

Ephesians 4: The Mouth in the Body

Leader Guide



Small Group Study – Each week our small groups team works alongside Pastor J.D. to create a small group study which corresponds to his sermon that week. The study examines a related passage of scripture to the text he preaches through with the goal of challenging small groups to grow both in their confidence in studying the bible and in their application of the truths brought out in the sermon.

Context: Ephesians 1-3 is an extravagant explanation of every believer's identity in Christ. Paul describes that we were predestined before time to become the adopted sons of God and sealed by the Holy Spirit to receive our eternal inheritance. We are forgiven and brought together with the rest of God's household. We are privy to the mystery of the ages, now made known in Christ: that God lavishes His love and power on those who are in Christ. Upon this theological foundation, Paul builds the practical exhortations that make up Ephesians 4-6. Ephesians 4:1 says: "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." What is this high calling? We are the body of Christ, the very dwelling place of God on earth (1:13, 1:22-23, 2:16-21, 3:6, 3:17, 4:4)! Ephesians 4 goes on to explain that there are certain roles in the body of Christ and certain ways to use our tongues that are extremely important to the health of this body.

Theme: The theme of this Bible Study, and the theme of this week's sermon, is "using our words to build up." Though "the unity of the Body" is Paul's main concern in Eph. 4, a closer look at Paul's logic will reveal the relationship between our theme and his. Paul makes clear that the first element to living a life worthy of having God dwell among us is unity (4:1-6). He urges that believers: live peacefully, defer to one another, and remember that we are members of one body. Paul further explains that unity will be achieved through the "building up" of the body (4:7-16). This happens when apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers do their jobs and everyone speaks the truth in love. Verses 25-31 give the most practical applications of the chapter, which involves speech that is truthful (4:25) and helpful for building others up (4:29). In summation, Paul's logic is:

- We are the body of Christ and the dwelling place of God on earth (Eph. 1-3)
 - Therefore, we should be unified. (4:3-6)
 - Unity is a result of maturity, (4:11-13)
 - Which is attained through building each other up, (4:12-16)
 - So that we can resist deceitfulness. (4:14)

Aim: The application is straightforward since this passage is an exhortation. Speech is to be used to build up the church and make it unified. Therefore, pastors and teachers must do their job properly while everyone in the church must speak truthfully in love. The aim for this study is to have Summit churchgoers and small group members ready to build each other up every time we meet together. What does that look like for your group?

7 Day Challenge for your group: For 7 Days speak or write every encouraging thought you have about a person to that person.

Study Questions:

Review: What was impacted you most from the sermon this weekend?

Openers (pick one or two):

What is the main goal for a church service or a small group meeting? What are our responsibilities in contributing to that goal?

There are several good answers including glorifying God. The answer that this passage will focus on is “building up” one another.

Recount a time someone’s word of encouragement gave life to you / lifted you up.

What is the most difficult part of receiving criticism?

[v. 1-6] “the calling you have received” –What is Paul referring to?

This will give you and your group the chance to spend some time rehashing central truths of the gospel, such as: our adoption and status as sons, forgiven and predestined for salvation, and the dwelling place of God on earth.

[v. 7-13] Why is it important that the church be unified?

To do church in a way that is glorifying to God. For instance, if meeting together in the name of God brings together a community, it is glorifying to God. If we all put aside our differences in the name of God, He is glorified.

What elements are necessary for unity among believers?

Humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, effort, the Spirit, using our collective gifts to build each other up, and maturity.

[v. 14-24 Paul talks about the church “growing up.” Why? What are the benefits / results of us as a local church growing up “in love” as Paul talks about? How have you experienced those results in your group?

1) So that we can be the functioning Body of Christ on earth, 2) so that Christians can stand firm and be rocks in society, 3) so that we can lay aside futility, 4) so that we can grow into the righteousness and holiness that will put God’s character on display in our community

[v. 15-32, and all of Eph. 4] What are some of the negative ways speech can be used according to this passage? What are some of the positive ways speech can be used?

-Grieving the Holy Spirit

+Building others up

-Deceitfulness

+Loving each other towards maturity

How will this study affect your demeanor in Sunday services and at small group? How will it affect your relationship with other Christians/friends/family?

The paradigm shift that the American church needs is to depart from the consumerist mentality and to become God’s people that are prepared for works of service (4:12). Do I go to church to be fed, or to feed?