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HOW TO GROW UP IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 40
EPHESIANS 4:14-16

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EPHESIANS 4:14-16 "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

We have just completed a study concerning the gifts God gave to men so the gospel could be communicated. Two of those gifts no longer remain, namely apostles and prophets. When the Canon of Scripture was completed, the gifts of apostles and prophets were no longer needed. But the gifts of evangelist and pastor-teacher remain in the Church Age for the communication of the gospel. Pastor and teacher are one and the same and go together. Pastor-teacher is one spiritual gift. He is the shepherd of the flock and he is commanded to teach the people. Verse 12 of Ephesians 4 gives an outline of the work of the pastor-teacher and we studied this in our last lesson. Verse 13 gave the goal toward which we are all moving, namely, the basis of true unity in Bible doctrine in the soul.

EPHESIANS 4:14 "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" In this verse Paul recognized the fact that some of the believers in Ephesus were still children in the faith and had not grown into spiritual maturity. "That" introduces a negative purpose clause. "Be" is the present, active, subjunctive of "eimi." The present tense shows that this is their present status. Active voice means that they, by their own action, have forced themselves into their present condition. The subjunctive mood means that they didn't have to remain that way.

The word for children is "napios." We need to distinguish "napios" from the usual word for children, which is "brephos." Once a person is born again he becomes a "brephos." When the believer becomes a mature Christian he is a "huios." But a "napios" is a believer who goes negative toward Bible doctrine and builds up scar tissue on the soul, and therefore is perpetually out of fellowship with God. Instead of becoming learners they go in the opposite direction and become "napios" which means spiritual immaturity. So in this sentence Paul told the Ephesian Christians to stop being spiritual babies. Those Ephesian Christians were at a spiritual stand-still.

So the correct translation of this verse is--"That we be no longer spiritual babies, in a stand-still position, being tossed about by waves, being whirled about by every wind of doctrine by the dice playing of men who cheat, face to face with the deceitful methods of fraud."

So Paul was actually telling these Ephesian Christians that they were spiritual babies and were also suckers. Paul gave three descriptions of their childish response.

1. "Tossed to and fro" The word is "kludonizomai." It is the word used of a ship in the wind out of control. The ship's rudder is broken and it is at the mercy of the winds. So Paul here said that these baby Christians were at the mercy of the wind of false doctrine. This is a picture of an unstable childish Christian because of no Bible doctrine in the soul. This means a build up of scar tissue on the soul. These Christians were slaves to the details of life, unstable, emotional, and were off-again, on-again Christians.
2. "Carried about by every wind of doctrine." This is a slight advance over the first stage. The first nautical analogy said that they had no doctrine in the soul. This analogy says that their negative volition had built up darkness in their souls and had been replaced by satanic doctrine. When the believer goes negative toward doctrine, then his soul becomes fertile soil for the Devil to move in and plant all kinds of false doctrine. The old sin nature is in control and darkness flows in and produces sins and human good. This is indeed a pitiful picture of a born-again person who has failed to take in doctrine and is at the mercy of the Devil's game. "Carried about" is "peri phero" and it means carried away by every false concept that comes along. Why are so many Christians sucked in by the social gospel and the tongues movement and things like that? Why are so many people involved in international peace movements? For one reason only. They have gone negative toward Bible doctrine.
3. "By the sleight of men." This means the Christian has become a sucker. This means loaded dice and there is no way for you to win in the game. This is a gambling figure of speech. "Sleight" comes from "kubeia" and this is where we get the word "cube" and it refers to dice playing. "By means of dice playing." Now what kind of a game do these birds run? This is explained by the words "cunning craftiness" and it simply means that the Devil always cheats on you. The word is "ponourgia" and it means to cheat in gambling. So "cunning craftiness" is cheating in gambling. This is false doctrine infiltrating the soul. The dice are designed to come up with one thing only and that is Satanic doctrine in the soul. "Whereby" is the preposition "Pros" plus the accusative and it means "face to face with." The Devil is always face to face with you, waiting to deceive. The word is "Methadia" and it means deceitful scheming, deceitful methods. The other noun is "plane" and it means to fraud or deceive. In other words, the odds are all against you.

