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Unity & Maturity in the Body of Christ

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Ephesians [3:14–21](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.14); [4:1–6](file:///Ephesians%204/1); [4:11–16](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph4.11)

## A special week:

We’re taking a short break from our Colossians series this Sunday and focusing on Christ Fellowship’s mission and vision. To prepare for this special sermon, this week we’re going to read through a few passages from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.

# Day 1

## Read

The first passage we’ll break down is [Ephesians 3:14–21](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.14), a prayer of Paul’s for the church in Ephesus.

### [Ephesians 3:14–17a](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.14) (NIV)

14For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

## Study

* Phrases like “for this reason” are used to link ideas together. To see the connection Paul is making and why he mentions “every family in heaven and earth,” read [Ephesians 3:1–13](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.1).

## Think about

* God has revealed his plan to reconcile humanity to himself, and to each other and it’s a person — Jesus Christ. It wasn’t easy in the first century to follow Jesus while facing opposition. It wasn’t easy for Jews and Gentiles to come together and find unity in the body of Christ. So notice what Paul prays for in Ephesians 3:16. Why should we pray for the same thing now in the 21st century?

## Pray

* Pray verse 16–17a for yourself and others close to you. Allow this verse to shape your prayer time today.

## Talk about

*Have a meaningful conversation about this passage with one of your CF Encouragers, your small group, or join us virtually in the Faithlife Community. (Search groups for Engage God Daily. For full instructions,* [*click here*](https://cfhome-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/lscheffler_cfhome_org/EYNh8cUxJRxClFV-Wt6QNe0BtkK34MHJDqeHamAwxlGmbQ?e=RL3RSh)*.)*

* At Christ Fellowship, we want to be “all welcome” and “people of grace.” We want to be encouragers who help the people around us feel known and loved. Discuss how is prayer essential to this vision. What part does the Spirit play?

# Day 2

## Read

### [Ephesians 3:17b–19](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.17) (NIV)

17bAnd I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

## Study

* The [Faithlife Study Bible](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Eph3.18) says, “Paul uses these two metaphors—one agricultural (“rooted”) and the other architectural (“established”)—as a reminder of the stability that Christ provides. Paul’s ultimate hope is that the indwelling presence of Christ will deepen the believers’ experience of God’s love.”
* Read what the Faithlife Study Bible note on [3:19](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Eph3.19) says about “fullness of God.” Follow their link to the note on Colossians 1:19.

## Think about

* How would being more and more “rooted and established” in God’s love change your life? How you treat other people? What your priorities are? If you fully grasped the vast love of God, how would you think, feel, and act differently?

## Pray

* Integrate Paul’s prayer into your prayer time today. Pray it for yourself and someone you hope will one day accept Christ.

## Talk about

*Have a meaningful conversation about this passage with one of your CF Encouragers, your small group, or join us virtually in Faithlife Community. (Search groups for Engage God Daily. For full instructions,* [*click here*](https://cfhome-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/lscheffler_cfhome_org/EYNh8cUxJRxClFV-Wt6QNe0BtkK34MHJDqeHamAwxlGmbQ?e=RL3RSh)*.)*

* Discuss your answers to the “Think About” questions. Inspire one another pursue Christ more and more.

# Day 3

## Read

### [Ephesians 3:20–21](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.20) (NIV)

20Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

## Study

* We’ve seen Paul mention “power” a couple of times in this passage. Read the Faithlife Study Bible [note on 3:20](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Eph3.20). What do you learn about the various words for power?
* Compare Paul’s prayer here in [Ephesians 3:20](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.20) and [Romans 16:25–27](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ro16.25-27). What similarities do you notice?

## Think about

So many people are grasping for power. They want power over others so they can be in control. Yet God’s power working within us will ultimately conform us to the image of Christ. How should Christ’s followers define and use power?

## Pray

Read this prayer from the [Book of Common Prayer](https://www.bcponline.org/Collects/seasonsc.html) and hear the echoes of what we’ve read in [Ephesians 3:14–21](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.14). Are there parts of this prayer that resonate with you? Pray it as written or make it your own?

O God,  
you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity:

Grant us the fullness of your grace,

that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God,

for ever and ever. *Amen.*

## Talk about

* We’ve come to the end of Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:14–21. Discuss why this prayer should inspire you to pray more — to ask and imagine all that the Spirit desires to accomplish through you personally, and through Christ’s body here at Christ Fellowship. How are prayers like Paul’s necessary for making progress in our vision to reduce loneliness, anxiety, and addiction through meaningful conversations where people experience Christ through us?

# Day 4

## Read

### [Ephesians 4:1–6](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph4.1) (NIV)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

## Study

* A good Bible study technique is to notice when key words are repeated. What word is repeated here? How does it fit with Paul’s overall message in this passage?

## Think about

Connect Paul’s instructions here with the prayer that immediately preceded it in [3:14–21](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.14). How would receiving from God all that Paul prayed for empower the Ephesians to “live a life worthy” of their calling? Why do you need the Spirit’s strength and God’s love to bear with one another and find unity and peace?

## Pray

As you read Paul’s instructions here, where do you feel the Spirit’s conviction? Maybe you’d like to be more patient, gentle, humble or less divisive. Pray according to the Spirit’s leading.

## Talk about

What does it look like to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit”? What obstacles get in the way? How can meaningful conversations help us find unity?

# Day 5

## Read

### [Ephesians 4:11–16](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph4.11) (NIV)

11So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

14Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

## Study

* Read the Faithlife Study Bible [note for 4:11](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Eph4.11). How has Christ chosen to equip his body? Notice the “so that” that tells us why. What will the result of the body being built up?
* Notice the “instead” in verse 15 that shows a contrast. What’s being contrasted?

## Think about

* Ephesians 4:11–16 gives us a beautiful picture of what Christ is doing in his body. How are you participating in the growth and building up of the church?
* Read through all the passages we looked at this week (Ephesians [**3:14–21**](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph3.14); [**4:1–6**](file:///Ephesians%204/1); [**4:11–16**](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph4.11)). What insight have you gained on the purpose and mission of the church?

## Pray

Take some time to pray for Christ Fellowship and its vision of [The Table](https://tablecf.com/). Pray about the part Christ is calling you to play?

## Talk about

* Have you signed up to be a CF Encourager? Look into it [here](https://cfhome.org/cfencourager/). If you have, discuss how it’s going.