

## **Ephesians 4a 4:1-16**

1 Paul reiterates that he is a prisoner of the LORD. (see 3:1) It is because he is the Lord's prisoner that he can request that we live a life worthy of the calling we have received. How would you describe that calling? (see 3:6,10-12) Could we have a higher calling? The rest of the letter is an expression of what it is like to live worthy of the calling.

2 The first description is complete humility. What a change that would make in the life of the church if we all followed Jesus' example of humility! There would be no arguments, no insistence on our own ways. The adjective 'completely' doesn't leave us much room for asserting ourselves. A church congregation with complete humility would be very attractive to the lost and to God.

Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit. It is one that is downplayed today, but one that Jesus exhibited. (2 Cor 10:1) We seem to admire the bold and the pushy that get things done. Christ exhibited power under control. Remember how he acted with the woman caught in adultery? Tax collectors? The prostitute that washed his feet? The only folks he dealt harshly with were religious leaders that would not hear him any other way. Gentleness is one of the qualifications of an elder.

Patience – (Romans 15:1) Another fruit of the Spirit. The more we mature in Christ, the more patient we should be toward the immature.

Bearing with one another in love – We must understand that we are all works in progress. Complete humility would demand that I bear with my brothers and sisters in love. Love says, "I will endure their weakness or failings because I care about them. I can put up with where they are at now, because Jesus does the same with me."

3 Every effort – we have to go out of our way to keep unity. If we let our guard down, or don't try, we find ourselves at odds and quarreling over a minor issue. It takes a great deal of effort (every effort) to keep the focus on Jesus, and to find the things we have in common. I often find people arguing about how to say the same thing. Look for your commonality in Christ. If you can't agree, agree to disagree and move on to where we do agree. Jesus prayed for us to be in unity in John 17, but we have to make every effort. 'Bond of peace' The peace of Christ, our peace with God should bind us together as one.

4 – 6 Seven ones: body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father of all. These are things that we should not have a problem discussing in unity with our brothers and sisters. We are all part of one body with different functioning parts. We are all partakers of the same Spirit. We all have the hope of resurrection and new glorified bodies. We all have faith that God will do what He has promised. We were all baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. We all worship the same God. The Gospel is said to be in the prepositions. The Father is 'over', 'through' and 'in' each one of us. That fact should cause a oneness.

7 We don't all have the same grace. Some need more for the calling they have. Some need more because of their situations. Some need less because of their natural character. Christ gives it as we need it.

8 Psalm 68:18 When Christ ascended he took our captor captive. (Col 2:15) Then He gave us gifts. 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4:11 describes the various gifts. Eighteen different gifts are mentioned. Each of us has been given the gift or gifts that Christ intends

**Commented [Q1]:** 1 By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away!  
2 Cor 10:1 (NIV)

**Commented [Q2]:** 1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.  
Romans 15:1 (NIV)

us to use. He decides who gets what, and all are for the building up of the body. (see verse 12)

9 – 10 This passage is interpreted two different ways. One is that Christ came down from heaven in the incarnation and then later returned to the right hand of the Father. The other is that he descended into hell to preach to the souls in prison, took the keys of death and hell, and then ascended to heaven in victory. The difference comes in the end of 9 by interpretation. Is the lower part of the earth the underworld or just to the surface of the earth?

11 Here is the Ephesian list of gifts. It is the shortest list and may be the ones that elders were expected to have. Apostles – there are the 12 that gave witness of the resurrection, but there may also be an apostolic gift, to oversee, and to start churches. Prophets – Some did predict future events such as famine and Paul's imprisonment, but the word itself means to speak forth God's word. Are those Pastors who have a call to preach a particular message to a particular group prophets? After all, that is what the Old Testament prophets were. Evangelists- Those with the gift to lead others to Christ. They are especially gifted at sharing the message of salvation that results in a life change. Pastors and teachers – most Greek scholars think that this is a combination gifting. Pastor is one who oversees, like shepherd, or elder, or bishop. Teacher is obvious. Since all elders were supposed to be 'apt to teach', the two go hand in hand. The teaching is the feeding of the flock and the shepherding is guiding and directing, seeing to the hurts and wounds, and protection.

12 All of these gifts are to prepare others to use their gifts. That is why they are thought of as elder gifts. When everyone uses their gifts the body of Christ is built up and functions as it should. (1 Corinthians 12:7) The elders of the church help others find their calling, and equip them to carry out their calling.

13 One day we will all have the exact same understanding of all that Jesus is, and we'll be in total unity. We will all be mature. Teaching within the church should be to direct us toward that goal. Then we will be "attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Eph 4:13 (NIV) (See 3:19)

14 The analogies here are of the spiritually immature being on a wind whipped ocean. They have no base. Whichever way the wind blows, they go. Do we see that with popular doctrines and issues in our day? Are you easily persuaded to and moved from your understanding of the Word? There is cunning teaching in the church, but it is often geared toward personal gain or promiscuity. Run from either of these. When we are grounded in what we believe, practicing a mature Christian walk, letting the Lord work through us, we will find a solid footing.

15 Instead of cunning and craftiness for personal gain, we will speak the truth in love and grow up into Christ. We grow to be more and more like Him. We grow up in Him as He grows up in us.

16 Each gift in its active place pulls us together and through Christ we grow to look like Christ, growing in love, building in love. That love is love for one another and love for the head, Christ Jesus. Each gift is to operate in love. Notice how the chapter on gifts is followed by the chapter on love in 1 Corinthians.

**Commented [Q3]:** 7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.  
1 Cor 12:7 (NIV)