So Paul was here telling the Ephesians that they were unstable and were victims of all the waves of false doctrine that had come their way. They were shooting dice with the Devil and his dice are always loaded against the truth.

EPHESIANS 4:15 "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"

Now it doesn't have to stay that way. A believer can move out from under the control of the Devil and can begin to speak the truth in love. The word for truth is a present, active, participle of "aletheia." This means true doctrine in the soul and should read "by means of love." So it should read, "Constantly maintaining the truth by the inhale of doctrine by means of love."

That we may "grow up" and the word is "auzano" and is an aorist, active, subjunctive. It is used here to show a childish attitude toward mature doctrine. Unto him is from "eis" a directional preposition. "That we may grow up into the fulness of Christ." "In all things" and it means to fill up the deficiency. "Who keeps on being the head; the Lord Jesus Christ."

EPHESIANS 4:16 "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." "From whom" and this refers to Christ. "The whole body" is a most important phrase and we want to get nine points on this.

THE WHOLE BODY

1. God initiates grace toward the believer. At the point of salvation every believer enters into union with Christ. From that point on God initiates grace toward the believer and the believer is the responder.

2. Since Christ has been glorified through his ascension and has been seated at the right hand of God, he must now have a body. The Old Testament saints are not his body. He didn't start to have a body until he was glorified and he was glorified the moment he was seated at God's right hand.

3. The church is the body of Christ.
EPHESIANS 2:16 "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:" These are believers in the Church Age only.

EPHESIANS 5:30-32 "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

4. After the rapture of the church, the church will become the bride of Christ.
2 CORINTHIANS 11:2 "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

REVELATION 19:6-8 "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

The Holy Spirit is forming that body for Christ now. When the saints are taken to be with him, they have a body like his, no old sin nature and no human good. Christ is going to give the bride a resurrection body. We are not dressed up yet, but we will be when we get the resurrection body. Now in the interim, what does he give? Since he can't give us the resurrection body yet, he does something to fill in for all the things man needs, so he gives us his mind, which is the Word of God. The mind of Christ is Bible doctrine. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:16 "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." This is also explained in PSALM 138:2 "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

5. As the body of Christ, the believer on earth receives the mind of Christ. In other words, we live by doctrine as long as we are in these physical bodies.

6. In the future the believers will receive their resurrection bodies and at that time become the bride of Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 3:21 "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

1 JOHN 3:1-2 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

7. Now we have the mind of Christ--in the future we will become the bride of Christ.

8. As the body of Christ we are to breathe in doctrine in the soul and this will lead us into mature, stable growing Christianity.

9. The body functions here on earth as the representative of Christ.

So this verse should read, "Christ, from whom all the body join together and knit together to every joint of supply, according to the norm of the operating energy in the capacity of each part, produces growth of the body, resulting in edifying itself by means of love."

"Fitly joined together" is from "sun ar mologeo" we are literally "joined together with Christ through doctrine." Once we believe we are joined to Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:7 "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." The word "compacted" is a present, passive, participle of "sun bibazo" and means "to unite together," to "knit together."

"Through every joint of supply"

1. The parts of your physical body are linked by joints. Believers are linked to Christ by doctrine in the soul. We have different spiritual gifts but are joined by doctrine.
2. Joints in the body help build muscle and strength. Joints make exercise possible. Doctrine makes spiritual exercise and growth possible.
3. Joints provide body coordination and action. This is an analogy to the filling of the Holy Spirit.

According to the "effective working" and the word is "energia" and means the operating energy. "Meros" doesn't mean measure but it means the capacity of every part. Doctrine in your soul measures the capacity of your spiritual life. This produces growth in the body and presents to the world a picture of the mature Christian life as love sheds it forth.