesians 4:16 "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which 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."

When one person is offended and pulls away, it affects the whole body. That one individual is

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needed in the church. Those of us in relationship with that person need to step in and help hold things together. The job of pastoring, shepherding, and caring for one another is not up to "THE PASTOR." It is all of our jobs to hold things together.

Jesus made a statement that both Matthew and Luke recorded. He said that "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters." We are either with someone and helping gather, or we are against the Lord and scattering. We want to be a church that is holding things together and gathering, not those who are scattering.

(Matthew 12:30) ""He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters."

The context of the passage is blaspheming with words. Our words have a powerful effect on holding things together or scattering. Solomon says that the words of a wise man are like well driven nails. Nails hold things together. Our words need to be things that bind together and hold things together.

(Ecclesiastes 12:11) "The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd."

C. Everyone is to work properly.

The third way that everyone is to do their part is by working properly. Paul says "the proper working of each individual part causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:16 "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which 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."

One of the most talented and versatile players in the NFL was Deon Sanders. Among other teams, he played for the Dallas Cowboys, where he played cornerback. Deon was nicknamed Neon Deion and also Prime Time. He played in both the National Football League and also in Major League baseball and excelled at both sports. He was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2011. Currently, he works as an NFL Network analyst.

In the late 90's Deon broke one of his little toes. I think it may have been the little toe on his right foot. It kept him on the bench for two months. He wasn't able to run and do all his fancy moves because of the broken toe. One little part of his body kept him out of commission. One little part not properly working hindered the whole body from doing what it was supposed to be doing.

Many people call the church today stadium Christianity. They say that there are 50,000 people in the stands watching 30 people on the field doing all the work. There has been a real push among Christianity in recent years to change this pattern. Churches frequently refer to members as the ministers of the body. They want to get away from the idea of a one man show or the pastor doing all the ministry. They want every member to become actively involved in ministry. This is a good thing.

In every arena of life, we learn more by doing than watching. We learn and grow more by

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experiencing things ourselves. We can read about riding a horse, but until we begin riding horses, we will not become good equestrians. We can read about golf, but until we begin to play, practice and get instructions on how to play golf, we will never grow in our ability to play golf. We grow and mature by doing, not watching.

This passage in Ephesians tells us that the body of Christ is not going to reach maturity until every member or joint begins to work properly and supply their unique and necessary part. As each joint supplies, the body is built up and grows toward maturity.

Introduction (Eph 4, 1 Cor 3:1-3, 1 Cor 14, Heb 3:13, 10:24-25, 2 Cor 10:8)

Signs of maturity

1. There will be a unity of the faith.
 2. We will grow in our knowledge of the Son of God.
 3. We will grow to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness Christ.
 4. We will no longer be children tossed here and there by waves. (Stability)
 5. We will no longer be carried away by every wind of doctrine. (Strong in word)
 6. We will not be deceived by the trickery and deceitfulness of men. (Discerning)
1. Everyone must be _____ for the work of service by the gift ministries. (Eph 4:11-13, 1 Cor 12:28, 31, Eph 2:20, Acts 5:42, 20:20-21)
 - A. Apostles
 1. Plant churches
 2. Lay foundations in churches
 3. Lay hands on and ordain pastors in churches
 4. Equip the church
 5. Build up the body
 6. Bring unity of the faith to the body
 7. Bring maturity to body; they are fathers
 8. Bring administration to body of Christ
 9. Discern truth from error and keep body from deception and false teaching
 10. Bring or set in order
 - B. Prophets
 1. Plant churches.
 2. Lay foundations in churches.
 3. Equip the saints to encourage and exhort one another
 4. Encourage, build up and strengthen the believers
 5. Exhort and prod saints to action
 6. Discern truth from error and keep body from the trickery of men, craftiness in deceitful scheming
 7. Give direction to the church
 8. Give correction to the church
 9. Maintain holiness in the church

Introduction (Eph 4, 1 Cor 3:1-3, 1 Cor 14, Heb 3:13, 10:24-25, 2 Cor 10:8)

Signs of maturity

1. There will be a unity of the faith.
 2. We will grow in our knowledge of the Son of God.
 3. We will grow to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness Christ.
 4. We will no longer be children tossed here and there by waves. (Stability)
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C. Evangelists

1. Equip the saints for evangelism
2. Build up the body of Christ by personally evangelizing and by equipping others to evangelize
3. Stir up and activate the body for service.
4. Move in signs, wonders, and power gifts.
5. Move in healing ministry.
6. Attract and bring in the necessary members of the body

D. Pastors/Shepherds

1. Equip the body to shepherd and care for one another
2. Are examples to the flock.
3. Feed the flock with God's word
4. Care for the flock.
5. Heal the flock so that they can do the work of service
6. Guards the flock so that they stay in the flock and receive care and equipping
7. Lovingly discipline the flock

B. Teachers

1. Equip the saints to be teachers
2. Give extensive instruction of God's word (line upon line)
3. Give understanding to the Scriptures
4. Keep body from error by establishing sound doctrines.
5. Helps people grow in their knowledge of God.
6. Helps people grow in their understanding of the ways of God.

2. Everyone is to speak the _____ in _____. (Eph 4:15, John 4:23-24, 8:31-32, 17:17, 15:26, 16:13, 2 Tim 2:24-26)

3. Everyone is to do their _____. (Eph 4:16)

A. Everyone is to be _____ together.

B. Everyone is to _____ together. (Matt 12:30, Eccl 12:11)

C. Everyone is to _____ properly.

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