

Ephesians: More Than A Makeover

Truth In Love: Building Up the Church

Ephesians 4:11-16

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / March 16, 2025

Ephesians 4:11-16 “And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up 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 mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Reader: This is the Word of The Lord.

Response: **Thanks Be To God!**

I. You need to see the work of the ministry as yours to do!

Ephesians 4:11-12 “And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

A. The Great Commission isn’t solely about making converts, but disciples who know how to follow Jesus.

Matthew 28:19-20 “Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...**”

B. Paul told Timothy not to just do ministry himself, but to multiply the ministry through others.

2 Timothy 2:2 “...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses **entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.**”

C. Encouraging one another in good works and ministry is a shared responsibility.

Hebrews 10:24-25 “**And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,** ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

II. Your job as a Christian is to build up and grow up!

Ephesians 4:12 “...for **building up** the body of Christ...”

Ephesians 4:15 “...**we are to grow up** in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ...”

Ephesians 4:16 “...when each part is working properly, makes the body grow **so that it builds itself up** in love.”

Ephesians 4:13-14 “...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”

III. You'll never build up or grow up without speaking the truth in love.

Ephesians 4:15 "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ..."

A. Truth & love are inseparably linked throughout the Bible.

Psalms 85:10 "Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other."

1 Corinthians 13:6 "[love] does not rejoice at wrongdoing, **but rejoices with the truth.**"

2 John 3, 6 "Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, **in truth and love...**⁶ And **this is love, that we walk according to His commandments...**"

1 Peter 1:22 "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart."

B. Some in the Bible who lacked love in their teaching and speaking with others:

1. Pharisees - obsessed with the law (God's and their own) but had no love for people.
2. Jonah preached judgement without compassion or love (Jonah 3-4).
3. The older brother in the parable of the prodigal son spoke truth but lacked love (Luke 15:25-32).

C. Some in the Bible who compromised on the truth while caring more about how they looked or were received:

1. Aaron made a golden calf instead of preaching the truth (Exodus 32).
2. Pontius Pilate knew Jesus was innocent but chose to appease the crowd (John 19:12ff).
3. The church in Thyatira was kind and loving but compromised the truth (Rev. 2:18).

D. Speaking truth in love means you want the very best for someone as God defines it, even if it costs you greatly.

Proverbs 27:6 "**Faithful are the wounds of a friend**; profuse are the kisses of an enemy."

Proverbs 28:23 "**Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor** than he who flatters with his tongue."

E. Speaking the truth in love means you take care in how you wield the truth.

Colossians 4:6 "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."

Galatians 6:1 "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should **restore him in a spirit of gentleness...**"

F. Don't buy the lie. It's not truth or love. It's truth in love together!

John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**"

G. Speaking the truth in love is what causes the body of Christ to work properly and build itself up!

Ephesians 4:15-16 “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, **when each part is working properly**, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion:

1. Why do you think people often see ministry as something for pastors and church leaders rather than for themselves?
2. Ephesians 4:12 says that ministry is for all believers, not just pastors and church staff. How does this challenge your view of your role in the church? In what ways do you see yourself contributing—or holding back—from ministry?
3. Think of a time when someone spoke truth to you in love. How did it impact you? What did their approach teach you about how truth and love work together?
4. Has there been a situation where you felt the need to speak truth but held back because you were afraid of how it would be received? Looking back, how might you have handled it differently?
5. When it comes to truth and love, which do you naturally lean toward? Do you tend to emphasize truth at the expense of love, or love at the expense of truth? How can you grow in balancing both to the glory of God?