

Usness, Serving

September 14, 2025

Ephesians 4:7-16

DAY 1: My Life as Teammate

1. Ephesians 4 begins with the imperative of “usness.” In versus 1-6, usness begins with personal character and continues with intentionally encouraging others.

2. Paul builds on the character premise, and intentionality to keep unity by adding the serving together component. We serve together.

3. Here are our verses for this week.

Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.”

⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?

¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe).

Ephesians 4:11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until 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.

Ephesians 4:14 Then 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. ¹⁵ Instead, 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. ¹⁶ From 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.

4. What is your general impression to this passage?

5. What question(s) do you have about this passage?

6. What strikes you the most about this passage?

DAY 2: The foundations of our serving

Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

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1. When we think about serving the Lord, most of us have some pretty big questions about our ability to serve the Lord!

2. Notice what the very first statement is: "grace has been given!"

3. Grace has several meanings. (a.) Grace is God's unmerited favor. (b.) Grace is also used to denote a specific gift to be able to accomplish God's working in and through you. (c.) Grace is also the power to do what we ought, including serving.

4. How would each of these three things overcome your hesitancy about serving?

a. Grace is unmerited favor.

b. Grace is also used to denote a specific gift to be able to accomplish God's working in and through you.

c. Grace is also the power to do what we ought, including serving.

5. When we come to verse 8, Paul loosely quotes from Psalm 68.

Psalm 68:18 When you ascended on high, you took many captives; you received gifts from people, even from the rebellious— that you, Lord God, might dwell there.

6. The psalmist portrays a scene from antiquity. A conquering army takes prisoners in chains and marches them back to the conquering homeland as slaves. The king received the slaves as gifts.

7. Paul pictures the same analogy but with one significant change! Instead of the king receiving gifts, this king gives gifts to His servants! That's us!

8. Paul continues the imagery from verse 8. Jesus descended from heaven to come as a human being. And Jesus later ascended back to heaven after the resurrection. Paul notes two items:

a. Jesus then gave gifts to His children!

b. Jesus leaving this earth allowed His presence to be everywhere!

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: God's people serving!

Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service,

1. There are three passages that give us examples of spiritual gifts that God gives His people. (See also Romans 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11).

2. In Ephesians, Paul combines the gifts with specific functions. In other words, prophets have the gift of prophecy, etc.

Rom. 12:4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

3. As to gifts:

- a. Every Christian has at least one gift.
- b. Not everyone has the same gift
- c. We belong to each other in service.
- d. Our gifts are given on the basis of grace.

Ephesians 4:12 ...to prepare God's people for works of service,

4. Many people assume that the job of ministry and service is primarily the work of professional pastors. That is NOT what Paul teaches!

Look back at verse 12. Who are the people responsible for works of service?

5. The responsibility for training God's people for acts of service is church leadership. Notice the word "prepare" in verse 12. The word "prepare" means to equip or to train!

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: The effects of serving

Ephesians 4:12 ...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until 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.

1. When God's people do works of service, Paul sees four objectives of our service. Next to each one, jot down your thoughts:

a. *so that the body of Christ may be built up-*

b. *until we all reach unity in the faith and -*

c. *in the knowledge of the Son of God and -*

d. *become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ-*

2. These are lofty goals!

3. Which goal strikes you as most important?

4. Why is that most important to you?

5. When you serve the Lord, these goals are at work, whether or not you are aware of it or not!

6. How would your own serving be elevated if you knew these goals were at play in your service?!

Day 5: More goals of serving

Ephesians 4:14 Then 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 men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From 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.

1. What does Paul identify as a major goal of serving in v. 14?

2. What does Paul identify as a major goal of serving in v. 15?

3. What does Paul identify as a major goal of serving in v. 16?

4. Who builds up the church? You! Who does the ministry? You!

5. You may think that your serving is “small potatoes,” but the cumulative effect of everyone serving moves us toward lofty and important goals!

6. As you think about serving the Lord, what do you want to do and remember from Eph. 4:7-16?